Tasks in Action: Exploring task-based instruction with heritage learners

El AREYTO Lab
SLA & Bilingualism

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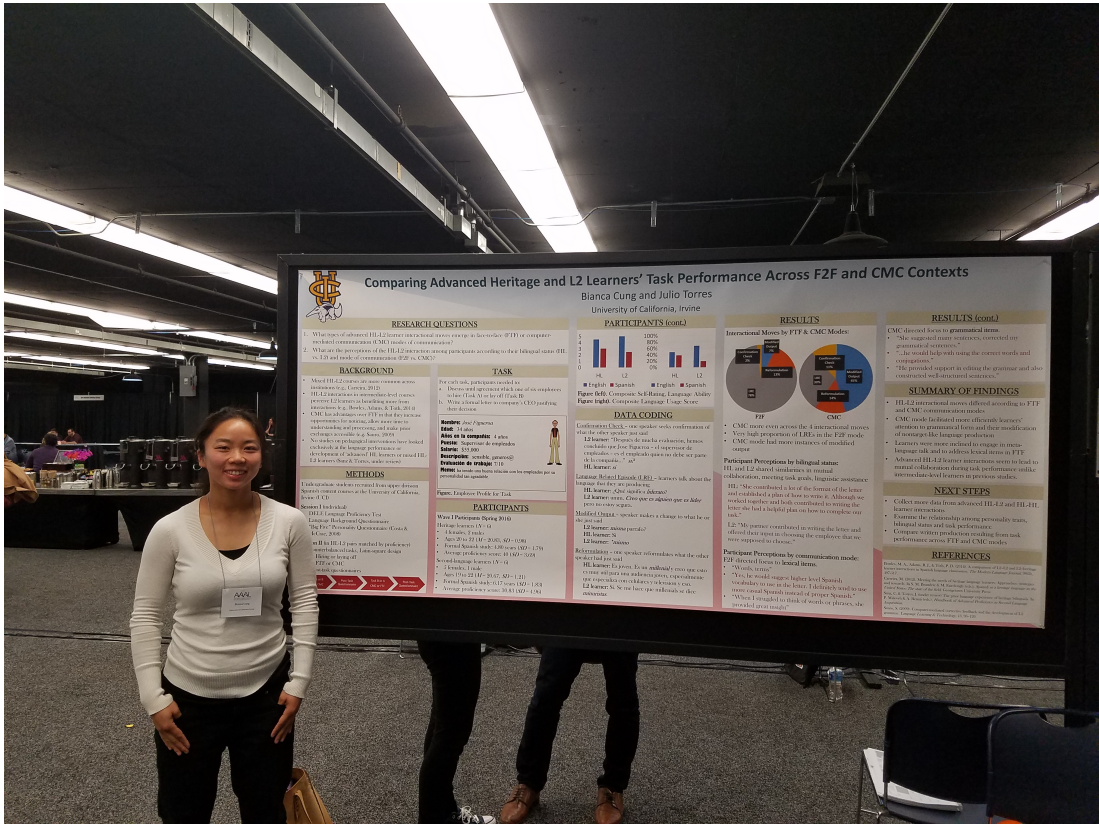
Collaborators



Workshop

Research on task-based instruction with heritage learners

Doing task-based language teaching in the classroom.

Latinxs Take a Spanish Test!

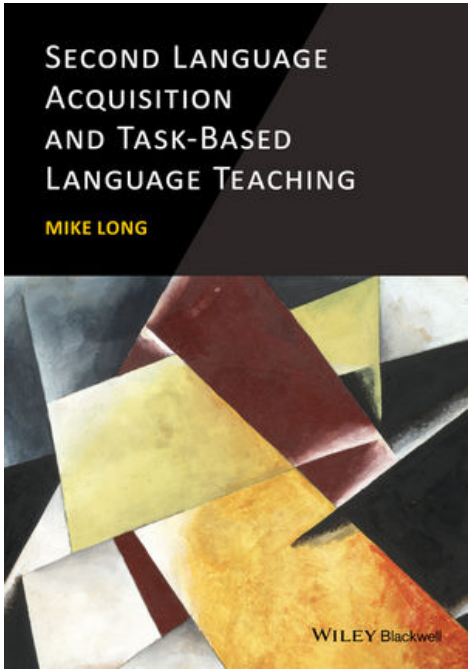
What is Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)?

