Book review
The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Writing

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Introduction. *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Writing* is a collection of research papers edited by Rosa M. Manchón and Charlene Polio. They aim to create a compendium that serves to contextualize and synthesize the development and research practices of the connection between second language (L2) writing and second language acquisition (SLA). The chapters of the collection feature theoretical perspectives and current empirical development on how and why L2 writing can be a meaningful site for language learning. Three reasons are formulated to articulate the significance of the volume concerning SLA-informed L2 writing studies: (1) research outcomes in this research domain are theoretically and empirically fruitful; (2) the theoretical contributions to the SLA knowledge are newly achieved; (3) L2 writing plays an indispensable role in instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) settings. By taking into account the socially situated nature of L2 writing teaching and learning, Manchón and Cerezo (2018) highlighted the substantial value of integrating L2 writing with SLA theories and research for both boosting the L2 learning process and advancing present and prospective SLA research agendas. Such an academic viewpoint appears to be predominant and invaluable in this collection with its theoretical advancements and practical insights contributed by authors from diverse educational settings.

Contents

Apart from an Introduction and a Coda (Chapter 28), the handbook chiefly comprises three parts, including Theoretical Perspectives, Core Issues, and Expanding Research Agendas.

Part I, incorporating two articles (Chapter 2 and 3), serves to summarize the theoretical perspectives on writing and written corrective feedback (WCF). Chapter 2 presents the theoretical cognitive underpinnings (i.e., noticing hypotheses, output hypotheses, skill acquisition theory, model of second language acquisition) within individual writing contexts. The theoretical underpinnings are critically commented in terms of their roles in writing and WCF during the L2 writing and revision process. Chapter 3 briefly articulates some key cognitive theories or hypotheses and attaches significance to sociocultural theory (SCT) in collaborative writing and feedback processing. It proposes that collaborative writing and feedback processing contribute to the development of the L2 learner by providing additional opportunities for students to grapple with potential problems or gaps in the writing process.

Part II addresses the core issues that make up the key volume of the handbook, and includes six sections, spanning from Chapter 4 to Chapter 21. Each section is devoted to the elaboration of a distinctive topic, including *Tasks and Writing*; *Language Processing*; *Language Transfer and Writing*; *The Role of Individual Differences*; *Writing Research*; *Corrective Feedback*; *Language Development*; *Writing Research in Different Contexts*. Each section comprises between two and five chapters. All of the 18 chapters that make up this part follow a similar structure: starting with an introduction concerning background information on the issues or topics, proceeding to define essential key terms, and then locating the focus of the chapter through a brief introduction of historical perspectives. Thereafter, a review of the relevant critical issues and topics, together with the current academic contributions and empirical research methods, constitute the main body of each chapter. Finally, the closure part usually contains recommendations for practice and further insights for future research directions.

The first section of part II, *Tasks and Writing*, consists of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 in which the authors extend the avenues of task-based research by exploring the effect of modalities (Chapter 4) and task complexity (Chapter 5) on task performance. To be more specific, by situating itself within task-based language teaching, Chapter 4 shows the role of mode in task-supported learning across oral and written task performance; while Chapter 5 presents the effect of cognitive task complexity on L2 writing development, suggesting that the complexity of writing task does affect L2 writer's response to the task demands.

The second section of part II, *Language Processing*, comprises Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, which explore the processing dimension of L2 writing and feedback respectively in both individual and collaborative writing conditions. Chapter 6

contains a focused discussion of critical issues and topics in the SLA-oriented strand, as well as the main lines of research advancing empirical knowledge for L2 writing development. Chapter 7 reviews studies on learners' engagement with WCF by focusing on theoretical assumptions, key issues, and relevant research outcomes within the interventionist strand, proposing that the research foci move beyond the question: "does WCF work?".

