

# Understanding the Impact of the Geographic Scope of Second Language Writing

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## Abstract

*A large body of research across geographic regions exists and L2 writing scholars and others may make assumptions about the field's scope. However, prior scholarship has not provided an explicit picture of geographic patterns emerging in the research and what those patterns suggest about the state of the field, although some efforts in this direction exist (Matsuda 1997; Kapper 2002; Pelaez-Morales, 2017, and more recently, Riazi, Shi and Haggerty, 2018). This research project examines patterns in the L2 writing research, as they relate to geographical locations of the field's authors and research sites between 1990 and 2012 in seven Applied Linguistics journals to: a) find empirical evidence to support or reject the claim that field has been geographically diverse, b) identify regions and countries that have been represented, underrepresented, or unrepresented, and c) initiate a conversation about the generalizability of the L2 writing research. This project is unique in that it is comprehensive and, unlike other research, it collects two types of geographic data: authors' institutional affiliations as well as reported research contexts.*

*Key Words:* contexts, geographic diversity

## Literature Review

Researchers have documented the changes occurring to the field of L2 writing over time (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Matsuda, 2003; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003; Reichelt, 2005; Reichelt, 2009; Santos, Atkinson, Erickson, Matsuda, & Silva, 2000; Silva, 2012; Tarnopolsky, 2011; You, 2004), and one of these changes has been the diversity of the L2 writing scholarship. The field's publications have become increasingly diverse, especially as seen in the geographical spread of the research and in the expansion of different L2 writing communities of practice across the world (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Although a large body of research across geographic regions exists and L2 writing scholars and others with an interest in L2 writing may make assumptions about the field's scope, prior scholarship has not provided an explicit picture of geographic patterns emerging in the research and what those patterns suggest about the state of the field, although some efforts in this direction exist (Matsuda, 1997; Kapper 2002; Ortega, 2004; Pelaez-Morales, 2017; and more recently, Riazi, Shi and Haggerty, 2018). Following this line of work, this article examines patterns in the L2 writing research, as they relate to geographical locations of the field's authors and research sites between 1990 and 2012 in seven academic journals. The goals in tracking the research contexts and authors' affiliations of articles are to:

- find empirical evidence to support or reject the claim that field has been geographically diverse;

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- provide a panoramic view of the changes occurring to the field's geographic scope, as seen in a collection of representative journals;
- and initiate a conversation about the generalizability of the L2 writing research.

Developing a better understanding of the changes in the field's geographic distribution would be of interest to L2 writing scholars, those entering the field, those with an interest in learning more L2 writing, and language educators in different fields since writing occurs in many different contexts (educational, demographic, etc.) and the study of L2 writing should be inclusive of the actors and activities in all of those contexts. What sets this research apart from other studies of geographic diversity is that it is comprehensive: most researchers, including those publishing most recently (Riazi, Shi and Haggerty, 2018) have examined geographic diversity in the field's flagship journal (JSLW); however, to-date, no other research has examined these patterns in different journals.

Using findings from this study, L2 writing practitioners can locate scholarship addressing the conditions in their surrounding contexts allowing them to make more informed decisions about how to teach L2 writing in those contexts. L2 writing scholars can also continue creating research agendas that focus on un- or under-represented geographic areas to help develop a more robust and comprehensive picture of L2 writing across the globe. And last, using information on where work is originating, members of the field can also make more informed decisions regarding where, geographically, more mentorship or apprenticeship programs to prepare second language writing scholars are needed. As the field reaches another decade of professionalization, it remains important to continue assessing where the field is and where it is heading. Who is included in the broader community of L2 writing literature, and for whatever reason, who is un- or under-represented? In turn, how does that representation bound the scope of the field's knowledge and inform generalizations about L2 writing?

### **Meta-analyses**

While only a handful of second language writing scholars have focused specifically on geographic distribution of the scholarship, several have contributed meta-analyses exploring the field's trajectory and addressing the idea of diversity defined broadly—e.g. topics, research methodologies, etc. Silva (1993), for instance, examined empirical research on ESL writing, culling 72 research reports that involved ESL writers composing in both their first and second languages leading to the conclusion that L1 and L2 writers required different instructional considerations; the 2002 Symposium on Second Language Writing examined knowledge construction in the field, and the subsequent edited collection (Matsuda & Silva, 2005) included several pieces that study research methods across the field's scholarship. Matsuda (2005) offers a metadisciplinary historiography of the field, while Weissberg (2005) analyzes the field's cross- modality research on speaking/writing connections. More recently, Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2008) synthesize twenty-five years of North American research on L2 writing in English, offering the field's most comprehensive meta-analysis to date. Their analysis includes an examination of research grouped by contexts and purposes (e.g., writing in secondary school, undergraduate settings, graduate programs, workplace writing, scholarly writing,

