8th International Conference on TBLT- 2019

Invited colloquium: **Technology-mediated tasks: Development, implementation, and assessment**

Convener: Marta González-Lloret (University of Hawai‘i)

This colloquium focuses on the affordances of technology to bring authentic, goal oriented, meaning-focused, tasks to language learners. The presentations illustrate best practices, informed by TBLT Principles and research, on task development, implementation, and assessment. The first presentation by Rebecca Adams showcases those aspects of task design, modality and student grouping that facilitate and shape the online communicative interaction to make it effectively for language learning. Our second presentation by Nicole Ziegler, serves as a link between development and implementation, and it explores the potential of training to create more dynamic and autonomous interaction in online language courses. The third presentation by Melissa Baralt explores the implementation of computer-mediated tasks for a fully online Spanish heritage course. She discusses the challenges that teachers face when using a task-based methodology online and provides suggestions on task development, and feedback provision specific to heritage learners. In the forth presentation, Katie Nielson focuses on the assessment of written tasks in a real-time online environment. She discusses the development of the task, how feedback is provided implementation, as well as the changes to the task based on the assessment f the task. All the presentations include examples from existing technology-mediated tasks to illustrate how these tasks were developed, implemented, and evaluated.

The colloquium includes a discussion to highlight how to most effectively translate the findings from these studies into practical applications for those who would like to implement similar tasks in their teaching practice, and it leaves ample time for the public to ask questions and share their experiences on developing, implementing and assessing technology-mediated tasks.

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Abstracts of Individual presentations

Development of technology mediated tasks
Rebecca Adams (University of Memphis)

Teachers and researchers working with technology-mediated tasks in second language settings have increasingly emphasized that careful consideration of task features is necessary to allow for students to engage with one another through the medium of technology in ways that create opportunities for language learning. When a task is created to facilitate an online communicative interaction, multiple decisions are made that can promote or stifle language learning opportunities. This presentation reviews research findings on interactivity in online modes, highlighting the ways that task design features, modality of communication, and grouping of participants for tasks shapes communicative interaction differently. Examples from online interactive tasks are used to illustrate the ways that the development of technology mediated tasks impacts the ways that learners use, correct, and question language during the tasks.

Meta cognitive training in a computer mediated task-based environment
Nicole Ziegler (University of Hawai‘i)

The benefits of interactional feedback are recognized across various theoretical frameworks in SLA. However, few studies have explored the benefits of explicitly instructing learners on providing real-time interactional feedback (e.g., Fujii, Ziegler, & Mackey, 2016; Sato & Lyster, 2012). This study investigated the impact of metacognitive instruction on the quality of learner-learner interaction in a computer-mediated context. An instructional model for metacognitive training in corrective feedback (CF), which included an instructional video and instructor resources for introducing CF to learners, was developed. Following a pretest-treatment-posttest-delayed posttest design, learners in intermediate-level L2 English university courses viewed the video and had whole-class debriefing sessions. Next, learners completed two task-based activities to practice giving interactional feedback. A control group completed the tasks without receiving any metacognitive instruction. All learners completed three additional tasks, one before viewing the video (pretest), one immediately following, and one two weeks later (immediate and delayed posttests). Analyses investigated learners’ production and resolution of Language Related Episodes (LREs; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). Preliminary results indicate an increase in LREs following metacognitive instruction, while qualitative measures suggest positive perceptions and increased awareness of the benefits of interaction and CF in computer-mediated communication.

The implementation of a fully online, task-based Spanish course for heritage learners
Melissa Baralt (Florida International University)

From the teacher’s perspective, supporting learners to perform real-world tasks in the online mode poses unique methodological challenges. Successful tasks in the face-to-face mode cannot just be translated to CMC, and so teachers need training and support for the implementation of tasks online.
Teachers who are in the unique position of supporting heritage learners have additional challenges given of the unique needs of this population. After reviewing TBLT fundamentals (tasks, task-based methodology, and methodological principles with their CMC-based pedagogic procedures), this presentation shares how a Spanish for heritage learners course was designed and implemented in a fully online course using task-based methodology. Particular emphasis is given on how feedback provision was done for the heritage learner profile. Some of the main challenges experienced and solutions tested are shared, such as how to balance real-world tasks with a department curriculum and how to manage over 40 learners in an online space. Examples of tasks that students performed online -- with the teacher’s methodological planning around that task to maximize their task performance -- are provided.

**Real-time assessment of learners’ writing tasks: simultaneously improving outcomes and instruction**  
Katie Nielson (Voxy)

One way to help prepare learners for real-world writing tasks is to have them complete simulations of those tasks in real time, via a shared document, with a teacher virtually present to offer feedback. This just-in-time feedback can help learners connect form and meaning rapidly and instructors are able to observe whether or not this feedback has been internalized as learners continue with their writing. This presentation will explore how these writing tasks were initially developed, how feedback is incorporated and received, and the changes that have been made to the tasks and their implementation based on ongoing assessment. Data from students’ and instructors’ contributions to the virtual writing tasks will be considered, and a wide variety of real-world writing tasks, from Yelp reviews to emails to text messages will be included.

**Discussion**  
Marta González-Lloret (University of Hawai‘i)

The discussion portion of the colloquium highlights how to most effectively translate the findings from these studies into practical applications for those who would like to implement similar tasks in their teaching practice. It will provide some guidelines and suggestions for development, implementation and assessment and will share best practices for technology-mediated TBLT.