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## An argument for globalized L2 writing methodological innovation

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, I present an argument for L2 writing methodological innovation to embrace the idea of ‘globalized L2 writing’, which entails focusing on different (types of) research questions and using these to draw on research methods from other fields. I use the term ‘global’ to refer to the cross-disciplinary nature of this endeavor, and the important contribution of diverse global perspectives and global knowledge to researching linguistic phenomena, along the lines of ‘Global Englishes’ and the ‘Global South’. Globalized L2 writing requires re-conceptualizing L2 writing as a global phenomenon that is paradigmatically unbounded and dynamic. It is both socio-political and open to expansion, and it is unrestricted by Western ideologies such as those proscribing imitation. I highlight two L2 writing methodological problems that offer opportunities to re-conceptualize L2 writing and recommend alternative L2 writing methodologies with associated research questions.

### 1. Introduction

In our current era of unbridled globalization, with increasing numbers of language teachers and scholars investigating L2 writing in a diverse range of settings, we have more opportunities than ever to pose research questions that require us to adapt and develop methodologies from other contexts and disciplines. Methodological innovation has the potential to reveal significant insights and push our diverse field forward. However, many L2 writing researchers are yet to take up these opportunities, as dominant constructs in English L2 writing research continue to prevail. Much of the problem lies in our inherent hesitancy with risk-taking (see [Cunningham & Hall, 2021](#)), and tendency to rely on established research and research questions for stable support before moving forward. But I argue this reliance on the major design methodologies, such as experimentation, ethnography, and text analysis (see [Hyland, 2016a](#)), and Western-centric methodological paradigms, is limiting L2 writing research. Furthermore, these methods are boosted by our favouring of primarily English L2 constructs, skewing our understanding of L2 writing across languages. It is this weddedness to tried and true methods and constructs that is holding the field back.

To clarify, ‘L2 writing methodologies’ is itself a somewhat evasive term. As such, decades ago [Raimes \(1991, p. 422\)](#) called for a synthesis of L2 writing methodologies:

one that presents a governing philosophy but pays attention within that philosophy to all four elements involving writing: form, writer, content, and reader. The combination of complexity and diversity makes it imperative for us not to seek universal prescriptions, but instead to “strive to validate other, local forms of knowledge about language and teaching” ([Pennycook, 1989, p. 613](#)).

This focus on the complexity and diversity of writing, inclusive of writer and reader as well as local knowledge, is central to developments in the area. Based on this understanding, in this paper, I refer to L2 writing methodologies comprehensively as approaches to addressing L2 writing, including research data collection methods, and research methodologies including approaches (qualitative, quantitative, mixed) and paradigms (positivist, interpretivist, pragmatist, etc.), as outlined in the introduction to *The Routledge*

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*Handbook of Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* (McKinley, 2020). I also refer to an example of a pedagogical methodology embracing multilingualism. Hyland (2016a) explains that with the increase of methods and methodologies for studying writing, “it is important to be aware of what our choices imply about our understanding of what writing is and how it can be known” (p. 116). In response to this statement, he highlights key studies in an overview of the main approaches in L2 writing research, situated in the main theories, inevitably dominated by English L2 writing research. While this authoritative overview may be useful for his target audience of novice researchers, it does little to change the way we think about L2 writing methodologies, which could be achieved with the formulation of research questions that require such changes in thinking.

Critical points concerning theories of L2 writing were raised by Silva (1997) who exhorted the need to challenge the dominance of L1 theories of writing in the field. Reichelt (1999) drew on Silva (1997) in her argument that “a theory of L2 writing that does not seriously consider FL [foreign language] writing is doomed to be skewed and incomplete” (p.182). Silva’s proposition for this theory of L2 writing research was focused on making mainstream L1-based theories less narrow and therefore more legitimate. By moving away from monolingual, monocultural, and ethnocentric foci (and less concentration on US undergraduate English L1 writing), L2 writing researchers could move toward reporting results that are more inclusive, realistic, generalizable, “and ultimately, more valid” (Silva, 1997, p. 216). These are crucial elements of more global approaches to L2 writing that are deserving of much more attention in L2 writing methodologies that are multi-/plurilingual, cross-/inter-cultural, and open-minded, taking into consideration multi-disciplinary and multi-contextual approaches to writing.

