

# Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning

## Volume III

Volume III of the *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, like Volumes I and II, is a comprehensive, state-of-the-art overview of current research into social contexts of second language (L2)/foreign language (FL) teaching and learning; language policy; curriculum; types of instruction; incremental language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar; international communication; pragmatics; and assessment and testing. It differs from earlier volumes in its main purpose—to provide a more in-depth discussion and detailed focus on the development of the essential language skills required for any type of communication: speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing.

Volume III preserves continuity with previous volumes in its coverage of all the classical areas of research in L2/FL teaching and learning and applied linguistics, but rather than offering a historical review of disciplinary traditions, it explores innovations and new directions of research, acknowledges the enormous complexity of teaching and learning the essential language abilities, and offers a diversity of perspectives. Chapter authors are all leading authorities in their disciplinary areas.

What's New in Volume III?

- Updates the prominent areas of research, including the sub-disciplines addressed in Volumes I and II and represents the disciplinary mainstays
- Considers and discusses perspectives held by different schools of thought on the what, the how, and the why of teaching foundational language skills, including theories, pedagogical principles, and their implementation in practice
- Captures new and ongoing developments in the key areas of L2/FL teaching and learning, and innovative research topics that have gained substantial recognition in current publications, including the role of corpora, technology, and digital literacy in L2/FL teaching and learning
- Examines new trends in language pedagogy and research, such as an increased societal emphasis on teaching academic language for schooling, somewhat contradictory definitions of literacy, and the growing needs for instruction in intercultural communication

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# Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning

Volume III

Edited by  
Eli Hinkel

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2017  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*  
[CIP data]

AuQ01

ISBN: 978-1-138-85981-4 (hbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-138-85982-1 (pbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-315-71689-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Minion  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

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# Preface

## **A Broad-stroke Overview: Political Impacts on Language Teaching and Learning**

In 1657, when John Amos Comenius completed his work on *Opera Didactica Omnia*, Latin was being slowly displaced by English, French, and Italian in school studies and curricula. In that work, Comenius outlined his theory of language acquisition that maintained that the teaching of all foreign languages had to be oral due to the preeminence of the spoken language above written for the purposes of communication. It seems that little has changed since then in the principles of language teaching and learning.

The appearance of Volume III of the Handbook is direct and clear evidence of the continuing importance of teaching and learning languages for practical rather than purely educational purposes. The book addresses changes in educational, social, legal, and immigration frameworks that have occurred in the past several years in many regions around the world. These new and not-so-new developments include, for example, the changing attitudes toward language proficiencies of countless demographic types of language learners who can be, for instance:

- immigrants and their families, who need to settle in their new locations and find employment in, e.g. the UK, the US, Australia, Germany, Canada, France, Italy, and New Zealand<sup>1</sup> (United Nations, 2013)
- temporary employees, guest workers, migrant workers in farming and factory jobs, and their family members
- international students and scholars in many countries around the world
- political, social, and environmental refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons
- voluntarily or forcibly resettled populations, e.g. whole groups of religious, ethnic, or cultural minorities (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015)

According to reports issued by the United Nations in the past few years, globally, the number of refugees and displaced persons has never been higher than it is today, and approximate numbers exceed 250 million. For the majority of these people, learning a new language is likely to be crucial.

Not entirely unexpected, and likely in conjunction with the increased scale and pace of such migrations, immigration and language requirements laws have been substantially revised in the countries that are considered to be desirable destinations. The International Organization for Migration has referred to Europe, as well as some regions in the US, as the most populous destinations, as well as the most dangerous in terms of the human toll at border crossings (European Parliament, 2015).



In recent years, a broad array of political, legislative, regulatory, and educational initiatives have been proposed and adopted into law to formalize language requirements of immigrants, students, and other types of new arrivals. They include the following:

- new educational and language-oriented legislation in the US and the UK
- 2014–2015 language requirements of the Canadian citizenship laws
- modifications in the Australian Immigration Act in 2015
- new language requirements of workers and students entering New Zealand (2014)
- new immigration laws (2013–2015) in a number of European Union (EU) countries, such as the UK, Italy, Ireland, Hungary, Germany, and Sweden.

According to EU immigration laws that apply to all member countries, a knowledge of English can be substituted for that of “the language of the host country” (p. 16) in the Netherlands, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and Finland. English proficiency is required of all students, scholars, and professional trainees who enter any of the 27 EU countries (European Parliament, 2011).