etc.), as well as overviews of scholarship focused on pedagogical interests and research investigating writer characteristics, composing processes, and written texts (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). Subsequently, Harklau and Williams (2010) trace the field's use of literature over a five year period, beginning in 2001, and Reynolds (2010) reports on a meta-analysis of five years of research publications to examine the field's use of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed- method approaches to knowledge-building. Taken together, these studies have emphasized the diversity of the L2 writing scholarship. Despite their significant contributions to the field, they offer minimal insight into the geographic contexts for second language writing scholarship and the implications of the field's global distribution (or lack thereof).

To date, only a handful of researchers have documented geographic diversity in the field and while most have focused on *Journal of Second Language writing (JSLW)*, they have defined geographic diversity differently, which makes comparisons across studies difficult and findings somewhat partial. Both Matsuda (1997) and Kapper (2002) previously examined the geographic distributions of contributors to *JSLW* using the authors' institutional affiliation as a marker of geographic diversity. At the five-year mark, the journal included authors from the U.S, Puerto Rico, and five other countries (Matsuda, 1997). By the ten-year retrospective, 15 countries were represented, in addition to the U.S and Puerto Rico, and the journal's subscriptions had extended to 40 countries (Kapper, 2002). In a later piece focusing on the contrast between foreign and second language contexts, Ortega (2004) conducted counts of articles published between 1992-2003 in *JSLW* finding that out of 109 empirical studies "61 (or 56%) investigated international students in higher education contexts in the U.S (45), Canada (12), the U.K (3), New Zealand (2), or Australia (1), while 37 (or 34%) focused on non-English contexts" (p. 3). These findings led her to conclude that the field's scholarship was ESL-oriented (p. 3). Ortega later (2009) expands her research by reviewing 154 research articles published in *JSLW* and in *TESOL Quarterly* between 1992-2007. By 2007, the research and its diversity had increased but the majority were still about English writing: 56 (or 36%) had been conducted in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts with the top 3 countries being Japan, Hong Kong, and China. Unlike Matsuda (1997) and Kapper (2002), Ortega (2004 & 2009) does not use author's institutional affiliations as markers of geographic diversity; instead, she seems to use research contexts, although this is not explicitly stated.

In one of the most recent works published on diversity of the L2 writing scholarship, Pelaez-Morales (2017) researches geographic contexts, languages, topics, and research orientations of L2 writing research published in *JSLW* between 1992-2015. To facilitate comparisons published in *JSLW*, Pelaez-Morales also defined geographic diversity as authors' institutional affiliations. She found that the representation of countries had almost doubled between 2002-2015—30 countries represented—and that there have been significant increases in collaborations, especially between 2012-2015, further contributing to geographic diversity of the scholarship. Her analysis showed that despite diversity, four countries—the U.S, Hong Kong, Japan, and Canada—accounted for over 70% of the total scholarship with marginal or no representation of other countries. A similar trend for increasing diversity was reported later by Riazi, et al., 2018 who also found the top 4 countries listed above were the most represented, but some methodological differences are worth noting. First, they defined geographic diversity as

the contexts in which research took place and distinguished between macro-contexts (the countries) and micro-contexts (for instance, universities) adding important information about diversity. Second, while they reviewed an additional year compared to Pelaez-Morales (2017), they collected empirical articles only, which they defined as research that "...collected and analyzed first-hand data of any kind (quantitative or qualitative), including those (e.g., corpus studies) that had no participants in the traditional sense. By first hand-data [they] mean[t] research in which primary data were used" (Riazi, et al., 2018 p. 43). As they acknowledged, not all empirical studies provide information on context; consequently, their sample is smaller and their findings show a lower representation of countries. Third, unlike Pelaez-Morales (2017), Riazi et al (2018), do not address collaborations or how they contribute to geographic diversity, which might be a by-product of their methodological choice or research foci. And last, a significant amount of the studies Riazi et al. reviewed (over 20% of their sample) were said to represent 18 other countries, but since it is not clear what these were, no further comparisons can be made.

