

Symposium

Aug. 31st (Fri.) 10:10-11:40 H203

## Considering the feasibility of TBLT based on “Focus on Form” approach in the Japanese English classroom

Sato, Rintaro (Nara University of Education)  
Kasahara, Kiwamu (Hokkaido University of Education)  
Hall, James (Iwate University)  
Koga, Tsutomu (Meijo University)  
Konno, Katsuyuki (Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology)

Day 1

With demands to improve students' communication abilities continuing, task-based language teaching (TBLT) based on the principle of focus-on-form (FonF), where meaning is given higher priority over form, is gaining attention. However, there is both optimism and skepticism about its applicability to the Japanese EFL learning environment. In our presentations we will examine the feasibility of TBLT based on FonF approach in the Japanese context and then engage the audience in a constructive discussion about it.

First, the chair presents issues with TBLT based on FonF which arose in his teaching and research (e.g. difficulty of attending to form and meaning simultaneously; feasibility of using the target form). The next speaker argues there is no great difference between weak versions of TBLT and the Presentation Practice Production (PPP) approach. He proposes that English teachers in Japan improve PPP by adopting practical ideas from TBLT/FonF rather than implement a strong TBLT/FonF framework. Concerning TBLT/FonF and teacher education, the third speaker argues that most teacher trainees and JHS/HS students lack sufficient classroom interactional competence for a strong meaning-focused approach. However, with sufficient scaffolding, realistic communicative goals, and an attention to form, teacher trainees can promote L2 communication in their classes. The last two speakers use insights from methodological, task, and motivation research, comparing affective variables evoked in two different classrooms, an oral presentation class and a traditional, teacher-centered class. They argue that communicative activities, such as group presentations and debates, can have a positive effect on EFL learners' affective variables and they should be adopted into a form-focused approach.

Overall, our presentations will show that ideas from TBLT based on FonF can enhance the Japanese EFL classroom but wholesale adoption of such principles can also be counter-productive.

Rintaro Sato is an Associate Professor in the Department of English Education of Nara University of Education. His research interests include intake and output processing, feedback, and negotiation of meaning.

Kiwamu Kasahara is a Professor in the Department of English Education of Hokkaido University of Education. His research interest includes second language vocabulary acquisition and testing.

James M Hall is an Associate Professor in the English Education Department at the Faculty of Education of Iwate University. His current research interests are in teacher education.

Tsutomu Koga is a part-time lecturer at Meijo University. His main interests are motivational dynamicity, communication confidence and apprehension, and willingness to communicate.

Katsuyuki Konno is a lecturer at the Faculty of Comprehensive Informatics of Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology. His research concerns learner motivation in EFL classrooms, L2 selves, and their effects on EFL learners' learning behaviors.