

***The Action-oriented Approach: A Dynamic Vision of Language Education.* Enrica Piccardo and Brian North. Multilingual Matters, 2019. vi + 338 pp. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788924351>**

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This book, by two leading contributors to the Common European Framework (CEFR), positions the Action-oriented Approach (AoA) as a “practice in search of a theory” (p. 2) that has grown in the wake of the CEFR over the past two decades, particularly among teachers of languages other than English. However, the existence of the approach may come as some surprise to English language teachers and researchers.

As argued by the authors, the AoA is deeply rooted in the notion of dynamic *action* in social contexts. The approach views learners primarily as *social agents* who use language to accomplish tasks that are not exclusively language related. In other words, “the learner acts and accomplishes tasks in order to learn; he or she does not learn in order to accomplish tasks” (p. 139), a position which is strongly aligned with a socio-constructivist perspective and the communicative approach—in particular with the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach. However, in the authors’ estimation, AoA both encompasses and goes beyond such earlier innovations in language education.

Chapter 1 presents the emergence of the AoA from its first explicit mention in the CEFR itself (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 9), to its place within our evolving understanding of language education as a movement toward complexity, socialisation, and change. The authors argue that the AoA represents a new, coherent, and important view that situates language learning within “dynamic sociological landscapes” (p. 10) brought about by globalisation. The AoA thus tries to establish this dynamism in the classroom by providing “real-life tasks” (p. 21) that provide a unifying frame in which actions can make sense and have purpose. It is in this way that we may think of AoA tasks as conceptually different than TBLT tasks. That is, in AoA tasks are seen as authentic by definition, rather than as pedagogical approximations of “target tasks” that sometimes merely bear “a relationship” to the real world as they do in TBLT (Long, 2015, p. 109).

In Chapter 2, Piccardo and North continue to build a case for the AoA by exploring notions of competence. They persuasively argue that the complex, contextualised, collaborative—and ultimately, dynamic—nature of communication can best be accommodated in a new paradigm for language education. This argument is driven home in Chapter 3 with an outline of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach. Some of the information in this chapter, for example the review of behaviourist to cognitive to meaning-focused pedagogies, will be familiar to most *JALT Journal* readers; however, the argument extended from social constructivism to agency, action, and affordances, which ends with a case for a “complex, ecological perspective” (p. 107) for language learning, is innovative and bold. The chapter is highly theoretical and, at this point in the book, practical-minded readers may well be asking how this all relates to the classroom.

Chapter 4 focuses on developments in language teaching methodology and covers many of the practical limitations of other approaches. It is here that an argument is made in detail as to how AoA is truly different from TBLT: namely, that AoA maintains a “broader and more holistic view of language and language use” (p. 137) that takes a stronger stance regarding *real-life* tasks. The authors also outline important distinctions between TBLT’s *learner* and AoA’s *social agent*. In brief, they define *learners* as being “more or less passive recipients of pedagogical action” and thus operating on a reduced level of situational (i.e., contextual) and interactional (i.e., social) authenticity, and a *social agent* as having agency and being in control of the process of completing the task, as well as benefiting from high situational and interactional authenticity (p. 139). However, perhaps the most important concept introduced in Chapter 4 is the AoA concept of a *scenario*, which refers to the simulated context in which AoA tasks and projects are situated. For teachers and materials writers who are interested in developing themed approaches to TBLT, the concept of a scenario should be of immense value as an organizing principle that can exist between the theme and its component projects and tasks.

Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive overview of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2000) and its latest companion volume (Council of Europe, 2018). This is worth reading even for those who are already familiar with these documents, as it helps to situate the AoA as an approach within a framework that many other teachers and researchers will already know. In particular, Chapter 5 helps readers to understand the new CEFR descriptors for mediation and plurilingual/ pluricultural competences, and how these can be integrated into assessment.

Chapter 6 is another theoretical chapter that takes a yet broader view of language learning, which recognizes plurality (of languages and cultures) as well as creativity within the dynamic nature of language learning that is proposed by the AoA. Piccardo and North illustrate and argue again the need for a holistic, ecological approach, by further explaining the role of mediation, plurilingualism, and pluriculturalism, which the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018) considers to be important in language education (p. 231). In particular, the addition of plurilingual and pluricultural competences (i.e., competences in languages and cultures other than one's L1 or the target L2) adds a facet to language descriptors that should be important even in relatively monolingual and monocultural countries like Japan.

