

ERC Seminar Series

Modelling Washback to the Learner: Investigating Test Preparation and Outcomes in Japan

Date & Time: 9 March 2016, 13:00 – 14:00 (Light lunch begins at 12:30pm)

Venue: Room G021, Faculty of Education (E33)

Language: English

Audience: UM Staff / Postgraduate Students

Registration: Online Registration (Link: <https://goo.gl/9l8Qo2> or QR Code)



Enquiries: Mr. Alan CHANG (FED_Event@umac.mo); Tel: 8822-4109

* *Complementary light lunch will be provided.*

Abstract

In this presentation I will summarize the key findings from a recent project that investigated test takers' test preparation strategies for two different tests, the University of Tokyo (UT) entrance exam and the IELTS Academic Test. In the Japanese context, university entrance exams play a central role in guiding learning and teaching at the pre-tertiary level, particularly in high schools. The influence of the UT exam on its recent undergraduates was examined in terms of their attained language proficiency and from survey and interview data about their test preparation strategies. These same students took the IELTS test twice during their first and second year of study at university, which further allowed us to compare their test preparation strategies for the IELTS Test with those for the entrance test as well as investigating any changes in behavior/scores over the period. The mixed methods approach provides rich and convincing data regarding the washback effect to learners. I argue that the learners are the primary stakeholders in language testing contexts and thus washback to the learner, which is a crucial part of the consequential validity a test, must be evaluated as part of the test validation process. I will propose a model that integrates current thinking in test validation and test washback in order to create a practical framework for future washback studies.



Speaker



Prof. David ALLEN gained his PhD from the University of Nottingham, U.K., and is currently Associate Professor at the Foreign Language Education Centre at Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, where he teaches courses on language teaching methodology, second language acquisition and English language. He has extensive language teaching experience in the U.K. and Japan. His research has focused on Japanese-English bilingual lexical processing, learner corpora, simplified materials for language learning, peer feedback in second language writing and most recently washback from university entrance exams and IELTS in Japan. His previous research has been published in journals such as PLOS One, Behaviour Research Methods, The Mental Lexicon, System, Language Teaching Research, and Reading in a Foreign Language.