

Individual Paper Session 12

Testing

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10:45-11:15am

University English entrance examinations in Japan and Task-based language teaching

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Although task-based language teaching is highly promoted in the English language teaching field, it is often argued that task-based language teaching is difficult to promote in EFL situations. For instance, in Japan, where the grammar translation method is used prevalently by teachers who claim it is needed to prepare pupils for university entrance examinations, there is reluctance to change to communicative teaching methods which allow students to be more engaged in accomplishing language tasks.

In this study, the 2004 university entrance examinations for 20 prestigious universities (10 private and 10 public), as well as one nation-wide examination, are analyzed. Based on these studies (Brown & Yamashita, 1995a, 1995b), test items in the 21 examinations were categorized.

The findings from this study suggest that most test items were based on reading passages that rate very difficult in terms of the *Flesch*, *Flesch-Kincaid*, and *Fog* readability indexes. Also, multiple choice questions dominated the examinations, especially in private university examinations. After reviewing the results of this study, suggestions of tasks to be used in the Japanese EFL situation are also provided.