In addition, learning and attaining proficiency in English has become progressively more important and economically urgent in various countries. Local media have continued to publicize government, political, and educational calls for raising English skill levels in practically every location around the world where legislative bodies and ministries mandate how foreign languages are taught and learned. A few representative examples include:

- the heightened importance of second (L2) and foreign (FL) language learning in such countries as, for example, China,<sup>2</sup> India, Pakistan, and Vietnam
- the “urgent necessity” for learning and using English in Saudi Arabia, other Gulf nations,<sup>3</sup> and throughout the “Arab world” (AlHammadi, 2013, p. 46)
- calls for “urgent action” and improvements in the English proficiency among school and university graduates in Malaysia,<sup>4</sup> Indonesia, Korea (Sung & Spolsky, 2014), and Taiwan<sup>5</sup>
- a growing preeminence of English in virtually all EU countries, where 77% of all primary school students and 100% of these students in Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, and Spain<sup>6</sup> learn the language to prepare “for global economy”

In short, the push for L2/FL learning, as well as English language learning and skills, has probably never been greater than it is today.

## Overview

The main purpose of Volume III is to provide a more in-depth discussion of language teaching and learning essentials. This edition is different from the earlier two because of its detailed focus on the development of the essential language skills required for any type of communication. In combination, however, Volumes I, II, and III have a better chance of presenting more thoroughly essential study areas in the field of language teaching and learning than any of the three volumes singly.

The contents of this book reflect the renewed importance of learning and teaching L2/FL, and it looks at the discipline from an entirely different vantage point. The content of Volume III continues to strive to remain thorough, as much as possible within the scope of one book. A collection of state-of-the-art overviews of what is known, important, advantageous, relevant, influential, fruitful, theoretical, practical, or controversial and contradictory in L2/FL teaching and learning may have little choice but to exclude a number of research areas. This obvious constraint applies equally to the

three volumes of the handbook that complement one another and present a relatively comprehensive picture.

Broad-scope books that, in one form or another, present an overview of the discipline need to maintain and continue its traditions and topic coverage. This volume includes all the classical areas of research in L2/FL teaching and learning, and applied linguistics, and the book design preserves the continuity with the previous editions. The key topics have remained enduring areas of coverage in all three volumes. In addition, chapter guidelines for each contribution have sought to account for a brief synopsis of the legacies within each topic area.

On the whole, however, Volume III of the Handbook is not a historical review of disciplinary traditions. The book explores the innovations and new directions of research in L2/FL teaching and learning. In light of the increasing importance of L2/FL usage around the world, the chapters examine in greater depth the core areas without which no communication can take place: speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing.

### **Methodology for Content Design**

As with earlier editions, to identify areas and topics that are of relevance, importance, and usefulness, it was necessary to look at the topics of research and interest among the professional associations and research organizations around the world. The following approach was adopted:

- (1) To focus on currency and relevance, the themes and shifts highlighted at research and professional conferences, meetings, gatherings, academies, presentations, and in-progress workshops were collected.
- (2) The divisions, affiliates, special interest groups, as well as content and topic areas in various professional associations and organizations in dozens of countries and across continents were compiled to ensure the currency and breadth of research topics, content areas, and values.
- (3) A thorough and extensive review of the L2/FL research published since the release of Volume II played a central role.
- (4) The new and additional disciplinary areas that complement established research territories are driven by the indelible effects of technology and politics in how languages are taught and learned at the present time.
- (5) Current social, political, legal, educational, and migration sources were surveyed. These consisted of legal and government briefs available in many countries and at numerous institutions (e.g. Migration Policy Institute or Migration Policy Center), news agencies, and an enormous number of research reports, initiative briefs, and publications produced and disseminated by an extensive array of international organizations.

As a result of this substantial examination, possible topic areas in the teaching and learning of the foundational L2/FL skills began to emerge and were subsequently narrowed down to seven main research areas reflected in the book.

The book chapters set out to highlight the major findings and the advancements of knowledge that have taken place since the publication of the earlier two volumes in 2005 and 2011. This tome includes seven parts, each divided into three to seven chapters, depending on its topics and contents. As mentioned earlier, it seems necessary to take stock of the classic applied linguistics L2/FL research areas, such as the sociology of language teaching and learning, language policy in education, and teaching and learning English as a global language. Similarly, an overview of other L2/FL facets accounts for more narrowly focused domains of research, and these address much of what currently takes place in the L2/FL universe.

In general terms, an inclusion or exclusion of a particular theme or topic in this already huge compendium of overviews reflects its prominence in L2/FL research literature and professional gatherings. It is important to note, however, that the research areas of interest and value may vary greatly across geographic locations and the human contexts in which L2/FL is taught, learned, and researched.