TBLT is an educational framework for the theory and practice of teaching second or foreign languages. Based on empirical research, TBLT adopts meaning-based, communicative tasks as the central unit for defining language learning needs, determining curriculum goals, designing activity in the (language) classroom, and assessing language competencies.

www.tblt.org

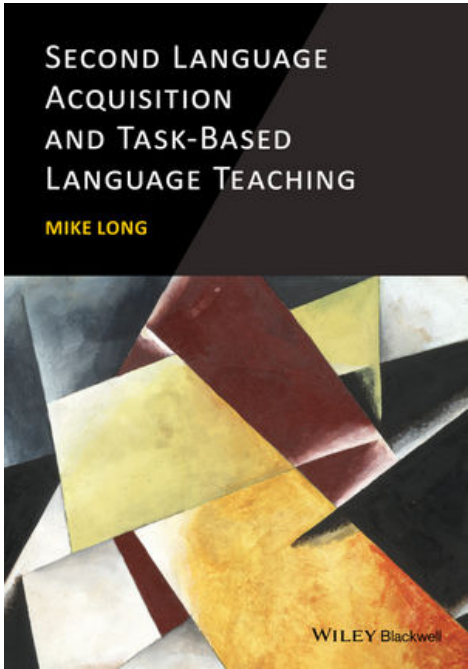
Why TBLT?

Learner-centered



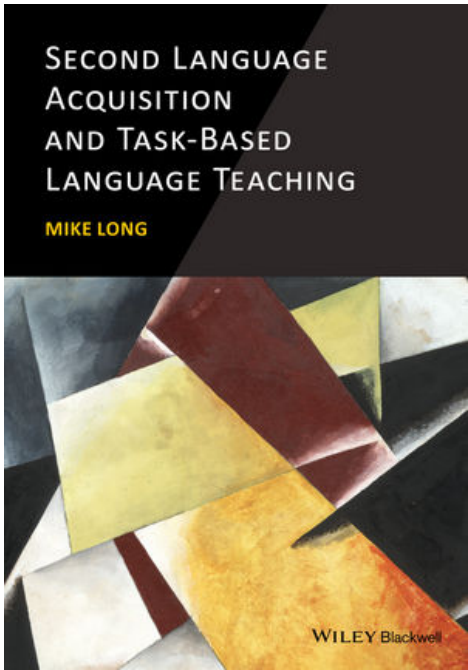
Why TBLT?

Relevance & value



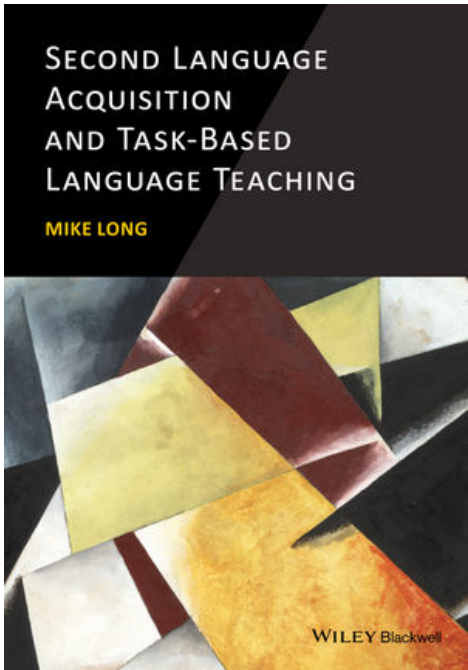
Why TBLT?

Psycholinguistic processes of second language acquisition



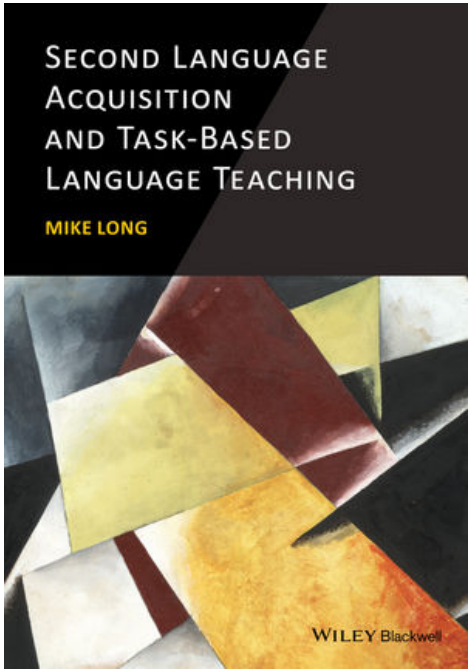
Why TBLT?

Empirically-based



Why TBLT?

