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Book Review: Task-based language teaching and assessment: contemporary reflections from across the world, Edited by N. P. Sudharshana & Lina Mukhopadhyay (2021). Springer Nature, Hardcover: 373 pages, \$129, ISBN-978-981-16-4225-8.

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Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Task-Based Language Assessment (TBLA) have been prevalent since they generated interest in the 1990's. Therefore, it does not come by surprise that we are immersed in titles that consider aspects of TBLT and challenges of TBLA in our current time. Despite this abundance, we are still confronted with a gap in the literature, lacking one coherent volume looking at these issues with both a pedagogical and empirical lens. The book under review is one of the very few to provide the nuts and bolts of task-based language teaching and assessment in second-language learning in one place coherently by providing tangible interdisciplinary examples of its implementation across the globe. By putting forth practical suggestions, the authors have presented both researchers and educators with a valuable resource book for both task-based language teaching and assessment in the classroom. Personally, I would recommend this book as a companion to Ellis et al.'s book on *Task Based Language Teaching: Theory and Practice* (2019), as it functions as a form of supplement to theoretical aspects of TBLT through practical case studies and empirical work and then highlights the future of TBLA in the EFL/ESL context.

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The book is divided into two sections, initially focusing on TBLT and then TBLA by providing an account of theoretical and experimental research by SLA researchers and practitioners from a variety of disciplines. As the chapters provide samples of task-based language instruction across the globe, expanding from South Africa to Europe (Spain and England) and Asia (Hong Kong, India) to Australia, the book equips us with an efficient all-encompassing view on TBLT in different global contexts, which is really helpful to achieve a comprehensive view of the topic region-wise.

After brushing up on the theoretical origins of TBLT in Chapter 1, we move on to N.S. Prabhu's theoretical underpinnings for communicative language teaching approaches, specifically TBLT. A very insightful quote is provided here that immediately grasps the reader's attention, when he emphasizes on reading as "*nutrition that reduces the need for medication*" (p.16). This indeed does emphasize that grammar acquisition is an essential component of comprehension, similar to mother tongue acquisition which does not bring along an explicit approach of teaching.

Chapter 3 gives an account of the undiscovered Vygotsky in Prabhu, with a focus on their resemblances between ZPD and reasoning gap activities and between 'internalization' concepts. Sample tasks are given from a project conducted in the University of Limpopo in South Africa where both of their ideas were implemented to teach indigenous languages.

The authors have added great readership to this volume by including a chapter by Rod Ellis (Chapter 4) on technology-mediated TBLT; however, the book does not provide further practical insights on the significant impact of technology-mediated TBLT on our classes today, which is currently a topic of great focus in TBLT studies. Considering the rapid advancements in technology, we are continuously faced with innovative techniques and approaches to make tasks authentic and assessment real-time in the ESL context. Hence, issues related to technology-mediated task design and task evaluation are trending concepts that are not fully covered in the book. Due to the significance of the concept of technology-mediated TBLT, it is recommended to consider adding a chapter on technology-mediated tasks and methods of task evaluation, as they are crucial to the future of TBLT (Chong and Reinders, 2020; Ortega and González-Lloret, 2014). It seems necessary for future editions to add a section on the qualitative research synthesis of technology-mediated TBLT such as that written by Chong and Reinders (2020) in order to familiarize teachers with the affordances and limitations of TBLT and enhance their preparedness to make use of this approach in their classrooms.

Chapter 5 provides a constructive account of what teachers and trainers should know for students' success in task-based learning, giving details on the framework for TBLT. Further on in the book, the chapter by Gilbert and Malicka discusses the interface between needs analysis (NA) and syllabus design, thus highlighting the role of needs analysis in the technological dimension of assessment tasks. The authors do indeed provide exemplary references throughout the chapter of prominent figures in NA and TBLT such as Gonzalez-Lloret, Doughty & Long, and Gilabert, which gives overall credibility to this volume. Chapter 7 gives a detailed account of the differences between task repetition and task rehearsal which yields very useful pedagogical implications for teachers on which type to use with high and low proficiency learners.

One of the greatest merits of the book is extensive discussions on the long standing debate of *task complexity* in Chapters 7 and 8, and numerous times again in Chapters 4, 14, 15, 16, and

17, showing the significant implications of this topic for teaching and learning. In Chapter 8 Veena Nair and Shruti Sircar investigate how task complexity and learner proficiency affect ESL learners' writing performance by incorporating Robinson's cognition hypothesis, hence providing great insights for teaching writing skills. Further on, Chapter 9 offers a set of macrostrategies to design contextualized form-focused tasks, while Chapter 10 draws on the principles of Conceptual Metaphor and TBLT to design tasks for development of metaphoric competence among ESL learners by presenting results of a small-scale intervention study in an actual classroom. These case studies are concrete and clear-but for beginner teachers who are designing tasks for their students as they are generalizable to different contexts.

On the one hand, the main distinction of this book is its inclusion of abundant studies on TBLA in both large-scale and small-scale oral proficiency assessment. On the other hand, this emphasis is placed more on the practice of task-based instruction and assessment for speaking and oral skills compared to other skills and subskills, leaving the reader in quite a murky state as to what extent TBLA is used across different skills such as reading, writing and subskills of grammar and vocabulary. Do the outnumbered chapters on oral proficiency indicate that TBLT is more common in teaching speaking? Or has there not been enough research done on TBLT and TBLA in the other three skills? The inclusion of the practical aspects of TBLA by skill type would be quite beneficial to teachers like myself who teach all four skills separately on a daily basis and could use some insight on various innovative ways to integrate task-based instruction and hence construct classroom-based assessment using real-time authentic tasks.

The second part of the book entails six chapters on applications of TBLA as an alternative assessment, beginning with Chapters 11 to 15 on TBLA for large-scale and classroom-based oral and written assessments, and leading to reading comprehension and grammaticality judgment in the final two chapters. One of the distinct advantages of the book is that it gives the novice teacher real-life practical examples of task-based assessment which can equip them with a greater understanding of how to implement similar tasks in their classrooms, especially with the sample tasks used throughout the chapters and appendices. While the majority of studies have been conducted at the elementary level, with a few from secondary level, it is ideal for teachers of beginner level students to follow in their teaching. A more ideal scenario would be to have samples from both elementary and tertiary level included as chapters, but we will leave this to future volumes of TBLT and TBLA. I would recommend a future volume to be written explicitly for tertiary contexts that have conducted empirical research, providing real-time sample tasks for more advanced students.

This volume provides an in-depth understanding of TBLT and practical examples of task-based activities, which are definitely beneficial to the teacher, specifically at elementary and junior high levels; however, the lengthy theoretical background given at the beginning of most chapters does not seem necessary. Shortening the length of chapters would provide for an easier read and assist teachers as a practical guide in their teaching and assessment.

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