As seen in studies dating as early as 1997 and as late as 2018, the same geographic regions continue to have been significantly represented in the L2 writing scholarship. While increases in geographic diversity are on the rise, the *quantity* of such research is low (Pelaez-Morales, 2017). While *JSLW* is the most representative journal in the field of L2 writing, analysis of publication patterns in a single journal can only provide a partial picture of the L2 writing research (Pelaez-Morales, 2017; Riazi et al 2018). Therefore, looking to develop a more comprehensive view of the scholarship, this article focuses on the geographic representation of L2 writing research as seen in seven representative journals. This study is unique in that it is comprehensive; and unlike other studies, it provides a more nuanced picture of geographic representation by looking at both author institutional affiliation and research context.

### Methodology

The primary goal of this research was to find empirical evidence to either support or reject the idea that the field of second language writing has produced a body of scholarship representative of different geographic contexts. In testing this hypothesis, I also wanted to continue mapping the geographic expansion of the L2 writing scholarship but do so more comprehensively. The following research questions guided the research:

1. Does the field of L2 writing have a national (U.S only) or international scope (non-U.S)?
2. What geographic areas are represented by L2 writing scholarship?
3. What do research contexts and author affiliations suggest about the use and/or generalizability of findings in the field of L2 writing?

To provide a comprehensive view of the geographic distribution of published L2 writing research, all original research articles published between 1990 and 2012 in seven representative journals: *Journal of Second Language Writing (JSLW)*, *Applied Linguistics (AL)*, *Modern Language Journal (MLJ)*, *the RELC Journal (RELC)*, *TESOL Quarterly (TQ)*, *International Journal of English Studies (IJES)*, and *English Language*

*Teaching (ELT)* were identified. To capture a broad range of geographic contexts for L2 writing and a diverse group of contributing authors, journals that actively publish second language writing but that were founded in different time periods and geographic locations were selected. While newer journals (e.g., *IJES*, *ELT*) are still establishing their identities and have not yet made traction in impact scales, they were included because new members of the field likely find them more accessible as starting points for their publications. The SCImago Journal Rank indicates which quartile the publication falls in based on the average number of weighted citations referencing the journal's articles in the previous three years, hence, indicating a journal's prestige. Out of the seven journals, four (*JSLW*, *AL*, *TQ*, and *MLJ*) are high-tier, Q1 journals, while the other 3 are low-tier journals: *RELC* (Q2), *IJES* (Q4), and *ELT* (Q4).

Journal selection was followed by a systematic review of all empirical research articles in the journals. For the purposes of this research, I defined empirical studies as any research based on observations, experiences and/or on observable data regardless of research orientation (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, etc). Some examples of what I classified as empirical research include case studies, ethnographies, analyses of texts (for instance, essays, meta-analyses or literature reviews), interviews, surveys, etc. Examples of what I considered non-empirical include editorials, book reviews, annotated bibliographies—these were excluded from the analysis. Unlike Riazi et al's 2018 definition of empirical research, I did not focus solely on studies looking at first hand-data.

The following sections were reviewed in each research article: its title, abstract, introduction, and methodology section, looking for two types of geographic data: a) country where a study took place and b) the institutional affiliation of the study's author(s). For clarity, in what follows, I refer to the former as "research contexts" and to the latter as "author affiliations." Some precautions were taken to accurately collect and record the two types of geographic data. First, information recorded was based on self-reports, but in cases when an author listed a university as his/her research context, the institution was linked to the country where it was located. In the case of collaborations, the location of each author was recorded. The same was done when a given study reported to take place in more than one location: all locations listed in the study were recorded despite it representing a single count in the total number of articles. Therefore, both the author location and study locations exceed the total number of studies published. In most cases, the study location and author's location overlapped, but exceptions existed, as will be discussed. In cases with political dissonance associated with the location (e.g., Hong Kong, Taiwan), the authors' own identification was used (e.g., recording an author's institutional affiliation that listed "Hong Kong" as Hong Kong). And last, I also created a category for articles that did not provide information on research location. For instance, meta-analyses, literature reviews, studies with no tangible research location (e.g. online data), and studies that although empirical, did not provide explicit information on research location all fell in this category ("Not Specified").