Practical implementation



An overview of a TBLT program

Needs Analysis

- Communicative needs
- Target Tasks
- Technology

Pedagogic Tasks

- Meaning is primary
- Real-world application
- Solve a problem
- Non-linguistic outcome

Exit Tasks

- Student assessment
- Based on target tasks in NA

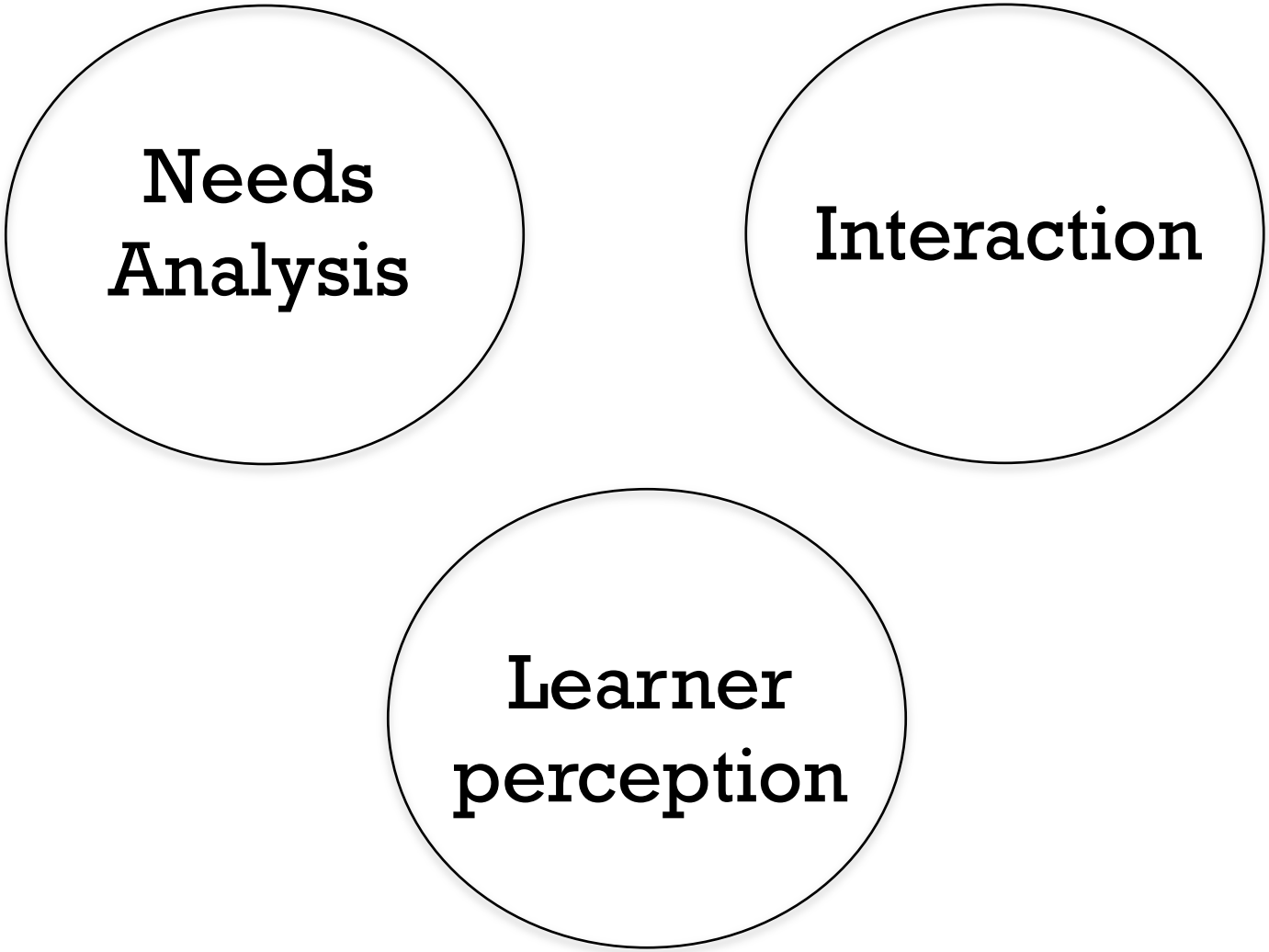
Program Evaluation

- Relevance/value for students
- Effectiveness of pedagogical materials

Long (2015)

Research on task-based instruction with heritage learners

TBLT & Heritage Learners



Needs
Analysis

Needs Analysis

A method to identify communicative tasks using input from multiple sources of information using multiple methods.

