Future Perspectives and Challenges of Task-based Language Teaching and Testing: In Honor of Rod Ellis's Contribution to TBLT Research

Guest Editors

Christine Coombe, Dubai Men's College, UAE

Hassan Mohebbi, European Knowledge Development Institute, Turkey

This special issue brings together cutting edge research and reviews highlighting the issues related to future perspectives and challenges of Task-based Language Teaching and Testing. After a thorough review of the received submissions, this special issue publishes three articles which investigate TBLT from different perspectives in various contexts.

The Effect of One-way and Two-way Jigsaw Reading Task on the Writing Performance of Iranian EFL Learners
Hosna Rasooyar, Fariba Rahimi Esfahani

Writing is viewed as one of the most important language skills both in L1 and L2 learning. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the impact of one way and two-way task types through jigsaw reading activities on the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of the study were 90 B.A. Students at the intermediate level and they were studying English in intact classes. These 90 learners were divided into three equal groups of 30 and homogenized prior to the administration of the treatment through giving them a PET as a proficiency test. Following that, a pretest of writing was given to the three groups. Next, the two

experimental groups received one way and two-way jigsaw reading activities while the control group did not receive such treatment and followed the conventional method of instruction based on the syllabus set by the university. The length of the treatment was ten sessions and each session was 90 minutes. At the end of the treatment, the participants were given the posttest of writing the scores of which were used to address the research question. The results of statistical analyses indicated that two-way tasks were significantly more effective on the writing performance of the participants.

Listening to Teachers' Voices: Evaluating Language Learning Apps with a Task-based Language Teaching Framework

Joshua Matthews, Rachel Burke

Language learning applications (LL Apps), especially those that can be downloaded to a mobile device, are popular, widely available and represent a potentially useful tool for language teachers and their students. However, concerns exist that many LL Apps are inadequately aligned with second language acquisition (SLA) theory, and/or poorly suited to the expectations and classroom requirements of language teachers. The current study examines these concerns by providing six language teachers with opportunities to use two popular LL Apps over the period of six weeks. During and after this period, qualitative data were gathered from the teachers by way of questionnaires and interviews. Teachers' elaborations of the perceived affordances of the LL Apps for their language teaching were then coded against the methodological principles of a Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework (Doughty & Long, 2003). Analysis indicated that although some methodological principles central to TBLT were evident in the affordances offered by the LL Apps, many were not, or only minimally so. Concrete suggestions about how to more strongly align LL App design with the principles of TBLT are provided, and the important role of the teacher in the LL Apps design process is emphasized.

Children and Tasks

Rhonda Oliver, Tatiana Bogachenko

A great deal of research has focused on tasks, particularly for adult second language learners. In this paper we provide an account of studies that have investigated children and tasks – an age group that have received far less attention. We consider, in particular, the impact of tasks on

children's language learning, how their design features influence child interactions, and the implications and challenges surrounding task pedagogy with younger learners. We conclude with suggestions for future research. We draw extensively on the work of Rod Ellis, not only because tasks, interaction and language learning underpin his extensive body of work, but because he was one of the first to focus on children using tasks in the language learning domain.