
Brief Reports and Summaries

A Brief Report on the Thai/TESOL Seminar : "Analysis of the 1986 English University Entrance Exam : Trends and Impact on the Teaching-Learning Process in the Classroom" (July 19, 1986)

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The seminar began with an interesting talk by Dr. Somthawil Dhanasobhon of Kasetsart University on the direction of this Year's English university entrance exams (both exams AB and ABC). She noted that the exams dealt mainly with the objectives of the English curriculum at the secondary level. Items covered a variety of language functions, and a greater percentage of the items were at the discourse level than on last year's exams. In both AB and ABC exams, English for everyday use and English for academic purposes had almost equal emphasis, while English for future careers was completely ignored. After considering these characteristics, Dr. Somthawil concluded that the exams in the past few years were satisfactory and suggested that English secondary school teachers aim at communicative language teaching in the classroom.

Alec Bamford of Srinakharinwirote University, Prasarnmitr, critically analyzed the weaknesses of the exams in terms of language and pointed out various problems in instructions, test-types and language. Many items also conflicted with reality and were therefore considered inferior. Bamford's talk was a very entertaining one, flavoured with witty and spicy remarks.

In the afternoon part of the program, Songporn Isrovuthakul of Chulalongkorn University Language Institute examined the reading passages and commented that reading skills still played an important role in the exams, with about 50% of the items being a test of reading. She also urged secondary school teachers to increase student involvement in reading classes and gave practical guidelines.

Dr. Samang Hiranburana of Srinakharinwirote University, Prasarnmitr, continued the discussion by studying the language use questions in the exams. She found that many items were testing linguistic competence, rather than communicative