Advanced Business Spanish (HL and L2 learners)

Phase 1 of needs analysis

- Domain experts (business professionals) suggested a total of 40 target tasks
- Open-ended questionnaire (qualitative)

Phase 2 of needs analysis

- Learners (Business majors/minors) rated frequency and difficulty of 40 target tasks
- Closed-ended questionnaire (quantitative)

Serafini, E.J. & Torres, J. (2015). The utility of needs analysis for nondomain experts instructors in designing task-based Spanish for the professions curricula. *Foreign Language Annals, 48*(3), 447-472.

TABLE 1

Perceived Frequency and Difficulty for Interpretive Tasks (Reported in Percentages)

	Frequency					Difficulty			
Interpretive Listening	4	3	2	1	N/A	3	2	1	N/A
Listen to guest speakers give presentations	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.82	0.00
Listen to news about current affairs related to business world	0.09	0.32	0.32	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.52	0.21
Listen to debates	0.15	0.21	0.47	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.39	0.55	0.07
Listen to customer wants/needs/complaints	0.09	0.09	0.21	0.58	0.03	0.00	0.26	0.19	0.56
Listen to company CEOs present corporate strategies	0.09	0.06	0.29	0.53	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.37	0.52
Listen to presentations on company financial trends	0.09	0.06	0.38	0.44	0.03	0.07	0.15	0.44	0.33

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TABLE 4

Summary of TTTs, Target Tasks, and ACTFL World-Readiness Standards

Target Task Types (TTTs)	Target Tasks (Phase 1)	ACTFL World-Readiness Standards
1. **Write formal correspondence** (individual): In your role as director of marketing at Microsoft, you need to send a formal e-mail to address the negative impact of some of your products on IT service providers in Mexico and Spain.	• Read/listen to client complaints[+] • Draft a formal e-mail	1.1 Interpersonal Writing 1.2 Interpretive Reading and/or Listening 2.2 Cultural Products and Perspectives 3.1 Making Connections
2. **Summarize and analyze case study** (group): Summarize and analyze the following case study regarding Bank of America's financial crisis and collaborate to come up with a solution for the three individual customers affected by the crisis.	• Read business case studies • Write a one-page summary of case study • Collaborate in teams to propose a solution • Write a case analysis • Present case study and analyze problems/ situations	1.1 Interpersonal Speaking 1.2 Interpretive Reading 1.3 Presentational Writing 1.3 Presentational Speaking 3.1 Making Connections 3.2 Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives
3. **Develop and present a marketing strategy** (group): In teams, come up with a marketing strategy to sell a Spanish-speaking product in an assigned U.S. city. Devise and send out a questionnaire[**] to collect market data in order to create an informed marketing strategy. Present your findings in an informal setting.	• Read reports about consumer trends[*] • Create survey to assess consumer trends[+] • Listen to guest speakers give presentations[*] • Give an oral informal presentation	1.1 Interpersonal Writing 1.2 Interpretive Reading 1.3 Presentational Speaking and Writing 2.1 Cultural Practices and Perspectives 2.2 Cultural Products and Perspectives 3.1 Making Connections 3.2 Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives 4.2 Cultural Comparisons 5.1 School and Global Communities

(Continued)

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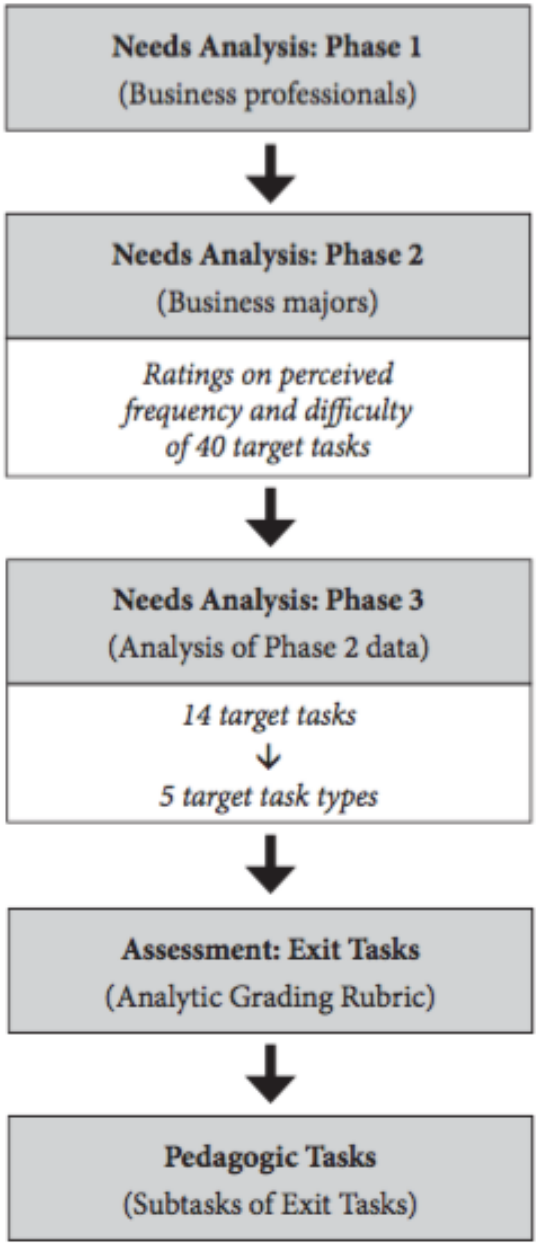

