Task-based language learning and teaching with technology is presented as a necessary book that fills a clear gap because of the lack of publications concerning TBLL and TBLT out of the face-to-face (FTF) contexts. The contents included in this compilation are closely related to fields such as Intelligent CALL (ICALL), virtual worlds (VWs), tellecollaboration, multimodality (MM), computer-mediated communication (CMC), etc. by paying attention to the role they play in second language acquisition (SLA) as well as to the interactionist theories that surround them. In the very beginning, the Professor Rod Ellis takes into consideration the connection among these fields and bears in mind whether 'negotiation in a CMC context results in the same pattern of interaction as that reported to occur in FTF task-based interactions' (Foreword). Learners are essential actors and the way they react or respond to the new language learning solutions or contexts must be explored in detail within the whole research process. The foreword is also aimed at introducing concepts and ideas related to task-based language learning and teaching, such as design and implementation features, or the impact that they have on language production -fluency, complexity and accuracy.

The book is a compilation of chapters written by some of the most representative and acclaimed authors in the field of CALL. A brief section with specific and outstanding details concerning their careers, curricula and research fields is included, which is a very useful resource to contextualise their contributions. The publication follows the structure of a coherent collection of research articles which is broadly structured in two parts: 'Research on Tasks in CALL' (from chapters 2 to 6) and 'Applying Technology-Mediated Tasks' (from chapters 7 to 11). These parts comprise eleven chapters well integrated within a whole picture depicting a field of study about which "little has been published in technology-mediated contexts” (Foreword). In spite of this, each contribution keeps its particular focus and is well integrated within each part and the whole book.

Thomas and Reinders (p.1) define this book as 'the first collection of international research to consider the synergies between second language (L2) task-based approaches and CALL'. These authors are also the editors of the book and devote their contribution to 'deconstructing' the relation which exists between tasks and technology. Many references to experts on this research field support not only the ideas and aims defined throughout the initial chapter in particular but also the contents of the whole compilation. It is considered as strength for the collection the fact that it includes contributions from researchers and learners from different places in the world, which
provides thus an enriching and inspiring view of the task-based approach when combined with the possibilities offered by CALL. The authors also include a complete definition of basic concepts and data obtained from previous literature and research, i.e. the definition of the participants' roles in the process, the contexts in which practice and learning take place, the introduction of technology to carry out tasks that were previously done in FTF contexts, its influence on methodologies, actual experiences and empirical studies, criticisms and potential dangers, etc.

In chapter 2, Müller-Hartmann and Schocker-v. Ditfurth reflect upon the fact that language learning and teaching have followed ‘two different research paradigms, the psycholinguistic approach and the sociocultural approach’. This dichotomy is also mentioned and taken into consideration by other authors along the book. The authors provide the reader with very useful definitions of “task” and also discuss how this research field has been developed during the last few years and how important it is to bear in mind contributions from other related fields and dimensions, such as “general distance learning” (p. 18), the pedagogical perspective, the intercultural communicative competence required by learners who contact other learners worldwide, the texts chosen for practice, sociocultural features and classroom contexts, etc. CMC is thought as “the prevalent concept of technology use in the language classroom today”. The authors also alert about the fact that “the computer is not the method, but the tool that needs to be used” (p. 20). The language classroom is seen as a “community of practice” in which there is a negotiation process between the teacher and the student to obtain more satisfactory results. Nonetheless, there has been a recent shift in research from single classrooms to long-distance collaboration, which has expanded the focus of attention. Müller-Hartmann and Schoker-v. Ditfurth provide the theoretical framework of the “Activity System” (p. 22), a system in which “the human activity is the central unit of analysis” (p.22) and alert about the differences existing between the concept of activity and the concept of task. They also offer specific details about all the agents that take part in the system as well as some enlightening research findings concerning the learners' and teachers' roles.

Mark Peterson is the author of chapter 3, in which “the expanding use of tasks in network-based computer assisted language learning” (p. 41) is explored, bearing in mind important and influential features concerning the psycholinguistic and sociocultural interactionist accounts. The author examines the “advantages and limitations of synchronous text-based computer mediated communication (CMC) as an environment for language learning” (p.41). Moreover, Peterson explores some of the potential effects of task characteristics and conditions and includes references to previous findings and studies focused on issues such as interaction, negotiation of meaning, the mental activities developed while interacting and learning, the effects of providing corrective feedback, etc. The chapter comprises sections devoted to exploring features and proposals for TBLT in network-based CALL, always bearing in mind “the nature of online interaction and suitability of current approaches to the use of tasks in online environments” (p. 45). Much attention is paid to the CALL theorists' debate and conclusions on the potential benefits for learners as well as on the hypothesized advantages and limitations of Real-Time Text-Based CMC in the whole process. These advantages and limitations, which occupy very important sections in the chapter, are structured in a very clear, visual and organised way and are also very well supported by a range of solid references on previous research.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept of Intelligent CALL and explores the relationship between this field and task-based language teaching. The first paragraph is devoted to asking several questions in an attempt to answer them along the whole chapter. Mathias Schulze includes a reflection made by Doughty and Long (2003, p. 50) by which they argue that "TBLT constitutes a coherent and theoretically motivated approach to the components of the design, implementation and evaluation of a genuinely task-based teaching program" (p. 63). This author presents and defines the field of ICALL and names the three branches of Artificial Intelligence (AI) which are more relevant for CALL. These are: “(i) natural language processing, (ii) user modelling, (iii) expert
systems and (iv) intelligent tutoring systems” (p. 65). Schulze follows a very clear structure and incorporates some principles, characteristics and requirements concerning good task design in ICALL. Moreover, the author provides the reader with real examples of TBLT in ICALL and presents projects and programmes focused on the development of the communicative competence of language learners. The final sections are organised in such a way that they allow the reader to know about the main features concerning the stages of implementation and real practice through tasks: pre-task activities and during-task and post-task support. ICALL applications in a real language-learning situation are considered to be “slow and sketchy” (p. 79), mainly due to the “immense complexities of the computational processing of human language and of the nature of language itself coupled with the complexity of foreign language learning processes” (p. 79).

