

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/2175-8026.2014n66p307>

**Thomas, Michael and Reinders, Hayo. *Task based language learning and teaching with technology***

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Computer-based and task-based language learning and teaching (TBLT) have been walking hand-in-hand and conversing with each other for the past 10 or 15 years (Motteram and Thomas, 2010; Thomas and Reinders, 2010). Nowadays, teachers cannot imagine their L2 classes without technologies anymore, specially the digital ones. In *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology*, Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, the editors, bring to bear an assembly of chapters written by experts in the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and TBLT. Almost all of them review the different but similar concepts of tasks provided by important researchers from Willis (1996) to Ellis (2003) and Samuda and Bygate (2008), although this book's editors take as starting point,

Ellis' (2003) task features, which predominantly highlights that tasks should have a primary focus on meaning, should resemble the real world and should have a definite communicative outcome. The book is not accessible to a wider audience since it is required from the reader some background knowledge regarding TBLT and CALL. Instead, it is geared toward, mostly, second language (L2) researchers and is divided into two parts: (1) Research on Tasks in CALL (Chapters 2 to 6) and (2) Applying Technology-Mediated Tasks (Chapters 7 to 10).

In the "Foreword" section, professor Rod Ellis draws the readers' attention to the fact that it is true there are many books on TBLT, but little has been published about TBLT in technology-mediated environments, with the exception of Chapelle, 2001. Thus, this book is a good service to TBLT research and is very welcome.

### **Chapter by chapter analysis**

The first chapter - Chapter 1 - "Deconstructing tasks and technology" - is an introduction to the book. Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, the book's editors, start explaining that their book is a response to Chapelle's (2001) appeal to contribute to TBLT, CALL

and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Then, they briefly provide an overview of the book, stating that it brings contributions by researchers from different countries such as Canada, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the USA, among others. Their attempt with this book is to bring together TBLT and CALL research, since TBLT has concentrated more on face-to-face (FTF) if compared to technology-mediated research and learning. Bringing the two kinds of research and learning together, a new hybrid or blended form of learning is constructed.

Part I of the book, entitled "Research on Tasks in CALL", starts with Chapter 2: "Research on the use of technology in task-based Language Teaching". Andreas Muller-Hartmann and Marita Schocker-v. Ditfurth offer an overview of research conducted during the years of 1999-2009, after Warschauer's (1998) request for more pedagogical and sociocultural research on L2 teaching-learning with technology. They touch on the role of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Active Theory (AT) inside TBLT contexts. They also bring to present old and still influential theories regarding interactionist views of language learning, such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. Muller-Hartmann

and Dittfurth make a significant contribution in this book explaining the theoretical framework of AT. They also discuss about literacies in the portion “From computer literacy to multiliteracies” of the chapter.

Mark Peterson, in Chapter 3–“Task Based Language Teaching in network-based CALL: An analysis of research on learner interaction in synchronous CMC”–, scrutinizes research regarding task design in network-based CALL. The author reviews critically nine studies related to research on synchronous text-based CMC, starting with early work of Kelm (1992) and Chun (1994). After that, Peterson reviews more recent work (Blake, 2000; Darhower, 2002; Lee, 2001; 2002; Fernández-García & Martinz-Arbelaiz, 2002; Smith, 2003a; 2003b) on the use of tasks in chat-based CMC. The author brings to discussion research on CMC-based CALL as a valuable tool for language acquisition since it promotes negotiation of meaning during interaction, in spite of the tradeoff effect that may occur between the development of fluency and accuracy.