Relevant?
Valuable?

Torres, J. & Serafini, E.J. (2016). Microevaluating learners' task-specific motivation in a task-based Business Spanish course. *Hispania, 99*(2), 289-304.

Task-specific motivation

Post-task Motivation Questionnaire

When you have completed the task, circle the number that best describes your opinion. Do not write your name on this sheet so that your responses remain anonymous.

Note: 1 = I definitely disagree
2 = I quite disagree
3 = I don't know
4 = I quite agree
5 = I definitely agree

Statements

1. I persisted with the task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I concentrated on the task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am glad about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I found the task interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am satisfied.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel angry about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel distressed about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am proud of my performance.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I learned from this task.	1	2	3	4	5

Torres, J. & Serafini, E.J. (2016). Microevaluating learners' task-specific motivation in a task-based Business Spanish course. *Hispania, 99*(2), 289-304.

Task-specific motivation

Table 2. Average ratings (standard deviation) based on questionnaires from both classes

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5
Class 1 (n = 13)	4.4 (.42)	4.3 (.62)	4.7 (.41)	4.6 (.31)	4.5 (.48)
Class 2 (n = 13)	4.3 (.42)	4.0 (.55)	4.2 (.56)	4.5 (.36)	4.7 (.36)

Note: 5 = I strongly agree; 4 = I quite agree

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for composite rating scores

Exit Task	Mean (Standard Deviation)
Task 1	43.11 (.77)
Task 2	43.04 (.89)
Task 3	44.56 (1.2)
Task 4	45.93 (.62)
Task 5	46.62 (.83)

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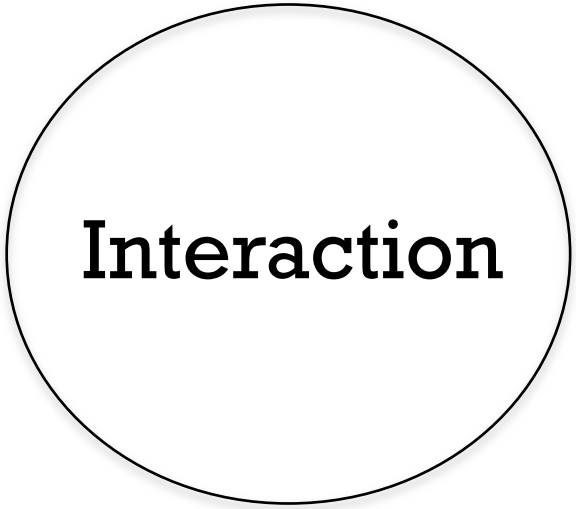

Interaction

HL-L2 task-based peer interaction

Blake & Zyzik (2003)

Bowles (2011)

Bowles, Adams & Toth (2014)

Henshaw (2015)

Focus on vocabulary

HL learners provide overall more assistance, especially with vocabulary.

In writing tasks, L2 learners provide more assistance with spelling & accent marks.

HL & L2 learners perceive that L2 learners benefit more from these interactions.

Study: HL-HL & HL-L2; FTF vs. SCMC

- Consultant for a company (Cortefiel or Movistar) on hiring or laying off an individual
- HL-HL & HL-L2 pairs; enrolled in an advanced content course
- Face-to-Face & written synchronous computer-mediated communication (FTF vs. SCMC)

Nombre: *Sara Navas*
Edad: 33 años
Años de experiencia: 5.5 años
Puesto previo: Supervisora regional
Salario deseado: $62,000
Descripción: ambicios@, responsable
Evaluación de trabajo: 10/10
Memo: Una persona con metas que tomó el puesto de liderato durante el primer año en su compañía previa.

