Impact of NPs Weight, Information Order, and Question Types on Iranian EFL Learners' Production of Dative Constructions

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This study intended to examine the impact of information order and NP weight on Iranian English language learners' production of dative alternation. A one-shot experimental design was conducted to answer whether Iranian EFL learners follow given-before-new principle (GBN) in answering dative wh-questions and whether weight influences word ordering for to-dative verbs. In addition, the role of the proficiency level of the learners was considered. To do so, a group of 100 Iranian EFL learners were selected. After taking the proficiency test, they were divided into two groups of High (n=50) and Mid (n=50) proficiency groups. They were required to respond to two questionnaires, based on a seven-point Lickert scale from completely acceptable (7) to completely unacceptable (1) sentences. One contained contextualized dative structures and the other decontextualized ones. They were asked to choose the sentences they would prefer. In the contextualized test, the participants had to choose based on the given context. On the other hand, in the decontextualized preference test, they were given a pair of dative structures and were required to choose the one they preferred. The results showed that intermediate and advanced EFL learners were not sensitive to the given-new information structure in their production and choosing word order structure. Also participants preferred those sentences which had the longer object at the final clause in dative construction and disfavor longer constituents in the middle of the sentence. Furthermore, the study showed that participants of High and Mid groups followed the principle of end weight in their answers. Both groups followed the end-weight...
and GBN principles for Who-type, but they could not recognize the GBN principle regarding What-type questions