Chapter 7 finally presents the AoA in full. It opens with the provocative section title, "The AoA: An All Embracing Perspective" and proceeds to sum up the approach. The second half of the chapter introduces practical examples of how the AoA may be implemented in the classroom. To the authors' credit, they recognize the complexity inherent in an approach where social agents must operate at two levels simultaneously, the individual and the social (p. 256). They also admit that the approach clearly requires an ambitious level of dynamism, adaptability, and therefore investment from the learner (p. 257). This is where the concept of the scenario, which frames AoA actions in authentic situational and interactional contexts, becomes crucial. That is, AoA scenarios serve to put social agents into real-life situations which activate knowledge and competences in purposeful ways and which, furthermore, can guide assessment. Example templates for scenario development (p. 284; 290) and to guide both teacher- and self-assessment (pp. 288-289) are provided in appendices. It may be asked, however, whether these solutions are substantively different from philosophically progressive and strong TBLT approaches that have been proposed, for example, in Long (2015, pp. 63-82).

In their concluding chapter, Piccardo and North estimate that "the synthesis of current learning theories offered by the AoA enables the fundamental paradigm shift that CLT called for, but was unable to provide, mainly due to the rather limited nature of [second language education] that informed CLT" (p. 276). They include TBLT in this failure, which at first struck me as an unfairly narrow view of TBLT, (i.e., one which seems designed to carve out space for an adjacent approach). However, the book does make a compelling argument for the principles behind the AoA, and it must be begrudgingly admitted that, while in principle a strong TBLT position *can* be broadly inclusive of social dynamics and complexity theory, these needs have not often

been met by TBLT proponents in practice. In other words, TBLT may have ceded important social-interactionist and constructivist ground, which now the Action-oriented Approach quite rightly seeks to cover.

In all, while this book may be a dense read for those not already well acquainted with some of the related areas, such as the CEFR, social interactionist theory, or TBLT, for those who are it is a well-argued and provocative work. As it is entirely focused on articulating a theoretical position, the book may frustrate readers who are looking for an explicit research agenda; however, an astute and glass-half-full perspective might see the approach as entirely ripe ground for research validation.

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***English as a Lingua Franca in Japan: Towards Multilingual Practices*. Mayu Konakahara and Keiko Tsuchiya (Eds.). Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. xxvi + 358 pp. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33288-4>**

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*English as a Lingua Franca in Japan: Towards Multilingual Practices* is a compilation of 17 chapters written by authors with a wide range of expertise. Edited by Mayu Konakahara and Keiko Tsuchiya, it is a special homage to Professor Kumiko Murata's scholarly experience and contribution to the academic community for applied linguistics in Japan. This volume aims to

examine the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in Japanese contexts and may serve as a useful tool for academics, graduate students, and teachers-as-researchers in Japan.

Following the editors' introduction to the field of ELF in Japan and summary of chapters, the volume is divided into four parts before ending with a Conclusion followed by a surprisingly brief 3-page index. Part I begins with situating ELF within Japan's language policies and English-education guidelines. The next two parts comprise the pragmatic use of ELF in Japanese contexts, with Part II dealing with research on ELF in academic and pedagogical environments and Part III focusing on corporate and institutional settings. The three chapters in Part IV present ELF studies in Japan and highlight the field's future directions in light of multilingualism. Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the ELF research addressed in this volume by detailing the definition of a *pedagogic device* (pp. 335-336) made up of knowledge, discourses, and practices and includes recommendations for implementing ELF-based pedagogy for instruction and future research.

Part I details ELF in Japan from historical and political viewpoints by critically reviewing ELF in Japan's language policy and education system. This section contains four chapters. In Chapter 2, Nobuyuki Hino reconsiders the position of Japan in Kachru's (1980) Three Circles model, contrasting the English from *learners* in Expanding Circle countries with that from *users* in the Outer Circle and native-speakers from the Inner Circle. By outlining four linguacultural values in Japan such as (a) an awareness of internationalization, (b) a quest for equity, (c) an orientation toward indigenization, and (d) a need for models, Hino presents the issue of ELF in Japan from a cultural and historical perspective. For a more locally appropriate approach to teaching EFL in Japan, he proposes an eclectic understanding of theories, language varieties, models, and users as a solution. In Chapter 3, Masakazu Iino discusses Japan's language policies and the marginalization of ELF in a discourse where so-called "native" varieties are still granted legitimacy, as well as the paradigm of English as a foreign language or EFL. In Chapter 3, Masakazu Iino explains language policy in Japan, highlighting the marginalization of ELF in a discourse where the validity of native-speakerism continues to take precedence over non-native varieties of the language. He also emphasizes how growing economic and technological competitiveness and a rising divergence of geopolitical interests have intensified the need for a better understanding of the cultural context of communication. In Chapter 4, Ayako Suzuki discusses competency-based education, influenced by impacts in the United States and the European Union. Additionally, this