La fecha: Madrid, _____

Estimado Sr. Escribano,

Torres & Cung (2nd review)

(2) Example of **LRE initiated & LRE not resolved** (HL-L2, SCMC)
L2: ¿Cómo se dice *downsizing*? **(LRE initiated)**
HL: No sé cómo se dice *downsizing* **(LRE not resolved)**
L2: How do you say downsizing?
HL: I don't know how you say downsizing.

(3) Example of **LRE initiated & LRE resolved** (HL-HL, SCMC)
HL1: ¿*Seria* lleva acento en la i? **(LRE initiated)**
HL2: Sí. **(LRE resolved)**
HL1: Does seria ['would be' in Spanish] have an accent on the i?
HL2: Yes.

✔ LRE initiated: FTF > SCMC

✔ LRE initiated & resolved : HL-L2 > HL-HL

Torres & Cung (2nd review)

(4) Example of **Corrective Feedback** with **Self-repair** (HL-L2, FTF)
HL: Tomó ese *step*.
L2: Medida **(Corrective Feedback)**
HL: Sí, medida **(Self-repair)**
HL: He took that step [in English].
L2: Step [in Spanish]
HL: Yes, step [in Spanish]

(5) Example of **Self-repair** not followed by corrective feedback (HL-HL, SCMC)
HL1: No está bien, yo creo que estaba bien porque no información adicional para agregar.
HL1: *No hay información. **(Self-repair)**
HL1: No, it's ok, I think it was fine because there no information to add.
*HL1: *There is no more information.*

✔ Self-repairs: SCMC > FTF

✔ Self-repairs: HL-L2 > HL-HL

Torres & Cung (2nd review)

Study: HL-HL & HL-L2; FTF vs. SCMC

What about the writing quality of the letters?

Accuracy

Error-free; appropriate; acceptable

Nosotros hemos repasado todos los perfiles de los empleados.

Cabe la posibilidad de que Laura ****podrá*** conseguir el puesto de José más adelante.

✔ HL-HL = HL-L2

Torres (in preparation)

Study: HL-HL & HL-L2; FTF vs. SCMC

What about the writing quality of the letters?

Complexity

Text sophistication

Nosotros hemos repasado todos los perfiles de los empleados.

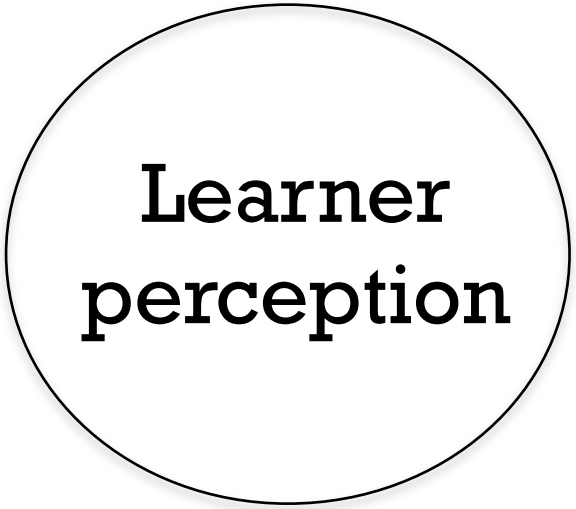
Ella tiene ambición **y** trae muchas ventas. **(coordination)**

Cabe la posibilidad de que Laura podrá conseguir el puesto de José más adelante. **(subordination)**

✔ Coordination: HL-L2 > HL-HL

✔ Subordination: HL-HL > HL-L2

Torres (in preparation)


Learner
perception

Study: HL-HL & HL-L2; FTF vs. SCMC

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Torres & Cung (2nd review)

How did HL learners' viewed their partners' assistance?

Planning

"We would work off each other ideas and when I would feel stumped my partner would jump in with their ideas."

✔ HL-HL: 52%
✔ HL-L2: 26%

Translating

"He helped me in using the right conjugation of the word. I tend to get those mixed up all the time."

✔ HL-HL: 41%
✔ HL-L2: 58%

Editing

"He contributed a lot and helped revise my errors."

✔ HL-HL: 2%
✔ HL-L2: 3%

Some preliminary observations

- HL and L2 learners find tasks relevant and meaningful to their learning – results from needs analysis
- L2 learners benefit more from HL-L2 interactions
- L2 learners are more preocuppied with surface linguistic structures
- HL learners focus more on the meaning-oriented aspects of the task
- HL learners may rely more on their existing linguistic resources.

