

## MONOGRAPH

## Teaching writing to learn languages in primary, secondary and tertiary education

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Writing is a complex process that develops over the life span (Bazerman et al., 2018), and is difficult to teach and learn, but essential to master in order to be considered literate in any language (Williams, 2012), and successful in life (Bazerman, 2009; Graham, 2019). The role of writing in learning to write, as well as learning content and language has been acknowledged in writing studies, language education, and second language acquisition (Hirvela et al., 2016; MacArthur et al., 2016). These three orientations to the study of writing have been informed by distinct theoretical frameworks (linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural approaches), and have led to different approaches to its learning and instruction (Beard et al., 2009; Hyland, 2022).

Such orientations have also been influenced by the advent of digital tools and social networking sites in the 21st century, which have transformed writing and have contributed to its pervasiveness (Freedman et al., 2016; Leu et al., 2016; Li & Storch, 2017). Additionally, the multilingual character of our society and the relevance of plurilingual education have drawn greater attention to the language learning dimension of writing (e.g., Losey & Shuck, 2021; Payant & Maatouk, 2022; Schnoor & Usanova, 2023). Within this context, and aligning with the idea that discussions of the role of writing in language learning need to include the role of writing instruction (see Manchón & Williams, 2016), this monographic section compiles studies that deal with teaching writing to learn languages, i.e., first, second, and foreign languages (L1, L2 and FL), through technological and non-technological means in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary education, as well as writing instruction to learn writing.

Among these studies, four report on the results of different writing and grammar-based classroom interventions that use i) a writing task in a compulsory secondary education class in Spain, which revealed effective pedagogical practices that are supported by empirical research findings (Alonso-Cortés Fradejas & Sánchez Rodríguez); ii) instructional grammar sequences (IGS) that were developed within a funded research project (i.e., Egramint) for Primary and Secondary Spanish schools to promote students' metalinguistic awareness in the learning of grammar and writing in different curricular languages (Reig Gascón et al., and Garcia Vidal respectively); and iii) disciplinary argumentative essay writing activities that centre on text revision through digital teacher feedback at university in the Chilean context (Urrejola Corales & Becerra Rojas). Finally, also in this issue though in the innovation and experiences section, within the context of social sciences didactics, Ortega Cervigón and Mateo-Girona show the





results of a five-year long intervention in a Primary school teacher education programme for the writing of a historical newspaper with a focus on teacher-students' use of journalistic language in general, and historical present and multicausal explanations in particular.

Similarly to Urrejola Corales and Becerra Rojas, two other studies in this section deal with text revision, particularly through the feedback offered by digital platforms and tools that are commonly used for writing in L1 French (Arsenau), and teacher written feedback targeting upper Secondary education EFL learners in Spain (García-Pastor & Grau Montesinos). More specifically, both studies deal with so-called written corrective feedback (WCF), which has attracted much of recent research attention, especially in L2 and FL writing (Storch, 2018). Unlike the interventionist studies above, which address both the process and products of writing, these two investigations concentrate on the latter, since they analyse students' texts for their difficulties and errors to account for the aforementioned feedback modalities without truly exploring the writing process. Garrido Vílchez and Seseña Gómez also focus on L1 Spanish freshman students' errors in the use of lexical and grammatical resources within their argumentative writings, which the authors attribute to a prevailing instructional approach throughout these students' schooling, whereby grammar is commonly taught unrelated to discourse usage. Lastly, as opposed to errors and feedback observed through learners' texts, Sanz-Moreno and Pérez Giménez deal with pre-service language teacher beliefs about grammar and writing.

All the studies thus explore the different aspects of L1, L2 and FL writing outlined above from a number of theoretical and methodological approaches that include socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic or textual perspectives as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods. In particular, two of the interventionist studies in this issue (Reig et al. and Garcia Vidal) are socio-cultural investigations that understand writing as a cognitive process based on three main sub-processes, i.e., planning, drafting, and revising (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Zamel, 1983) along with a situated socio-historical activity that accomplishes social action (Bazerman, 2016) in the form of discourse genres (Bajtín, 1982). Writing also enables the writer to learn linguistic content (i.e., grammar) across different curricular languages (Spanish, Catalan and English) through teacher-student interaction and learners' collaborative talk within IGS (Camps, 2003; Camps & Zayas, 2006). In both studies, raising students' metalinguistic awareness of grammatical elements across these languages, namely, adjectives for the production of a newspaper advertisement to adopt a pet (Reig et al.), and past verbal tenses in order to write a letter to a Primary school teacher (Garcia Vidal), is essential to master such languages, and writing in each. Therefore, these two studies emphasize the writing to learn languages dimension of writing, whilst acknowledging its learning to write aspect.

