

UMU RESEARCH SEMINAR, MAY 17-19, 2018

POSITION/FOCUS PAPER

Dr. Parvaneh Tavakoli, University of Reading, UK

Task-modality effects: Issues in past and current theory and research



Research in the effects of task design and task type has been prolific over the past three decades offering the fields of SLA and L2 teaching a number of significant findings with important implication for research and practice in these areas. This body of research (Ellis, 1987; Foster & Skehan, 1996, 1998, 2001; Gilabert, 2007, Gilabert et al., 2016; Revesz et al., 2016; Robinson, 2001) has provided solid evidence that some task design features consistently

influence task performance and L2 development. While many of these studies have focused on task effects in either writing or speaking, investigating the effects of task modality and its interaction with task effect is a relatively new and under-researched area. This more recent and developing area (Kormos, 2014; Kuiken & Vedder, 2011; Manchon, 2014; Vasylet et al., 2017; Zalbidea, 2017), however, has clearly indicated that there are differential effects when task design interacts with task modality highlighting the varying opportunities modality offers for L2 performance and development.

Focusing on the impact of task modality on L2 performance, the current paper's primary aim is to present an overview of the underpinning theoretical principles informing this body of research. The paper would also aim to highlight the issue of task modality in the global discussion of factors contributing to the development of writing and the potential contribution modality can offer second language learners. Summarising the existing research evidence on the opportunities task design and task modality offer L2 teachers and learners, the paper will serve as a framework in which practical implications suggested by this body of research will be scrutinised.