

Student Attitudes toward Task-based Language Teaching at Japanese Universities

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Little is known about student beliefs regarding task-based language teaching (TBLT) in Japan, although the changeover from traditional methods (i.e., grammar-translation) as mandated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology can be seen across the country. This study investigates the beliefs of 739 university students in the Tokyo area regarding fundamental principles and features of TBLT. After becoming familiar with a TBLT learning environment, these learners evaluated TBLT in relation to their experiences with the traditional teacher-centered classroom model. Learner perceptions of TBLT were investigated and compared across majors, colleges, background with L2 use and culture, and reported proficiency levels. We will assess whether students interpret TBLT as an effective way to acquire a foreign language.

Introduction

Advocates of communicative language teaching (CLT) believe that “language is acquired through communication” (Howatt, 1984, p. 279). This general principle also informs task-based language teaching (TBLT), whereby tasks are seen as “a means of enabling learners to learn language by experiencing how it is used in communication” (Ellis, 2003,