

Task-Based Language Teaching: Implementation and L2 Outcomes

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Abstract

While traditional approaches to language instruction organize syllabi and curricula around grammar points, task-based language teaching (TBLT) utilizes authentic tasks driven by the needs of the learners, and resulting linguistic forms, as the units of instruction (Long, 1985, 2015). Meta-analytic findings have documented the success of implementations of TBLT pedagogy in a variety of contexts (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017) and highlighted the role of corrective feedback for L2 outcomes in task-based interactions (e.g. Bryfonski & Ma, 2019). The role of instructors in TBLT pedagogy is critically important; teachers must not only identify student learning needs and develop target tasks, but also tailor linguistic input and corrective feedback for individual learners – all of which has been said to require more creativity, resourcefulness and expertise than traditional approaches to language teaching (Samuda, 2001). Despite this, the role of instructors in TBLT classrooms has received considerably less attention in research to date when compared with other task-related variables.

This talk will explore these issues and address gaps in previous research by presenting on three related research projects. The talk will begin with an overview of a study of L2 Mandarin tone acquisition that took place in a task-based, computer-mediated context and investigated gains in L2 perception and production. Next, the results of a meta-analysis that investigated the effectiveness of TBLT programs for L2 learning will be overviewed. Finally, I will discuss a study of the impacts of a task-based teacher training program on novice bilingual teachers' implementation of TBLT pedagogy in Honduran bilingual schools. The talk will end with discussion of a research program that longitudinally investigates TBLT, training and L2 learning outcomes.

Bio

Dr. Lara Bryfonski recently graduated with her doctorate in Applied Linguistics from Georgetown University where she conducts research on second language acquisition and task-based language teaching and learning. She has published and presented her research on a variety of topics in second language acquisition, including task-based language teaching, corrective feedback, materials development, language learning in study abroad, and methods for second language research. Her publications appear in journals such as *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Language Teaching Research* and the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* as well as a variety of edited collections. Lara is a former ESL teacher and has taught language students from preschool to adulthood in a variety of contexts in the U.S. and abroad. She is an experienced teacher trainer and has worked with NGOs, public and private schools, governmental and financial organizations and universities to provide research-based training in language teaching. She will be joining the faculty of linguistics at Georgetown as an assistant professor this fall.