Doing task-based language teaching in the classroom.

Doing TBLT in the classroom!

- What is and what is **not** a task
- Task-based methodology – pre-task, during task, posttask cycles
- Designing a task-based lesson together
- Adapting TBLT for heritage language learners

Step 1: Create the task!

What is a task?

"….is meant by the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between." (Long, 1985, p. 89).

What is a task?

- meaning is primary (proxy to the real-world);
- a communicative goal, problem to solve;
- the learner uses his/her own linguistic resources;
- a non-linguistic outcome

Ellis 2009; Skehan (1996)

Step 2: Design activities prior (pre-task) and after (posttask) the execution of the task

Task-based Methodology:

Pre-task phase

prepare students to execute the task in a way to promote language development!

- Give students a model
- Review pertinent vocabulary
- Brainstorming ideas
- Conceptual maps
- Focus on linguistic form
- Task planning – allow students time to plan
- Do a simpler version of the same task

Task-based Methodology:

Task phase

students do the task

POSSIBLE OPTIONS:

- Give a limit time
- Add an element of surprise
- Provide feedback on target form as they're doing the task

Task-based Methodology:

Posttask phase

give an opportunity to repeat the task, reflections on task execution; focus on form

- Repeat the task; the same task or one with similar format
- Students prepare a report; a presentation
- Focus on linguistic structures
- Reflections about language use
- Review vocabulary
- Correct errors

Task-based Lesson with “Social Media” reading passage

Step 1: Create the task!

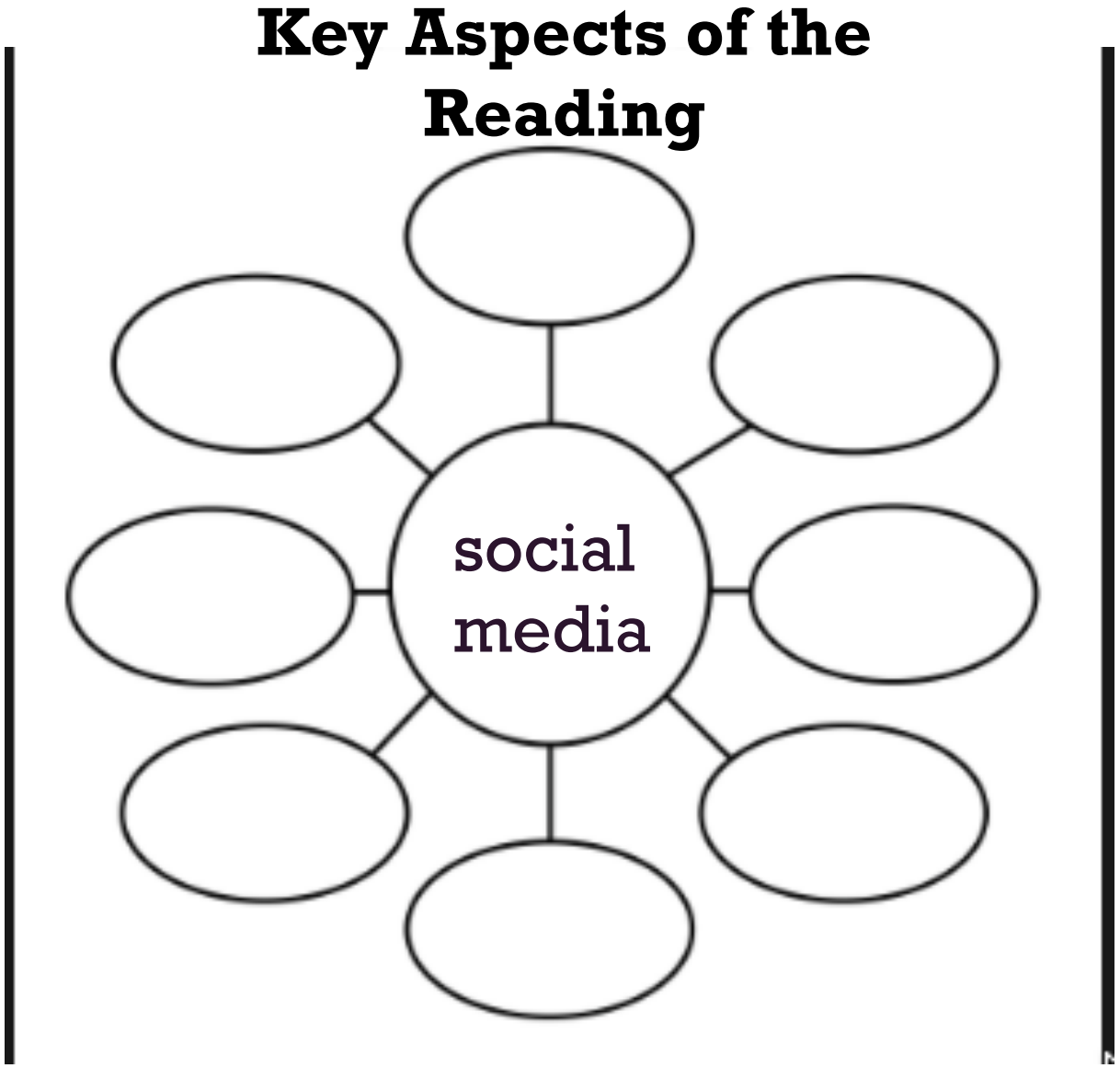
Task: Our student newspaper, *New School,* wants to have a special issue on the use of social media among students. In pairs, your task is to create a Likert-scale questionnaire with the goal to gather information. The questionnaire should be based on one of the aspects discussed in the reading passage, "Social Media."