chapter addresses ELF education in Japan in relation to English education guidelines while emphasizing the principle of global citizenship. Although some progress toward ELF has been observed in Japanese English education, the author argues that ELF's scholarly work did not precipitate the change. Rather, two primary driving forces are illuminated; the first is the introduction of competency-based education into Japanese education policies and the second is the cultivation of global human resources. These were also included as recent revisions in MEXT's new Course of Study towards a competency for lifelong learning. In Chapter 5, Tomokazu Ishikawa draws on Larsen-Freeman's (2018) complexity theory to characterize both monolingual Standard English and ELF as "complex adaptive systems" (p. 100) operating in their local context.

Part II comprises chapters on ELF in academic and pedagogic settings in Japan. In Chapter 6, by looking at accommodations in code-switching, Ayano Shino elaborates on the benefits and challenges regarding team teaching in primary school where a Japanese homeroom teacher (HRT) is paired with a foreign English teacher serving as an assistant language teacher (ALT). This chapter also outlines concerns such as power authority, teacher motivation, and foreign language anxiety in classrooms where HRTs and ALTs work collaboratively. With the growth of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) courses in Japan, Chapter 7 features an exploratory study by co-authors Tetsuo Harada and Ryo Moriya on ELF in EMI lectures at university. Yoko Nogami (Chapter 8) presents a micro-level analysis conducted to ascertain the (un)changes in Japanese university students' views of ELF following their participation in a study abroad program. Similarly, Chapter 9 by Konakahara describes an in-depth ELF-focused module for undergraduate students that resulted in a shift in their attitudes toward ELF.

Part III contains four chapters of ELF studies in the workplace in Japanese contexts. Chapter 10 by Akiko Otsu uses transcription data from a single case analysis of the first meeting between a Japanese businessperson and a Malaysian hotel clerk to focus on small talk use in business ELF or BELF. In Chapter 11, Miyuki Takino reports on qualitative data from narrative interviews to elucidate Japanese businesspeople's habits and cognitive processes related to multilingual usage of BELF and Japanese for various business activities in multinational corporations in Japan. Tsuchiya (Chapter 12) analyzes instances of businesspeople using multilingual tools and translanguaging in the course of conducting business negotiations. Another research-based report is provided in Chapter 13 with a detailed description from Yukako Nozawa of ELF interactions between a medical student or stu-

dent doctor and a patient (i.e., an actor acting as a patient), which was a part of the training in a medical English course at a Japanese medical university to examine the pragmatic use of ELF by students while performing consultations and showing empathy.

In Part IV, Masaki Oda (Chapter 14) offers a criticism of Japan's English-education program, devoid of ELF and multilingualism, even in the face of globalization and the Olympics showcase. In Chapter 15, Yasukata Yano critiques the Japanese people's deep-rooted native-speakerism and advocates for the use of their linguistic capital in ELF interactions. In Chapter 16, Barbara Seidlhofer and Henry Widdowson acknowledge the boom in ELF study in Japan over the last decade before advancing the theory of ELF through a rethinking where "learners cannot be taught English as an international language as such, they can only be prepared to put the resources of English to expedient use and an international means of communication, in other words by developing their communicative capability" (p. 330).

To summarize, this book explores the phenomenon of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) in Japan, using multilingualism as a medium to explore language practices and attitudes in what is traditionally viewed as a monolingual, monocultural environment. The chapter authors take up a wide range of issues related to this theme, including language education policies, the essence of ELF communication in academic and business environments, users' and learners' perceptions of ELF, and pedagogy for fostering ELF-oriented attitudes. The overarching recommendation is to rethink teaching and learning practices, moving the emphasis away from adherence to native-speaker norms and toward ELF users' innovative use of multilingual tools. This book is important for advancing ELF research and analysis in Japan and it would also be of benefit to students and scholars exploring multilingualism and World Englishes in other global contexts.

## References

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***Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics.***  
**Heath Rose, Jim McKinley, and Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan.**  
**Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. x + 296 pp.**

*Reviewed by*  
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In the world of academic publishing, teacher-researchers and graduate students have a wide range of choices when it comes to titles on research methods and methodology. For most of these books, we can peer into the minds of eminent scholars in order to glean their thoughts on this complicated subject. Far fewer books, however, succeed in reaching out to the readers by presenting research methods in an engaging, practical, and accessible manner. *Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* is one of those rare works. The authors state that their volume is predominantly targeted for “postgraduate students of applied linguistics and language education research (including TESOL), who are being introduced to research methods for the first time”, but also hope that it “will become an essential resource for all applied linguistics researchers and will be used as a valuable textbook for research methods courses worldwide” (p. viii). This aspiration carries weight since before taking up teaching posts at the Universities of London and Oxford, each of the three authors have taught for many years in Japan, other parts of Asia, and Europe. Their experience of teaching and researching in situations similar to those for many readers of *JALT Journal* has enabled them to contextualize their discussions in a way that speaks to many of our shared challenges, needs, and concerns.

*Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* was also written to serve as a companion work to Paltridge and Phakiti’s (2015) book on research methodology in applied linguistics. The authors believe that while excellent, that work did not go far enough to address the common problem of graduate students and classroom practitioners – that of conflating research methods with research design. Their primary goals for writing this book are in helping readers identify the right methods for the right types of investigation and providing them with clear instructions on how to get “the most appropriate data for the research questions” (p. 20).

The first chapter begins with an impressive introduction to the basics of research methods. Their discussion of the complex interplay between quali-

tative and quantitative research in educational studies is one of the best that I have read in the research methods genre, and it effectively highlights how over-focusing on the qualitative-quantitative divide is often counterproductive. Whether we use words or numbers, these are simply tools that need to be used appropriately as we investigate issues in our second language classrooms.

Most of the remaining chapters focus on a specific domain of data collection. These include data elicitation tasks (Chapter 2) such as discourse completion or oral proficiency interviews, and introspective as well as retrospective protocols (Chapter 3) such as think-aloud forms of research data collection. The discussion in this chapter on eye-tracking and key-logging software, while often unavailable to many researchers due to cost and institutional limitations, will be a useful reference later when this technology becomes more accessible. Chapter 4 features an impressive discussion of validated tests and measures. These, the authors explain, are inventories that are attended by “a convincing body of evidence that the test or measure actually does what it claims to do and that the scores or ratings it yields can be used in a meaningful way” (p. 68). Examples of validated tests are the TOEIC, TOEFL, and IELTS. The issues teacher-researchers should consider in finding and properly using such tests are described in reassuring detail. Observation techniques, interviews, as well as diary studies, journals, and logs are the subjects of Chapters 5 through 7. Throughout these chapters, the position of the researcher as one who has the potential to change and to be changed by the acts of observation and recording events are considered. While the authors do help to raise awareness of these concerns, they seem resigned to the notion that one can only try to make a good faith effort, stating that the implementation of such methodologies is “not an exact science” (p. 109). Insightful considerations of how to use questionnaires and how to work with focus groups in an informed manner are found in Chapters 8 and 9. The authors provide an excellent discussion of the different approaches to document data collection, as well as ways of both making and analyzing corpora in Chapters 10 and 11. The final chapter of the book finishes with an informed discussion on triangulating one’s data and dealing with the real challenges of replicating one’s findings in applied linguistics research, such as (a) being able to use the methodologies in the way they were used in earlier studies, (b) maintaining transparency in how one must adjust their research to fit the conditions of their particular learning environment, and (c) taking an original direction grounded in an understanding of previous research, rather than one representing an uninformed flight of fancy.

All of the chapters follow a pattern evocative of how one might teach a graduate course or a teacher training workshop. Chapters begin with pre-reading activities based on the pattern of *Think, Discuss, and Imagine*. It is here that readers engage in a consciousness-raising exercise intended to elicit questions and the need for more knowledge about the issues to be discussed in the chapter. If used as a textbook, the first section of each chapter would easily serve as necessary warm-up activities. Each chapter then outlines key concepts for the methods and contains an insightful survey of practicalities. This includes standard data collection procedures, issues to anticipate, and possible pitfalls to avoid. Each chapter also features ways of improving the validity and reliability of the data collected. One of the features that I especially appreciate about this book is the section that presents examples of applied linguistics studies using the data collection methods in each chapter. This is followed by a section on the implications each of the data collection methods have for teacher-researchers, and this is further enhanced with the provision of reading lists of other authoritative books that delve further into how to use the methods. Each chapter closes with a list of post-task questions for further reflection. Here, readers are encouraged to expand upon the data collection methods and to look for opportunities to apply them in their own in-class investigations.

In terms of weaknesses or shortcomings, I was hard-pressed to find areas for improvement. One could mention the few typographic errors, the absence of the Oxford comma in display tables, or in Chapter 2, where the same subject heading has been confusingly used twice, but such would be the observations of a churlish pedant. I did notice something of a preoccupation on the part of the authors with seemingly post-positivist concerns, in that their fixation on validity, reliability, and replication seems, in my mind at least, to unduly straightjacket the more qualitative data collection methods presented in the book. It also would have been helpful had the authors developed an inventory as an appendix where readers could answer questions which would then indicate an appropriate data collection method matching their area of research interest.