L2 writing methodological innovation has the potential to develop by embracing the idea of ‘globalized L2 writing’, which involves focusing on different (types of) research questions and using these to draw on research methods from other fields. In choosing the word ‘globalized’, I do so critically, and it should not be viewed as an endorsement of political and economic globalization. Rather, I use the term ‘global’ to refer to the important contribution of diverse global perspectives and global knowledge to researching linguistic phenomena that spans the realms of the global, the local, and the glocal. In this sense, ‘globalized L2 writing’ has stronger connections to the terms ‘Global Englishes’ (see Galloway & Rose, 2015) and the ‘Global South’ than globalization and emphasizes the understanding of writing for a global audience. ‘Globalized L2 writing’ needs to capture what L2 writing from a global perspective means. To do this, I argue for re-conceptualizing L2 writing as a global phenomenon that is paradigmatically unbounded and dynamic. Based on this re-conceptualization, we can generate research questions that require drawing on emerging theories of L2 writing, as well as methodological approaches from other disciplines and non-Western (e.g., ‘the Global South’) contexts. Through our limited approaches thus far, we have yet to understand the possibilities of what global methodological approaches could really offer.

## 2. Re-conceptualizing L2 writing research

Efforts to innovate L2 writing have been built on addressing gaps in methodology as well as addressing the issue of complexity. But L2 writing design methodologies such as experimentation, ethnography and text analysis continue to dominate, addressing similarly constructed research questions. Researchers tend to adhere to tried and tested methods despite a growing literature that highlights a variety of methods available to us for understanding the complexities of L2 writing. In this section I discuss methodological approaches, theories, and perspectives that offer opportunities to re-conceptualize L2 writing.

It is important to question what it means to innovate L2 writing methodologies. It may be best to refer to L2 writing paradigms that have expanded over the years. In Cumming’s (2016, p. 65) overview of L2 writing theories, beyond four main theories (“contrastive rhetoric, cognitive models of composing, genre theories, and sociocultural theory”), he also covers critical theory, dynamic systems theory, goal theory, language socialization, biliteracy, and identity theories, explaining that these theories all make important contributions to advancing L2 writing research, and “because L2 writing is inherently multi-faceted”, theories will continue to emerge. However, as much as theories continue to develop, they tend to contribute only marginally to methodological innovation. For instance, Riazi, Shi, and Haggerty’s (2018) ‘historical survey’ (a form of secondary research synthesis) of 272 empirical studies published in *JSLW* between 1992 and 2016 confirmed the focus on usual participants (undergraduate students in the US). Their review also confirmed the usual theories (“cognitive, social, socio-cognitive, genre, contrastive rhetoric, and critical”, p. 41), and the usual topics (feedback and teaching).

The continued growth of globalization has changed the nature and conceptualizations of L2 writing. With such changes, the need to innovate L2 writing methodologies to address the complexity and diversity has been a focal point for some time now. In their ‘systematic research synthesis’ (also known as a ‘systematic review’ – a terminological difference worth discussing further; see Chong & Plonsky, 2021) of L2 writing mixed methods research published in *JSLW*, Park, Yi, and Jang (2021) provide a justification for their study based on Manchón and Matsuda’s (2016) the *Handbook of Second and Foreign Language Writing*, in which the editors highlight “a collective future trend towards methodological diversity and expansion of repertoires of research methods and approaches” (p. 9). They also raise Silva’s (2016) chapter in that handbook, in which he clarified that L2 writing “[had not] developed a particular conceptual or theoretical framework or methodological approach” (p. 33). Park et al. (2021) found some notable methodological points, such as mixed methods researchers’ tendency toward leading with or favouring quantitative approaches before moving to qualitative approaches, and that most mixed methods L2 writing research focuses on evaluation and assessment. While a potentially useful overview of these 27 studies, the review, like Hyland’s (2016a) overview, did not provide any new conceptualizations of L2 writing.

I propose three key areas where L2 writing methodological innovation is currently being addressed: mixed methods, complexity/ecological perspective, and CDST. I will discuss each, briefly, in turn.