The following subsection, titled *Language Transfer and Writing*, is devoted to the issues about transfer and multicompetence in L2 writing in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. Chapter 8 deals with the role and interactive relationship between L1 and L2 linguistic knowledge, as well as cognitive processing in writing. Then Chapter 9 extends the discussion by exploring writing from the perspective of multicompetence, which serves to re-exam the relationship between language and writing knowledge in multilingual writing instruction and development. It is noted that multilingual writers appear to be more flexible in writing performance, indicating that various forms of language knowledge interact to facilitate multilingual writing development.

The fourth section of part II, *The Role of Individual Differences*, deals with age, cognitive, motivational, as well as affective factors in L2 written performance and WCF processing. These factors have received scholarly attention recently in L2 writing research. Age-related research in Chapter 10 focuses on L2 learners of different ages, shedding light on the age nuances between early and late learners and thus rectifying the traditional assumption that "younger is better". In terms of cognitive individual differences, Chapter 11 reviews the role of working memory and language aptitude in L2 writing achievements and WCF appropriation. In what follows, Chapter 12 mainly sheds light on the factors of learner beliefs, motivation, and emotions, including their potential links and the roles they play in the L2 writing process and WCF. It is highlighted that research on emotions (i.e., anxiety, enjoyment, pride, shame), except for L2 writing anxiety, has received marginal attention in the field.

The section *Writing Research, Corrective Feedback, and Language Development* tackles the issues of grammar, vocabulary, formulaic language, written corrective feedback, and writing assessment. Chapter 13 aims to provide scholarly evidence that L2 writers' grammatical development might benefit from the L2 writing learning process. More proficient L2 writers also tend to develop and put copious vocabulary items into use while writing, as claimed in Chapter 14. Chapter 15 also shows the essential role of proper use of formulaic language for L2 learners' output in writing. By interpreting research on WCF, Chapter 16 reviews the effects of WCF on L2 learners' performance in writing. Chapter 17 of the section probes into the role of language in writing assessment in L2 research. The contributors claim that studies in SLA of language features increase profit in the test development and validation process (Plakans, Gebril, & Bilki, 2019).

Part II ends up with section 6, *Writing Research in Different Contexts*, to provide insight into various contexts for L2 writing learning and teaching. The initial context, content and language learning, in Chapter 18, operate effectively in L2 writing development and even overall language competence. Then Chapter 19 addresses the study-abroad settings, but the research on this topic remains small in size. It points out that study-abroad programs are proposed to boost L2 learners' writing proficiency. What follows is the discussion of the academic settings (Chapter 20) concerning the intersection between instructed L2 learning in English and L2 academic writing in tertiary education. Another context in Chapter 21 explores the role of technology-supported environments in facilitating SLA and explains how relevant domains have grown essential for the teaching and learning of L2 writing.

Overall, the authors in Part II have made a comprehensive review of the research previously conducted with regard to the intersection between L2 writing and L2 development.

Chapters in **part III** are devoted to extending the research field by providing directions and recommendations for prospective research agendas. Situated within the context of ISLA, Chapter 22 synthesizes the ideas of process-oriented writing, WCF, as well as their links with language learning for further investigation on L2 writing and feedback. Chapter 23 then concentrates on the essential role of learners' attention-related behaviors in the process of writing, while Chapter 24 approaches the nexus of SLA and L2 writing process from the lens of multimodal writing. To innovate SLA-oriented L2 writing studies, Chapter 25 proceeds to provide methodological options (i.e., verbal protocols) available to advance procedures for data collection and analysis in investigating L2 writing behaviors and processes and L2 feedback processing. Contributors in Chapter 26 present an inspiring direction from the perspective of corpus use, assisting writing scholars in conducting more systematic research with larger datasets. The closing chapter, Chapter 27, exhibits automated analysis of written texts, aiming to upgrade the accuracy of natural language process tools and to design automated writing assessment to propel L2 writing teaching and learning. The Coda (Chapter 28) summarizes the previous chapters in order to provide affordance with pedagogical suggestions and implications for practice in relation to tasks, feedback, and learning contexts.

