

Taking CALL to Task

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What's this guy on about?

- Survey of projects in ICALL
(Heift & Schulze, in press)
- Application of NLP in CALL
 - problem of domain specification
and restriction
- Suggestion: TBLT in ICALL

Outline

- TBLT
- ICALL
- TBLT + ICALL \Rightarrow some early examples
- TBLT + ICALL \Rightarrow future possibilities

Task-Based Language Teaching

- Task = “a goal-oriented communicative activity with a specific outcome, where the emphasis is on exchanging meanings, not producing specific language forms” (Willis, 1996, p. 36)
- “Task-Based Language Teaching ... constitutes a coherent, theoretically motivated approach to all six components of the design, implementation, and evaluation of a genuinely task-based teaching program: (a) needs and means analysis, (b) syllabus design, (c) material design, (d) methodology and pedagogy, (e) testing, and (f) evaluation” (Doughty & Long, 2003, p. 50).

Tasks

- Pre-task activities, post-task activities (Willis 1996, p.42)
- Pre-task (rehearsal, strategic) and within-task planning (pressured vs. unpressured) (Ellis 2005)
- Focused and unfocused tasks (Ellis 2003)
- Open vs. closed tasks (Willis 1996, 2004)
- Real-world vs. pedagogic tasks (Willis 2004)

ICALL

- Artificial Intelligence: particularly Natural Language Understanding and Generation, User Modeling
- NLP technology
- About 120 projects in 25 years
- Error correction, feedback, linguistic awareness
- Grand tools vs. power-fibs


Two approaches × two

- Buggy rules vs. relaxed constraints
- Severely restricted domain vs. completely free text

TBLT + ICALL

Examples I

- Jehle: *SPANLAB* (1987),
Underwood: *ELIZA, FAMILIA*
(1982)
- Sanders: *Spion* (1988, 1995)
- DeSmedt: *Herr Kommissar*
(1995)
- Holland et al.: *Bridge, MILT*
(1993-95)



TBLT + ICALL

Examples II

- Heidorn et al.: *Critique* (1982, 1984)
- Zock: *SWIM* (1992)
- Nerbonne et al.: *Glosser* (1998)



Learning Tasks Should Be:

Rosell-Aguilar (2005, p. 420):

- interactive and include reporting back of communicative outcome (Skehan, 2003);
- collaborative, interesting, rewarding and challenging (Meskill, 1999);
- meaningful and engaging rather than repetitive or stressful (Oxford, 1990);
- provide opportunities to produce target language (Chapelle, 1998);
- make use of authentic materials (Little, 1997);
- be appropriate to the medium used (Furstenberg, 1997).

ICALL Tasks Could Be:

- Raising linguistic awareness by making linguistic features salient
- Defining the communicative situation and the sublanguage
- Providing exercise material and/or (linguistic) resources for pre-task activities
- Providing feedback on form for post-task activities

Examples

- Use of parallel corpora as teaching aids (Nerbonne 2003, Paulussen, 2006)
- Providing additional (linguistic) information in authentic texts (Amaral, Metcalfe, Meurers, 2006)
- Transparent ICALL systems like *Babel* (Müller)
- Re-writing tasks (Weischedel, Voge & James, 1978)
- Picture description task (Schröder & Menzel, 1999)
- Focused tasks (e.g. teenager moaning task)

...

Cautious conclusion

- Task design
 - analysis of communicative situations
- Task analysis for research and design
- Carefully crafted task descriptions are needed
- Systems should facilitate task planning, preparation, and feedback