### 2.1. Mixed methods: underused in L2 writing research

To date, we have yet to truly benefit from mixing methods, an underused approach in L2 writing research methodology. Mixed-methods research suffers from overtaxonimization and overvaluation of arguments about mixed- versus multi-method research, and there is a lack of shared understanding about differences between mixed *method*, mixed *methodology*, and mixed-methods *paradigm*. In a recent paper (Hampson & McKinley, 2022), we attempted to decipher these differences, proffering that mixing methods goes beyond mixed data or analysis, and considering mixed method *approach* as a possible solution in which a study can mix types of reasoning (i.e., inductive, abductive, and deductive – see also Rose et al., 2020). Indeed, “few L2 writing studies have adopted [such] a mixed-methods approach” (Michel et al., 2020, p. 279). Although certainly not a new idea, moving toward mixed-methodological innovation in L2 writing, we see an ability to go beyond the polarization of qualitative transferability and quantitative generalizability into more integrated implications. Such approaches may be better for embracing the inherently messy real-world engagement of L2 writing spaces in a way that informs rather than detracts from implications (see e.g., McKinley & Rose, 2017; Ruecker & Svihla, 2020). The problem was highlighted concerning writing for English for specific purposes (ESP):

...while research on L1 and L2 writing shows that writing academic genres is a complex and ‘recursive’ process, ESP genre research has typically focused on the end product (i.e., the published [research articles]) providing limited insight into the journey of the article in its construction and the rhetorical decisions made by authors en route. (McGrath, 2016, p. 26)

In response, McGrath conducted a method-driven case study involving the analysis of a mathematics research blog, concluding with a call for mixed methods: “future research could combine the analysis of collaborative research blogs with established ESP research methods such as corpus and genre analysis, and interviews with expert informants (p. 35).

While examples of mixed methods L2 writing research can easily be found in the research on the topic of L2 writing feedback (e.g., Boggs, 2019), or research involving digital technology (e.g., Michel et al., 2020), it is not commonly used as a way of innovating L2 writing methodology. An exception is in the literacy literature on methodological innovation of L2 writing, in which scholars in Norway conducted mixed-methods case studies with primary school children including learner logbooks, a questionnaire, interviews, and a reading project before-and-after written texts (Birketveit & Rimmereide, 2017). The study was designed to embrace the complexities of L2 writing to exploit the advantages of using a variety of input materials, in this case, authentic picture books. It provides an example of a mixed methods approach that mixes reasonings.

### 2.2. Researching complexities of L2 writing + an ecological perspective

Complexities of L2 writing were recently addressed in the ESP literature in light of developments in sociocultural approaches to conceptualizing workplace writing. Taking a broader conceptualization of context, the study, conducted in Oman, showed through a needs analysis with employees that preparing university students for workplace writing was ineffective using a classroom-only approach, as the socio-contextual elements of such writing were ‘too complex’ (Al Hilali & McKinley, 2021). The conclusion to the argument is that classrooms can do little to prepare students with the tools needed for how to write in a socially constructed space outside the classroom. The social learning theories underpinning the argument in this study also highlighted the value of ethnographic methods and humanizing research by such scholars as Benesch (2001), who challenged needs analysis approaches as too simplistic and due for a complete re-think that takes into consideration wider social contexts and spaces.

L2 writing complexity has also been addressed from an ecological perspective (Sasaki, 2012), notably in written feedback mixed methods research, both primarily quantitative (e.g., Boggs, 2019) and primarily qualitative (e.g., Han, 2019). An ecological perspective on language “(a) foregrounds the relationship between each individual and the environment, (b) embraces the richness and complexity of the context [...], and (c) rejects the simplistic, cause-effect relationship in language development [...].” (Han, 2019, p. 288). Through a metaphorical use of Ecology, a sub-field of Biology, researchers can embrace the complexity of language use (van Lier, 2010). Social constructivist researchers have borrowed the idea of “ecology” or “ecosystem” to refer to the environmental contexts of learning (see Chong et al., 2022). As non-English L2 writing research often occurs outside English-dominant contexts, ones with which many readers of the L2 writing research are unfamiliar, it is important for researchers to investigate contextual factors that influence L2 writing in those contexts. With this understanding, there is potential for an ecological perspective (or ‘ecological systems theory’) to contribute to L2 writing methodological innovation along similar lines to complex dynamic systems theory.