Pre-task phase

Review the reading "Social Media"

Without looking at the reading, name the types (or examples) of social media that you remember from the reading. Let's list them!

Review the reading "Social Media"



Sample Likert-scale Questionnaire

I like……

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A (I do not do this.)
Responding to event invitations on Facebook	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Commenting on others' photos or videos	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Viewing others' photos	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Playing games through Social Media	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Watching posted videos online	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Participating in Discussion Boards	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Viewing 4-H updates through Social Media	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Communicating with my 4-H Agent through Social Media	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5
Being identified in 4-H photos or videos posted online	❑ 1	❑ 2	❑ 3	❑ 4	❑ 5

Task phase

Task: Our student newspaper, *New School,* wants to have a special issue on the use of social media among people in our community. In pairs, your task is to create a Likert-scale questionnaire with the goal to gather information. The questionnaire should be based on one of the aspects discussed in the reading passage, "Social Media."

Post-task phase

Switching surveys!

(1). Now, with another pair, switch your surveys and I want each pair to point out any comprehension, vocabulary or grammar issues in the survey. Circle a maximum of 5 problematic items in the survey to discuss with the pair.

(2). As a class, let's discuss the issues that you all identified in the surveys.

Administer the survey!

Administer the survey to 5 to 10 students in our school/community.

Bring your results to class.

Present your results!

Tally the total number of *Strongly agree, agree, disagree* responses for each question.

Create a pie graph that summarizes the top **4** *strongest agree* or *agree* results of your survey. For each pie component, write the key words of your survey "I like…" statement as well as the total number of answers for each statement. You will present the results to the class.

+ Adapting task-based instruction for HL learners!

- Conduct a **needs-analysis** with HL learners -- gather information about their local bilingual environments; how they use the heritage language; their motivations and goals for studying the HL.

- Assess whether the tasks used are **relevant and valuable** to the learning of heritage language learners. Adjust tasks accordingly!

Torres & Baralt (forthcoming)

+ Adapting task-based instruction for HL learners!

- Keep in mind that HL learners use different variations of the HL in their homes and communities. Design **tasks that validate their local varieties & registers**. Ex: Create an ad for a local business that will air in a local radio station.

- Consider a **'multilingual' and 'multimodal'** lens to design tasks = a multiliteracy approach!

Torres & Baralt (forthcoming)

+ Adapting task-based instruction for HL learners!

- Due to HL learners' variable knowledge of the HL, perhaps **explicit grammar instruction** is more "appropriate" during the **post-task phase**. (We need empirical evidence for this!)

- In mixed HL-L2 classes, **differentiate task-based instruction!** Create different versions of the same task? Differentiate pre-task & post-task activities?

  Ex: for the Microsoft task, a planning task can be sending a memo to the company's CEO with ideas to solve the problem. HL learners – voice memo; L2 learners – written memo

Torres & Baralt (forthcoming)

Adapting task-based instruction for HL learners!

- Keep in mind that HL learners are not a homogenous group. Their HL identities are at the intersection with other identities and (sub)groups. Design tasks that reflect **intersectionality and their complex identities**!

Torres & Baralt (forthcoming)

Resources

Task-based Language Teaching

www.tblt.org

Indiana University – TBLT Support Site

www.tblt.indiana.edu

Thank you!!

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El AREYTO Lab

SLA & Bilingualism

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