

## **Tasks as meaning-making social practices: a functional model and analysis**

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In TBLT research, tasks are defined in terms of form and meaning e.g. a pedagogical task is "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in ... mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form" (Nunan 2004:4). But the main assessment measures in TBLT research (accuracy, complexity of T-units, fluency) largely measure form and do not address meaning or the relation of form and meaning.

We will present a linguistic model and analysis of tasks based on a Systemic Functional Linguistic model of language that places meaning at its centre, integrates meaning and form, and provides linguistic tools for the analysis of task data. Using data from classroom tasks we will illustrate an approach to tasks as multimodal social practices that combine action and knowledge in a theory-practice dynamic. Social practices are analysed as semiotic units of meaning and learners are seen as meaning-makers and decision-makers.

We will show how this model and analysis offers a greatly enriched view of the role of tasks in the development of advanced language/academic discourse/language as a means of learning. We will also note how it extends the domain of task analysis beyond language classrooms to all classrooms where language is a means of learning, thus extending the significance and potential contribution of TBLT research in a major way.