### 2.3. Complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) and L2 writing

The complexity of L2 writing with its myriad influencing social factors has more recently been viewed from the perspective of complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), in recognition of the shortcomings of the focus on context, rather than complex systems. CDST is particularly relevant to non-English L2 writing as “many currently accepted concepts in L2 writing do not fully explain the learning of complex writing systems” (Rose, 2019, p. 79). Fogal and Verspoor (2020) assembled a volume dedicated to CDST and L2 writing, with two of the four dedicated sections being ‘new constructs, approaches and domains of L2-writing scholarship’ and ‘methodological issues’. Having been given a significant introduction to the broad field of applied linguistics by Larsen-Freeman (1997), we now know the complexity theory perspective to be valuable for critically investigating L2 writing learning development. For example, see Shirvan et al., (2021) interview-based study with six adult EFL learners who identified a range of contextual factors that nurture their L2 writing mindset.

I would like to highlight two chapters in Fogal and Verspoor’s volume. In the book’s final section, Bulté and Housen (2020) present

a critical appraisal of CDST-framed L2 writing research, raising some key problems. They confirm that the problems of such research, which have yet to be resolved, mean that using CDST to explore the complexities of L2 writing has not yet achieved its potential, leaving the area open to possibilities for innovating “more traditional studies with a cross-sectional or pre-post design that focus on potentially significant group trends only, and that are linear and additive by definition” (p. 235). Although not stated by Bulté and Housen, it seems evident that the narrow focus on Western constructs is holding back the potential of CDST as a L2 writing methodological innovation. I am referring here to the Western composition scholarship that undervalues *imitation* in favor of originality (see You, 2010). On this construct of imitation, the other chapter I highlight from the Fogal and Verspoor volume is by MacQueen and Knoch (2020), who may have a solution. With their focus on L2 writers’ *adaptive imitation* approach (also described as *mimicry* in contrastive rhetoric research – see McKinley, 2013), they stipulate that there is great potential, but it is held back in an “imitation conundrum”, as Western scholarship generally condemns imitation. But outside of Western writing constructs, such approaches are part and parcel of learning to participate in academic discourse communities.

Where in some non-Western contexts such as China, Zhou (2021) argues that constructs such as imitation may be used for L2 writing instruction in the form of *creative imitation*: “creation coupled with language imitation, inherent in *xu* that irons out the comprehension-production asymmetry, facilitates idea expression by scaffolding, and pre-empts errors through modeling” (p. 351). This form of imitation is constructive within the *xu-argument*, which contends that the concept *xu*, meaning to complete, extend, and create, “incorporates all the properties instrumental to effective language learning” (p. 353). ‘All the properties’ in the given context in the *xu-argument* aligns with CDST perspective studies. We are beginning to see valuable research embracing this argument (e.g., Zhang & Zhang, 2021), and such research could present new ways of re-conceptualizing L2 writing by operationalizing a non-Western construct.

### 3. Responding to methodological limitations of Western composition scholarship

Western L2 writing constructs are inherently limited by a seemingly incessant focus on writing task products. Considering how much progress has been made in understanding L2 writing as a social endeavor, highlighting various process approaches to L2 writing such as sociocultural, constructivist, behavioral and cognitive, it is curious that L2 writing research has continued to focus on writing task products (see Michel et al., 2020). Focusing on writing processes was revolutionary many decades ago, and re-conceptualizations of English L2 constructs moved us into a post-process revolution in the 1980s, captured in a 2003 *JSLW* special issue (see the introduction: ‘L2 writing in the post-process era’ - Atkinson, 2003). But the focus in such ‘revolutions’ seems to be a result of the problematic reliance on English L2 writing as the basis for discussing L2 writing. Indeed, Casanave (2003), based in Japan at the time, reflected in the same special issue, “I have had trouble connecting a Western intellectual discussion about process and post-process to the realities of my life in a non-Western country” (p. 86). She argued that there had been no process movement in Japan (at that time), and so was “not sure how to talk about what ‘post-process’ might mean outside the realm of Western composition scholarship”. Casanave called for more socio-political approaches to researching L2 writing that, ideally in the form of case studies, capture local contexts beyond Western constructs.