But these are minor concerns. Most of the time when I thought I had found something the authors may have missed, inevitably they would address those points later, almost as if they knew that I was on the periphery, watching critically. As I progressed through the book, I began to admire the quality and insight of what the authors have accomplished, and half wished such a resource had been available to me during my own graduate studies. Thankfully, however, the considerable knowledge and knowhow of these authors are available to students and teacher-researchers today.

In conclusion, the approach and depth of instruction from *Data Collection Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* is rigorous as it is well-informed; it will be a valuable resource to graduate students and classroom teacher-researchers alike. In my current duties as a graduate-level thesis and dissertation supervisor, I intend to use this work to help my own students make better decisions about the type of data they should gather and develop clearer ideas about the procedures they should follow in order to develop more compelling studies.

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***Eye Tracking in Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism*.  
Aline Godfroid. Routledge, 2019. xxiv + 411 pp. e-book  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315775616>**

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*Eye Tracking in Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism* by Aline Godfroid may be the most comprehensive work related to eye-tracking research for applied linguistics to date. Godfroid provides a mix of theoretical and practical considerations that both novice and advanced researchers can benefit from. Though not a new stream of research, books related to eye-tracking in an applied linguistics context are few. As such, a volume this thorough is a welcomed addition to the body of literature as it provides all the necessary information to carry out an eye-tracking study from start to finish. It is a resource that I wish I had access to when I began eye-tracking experiments, as it would have significantly reduced the learning curve.

Godfroid states that she had graduate students in mind when conceptualizing the book. The flow and organization of the volume bears that out; it reads like a step-by-step guide to writing a master's thesis. Consisting of nine chapters, four major themes can be found: (a) an introduction to eye-tracking in second language acquisition studies (Chapter 1), (b) an overview

of eye-tracking in cognitive psychology research (Chapter 2) and applied linguistics (Chapters 3 and 4), (c) a theoretical framework for designing eye-tracking studies (Chapter 5), and (d) a hands-on guide for carrying out eye-tracking experiments (Chapters 6-9).

Godfroid defines eye-tracking as, “the colloquial term used for eye-movement recordings, which are typically (but not necessarily) made as participants perform a task on a computer screen” (p. 11). In language studies, the tracking of eye-movements using video recording equipment can provide information about the cognitive processes of language acquisition. The first two chapters lay the groundwork for understanding the basics of eye-tracking in research, not limited to second language acquisition. In Godfroid’s words, Chapter 1 covers the “what, why and how” of eye-tracking research and describes various ways in which eye-tracking can be used in a study (p. 21). Chapter 2 explains some of the physiological concepts of eye movement and its relationship to the mind. The eye-movements that are most commonly measured in second language acquisition studies are *fixations*: periods of time when eye-movement is relatively still, and *saccades*: periods of time when the eye is moving. A simple illustration of how measuring fixations and saccades can reveal information about language ability is a study which found that as children become more skilled readers in their first language, their fixation time decreases and saccade length increases (p. 35). Many investigations into second language acquisition follow a similar pattern. Technical terms that are ubiquitous in eye-tracking literature are also introduced in this section, and while it may seem dense with specialized terminology, readers would benefit by taking the time to understand the concepts presented in this chapter.

Through a very detailed review of studies utilizing eye-tracking in applied linguistics, Godfroid maintains that most studies fall into one of two categories: *text-based eye-tracking* and *visual world paradigm*. Chapter 3 reviews the major research themes and studies related to text-based eye tracking. As the name suggests, these themes deal with studies containing written language, with topics ranging from the effects of subtitles on listening comprehension (p. 81) to how having a countdown timer visible during a test may adversely affect test validity (p. 83). For most second language acquisition researchers, text-based studies are the most prevalent (p. 64). Chapter 4 reviews studies related to the relationship between spoken language processing and eye movements, known as visual world paradigm.

Chapter 5 covers general experimental design principles and starts with basic research terms, such as defining types of independent, dependent,

and confounding variables. The chapter progresses to concepts in research specific to eye-tracking, such as how to determine the number of items needed in an experiment (p. 151) and ideal sample sizes for eye-tracking research (p. 154). Chapters 6-8 move into carrying out research studies, from creating the research questions, to conducting measurement, and finally to completing data analysis. These chapters transition from the theory described in previous chapters, to practical information, such as font size for experiments, how to prepare audio files for listening exercises, and software and statistical tools that can be used at certain stages of the experiment. Finally, Chapter 9 focuses on creating an eye-tracking lab and the practical considerations for setting up the environment.