Glenn Stockwell is the author of chapter 5. He considers TBLT as a field which includes a varied range of aspects and alerts about the fact that “in recent years, communication tasks have to a large degree become synonymous with computer-mediated communication (CMC)” (p. 83). This chapter is thus presented in an attempt to “give a deeper insight into the multiple modes of CMC-based communication tasks founded on empirical data and to provide a discussion of the effects of these modes” (p. 84). This allows the reader to know about “how these modes may be used both independently and in conjunction with one another” (p. 84) during the process of design and implementation of technology-based tasks. Stockwell shows that those tasks which have been “described in CMC research most commonly fit into the category of open tasks”, including “discussions of prescribed topics with no fixed outcomes or responses” (p. 88). The chapter comprises a very clarifying and inspirational robust study aimed at providing an example of multimodal CMC “where the language produced by learners during Synchronous and Asynchronous CMC tasks is examined in terms of lexical density, grammatical accuracy and complexity”, bearing also in mind “the discourse features used” (p. 90). According to the author, there is a need to keep on investigating “how TBL may be conducted in computer-based environments” and “how the medium has the potential to affect the way in which learners interact, the language they produce and the strategies they use” (p. 102).

The first part finishes with chapter 6, through which Karina Collentine measures the complexity in task-based synchronous computer mediation. She reflects upon the important impact that different task types have on task performance, the kind of language that arise as a result of their use and thus the effect on the whole second-language acquisition (SLA) process. According to this author, task-based researchers are working to develop “design principles” that would help increase “the meaningfulness of language use and the amount of communicative interaction that learners experience” (p. 106). Linguistic complexity is addressed to as the central concept in the chapter, which also includes some of the aspects that may affect it. Collentine includes varied details from recent research concerning the groups of features that contribute towards “operationalizing complexity”. The initial ideas are supported by a well-founded study aimed at answering whether “learners produce more displaced discourse and lexicogrammatical complexity in the Interrupted task chatting activity (ITCA) or in the post-task chatting activity” and whether there is “a stronger effect for intermediate or advanced level learners” (p. 112). The study thus was developed in an attempt to know more about language complexity and the effect that different tasks can have on students at different levels of instruction.

Chapter 7 is the first contribution in part 2. Regine Hampel alerts about the fact that “online interaction between learners is becoming easier” (p. 131) and highlights the importance of interaction as a powerful venue for second language acquisition. According to the author, the context of the chapter is a blended language course that combines “more traditional modes of delivery and e-learning” (p. 133) and that takes a “task-based approach to designing activities for a virtual learning environment based on Moodle” (p. 133). Hampel continues to contextualize her study by providing information about two preceding pilot studies, which also help shed light to her well-founded
approach to this field. Her study is widely supported by several sections that deal with: design -bearing in mind the need to identify different task features and observe how these were realized in the actual course-, the goal -combining language and content to be taught at a distance and the development of linguistic skills with the construction of knowledge-, tasks types, conditions, procedures -including a wide range of methodological options for implementing the tasks-, the predicted outcomes and the participants. This is thus a very useful chapter that allows the reader to visualise the way in which three factors -“interaction in language learning, learner support through scaffolding, and mediation by computer”- contribute to “feed into the pedagogical design of online tasks in a blended distance language course” (p. 149). Other aspects such as the importance of tutor support, the environment, the learning goals, the distinct formats, etc. are able to have a noticeable effect on the whole process.