And since then, although there have been calls for re-conceptualizing various aspects of L2 writing—such as the colloquium ‘Reconceptualizing L2 writing assessment research’ at the 2010 Symposium on Second Language Writing (Norris, 2010); Byrnes and Manchón’s (2014) edited volume *Task-Based Language Learning: Insights from and for L2 Writing*; Qu’s (2017, p. 93) targeting of teaching methodologies specifically: “What needs to be reconceptualized is not L2 writing course’s mission but its methodology in teaching the language”—we are still heavily dependent on Western constructs for our guiding principles.

In consideration of contributions to L2 writing methodologies from the ‘Global South’, scholars have drawn our attention to inherent problematic Western constructs that are limiting development in applied linguistics research, including L2 writing. For example, Kubota (2020) in her paper “Confronting Epistemological Racism, Decolonizing Scholarly Knowledge: Race and Gender in Applied Linguistics” challenges ‘Global North’ thinking suggesting that L2 writers are not discriminated against when it comes to publishing their work (see Hyland, 2016b). Such discrimination seems to occur at all levels of L2 writing, including all levels of education, where Western constructs dominate and fail to embrace the learners’ non-Western identities and ways of thinking.

### 4. Two key problems for L2 English writing methodologies + possible non-Western methodological solutions

As L2 writing methodological paradigms are so often bounded by the dominant L2 English writing constructs, including positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, and so on, there is great potential for methodological innovation by re-imagining such paradigms. In this section, I discuss two fundamental problems within the dominant paradigms that are simply not sufficiently addressed when it comes to globalized L2 writing methodologies. These problems concern: 1) argumentative writing and 2) multilingual writing practices.

First, some L2 writing methods just do not match non-English/Western languages. For example, contrastive rhetoric, argumentation, even *genre* – as they are presented in the dominant literature (originating from a Western perspective, see Hinkel, 2011) – are generally based on English language research and structures. We do not have the same level of development of frameworks for some other L2 writing. Contrastive rhetoric, first put forward by Kaplan (1966), explores the influence of the L1 in L2 writing. The idea is that we can establish patterns notable in the L2 writing of those from particular L1 backgrounds and teach to those points. The focus on these patterns is problematic, as it ignores conceptualizations of writing where features of meandering, beautiful writing are seen as a strength, including South and East Asian (Indian, Chinese, Japanese), as well as Western languages (Germanic, Spanish). Argumentation investigation in L2 writing, similarly, is construed based on a Western deductive approach (i.e., present the argument first, then support it), rather than an inductive approach (i.e., build up to the argument, which is presented last). Indeed, contrastive rhetoric research has been focused almost exclusively on the influence of a range of L1s on English L2 (ESL and EFL) writing. Connor (1996)

challenged the concept, suggesting the term *intercultural rhetoric* instead, as a way of acknowledging developments in cross-cultural research and, although not directly, to redirect what was an inherent English L2 construct. Another significant challenge to Kaplan's concept was raised by [Kubota and Lehner \(2004\)](#) as *critical contrastive rhetoric*, which embraces poststructuralist, postcolonial, and postmodern critiques of language and culture, allowing for a reconceptualization of cultural difference in rhetoric. Critical contrastive rhetoric is a prime example of a methodological innovation designed to challenge the monolingual, monocultural, and ethnocentric L1 theories raised by [Silva \(1997\)](#). It is also an example that aligns with CDST and ecological systems theory.