Each chapter also contains case studies and references on how various concepts introduced in the book were used in previous research investigations. This is one area where the book is especially helpful, and it is evident that Godfroid dedicated a significant amount of time to categorizing and cataloging previous studies. The comprehensive review of the literature alone makes this book a valuable resource to even well-established researchers, who may not need to pay as much attention to some of the more basic concepts covered in the book.

While the majority of the book is fairly easy to digest, the vast number of technical terms introduced throughout the book requires careful reading. This may prove overwhelming to novice researchers or researchers new to the field, as a certain amount of knowledge about second language acquisition research is also necessary to make sense of some of the concepts covered. Thus, many researchers will probably be best served by using this book as a reference when constructing a study, rather than reading it straight through. Admittedly, certain sections of the book that were outside the scope of my current research interests were difficult to understand at times.

My overall assessment of the book is overwhelmingly positive. It is thorough to the extent that a graduate student could conceivably rely on this book as their sole reference to design a thesis-worthy experiment. I have only one minor critique, which concerns the final chapter. Chapter 9 focuses on setting up an eye-tracking lab and contains insights that only someone with lots of experience could identify, such as how to deal with subjects with one eyelid, where the calibration of eye-tracking devices can become difficult. However, the section about selecting an eye-tracking device (Chapter 9.1) left me wishing Godfroid would have compared various brands of equipment with a little bit more depth. I assume this was intentional

in order not to show bias towards a particular brand or model. However, with the extreme disparity in prices of equipment available on the market, a short description of what the major eye-tracking devices can and cannot do would have been helpful, especially since this book seems intended for people looking to begin conducting eye-tracking research. Having done research with three different eye-trackers in the past, I think choosing a suitable eye-tracker is of prime importance, especially considering the cost of some of them and the range of functionality that each offers. Another major work on this topic, *Eye-tracking: A Guide for Applied Linguistic Research* (Conklin et al., 2018), provides a detailed listing and comparison of some of the major eye-trackers on the market. Unsurprisingly, only three years on from the initial publication of that book, new equipment and updated models have come onto the market, which make it difficult for these sorts of comparisons to remain current. Nevertheless, a review of retail eye-tracking equipment seems essential for a chapter titled, "Setting up an Eye-tracking Lab." Godfroid notes that prices can range from free to over \$50,000 USD for high-end equipment (p. 12), making eye-tracking research a potentially expensive endeavor. This title is therefore a great initial investment for those looking to conduct eye-tracking studies and a must-have reference for those already engaged in eye-tracking research.

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***Complex Dynamic Systems Theory and L2 Writing Development.* Gary G. Fogal and Marjolijn H. Verspoor (Eds.). John Benjamins, 2020. xviii + 304 pp. e-book <https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.54>**

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Learning development is neither linear nor does it take place in a vacuum. This statement might seem obvious to many, but L2 writing researchers have rarely approached investigations that take these truths into account. Through years of group studies, researchers have successfully captured the changes that occur in L2 writing, particularly involving the commonly used variables of complexity, accuracy, fluency, and sometimes lexis (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). Such studies often use group means to show changes in development at different points in time or for different levels of proficiency but fail to shed light on an important question: What does change look like over time at the individual level?

*Complex Dynamic Systems Theory and L2 Writing Development* is a collection of studies in which various researchers attempt to address this question. It comprises of 11 chapters that are arranged into four themes: “CAF Perspectives,” “New Constructs, Approaches, and Domains,” “Methodological Perspectives,” and “Curricular Perspectives.” In the Foreword, Diane Larsen-Freeman explains how Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) is uniquely suited to offer a fresh perspective to L2 writing research by recognizing writer agency and providing a more fine-grained and nuanced view of writing development. From there, in the Introduction, editors Fogal and Verspoor set up CDST as a framework for investigating L2 writing, which can complement group studies by analyzing the variability of individual learners “as the motor of development” (p. xi).