In Chapter 4–“Taking intelligent CALL to task”–, Mathias Schulze, at first, questions what intelligent CALL (ICALL) is and what it has to do with TBLT. Schulze explains that

ICALL is a subfield of or a field within CALL that uses artificial intelligence (AI) techniques and technologies for instance. Inside AI there are four research branches: natural language processing (NLP), user modelling, expert systems and intelligent tutoring systems. After providing some theoretical background on the aforementioned constructs, Schulze cites relevant and recent ICALL projects/systems for written language input and output with the aim of investigating the relation between TBLT and ICALL, i. e., what contributions ICALL can make and has made to TBLT and vice-versa. Some of the ICALL projects/systems reviewed are *E-Tutor* (Heift & Nicholson, 2001), *Robo-Sensei* (Nagata, 2009), *Tagarela* (Amaral&Meurers, 2008), *Spion* (Sanders & Sanders, 1995), *Herr Kommissar* (DeSmedt, 1995), *FLUENT I and FLUENT-2* (Hamburger & Hashin, 1992), *VERBICON* (Bailin, 1990), and *ALICE* system (Cerri, 1989). Actually, Schulze states, *E-Tutor* and *Robo-Sensei* are the only ones which have still been used by a significant number of students. TBLT in ICALL projects can be costly and difficult to design and maintain, but they can be productive sites for future research and development in ICALL. This chapter is recommended for L2 researchers interested in ICALL.

Glenn Stockwell focuses on the “Effects of multimodality in computer-mediated communication tasks”. The book’s fifth chapter discusses multimodality and CMC-based learning tasks. Stockwell describes a study in which multimodal synchronous CMC (SCMC) and asynchronous CMC (ACMC) were employed. The language produced by the 24 English learners during the interactions while performing the tasks was examined in terms of lexical density (vocabulary), accuracy and complexity (syntax), and the discourse features used (examined holistically). All interactions took place on Moodle. Results show differences in the language employed during interactions and highlights the tradeoff effects that occurred between complexity and accuracy. The author speaks about the implications of CMC modes for TBLT and concludes the chapter pointing out the fact that different types of CMC can offer L2 students opportunities to develop different aspects of the target language. This is an issue that deserves serious attention from the part of L2 teachers who desire to apply tasks in CMC contexts successfully.

Karina Collentine, in the sixth Chapter of the book, entitled “Measuring complexity in task-

based synchronous computer-mediated communication”, focuses on SCMC aiming at offering visions of specific task conditions that encourage linguistic complexity taking into consideration planning time and pressure. She also questions if SCMC generates more linguistic complexity than oral FTF interactions. After a summarized but rich literature review on tasks, linguistic complexity, and SCMC, the chapter features a study conducted in the USA with intermediate- and advanced-level Spanish learners. Its goal was to measure the linguistic complexity produced in different task-based SCMC. Depending on the type and condition of the tasks, intermediate- and advanced-level language learners may produce different language behavior, she concludes. This chapter is dedicated especially to materials designers and practitioners who have to select and design particular task types which will foster linguistic complexity. It is a relevant contribution for TBLT research.

The second part of the book called “Applying technology-mediated tasks”, starts with Chapter 7: “Task design for a virtual learning environment in a distance language course”, by Regine Hampel. She discusses online task design for

a virtual learning environment (VLE), also known as Learning Management System (LMS), in this case, Moodle, in a blended distance language course. The TBLT approach is informed by Klapper (2003) and Ellis (2003) and focuses on cognitive and sociocultural language learning theories. The chapter features two pilot studies: The CyberDeutsch project (2006) and the Collaborative teacher training project (2008). The findings of the pilot studies, including the importance of tutor support, helped designing a blended language course—the Open University German Course—offered to students in Europe. After describing the goals of the course, Hampel discusses about task types and conditions, importance of tasks, input, linguistic and cognitive complexity, procedures, outcomes, and teacher and learner factors related to the course. Unfortunately, Hampel focuses on the approach and design for the virtual/online learning environment, and does not take a process oriented perspective as regards the use of the designed tasks by the students. Nevertheless, since task-based research in online settings are scarce, Hampel's study is noteworthy and contributes to this book, especially nowadays when more blended distance language courses—which combine conventional courses with online

elements—are offered if compared to some years ago.