As with any collection of state-of-the-art overviews, this compendium may have little choice but to exclude a number of research areas. This obvious constraint applies equally to all three volumes of the handbook. Like Volumes I and II, Volume III brings together a comprehensive, state-of-the-art overview of current research into social contexts of L2/FL teaching and learning, language policy, curriculum, types of instruction, and incremental language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar, as well as international communication, pragmatics, assessment, and testing.

In a departure from the design of the two earlier editions, the structure of Volume III seeks to acknowledge the enormous complexity of teaching and learning the essential language abilities. Most researchers, methodologists, curriculum designers, and practitioners typically accept it as given that language teaching and learning is such a vast and complex area of study that it might be simply impossible to grasp it in its entirety.

One outcome of the complexity of language and language teaching is that multiple perspectives, research methods, learning priorities, and instructional approaches can be found in practically every aspect of linguistic analysis and pedagogy. To account for the fact that divergent perspectives and schools of thought exist on the teaching and learning of all essential language skills, the content of Volume III expands its overviews of research findings in L2/FL listening, speaking, literacy, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar.

To some extent, the diversity of perspectives in research on L2/FL teaching and learning reflects the rising professionalization of the field and the increasing depth of knowledge in scholarship and pedagogy. L2/FL research and its findings fundamentally hinge on indirect and interpreted evidence, and in almost all cases, more than one perspective and interpretation are possible. For this reason, it may come as little surprise that theoretical and scholarly views on key variables in L2/FL teaching and learning can differ to a great extent. Multiple and different perspectives on practically every aspect of L2/FL teaching and learning are probably inevitable.

Diverse viewpoints and mindsets are coin of the realm in every discipline, and L2/FL research is no exception. To this end, Volume III seeks to account for disparate frames of reference, research findings, and their interpretations in the key areas of language teaching and learning.

The new features of the book are highlighted at the outset, followed by those that have endured the test of time and are therefore retained in Volume III.

### **New Directions, Contents, Chapters, and Authors in Volume III**

The content changes in Volume III accomplish four goals:

- (1) survey and update the prominent areas of research, including the sub-disciplines that have been already addressed in Volumes I and II, and that represent the disciplinary mainstays
- (2) consider and discuss perspectives held by different schools of thought on the what, the how, and the why of teaching foundational language skills, including theories, pedagogical principles, and their implementation in practice
- (3) capture new and ongoing developments in the key areas of L2/FL teaching and learning, and innovative research topics that have gained substantial recognition in current publications, e.g. the role of corpora, technology, and digital literacy in L2/FL teaching and learning

- (4) examine new trends in language pedagogy and research, e.g. an increased societal emphasis on teaching academic language for schooling, somewhat contradictory definitions of literacy, and the growing needs for instruction in intercultural communication

The selection of chapter authors also adheres to the original strategy of inviting leading authorities in their disciplinary areas. As in Volumes I and II, all authors in Volume III are outstanding authorities in their areas of expertise. Volume III includes 35 chapters with 14 returning and 21 new authors.

- An inclusion of new authors from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America maintains the book's international scope.
- Some authors whose names are synonymous with their areas of expertise and who are the pre-eminent figures in their sub-disciplines have been invited back to contribute to Volume III. Nonetheless, all chapters are completely new and will not significantly overlap content in those domains published in previous volumes.
- Some authors with world-class reputations and diverse research interests have chosen to work on chapters on topic areas different from those in their earlier chapters.
- The addition of new material primarily covers the impact of technology on L2/FL pedagogy, the influence of corpus studies on instruction, and innovative developments in cross-cultural interactions.
- The assessment and testing chapters bear little resemblance to the corresponding sections in Volumes I and II. The chapters on social outcomes of language assessment, practical factors in language testing, and large-scale and classroom assessment complement the thematic threads addressed in the earlier volumes.

The audience for Volume III is envisioned to be the same as for Volumes I and II. Earlier and current volumes of the handbook are geared to all types of L2/FL and FL professionals: researchers and researchers-in-training; advanced and not-so-advanced graduate students; faculty in teacher training, teacher education, and applied linguistics programs; practicing, novice, and pre-service teachers; teacher trainers; curriculum designers; and material developers; or others who are still merely considering joining the profession.

### **The Organization of the Book**

The principles for selecting themes, topics, research areas, and chapters in Volume III have remained somewhat similar to those in Volumes I and II. The contents of the book are organized into seven thematic parts. (One widely acclaimed linguist commented that now that the book is not as lengthy as the previous two volumes, it might actually be possible to read most of it.)

The social contexts of L2/FL learning and users, who undertake to learn a language (most commonly, English), are the top priority in the research on L2/FL teaching and learning. Much L2/FL research that is into the social, political, and educational systems undertakes to find out as much as possible about the contexts in which second and foreign languages are taught and learned.