Second, multilingual writing practices are insufficiently considered in L2 writing methodologies. There is a strong emphasis on native standards of written language, notably in the Global Englishes literature that has targeted dominant U.S. and British standards of English ([Rose et al., 2021](#)). European orthographies result in writing being culturally anchored, which ignores the fluid multilingualism found in other forms of writing, such as in sub-Saharan Africa ([Lüpke, 2018](#)). These Western orthographies also constrict the value of words, which in Buddhist philosophy, “do not refer directly to objects, processes, etc. of reality proper, but to *conceptual images of reality*” ([Bernárdez, 2017, p. 15](#)). Concerning Global South methodologies, I have chosen to highlight a pedagogical L2 writing methodology that brings together a popular learner concept in L2 research, translanguaging, and a sub-Saharan African educational philosophy, Ubuntu, or *humanity towards others*. It is known as ‘Ubuntu translanguaging pedagogy’, defined in a recent doctoral thesis as.

a multilingual literacy model that promotes the African humanism concept of interdependence between languages as well as literacy skills ([Makalela, 2015](#)). The Ubuntu translanguaging framework is proposed as a solution fitting the sub-Saharan African multilingual context as opposed to Eurocentric ideological multilingualism. ([Amini Ngabonziza, 2020, p. 146](#))

Such a conceptualization of writing supports an integration of multiple languages in a written text through a recognition of not just writer expression, but of making a connection to a writer's multilingual reader by using multiple languages in particular ways. This is positioned in contrast to a Western understanding of L2 writing that focuses more on writing fluency being held to particular standards that would be inappropriate for writing in such contexts.

The idea of ‘translanguaging in writing’, argued for effectively by [Canagarajah \(2011a, 2011b\)](#) as an innovative L2 writing methodology, has been used for a growing number of L2 writing studies with young learners following Global North conceptualizations of bilingual education (e.g., [Rowe, 2022](#)). However, translanguaging in writing has been less acknowledged as an approach to self-regulated learning (in the West, but also the Global South – see e.g., [Joseph's 2015](#) study in South Africa, or [Khan and Muhammad's 2019](#) study in Pakistan) that embraces acts of decolonization and other ways of thinking about the value of words and how writing does what it does. [Velasco and García \(2014\)](#) explain that translanguaging in writing could be both a goal-achieving strategy and semiotic tool-drawing process. They describe such activities as examples of self-regulation, as they “encompass self-efficacy mechanisms that enable personal agency” (p. 11). Their case study explored young bilingual writers' translanguaging practices, concluding that these practices were acts of self-regulation. They identified five different ways translanguaging can be used in writing processes: in planning 1) using multimodal approaches and resourcing multilingually, and 2) exploring vocabulary and note-taking; in drafting 3), resourcing multilingually, and 4) retrieving and transforming words; and in the final product 5) for engaging with rhetoric and what [Kress \(1997\)](#) referred to as ‘transduction’, or, the remaking of meaning across modes. The results of Velasco's and Garcia's study support translanguaging as having the potential to reconceptualize L2 writing methodologies.

These key problem areas can be addressed by moving beyond the dominant paradigms to align L2 writing methods and non-English/Western languages. Such paradigmatic re-imagining have the potential to re-conceptualize L2 writing problems, which will be addressed in consideration of possible research questions in the next section. There are no doubt further examples of fundamental misalignments of methods and languages, which are simply not addressed by prevailing constructs and methods in L2 writing research. Acknowledging the shortcomings of current L2 research knowledge for revealing the complexities of global L2 writing across languages and diverse learning contexts is a necessary first step to innovating future methods and addressing research problems from a different perspective.

## 5. Innovative research methods for innovative research questions

The statement made by researchers of business administration, “if we do not pose innovative research questions, it is less likely that our research efforts will generate interesting and influential theories” ([Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 1](#)), is a fundamental one for addressing [Hyland's \(2016a\)](#) point about the choices we make in L2 writing research and how they can change the way we think about writing and knowing writing. Devising new research questions, and possibly new types of research questions, requires identification of the new issues and problems for investigation. I take the following statement made by clinical researchers: “The challenge in finding a research question is defining an important one that has not been answered and that can be transformed into a feasible, ethical, and valid study plan” ([Cummings & Kanaya, 2023, n.p.](#)). What questions about L2 writing have not yet been answered? This is really too difficult a question to answer, as the possibilities seem endless, and at the same time impossible to identify. In the same chapter, the researchers suggest, “Taking a new concept, technology, or finding from one field and applying it to a problem in another can lead to innovative research questions...” (n.p.).