The next chapter, by Thomas Raith and Volker Hegelheimer, is devoted to language teacher development, TBLT and technology. Chapter 8 features a qualitative research study (RAITH, 2010) with in-service student-teachers in Germany who had to create reflective standards-based electronic portfolios (e-portfolios). Raith and Hegelheimer point out the important role of feedback in the reflective student-teachers' teaching processes. The study reveals that reflective practice through standards-based e-portfolios fosters development in all aspects of TBLT and task-based teaching competencies by means of mutual asynchronous feedback, but more guided reflection process is needed to achieve these goals. Thus, digital technologies can be of aid in teachers' education scenarios and improve task-based teaching competencies. This chapter is geared toward pre- and in-service language teachers who want to go a step further in developing their classroom practices.

In the ninth Chapter of the book –“*EduBba*: Real world writing tasks in a virtual world”–Kenneth Reeder describes *EduBba*—an ICALL prototype presented in a

CD-ROM which simulates real world writing tasks in a virtual world (VW). Three elements were taken into consideration in the case study presented in this chapter, conducted in 2000-2001: NLP; a real-world database distributed across characters in the VW; and an instructional design that links cognitive processes with real-world linguistic processes, genres and forms. Reeder shows that ICALL and NLP can give support to TBLT, since they can mediate authentic pedagogical and linguistic interactional tasks. Despite limiting users' productions to written output, *Edubba* can be seen as a starting point to demonstrate the possibilities created by VWs. Reeder, however, asks whether *Edubba* can be an example of a TBLT. ICALL, VW and virtual reality (VR) developers can make good use of the research presented in this chapter (Reeder & Hart, 2001), although the CD-ROM is not commercialized.

Mirjam Hauck, in Chapter 10—"The enactment of task design in telecollaboration 2.0"—describes a 'telecollaborative' pilot project which took place in 2008 between pre- and in-service trainee language teachers and learners from different countries. In the "Telecollaboration 2.0 and electronic literacy skills

development" portion of the chapter, Hauck explains what telecollaboration refers to and compares it to "Telecollaboration 2.0", besides discussing e-literacy and other kinds of literacies. The following sections are dedicated to present and explain the telecollaborative project and its task. It finishes with a summary of the pilot project (2008) and suggestions for the project itself (2009). This chapter contributes to research on the relationship between TBLT and technology, an under researched area. Moreover its rich theoretical background highlights the relevance of task design, multimodality and literacy skills inside computer-mediated collaborative tasks for language learners and teachers development.

*Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology* concludes with an afterword in Chapter 11. Gary Motteram and Michael Thomas attempt to discuss the future directions for technology-mediated tasks while providing a brief summary of what was discussed in the whole book. They do not try to predict the future of technologies or TBLT exactly, since it is a difficult and "dangerous pastime". Instead, they stress the strong link between technologies and tasks and draw

on Chapelle's (2001) future research agenda in the field of task-based CALL. After that, Motteram and Thomas present the current state of "the world of language learning" and then describe two vignettes. The first one is related to language teaching in virtual classrooms or Skype and the second is related to language learning in Second Life. As examples, they cite projects, such as LANCELOT and AVALON. The authors remind us that the application of TBLT needs teacher training and that technical problems may arise and make task focus unclear. While they describe the two vignettes, they remind the reader of some important comments that were discussed in the 10 chapters of the book. Finally, Motteram and Thomas take the readers back to the future, reminding them that technologies are always changing and when it comes to choice of technology-based tasks, it depends, most of all, on the teachers' and instructors' needs and possibilities in their networked classrooms. In this sense this book is also an important contribution for language pedagogy. The chapters' authors converse with each other and ground their theories on SLA. It also brings a significant dialogue between CALL and TBLT, in a way that it was not done before.

In conclusion, *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology* aims at bringing more fully into debate the nature of language learning through tasks within technology environments with a consistent focus on the principles and practices of their use in the language classroom. Using close analyses of published research studies, Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders provide illustration of the contributions of a range of specialists in research and in teaching methodology from different countries.

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(Recebido em 17/05/14. Aceito em  
17/06/14)