By contrast, other interventionist studies in the issue (Urrejola Corales & Becerra Rojas, Alonso-Cortés Fradejas & Sánchez Rodríguez, and Ortega Cervigón & Mateo-Girona) highlight the learning to write aspect of writing without disregarding its potential for language learning. These investigations draw on a similar socio-cultural conceptualization of writing to that of the previous papers in combination with its view as a complex mental process. Within the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) movement in Tertiary education, Urrejola Corales and Becerra Rojas as well as Ortega Cervigón and Mateo-Girona conceptualize writing as a life-long learning ability that aids in thinking, learning and self-knowledge (Bazerman et al., 2018) along with promoting social inclusion (Urrejola Corales & Becerra Rojas). As such, writing to these authors is also a cognitive process, in which teachers' innovative methodological approaches



and feedback are necessary to promote learning in general, and learning to write in particular, so that students get to produce high quality texts in the writing of disciplinary genres, and reach self-regulation in their own writing process. Therefore, the teacher mediates students' writing and is a key element in their learning, as Alonso-Cortés Fradejas and Sánchez Rodríguez emphasize in their paper. These authors argue that effective writing instruction rests on a series of pedagogical practices that have been attested in the literature (e.g., Graham et al., 2012; Graham & Harris, 2017; Graham et al., 2023), and depict writing as i) a social activity, in which the writer addresses a real audience for a specific communicative purpose in a given context; and ii) a complex genre-based composing task, that requires the teacher's instruction and scaffolding for text planning, drafting, revising, and editing, as well as the learning of the genre's rhetorical features and language issues. Interaction between learners in collaborative writing, and making connections between reading and writing are of outmost importance for writing efficiently in any language.

The cognitivist view of writing is also observed in Arsenau's work, in which text revision is defined as a sub-process of the writing process that involves the writer's use of stored knowledge of different kinds, and various cognitive strategies to improve their text (Hayes & Flower, 1981). Revision is also considered a reflective activity that entails critical re-reading along with the identification and resolution of problems (Hayes, 2004). These problems are already identified for learners, when they receive WCF on their texts. Such feedback may come in the form of automatic binary, score-based, and metalinguistic feedback provided by digital tools and platforms, as shown by Arsenau; or in the shape of teacher WCF on micro- and macro-level aspects of learners' written products, and all or the majority of errors (unfocused feedback) vs. a few errors (focused feedback), as discussed by García-Pastor and Grau Montesinos. These two authors also show that errors can receive teachers' direct or indirect correction, and/or metalinguistic explanations. The perspective on WCF adopted by these papers favours the products of writing over writing processes, so that learners' compositions are taken to reveal their knowledge of forms, and their awareness of the system of rules to create texts along with the linguistic resources they can use to accomplish their communicative goals and intentions. Therefore, students' texts in these studies are not exclusively perceived as objects completely isolated from those who write them or the writing contexts, in which they are produced (vid. Hyland, 2022).

This linguistic or text-based perspective on writing emphasized in the studies just discussed is also observed in Garrido Vilchez and Seseña Gómez's paper. These authors implicitly conceive of writing as a cognitive process, whilst assuming that features of their students' argumentative texts illustrate their knowledge of the lexical and grammatical elements that are characteristic of this macro discursive genre. The writing context as established in a writing task, namely, time available for writing, pre-established text length, and the nature of the writing prompt is also expected to affect the quality of students' writings. Additionally, the authors contend that the way in which a learner uses certain linguistic resources and excludes others in text creation is related to the kind of writing and grammar instruction received throughout their learning journeys. Sanz-Moreno and Pérez Giménez also refer to teachers' grammar and writing pedagogical practices, but they approach these through their beliefs. The authors understand composing in different languages as a necessary means to learn their grammatical systems and achieve proficiency in each in line with certain language education studies (Camps et al., 2005; Fontich & Camps, 2015; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).



