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## 主 論 文 の 要 旨

論文題目

Learning-oriented assessment as contextually grounded practice in Japanese higher education: The case of EFL  
(日本の高等教育という文脈に根差した学習指向評価：EFL の事例)

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## 論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

### Background

At its heart, this study is concerned with how assessment practice can best be done in order to promote productive and effective learning outcomes. This topic has garnered widespread attention in various educational contexts the world over, as teachers and educators grow dissatisfied with psychometric measures of learning achievement and an emphasis on summative testing that seeks to rank students rather than improve their learning. However, while there has been growing research from abroad, there has been very little coming from Japan. Therefore, it was decided to investigate assessment processes in Japan, with a view to understanding how it is currently undertaken, so that policy recommendations for learning-oriented assessment practice could be made.

### Organization and structure

Firstly, an introduction was given and the background to the study was explained (chapter 1). In order to achieve the goals of the research, the study revolved around EFL classes in Japanese universities. Higher education in Japan has been criticized from a number of social commentators, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology also recognizes the need for changes to the system. This study thus comes in a very timely manner, as educators and policy-makers alike seek ways to improve the learning achievements of Japanese youth.

Secondly, a literature review was undertaken. The first part of the review focused on broad paradigmatic issues (chapter 2). Key concepts surrounding teacher and student beliefs about assessment were examined, including the conceptualization of formative and summative assessments. It was noted that teacher beliefs greatly impact upon how assessment is conducted in the classroom. Student beliefs, likewise, exert a strong influence over how students approach assessment tasks. A number of studies from abroad were examined, looking at how teachers

conceived of assessment, and what qualities of assessment tasks students believed had a positive effect on learning. The various ways in which formative and summative assessment had been conceptualized in the literature were also explained. It was noted that there is no inherent quality in an assessment task that makes it formative or summative, but rather those labels describe how the results of that assessment are used. A number of theoretical frameworks concerning how assessment can best promote learning were then outlined; namely, Authentic Assessment, Dynamic Assessment, Assessment for Learning, Teacher-based Assessment and Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA). With a strong research base in higher education and the Asia region, LOA was deemed to be the most promising way of framing the present study.

Previous research related specifically to the Japanese context was also reviewed (chapter 3). In particular, the notion of Japan as a Confucian Heritage Culture was discussed. Broadly speaking, this places Japan in a cultural context in which education is considered utilitarian, success in examinations is valued more highly than actual knowledge, and high-stakes summative testing quashes any inclinations towards formative assessment. This chapter helped to locate the present study in its proper context. From the preceding review, gaps in the literature were discovered which suggested the following research questions: (1) What are the assessment beliefs and practices of EFL teachers working in Japanese universities?; (2) How do university students conceive of and experience assessment?; (3) How do contextual factors influence learning-oriented assessment?; and (4) To what extent do the qualitative data (interviews, narrative frames and document analysis) and quantitative data (surveys) converge with regard to the main conclusions of this study?

In seeking to answer these research questions, the study method was then outlined (chapter 4). It was noted that the philosophical orientation of the study is post-positivism, while the conceptual framework is social-constructivist. A mixed methods research design was employed, as it was considered that both quantitative and qualitative data would be needed to most effectively address the research questions. The particular data gathering instruments were then described, along with justifications for their use. The first instrument was the student conceptions of assessment survey. The second instrument was a survey directed at teacher belief and practice. These two surveys constituted the quantitative data sets. The next three instruments were tied together by means of a case study methodology.

The data gathered from students via the survey and the narrative frames were then described and analyzed (chapter 5). The survey was one that had been previously created and used with Chinese students, called the Chinese Students' Conceptions of Assessment survey, or C-SCoA. A factor analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 22, whereupon seven factors were found that adequately described the students' conceptions of assessment. In addition, it was decided to use narrative frames to gather qualitative data. Narrative frames are a written record, and so are easier to translate. Also, they allow respondents time and space to consider their answers. All the

students in the six EFL courses in the case study were asked to participate, which led to a total of 219 completed narrative frames. The method used for analysis was qualitative content analysis (QCA).

