

Japanese Young Adults and the Task of Reading Poetry: Implications for Second Language Learning

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Abstract:

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The aim of the present study was to evaluate the process of poetry reading for second language learning. Poetry reading is a close reading, meaning- construction task that involves top-down and bottom-up processing skills which extends understanding and can promote second language learning. This study used Skehan's (1998) methodology and position on task-based learning in second language settings. Four pairs of advanced young adult learners of English in Japan (5 female, 3 male) conducted small group format paired discussions. Hanauer's (2001) methodology, which used paired dyads talking in response to a focus-on-form prompt, was adapted for this study. The study also utilised codes developed by Hanauer who found that *noticing*, *questioning* and *interpretive hypothesis* were the three most frequently used categories of response. The results of this study revealed that the learners also used *questioning* and *noticing* frequently along with *paraphrase* and *world knowledge*. Additionally, some evidence of the expert-novice representations could be found in the interactions. As a result of this study it is possible to illuminate some aspects of the role of poetry reading tasks for second language learning and make recommendations for language course design and implementation.

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