**Part I, Social Contexts, Language Policy, and Language Learners** consists of seven chapters. At the beginning of the book, the chapters in this section focus on the people who set out to learn a second and foreign language in various contexts, political and educational systems. As is typical of many populations, language learners everywhere have broad-ranging objectives for achieving different L2/FL proficiencies in order to accomplish their educational, vocational, personal, academic, professional, career, and communicative goals. The contents of Part I address the sociology

of language teaching and learning, the status of language policy in education, views on English as a Global Language, learning English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes, the research on teaching English to very young learners, and teaching and learning the language of schooling.

The current research in language curricula and pedagogy represents the second theme. These are discussed in **Part II, Curriculum and Instruction**. The seven chapters discuss applications of research to curriculum and material design, as well as deal with a few prominent exemplars of instructional approaches in L2/FL. These approaches were selected for a closer look because they are widely adopted in various geographic locations and social contexts around the world. For example, research in spoken and written discourse and the applications of its findings to teaching L2/FL receptive and productive skills is probably one of the more robust areas in language pedagogy, and no handbook on second language anything can proceed without an overview of the current state of affairs in this discipline. Since at least the early 1980s, content-based language teaching—and more recently its European counterpart Content Integrated Language Learning—has become central in a range of teaching contexts and at various levels of schooling, such as elementary and secondary, including both majority- and minority-language learners. The same can be said about the growing prominence of corpus analyses and their findings in all manner of language pedagogy. The proliferation of technology in language learning and instruction in and out of school (not to mention the ubiquity of technology anywhere and everywhere world-wide) has dramatically changed how learners go about their daily language-related activities.

The focus on specific language skills begins in **Part III, Listening and Speaking**. As has been mentioned, a number of standpoints, interpretive paradigms, and perspectives typically co-exist side-by-side in what is known and valued in research on practically all facets of L2/FL teaching and learning. This indelible quality of L2/FL anything—and particularly so in research on language pedagogy—seems clear in the two chapters on L2/FL listening and the other two on L2/FL speaking. Two chapters address the current and divergent perspectives on listening pedagogy and learning to develop L2/FL listening abilities. Similarly, two additional chapters are devoted to the classroom teaching of L2/FL speaking skills and the five categories of opportunity in the acquisition of speaking abilities: rehearsal, interaction, output, feedback, and language understanding. The role of pronunciation in developing L2/FL speaking and listening skills similarly intertwined with the development of L2/FL listening and speaking skills.

The five chapters in **Part IV, Literacies, Reading, and Writing**, treat a number of broad domains of research, such as pen-and-paper literacy, using digital technology for language learning, L2/FL reading as an essential language skill, the increasing prominence of computers in learning to become a proficient L2/FL reader, and ongoing debates and controversies in the complex political world of L2/FL writing. The classical definition of literacy refers to the ability to read and write. However, how teachers and learners go about it in various regions around the world probably has little in common. In addition, the application of the term “literacy” to adopting and practicing with digital technology to improve learning is likely to be a bit of a misnomer when compared to literacy in its classical sense. Nonetheless, socially accepted and widely employed definitions of complex constructs do not necessarily have to be consistent or logical. Hence, pen-and-paper literacy thus finds itself in the company of digital literacy that, by definition, requires advanced reading and writing abilities.

The four chapters in **Part V, Vocabulary and Grammar**, focus on various aspects of learning L2/FL lexicon and its nearest relative, grammar. In recent decades, dramatic shifts in theoretical foundations, teacher beliefs, and the practice of teaching have had enormous influence on the place of vocabulary, grammar, and their contributions to language pedagogy and uses. Although typically whole books are written on L2/FL vocabulary, grammar, or vocabulary combined with grammar,

the chapters in this book section only touch the tip of the iceberg. How, when, and in what contexts vocabulary is learned, as well as how to measure its size and growth, are the topics without which no vocabulary overview can take place. On the other hand, the two schools of thought on grammar research and pedagogy approach analyses, instruction, and practice from vantage points that may not be easily reconciled. Taken together, however, the viewpoints presented in this book section dominate in various geographic locations and educational contexts around the world.

The topics of **International Communication and Pragmatics** are considered in **Part VI**. Research into the connections between language learning and communication across cultural, social, and national divides has long remained one of the pivotal areas of study. More recently, intercultural and international communication have attracted further attention due to the increasing effects of globalization. The term “international communication” first appeared in research and publications in the 1950s, while the coined phrase “intercultural communication” and its alternative form “cross-cultural communication” emerged slightly later in the 1960s. Studies in L2/FL pragmatics are bound up with cross-cultural and cross-national language usage in an enormous array of socio-cultural frameworks. Social and pragmalinguistic variations in spoken interactions and their norms are taken up in research on speech acts and cross-cultural speech act uses.