Teacher belief and practice was then addressed through a questionnaire, a series of interviews, and a document analysis (chapter 6). The questionnaire was loosely based on one that had been conducted with teachers in Hong Kong, China and Canada. 148 completed responses were gathered from university EFL teachers. The results indicated that teachers mostly have student-centered purposes for conducting assessment. Interviews were conducted with the six teachers who participated in the case study. The aim was to explore how these teachers planned and conducted assessment, how they reflected on that assessment, and any beliefs and values they had concerning assessment. The data were coded, and then checked for reliability and validity through the use of a second coder. Documents gathered during the case study were also analyzed. Teachers were asked to submit all the documents that related to assessment in that course, such as an official syllabus, an outline of the assessment scheme, tests and quizzes used during the course, rubrics for evaluation, and others. The data showed that teachers used a variety of tasks to assess their students, including final tests, weekly quizzes, role plays, oral presentations, and book reports. The most common type of evaluation was teacher assessment, with peer- and self-assessment used very rarely.

The results from the five data sets were subsequently triangulated and discussed (chapter 7). Each research question was addressed in turn, according to what the combined data had revealed. The assessment beliefs and practices of EFL teachers were described, along with a discussion of how students conceive of and experience assessment. A description of how contextual factors can encourage and discourage effective LOA practice was also given. In addition, comments were made concerning the extent to which the qualitative and quantitative data converged with regard to the main conclusions that were drawn.

Finally, a conclusion was given that summarized the study, noted its limitations, and suggested some avenues for future research (chapter 8). The contributions of this study to the field of EFL assessment and Japanese higher education were also outlined.

### **Major results and findings**

Concerning teacher belief and practice, it was found that there were not so many significant differences between native-speaker and non-native speaker teachers, nor between full-time and part-time teachers. One difference was that NS teachers believed that speaking and listening assessments were better for assessing learning than paper-and-pencil assessments ( $\bar{x} = 3.08$ ) to a greater extent than NNS teachers ( $\bar{x} = 2.58$ ),  $U = 1,509.000$ ,  $z = 1,509.000$ ,  $p = 0.003$ . Similarly, NS agreement ( $\bar{x} = 3.94$ ) to the belief that assessment methods related to real life were better than paper-and-pencil procedures was significantly higher than NNS agreement ( $\bar{x} = 3.30$ ),  $U = 1,219.500$ ,  $z = -4.376$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . The most significant difference in practice was 88% of NS

teachers reported assessing students for the purpose of providing feedback to students as they progress, compared to 57.5% for NNS teachers, representing a significant difference ( $\chi^2 (1) = 16.760$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\phi = -0.337$ ). Based on the odds ratio, the odds of assessing students for the purpose of providing feedback were 5.40 times higher for NS teachers.

However, overall the similarities were more striking than the differences. Teachers believed that assessment provides a valuable learning opportunity for students, and that assessment results are important for instruction. Teachers also put effort in to making assessment tasks as similar to 'real world' activities as possible, and to use a variety of assessment methods.

Concerning students' conceptions and experiences of assessment, the results implied that most students had positive orientations to assessment. Measured on a 5-point Likert scale, they believed that good grades lead to a better career path ( $\bar{x} = 4.23$ ) and that assessment makes our class cooperate more with each other ( $\bar{x} = 4.20$ ). Student narratives also confirmed that group work and peer-assessment were valued as improving learning. Students placed importance on teacher evaluation and feedback, and reported using assessment results to improve their learning.

As regards those contextual factors that facilitate LOA and those which do not, it was found that 7 factors facilitated LOA, and 5 factors impeded LOA. Factors which facilitated LOA are: 1) streamed classes; 2) clearly defined curriculum goals; 3) well-balanced weighting of assessment tasks; 4) freedom within administrative constraints; 5) use of ICT; 6) student engagement with peers; and 7) introduction of innovative assessment tasks. Factors which impeded LOA are: 1) lack of information; 2) insufficient time; 3) limited variety of assessment tasks; 4) difficult students; and 5) poor communication between teachers and coordinators.