In the first part, the editors showcase researchers using the more familiar metrics of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF), while adding a level of CDST analysis to their approach. In Chapter 1, Kyoko Baba uses growth curve modeling and reflective written comments to better understand the differences in the effect of multiple iterations of a free writing task on fluency between a high-performing learner and a low-performing learner. The researchers in the next two chapters in this part combine CAF-related

variables and CDST to investigate case studies of Chinese learners of English. Junping Hou, Hanneke Loerts, and Verspoor (Chapter 2) compare the developmental differences between two Chinese learners of English by analyzing 12 writing samples holistically and analytically using measures related to CAF. In Chapter 3, Yu Wang and Shoucun Tao examine linguistic complexity in connection to the development and interaction of discourse-semantic complexity. Both of these studies demonstrate the differences between more and less advanced learners, revealing a more synchronous and coordinated development between CAF variables among advanced learners. The studies presented here provide enough of a fresh take on CAF approaches while also exemplifying how CDST can be used to understand CAF-related variables on a more individual and nuanced level. Furthermore, the authors in this chapter demonstrate the variability of L2 writing development with an emphasis on the linguistic systems of advanced-level writers.

In the second part, the authors shift away from the CAF framework and explore new approaches to mapping changes in L2 writing development using CDST research. All three studies introduced in this section use case studies as a way to understand the relationships and interconnectedness of internal and external systems on L2 writing development. Whereas Susy Macqueen and Ute Knoch (Chapter 4) and Ryo Nitta (Chapter 6) uncover the symbiotic relationship between external and internal factors on writing development, R. Rosmawati (Chapter 5) illustrates the interconnectedness of multiple levels of complexity within the writing development of a single case. Combined, these studies provide examples of L2 writing development that reveal the interrelated change patterns that are often obscured by large group studies.

The third section addresses methodological issues in researching L2 writing through the lens of CDST. Elizabeth Hepford (Chapter 7) begins this section by illustrating how to capture *phase shifts*, which are points at which language usage is restructured, leading to a more stable pattern. Hepford argues that phase shifts are critical to understanding how L2 writing develops. In Chapter 8, Alex Gilmore and Gabriela Adela Gánem-Guitiérrez discuss the challenges of conducting mixed-methods research from a CDST perspective. Considering this, if L2 writing is viewed in the context of complex systems, then it only makes sense that it should be studied through a combination of methods that can reveal several levels of social and individual factors. However, the authors also caution that this approach entails challenges such as collaborating with experts outside of the field, dealing with unwieldy technological tools, and coordinating several levels of analysis together, all

of which they attest to with examples from their own research experience. Turning a critical eye inward, Bram Bulté and Alex Housen add a constructive critique of CDST research in Chapter 9 by demonstrating its strengths and weaknesses through an example study on L2 writing complexity. Beyond providing a defense of traditional group studies, they offer a clear-eyed view of the challenges of applying CDST to L2 writing research as well as suggestions on how to overcome the growing pains of the new epistemology. Despite their concerns, the authors ultimately believe that CDST research will mature and provide useful insights into L2 writing development in a way that complements traditional group study research.

In the final section, the research studies center on the theme of curricular perspectives by using the construct of curriculum as a subsystem of the complex system of formal education. Heidi Byrnes (Chapter 10) calls upon researchers investigating L2 writing development from a CDST perspective to expand the focus beyond individuals to include the educational context and broader curriculum. In Chapter 11, Fogal responds to Byrnes's call by using curriculum as both the context and construct of investigation in a case study of a Thai university program. Using this approach, Fogal explored the degree to which a small group of stakeholders (students, professors, and administrators) within a curricular context interpreted the influence of curriculum variables (agents, experiences, artifacts, and entities) on L2 writing development. Through analysis of system maps, Fogal found that whereas students emphasized experiences of past and future selves, the faculty were concerned more with the here-and-now aspects of the program. Essentially, this type of framework provides insight into how different stakeholders and variables interact to influence curriculum and ultimately L2 writing development while providing a more familiar research context for most language teaching professionals.

This volume offers new and innovative approaches to researching and understanding L2 writing development from a CDST perspective. It demonstrates all of the hallmarks of the CDST approach with minimum-maximum graphs, change point analyses, Monte Carlo simulations, and the use of case studies to reveal the variation and relationships that occur within a complex system of learning development. Of particular interest to readers of *JALT Journal* are the several studies by researchers examining the variation in development of Japanese learners of English (Chapters 1, 5, 6, and 8). However, this book might be challenging for teachers or budding researchers interested in L2 writing. The contexts presented in this volume are limited to university level writers and there are few, if any generalizations that can be

drawn from these works for immediate application in various teaching contexts. Those readers may want to look instead at the third edition of *Teaching and Researching Writing* (Hyland, 2016). Rather, this book is aimed at researchers and scholars of both CDST and L2 writing interested in learning how a CDST approach can be applied to L2 writing and how it can provide an alternative point of view to understand L2 writing development. Although CDST is still a relatively new approach for L2 writing, it has the potential to broaden our perspectives about the unique and variable developmental paths of L2 writers.