Such new technology emerged in the field of computer science: keystroke logging, which has become a valuable methodology for writing researchers, as it has made it possible to pose different research questions. [Leijten and Van Waes \(2013, p. 383\)](#) explain:



**Table 1**  
Possible research questions for the key problems in L2 writing methodologies.

Responding to (new issue / question / problem)	Traditional method	Innovation / alternative conceptualization	RQs	From
Argumentation	Western deductive	Meandering, beautiful writing seen as a strength	How can the relationship between the individual and complex environment be operationalized in L2 writing argumentation?	CDST (Applied Mathematics; Brain Science) and ecological perspectives (Biology, Psychology)
Multilingual writing practices	European orthographies/ writing is culturally anchored	Fluid multilingualism – abandon orthographies  Words do not refer directly to objects, processes, etc. of reality proper, but to <i>conceptual images of reality</i>	How can L2 writing work without orthographical constraints?  How can abstract views of language be operationalized in L2 writing?	Decolonization (Political Science) / Global South philosophies

We argue that the combination of linguistic and process analyses allows us to address new and innovative research questions that could not be addressed before because process data can be analyzed on a higher, more complex level.

The two areas highlighted in this paper are addressed as emerging concepts with the potential to re-conceptualize L2 writing. Table 1 presents an overview of the problem areas, their traditional methods, the innovation or alternative conceptualization, possible research questions, and the fields from which the concepts developed.

As argumentation in L2 writing is so often analyzed according to, or in comparison with, Western deductive methods, innovation is possible in re-conceptualizing argumentative writing from other global perspectives. Such perspectives can be embraced using ecological systems theory and/or CDST. Research questions that address the complexities along with the individual and local ways of thinking can reveal valuable insights about how argumentation in L2 writing is understood outside the dominant constructs. These insights and their global/glocal perspectives can then in turn inform the dominant constructs.

Multilingual writing practices are terribly underutilised in L2 writing methodologies, due to strict adherences to standards of language use from dominant Western orthographies (e.g., U.S. and British English). There is potential to re-conceptualize L2 writing as unconstrained and unbounded by the rules of Western orthographies, which can be guided by embracing decolonization initiatives and Global South philosophies. These global perspectives would allow L2 writing methodologies to view written language differently, including fluid multilingualism and recognition of abstract cultural understandings of word usage.

## 6. Conclusion

To conclude, I present these ideas as an argument for a re-conceptualization of L2 writing from a global perspective that focuses on different (types of) research questions and using these to draw on research methods from other fields. With a focus on L2 writing for a global audience, inevitably we look to English as a global lingua franca. However, we need to acknowledge that English L2 constructs may be limiting innovation. While the dearth of work done on English L2 writing allows for some methodologies—especially those reliant on large datasets—to develop, the dominance of the work on a single Western L2 leaves other areas of development restricted. Globalized L2 writing, as a concept, is both socio-political and open to expansion. It is unrestricted by Western ideologies such as those proscribing imitation.

The argument I present encourages those working in the various areas of L2 writing to ‘think outside the [Western-centric] box’. We need to question everything we ‘know’ about L2 writing. An interesting opportunity to do this came up in popular culture with the positioning of a linguist at the center of the story in a major studio film called *Arrival*, released in 2015. Aliens, called ‘heptapods’ as they have seven legs, communicate solely through writing. However, as an alien language, it does not adhere to any human structural properties of writing. Instead, the written language represents non-linear concepts rather than single words. This written language presented the story’s protagonist, a linguist, with the challenge of decoding when there were no such methodologies in existence to do this. For the film *Arrival*, linguist Jessica Coon was consulted based on her work decoding indigenous languages. In an interview for the Los Angeles Times, Coon explained, “We’re interested in the structural properties [of language]; we’re interested in understanding what underlies them. There are between six- and seven-thousand languages in the world, and for most we’ve only begun to scratch the surface” (Zeitlich, 2016). Indeed, we can say the same for L2 writing methodologies. It is time we acknowledge Western conceptualizations of L2 writing as limited and take better advantage of our access to global theories and practices.

## Declaration of interest

I have no financial and personal relationships with anyone or any organizations that could inappropriately influence my work.

## Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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