The four chapters in **Part VII, Assessment and Testing**, are probably insufficient to discuss in any depth the many important human and institutional issues entailed in measuring L2/FL proficiency. However, the overarching goal of the chapters in Part VII is to underscore the vexing complexity of language assessment and testing as it is closely tied to L2/FL learning, learning processes, and inferential measurements of L2/FL competence, proficiency, and skill. Thus, the chapters present brief overviews of the socio-political contexts of language assessment, practicalities, benefits, and constraints entailed in virtually all language assessments, as well as large-scale assessments that serve multiple purposes in multiple contexts. The final chapter in this section draws on many concepts and findings in classroom assessment with the goal of helping L2/FL teachers plan, design, and carry out reflective or formative measures that can blend assessment and L2/FL instruction.

### The Structure of the Chapters

In this Handbook, as in any other large book that consists of dozens of chapters written by the three or four dozen authors and co-authors, the contributions are likely to differ in character. To a large extent, the chapters reflect the diversity of the research into L2/FL teaching and learning, the contexts in which it is taught and learned, and the individuals who teach and learn. To add to the mix, some chapters deal with concrete and well-defined topics or argue for the validity of particular research findings, teaching methods, or language learning theories, whereas others cover abstract research areas or seek to balance disparate research undertakings.

In Volume III, the principles for selecting and structuring chapters have largely remained the same as they were in previous editions. Based on the survey of the information sources, the areas of relevance and currency were relatively easy to identify. In light of the great diversity of the field, research, and disciplinary perspectives, every effort has been made to make the chapters consistent in style, tone, and the depth of material coverage. For this purpose, all contributors were requested to construct their chapters along a similar outline:

- An explanation of how the topic discussed in the chapter fits into a larger picture of the domain of L2/FL research
- Important developments, trends, and traditions in the discipline, as well as current controversies and the reasons that they have arisen
- A detailed examination of the current research findings presented in the chapter



- A section on conclusions and/or future research directions
- A substantial list of references that can assist interested readers in backtracking seminal and relevant works

Each chapter represents a standalone examination of research in a specific L2/FL subdomain, yet the book as a whole seeks to reflect the major trends in the current investigations into the people and the contexts where and how second and foreign languages are taught and learned.

### Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to my friends and colleagues whose guidance, assistance, and advice were vital. I am sincerely and deeply grateful to them for giving generously of their knowledge, experience, and time (in alphabetical order):

Kathryn Bartholomew, Seattle Pacific University  
 Marianne Celce-Murcia, University of California, Los Angeles  
 William Grabe, Northern Arizona University  
 Robert B. Kaplan, University of Southern California  
 Sandra Lee McKay, San Francisco State University  
 Penny Ur, Oranim College of Education  
 Cheryl Zimmermann, California State University, Fullerton

Naomi Silverman, Publisher at Routledge, has been a wise, supportive, foresightful, and steadfast friend and colleague for many years. The Handbook and its editions were Naomi's idea, and they simply would not have happened without her support, initiative, and enthusiasm for this ongoing project.

More than a dozen reviewers, former and current graduate students, experienced teachers, and one textbook writer read various drafts of all chapters and provided thorough, thoughtful, and detailed comments. Their work was instrumental in the development of individual chapters and, by extension, the volume as a whole. My heartfelt thanks goes out to them: the book could not have proceeded without their knowledge, expertise, and devotion to the cause. My appreciation also goes to the three external reviewers of the second volume of the handbook, and their suggestions for revisions and changes in Volume III were very helpful.

### In Memoriam

*The Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* and its two earlier volumes have been around since 2003, when Volume I was originally proposed and then developed. In the past many years, the editions of the Handbook have greatly benefitted from the expertise and generosity of world-class chapter authors, colleagues, and friends. Their scholarship, work, and contribution to the field have been invaluable to the study and teaching of language and second language. Their contributions to the lives of their colleagues, students, and readers have touched and will continue to touch all those who learned and will continue to learn from them.

Richard Baldauf (1943–2014)  
 Alan Davies (1931–2015)  
 David Eskey (1933–2002)  
 Elliot Judd (1948–2008)  
 Yamuna Kachru (1933–2013)

Jiri Nekvapil (1935?–2015)  
Teresa Pica (1945–2011)  
Theo van Els (1936–2015)  
Leo van Lier (1944–2012)  
Larry Vandergrift (1948–2015)

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