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***Academic Writing for International Students of Business and Economics (3rd ed.). Stephen Bailey. Routledge, 2020. xxx + 314 pp.***

*Reviewed by*

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Written with teachers and students in mind, this book presents a hands-on approach to learning academic writing. Stephen Bailey addresses the writing process, while focusing on language problems and specific vocabulary for academic writing in business and economic related fields.

The author focuses on writing essays, reports, and other papers for English-language academic courses. To reach this goal, he divides the book into five parts, "The Writing Process," "The Elements of Writing," "Language Issues," "Vocabulary for Writing," and "Writing Models." Each part has subsections with exercises to practice the skills that have been described and closes with a "Progress Check" for review. The book provides highly relevant examples, in a very clear, direct, and practical manner.

*JALT Journal* readers may find the 20-question Academic Writing Quiz (p. xxviii) useful, as it can be used both by teachers in a course and by learners in self-study as a diagnostic test to check one's knowledge of academic writing and some of its metalanguage before starting to use the book. Alternatively, the quiz can be used as a review after completing the text.

In this third edition, Bailey starts out by explaining in the front matter the aims of the book and the reason why important sections have been included as well as updates to the companion website with teaching notes and useful links to other sources. In the "Introduction for Teachers" and "Introduction for Students" the structure of the book is highlighted and suggestions are made concerning the application of these materials in the classroom or as self-study resources. For teachers, useful suggestions for the application of the main topics to classroom practice are provided in a table on p. xviii. Students looking to structure their self-study routines will find the table on p. xx useful for guiding their learning plans.

In Part 1, "The Writing Process," the author covers the basic processes of writing, how to find suitable sources for reading and to support one's thesis, and how to develop critical-reading approaches. A section on avoiding plagiarism is presented before moving on to how to plan an essay, understand titles, and how to find key points for note making. To support the plagiarism section, the author provides a thorough explanation of how to paraphrase and summarize ideas, which can be extremely helpful to business students. In this section, under references and quotations, he also describes how to insert citations in the students' own written texts. Similarly, attention is given in this part to proper internet referencing, which has become very common and necessary in course requirements and academic publications. Techniques for how to contrast sources, organize paragraphs, and write introductions and conclusions are also provided. This section includes additional useful information on how to edit and proofread.

In Part 2, "Elements of Writing," the reader is introduced to the elements of business writing, including the elaboration of argumentative, causative, and comparative texts. Bailey also covers the communication of data through visual resources, such as tables and charts, by addressing how these elements can be described in the body of a text. A table on page 130 contains (a) verbs and adverbs commonly used to describe visual resources that present growth rates or changes and trends in a topic like temperature and (b) adjectives followed by nouns to highlight drops or declines.

Part 3, "Language Issues," provides readers with prevalent language topics that learners of English writing may find challenging. Some topics covered

in this part are cohesion, definite articles, numbers, passive and active voice, punctuation, singular or plural, style, and time markers. A helpful example can be found on page 167 in the section on countable and uncountable nouns, which can be problematic especially for common terms used in business and economics that accept both singular and plural forms and which may not exist in the L1 of international students. Another interesting feature in this part is the explanation of how to use modifiers before adjectives and how to create a positive or negative nuance.

“Vocabulary for Writing” (Part 4) deals with specific vocabulary for business and economics. Bailey addresses encounters with lower frequency and unfamiliar vocabulary and explains how to prioritize words according to the context of the text. One drawback in this part that the author could have covered is an exploration of collocations which Biber and Conrad (1999) define as “associations between two words, so that the words co-occur more frequently than expected by chance” (p. 183). Such a discussion would have provided information for students and teachers to use to find meanings beyond the memorization of individual words. The study of lexical bundles can make the vocabulary learning process much more meaningful. In addition, this can help learners in the writing process because they will see in the text which words are most commonly used with a specific word they may not have known the meaning of, and this is not something students normally use in their writing (Cortes, 2004).

In Part 5, “Writing Models,” the author provides authentic texts as case studies, with the aim of offering tips on how to write long papers, reports, and in groups.

While not prescriptive in nature, this title is particularly interesting for novice writers looking to engage with the process of writing, explore language and vocabulary issues, and experience different genres and writing styles. Students of business and economics will find explanations and samples of academic texts together with important writing tips that may help guide learners with organizing their writing.

The book provides insight into writing quality and can be used in person or online by teachers or learners studying on their own. It is clear, accessible, objective, and user-friendly, with a glossary, answer keys, and index, which can support autonomous, independent learning. Thus, the book provides several insights into the fundamental principles behind the art of writing, I highly recommend this volume, particularly to international students whose responsibilities include academic writing in business and economics.

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