Final remarks
The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Writing synthesizes the theories and empirical research on the association between L2 writing and SLA studies. It concentrates on what lies ahead with detailed and enlightening research agendas on how L2 writing can oil the wheels of SLA studies and vice versa. Manchón and Polio succeed in their attempt to single out the critical issues and topics when approaching L2 writing as a site for learning

from multifarious lenses within SLA studies (i.e., learner individual difference, language transfer). The whole edited volume is orchestrated coherently and systematically with a clear structure by starting with theoretical perspectives (Chapter 2-3), proceeding with empirical research development (Chapter 4-21), and ending with prospect agendas (Chapter 22-27). Therefore, readers will have a clear idea of what lies behind and ahead while reading the compendium.

Given the fact that the research on the connection between L2 writing and SLA has not yet grown strongly, this handbook attaches paramount significance to providing affordances for possible and feasible directions for further explorations. In addition to the chapters that explicitly deliberate over prospective research agendas in Part III, an apparent feature of the chapters in Part II is that almost every article ends with a brief recommendation about how to refine and extend current empirical findings within its distinctive academic settings and perspectives. Therefore, the handbook turns out to be reader-friendly for those newcomers who possess relatively little knowledge about the field and want to strengthen their research, and also for those researchers who are in the pursuit of an innovative research paradigm to further expand their research scope.

Moreover, what makes the volume prominent is its innovative combination of diverse theories and perspectives, which expands and re-energizes common research schemes. For instance, WCF is not new in L2 writing research, but Chapter 7 — instead of getting engrossed in the function of feedback solely — identifies the essential role of learners' engagement with WCF in individual and collaborative writing contexts. Especially in Section 4, Part II, the authors integrate learner individual differences (i.e., emotion, motivation, working memory, and aptitude) with L2 writing and WCF, which has not received adequate scholarly attention in recent years. Such an attempt boosts disciplinary and interdisciplinary development by absorbing theories from educational psychology.

Another shining point of the handbook lies in its ability to bring together the existing methodological approaches and to recommend future directions to capture the dimensions of L2 writing and WCF. Chapters in Part II rely on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches in a way that convincingly demonstrates the appropriateness of the methodology used. There is also a separate article in Chapter 25 that serves to review previous methodological choices in the investigation of L2 writing behavior and process. It illustrates novel research methods (i.e., keystroke logging, eye gaze, eye tracking, eye movement) for data collection and analysis for a less fallacious exploration of the domain.

In brief, albeit as a newcomer of scholarly interest, the intersection between L2 writing and SLA studies has developed radically and productively for its operative implications. Such integration serves to facilitate the analysis of the

learning-to-write process in second/foreign or other additional language learning contexts, and to expand future SLA research trends with regard to theory, research, and applications.

Despite the academic and pedagogical contributions that the handbook has made, there still remain several minor flaws to be noticed. There might be some critical issues that have not been sufficiently introduced and discussed, as can be seen, for example, in Chapter 12, where beliefs and motivation are given substantial attention, while emotion — an essential issue in the chapter — is confined to a brief introduction. From a methodological point of view, a more comprehensive description of the methods and contexts would have allowed for more valid and extensive replication studies. Chapter 25 represents a comprehensive review of the methodologies for L2 writing and WCF with four empirical studies. However, the description of the qualitative research design could have been made more informative, for example, through a brief justification of the methods used and a description of the participants selected and classified according to proficiency. As Chapter 10 states, when taking methods such as eye-tracking, time-compressed writing should be conducted contingently with younger and older participants.

In summary, the handbook *Second Language Acquisition and Writing* stands out as an invaluable compendium with its copious collection and comprehensive review of research development pathways, together with feasible and inspiring research recommendations. The volume can be influential for scholars who specialize in the studies of SLA and L2 writing, and for teaching practitioners who are seeking enlightening pedagogical implications and guidance within L2 writing settings.

References

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