Chapter 8 addresses teacher development, which is identified by several authors as the "lynchpin for progress of the TBLT enterprise" (p. 154) and the "ideal to put the idea of reflective learning into practice" (p. 155). Thomas Raith and Volker Hegelheimer, discuss the role of e-portfolios and the way competencies can be improved by using them when dealing with foreign language teacher education, and also explore what competencies a teacher needs to put TBLT into practice. The authors present a clarifying compilation of the advantages provided by the use of portfolios. For instance, student teachers can "take responsibility for their own learning and share their learning experiences", they are also allowed to "collect different kinds of artefacts to document their learning process", they can "connect their portfolios to teacher standards" and even "evaluate their own professional development" (p. 155). The authors thus provide a new view within the whole process, i.e. the role of the teacher while training the skill that would help them to put TBLT into practice, to design tasks that are able to encourage learners in the process, etc. Chapter 8 presents the concepts of "training" and "development" (p. 167) and also includes a very useful list of TBLT standards that would allow teachers reflect upon their own strategies and new ways to improve actual practice. The theory is complemented by data obtained from research on a real teacher training programme conducted in Germany, which makes the chapter be a complete tool for teacher learners who want to spread their knowledge on the topic or who want to reflect on and check if the way in which they actually work fit the adequate standards.

In chapter 9, Kenneth Reeder presents a case study of an intelligent CALL (ICAL) prototype entitled Edubba. Research on this prototype has been done in attempt to create and deliver authentic tasks through which learners can receive "authentic content for language learning” (p. 176). The author provides the reader with abundant details concerning Edubba: its functions, the participants involved, the tasks carried out, etc. and presents the context in which the first experiences have been developed. This chapter thus represents a starting point to “demonstrate the affordances of virtual worlds (VWs), autonomous exploration and technologically mediated linguistic interaction tools” (p. 184). The authors go beyond by taking into consideration other aspects such as the importance of serving pragmatic functions, the theoretical relationships that emerge among language demands, thinking skills or tasks, etc. The chapter is structured in such a way that the reader is able to witness the whole process. A process aimed at developing learners' writing and reading skills through a programme involving "navigation and interaction” that would of course require "orientation instructions” (p. 188). Writing in Edubba is conceived of as a “collaborative process” (p. 190) and the author alerts efficiently about the fact that several authors have demonstrated that "writing is as much a social construction as an isolated intellectual act” (p. 190).

Mirjam Hauck is the author of chapter 10. She starts by remarking the fact that little attention has been paid to the task design and implementation phases concerning task-based language teaching (TBLT) in published research. She approaches TBLT by linking it to telecollaboration in an attempt to explore the different ways in which "decisions about task design for telecollaboration are reached and what happens during the actual
implementation of a task” (p. 197). The author presents a four-way telecollaborative encounter between pre- and in-service trainee teachers of English as a Foreign Language from several countries. The backdrop is considered to be the need to know more about the factors which influence “task choice” (p. 197). Mirjam Hauck’s contribution is a multi-faceted answer to some of the challenges set out in the introductory lines. The readers are allowed to expand their knowledge on various foci of telecollaboration and on how it effectively contributes towards achieving specific goals concerning language learning. The author also highlights the concept of multimodality (MM) and the need to raise the multimodal awareness among the participants. One of her aims is to shed light on the “interrelationship between multimodal literacy and online communication” (p. 198). Therefore, this approach to task design is mainly based on the “mediating role of technology” to make meaning and achieve communication (p. 204) and on the way technology also helps “re-mediate existing modes of meaning making and communication” (p. 205).

The last chapter is presented by Gary Motteram and Michael Thomas in an attempt to predict the “future directions for technology-mediated tasks” (p. 218), a field which has not been developed enough yet. This field provides a huge amount of opportunities for learners to engage in authentic task-based activities focused on aspects such as developing “the communicative fluency, accuracy and complexity” (p. 219). The aim of this chapter is not just to try to predict the future of this field but also to provide a general view of the contributions made by all the participants. Therefore, the authors review the contents included throughout the book and try to come to a final conclusion that would also leave some doors open for future research and developments. TBLT is considered to be currently advocated as “the replacement for communicative language teaching” (p. 218). One of the most important aspects concerning the present of the language learning and teaching field is that it may have entered in a phase that has been called the “sociocultural turn” (Johnson, 2006, p. 235). This theory might explain why so much importance is being given to computer-mediated communication (CMC) on these days. One other development in the field is considered to be the “use of case studies” in an attempt of language educators to “theorize from and about their practice” (p. 220). This final chapter also comprises a list of current critiques that have emerged concerning the task-based approach in the last few years. Then, the authors come back to the future and reflect on the “significance of changing pedagogy both within and outside the classrooms”, exploring the challenges and facing resistance and obstacles that might occur.

As a conclusion, Task-Based Language Learning presents a very complete and interesting compilation of research chapters that fulfil the aim of expanding research on a field about which little has been published before. The contributions provide the reader with ideas and conclusions from previous research or literature, but also with very clarifying data and results obtained from case studies of varied educational projects in an attempt to answer some of the questions posed both implicitly and explicitly by the book. It covers many areas and takes into account important shifts in the traditional pedagogies, methodologies and roles. Therefore, this is a very recommended book not only to readers who are experts on this field of knowledge or who are interested in going into it in depth, but also to the learners who want to start studying it and who want to have a snapshot of the past, present and future of TBLL and TBLT.

References