From a methodological standpoint, the studies in this special issue draw on qualitative and quantitative research methods to account for the distinct aspects of writing they address. The two IGS studies employ such didactic sequences as interactional and written classroom data collection tools. Reig et al. also delivered questionnaires to the students, and conducted a semi-structured interview with the teacher, which enabled them to obtain data that they analysed quantitatively through frequencies and percentages, and qualitatively based on the rhetorical and linguistic features of the advertisement genre that learners had to produce. The authors conclude that the IGS facilitated transfer of linguistic knowledge from learners' L1 to the target language (EFL) in this particular genre, and contributed to the development of the grammatical notion of "adjective", and students' adequate use of different types of adjectives in their texts. Garcia Vidal followed discourse analysis and content analysis to examine students' use of met-*alanguage*, their metalinguistic reflections, and their use of certain grammatical elements in different written data sets. She also estimated frequencies and percentages that complemented her qualitative analysis, which pointed at the potential of IGS to promote learners' metalinguistic awareness, and their moderate progress in the use of *metalinguage*. However, she also observed remaining difficulties regarding learners' comprehension and usage of past verbal tenses as well as other grammatical elements in letter writing.

Urrejola Corales and Becerra Rojas also collected written data consisting of college students' essay drafts, which they compared to check whether they understood the writing teacher's audiovisual feedback, and included such feedback in subsequent writings. To this end, the authors analysed the students' texts qualitatively for rhetorical and linguistic categories of the genre that presented problems, and the solutions the students offered to these based on the teacher's feedback. They also quantified these problematic instances and their correct solutions to obtain a clearer picture of the extent to which they had incorporated such feedback, and had learnt new content through their different writings. The results of the study indicate a positive effect of the multimedia feedback provided by teacher in students' disciplinary writing. Ortega Cervigón and Mateo-Girona also collect written data in the form of teacher-students' historical newspapers, which they examine according to the general and specific features of this genre qualitatively and quantitatively. The authors show that journalistic writing with these pre-service teachers favours conceptual knowledge building, and promotes their social and civic competences, as well as their competence in linguistic communication.

The studies on WCF (Arsenau, and García-Pastor & Grau Montesinos) and learner errors (Garrido Vilchez & Seseña Gómez) also analyse students' writings qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, Arsenau explores types of revision tasks inserted in digital writing tools and platforms according to the actions they require from learners in the revision of their texts. These authors indicate that such digital composing devices target spelling, syntax, and punctuation in isolation, but combine different feedback types, and mostly comprise selection-classification and identification activities. Ideally, they should target the distinct aspects of texts already mentioned in combination. Similarly, García-Pastor and Grau Montesinos argue that Secondary school students might benefit from more feedback on macro-level aspects of their texts along with more indirect and metalinguistic feedback from their EFL teachers, who were found to provide mainly direct and unfocused feedback on micro-level errors. Lastly, Garrido Vilchez and Seseña Gómez conclude that grammar instruction which promotes students' metalinguistic awareness in connection with writing throughout Secondary education might help them overcome the difficulties that they experience when producing distinct academic genres at university.



As opposed to the studies above, Alonso-Cortés Fradejas and Sánchez Rodríguez analyse observational data by means of a rubric on teachers' pedagogical writing practices that they developed based on empirical findings, and systematic observations that they conducted across multiple writing classes in Primary school. The authors follow content analysis, and use figures to indicate the number of effective instructional practices implemented by a specific teacher to conclude that documenting teachers' L1 writing pedagogy in this manner allows for bridging empirical findings with the reality of classrooms, whilst fostering practitioner-researcher collaboration. Finally, Sanz-Moreno and Pérez Giménez is the only study that adopts quantitative data collection and analysis methods exclusively through the use of a validated questionnaire on teacher beliefs about grammar, and the analysis of the responses to its items and questions delivered by pre-service Primary and Secondary school language teachers across Spain. The authors use frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to account for these teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and representations (Cambra & Palou, 2007), whereby the grammar-writing connection is a shared strong representation, and writing is not only deemed essential for grammar learning, but grammar knowledge is also pivotal to write correctly.

All in all, the studies in this issue aim to develop our understanding of writing instruction in different languages and educational stages in order to promote language learning, and learning how to write efficiently. They also highlight the idea that feedback and text revision are relevant in the writing process, and that teachers should become researchers themselves to investigate the relationship between their instructional practices and their students' writing development in their classes.

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