## Findings

### Research Question # 1: National (U.S only) versus International Scope

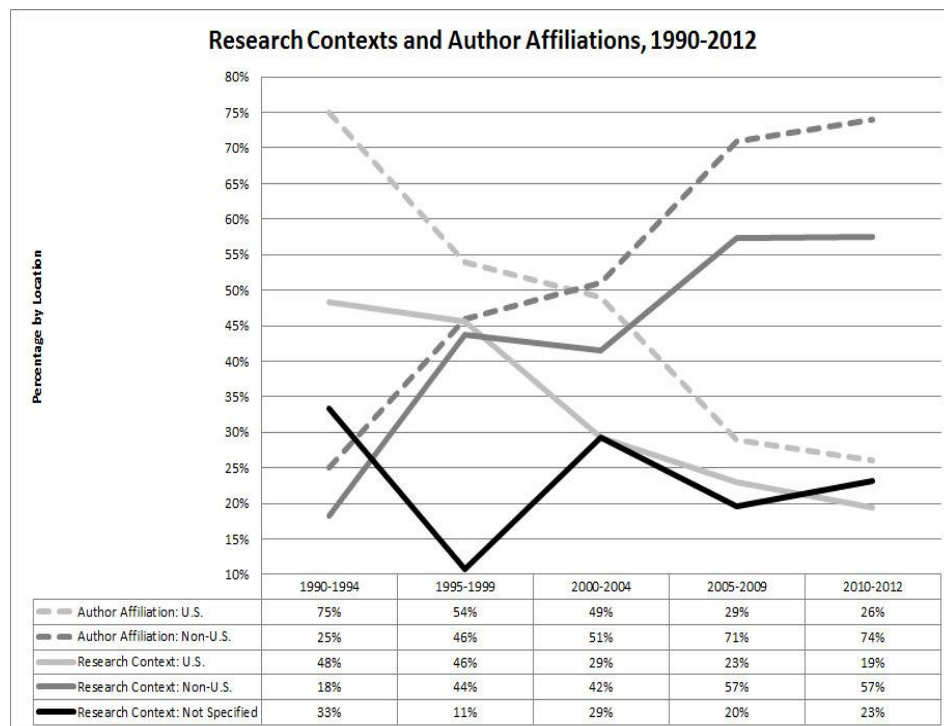
573 research articles on second language writing were published between 1990 and 2012 in the seven journals examined. Of these 573, 191 came out between 1990 and 1999, 226 between 2000 and 2009, and 156 were published between 2010 and 2012. In terms of volume of publication, unsurprisingly, *JSLW* remains top among the journals examined with close to 48% of the field's articles, followed by *TQ* (12%), *ELT* (11%), *RELC* and *AL* (8% each), *MLJ* (6%), and *IJES* (5%). As will be discussed in more detail below, increases in international scholarship correlated with high representation of L2 writing scholarship in Q4 journals, especially *ELT*, which published close to the same amount of L2 writing scholarship as *TQ*.

**Research Contexts.** Overall, findings show that the L2 writing scholarship, as seen in seven representative journals, has had a *primarily* national scope within the U.S, as seen in research contexts. However, analysis of data reveals differences in the trends from decade to decade with a move from a national, U.S, focus (1990s) to increasing internationalization in the 2000s, but especially between 2010-2012. As it is to be expected, increases in internationalization have resulted in a reduction of U.S scholarship both in numbers and percentage and vice versa. These findings suggest that the L2 writing scholarship has progressively increased in international settings; hence, granting empirical support to the claim that the L2 writing scholarship is becoming geographically diverse.

A few observations regarding the data have noteworthy implications for the growth of the field, however. First, despite increasing diversification of the scholarship, the representation of non-U.S countries, as seen in the non-U.S category, is small. Second, much of the growth of the international scholarship or scholarship from countries other than the U.S is attributed to the increasing presence of L2 writing scholarship in lower-tier journals, such as *ELT*, *IJES*, and *RELC*. Third, while top-tier journals such as *TQ* and *JSLW* have reached a balance of sorts in the U.S. vs. non-U.S. scholarship they have published, these numbers are still concentrated in pockets of regions abroad, as will be discussed. And last, a sizeable number of studies did not provide direct information on research location (25% of the total data analyzed). The implications missing contextual information below in research studies is also discussed later.

**Authors' Affiliations.** As figure 1 containing data from both authors' affiliations and research contexts shows, trends in authors' institutional affiliations also mirror the trends in research contexts. Although the L2 writing scholarship started with a predominant representation of U.S. authors, within six years, the distribution of authors reached an equilibrium of sorts, and from 2005 to 2012, authors from outside the U.S. outnumbered U.S. authors in the 7 journals examined. When non-U.S. authors publish L2 writing research, they are more likely to publish about research conducted in non-U.S. research contexts. As a result, increases in articles by non-U.S. authors have a positive impact on the journals' ability to disseminate L2 scholarship reflective of more geographic contexts, as is discussed in more detail below. Increases in non-U.S. research

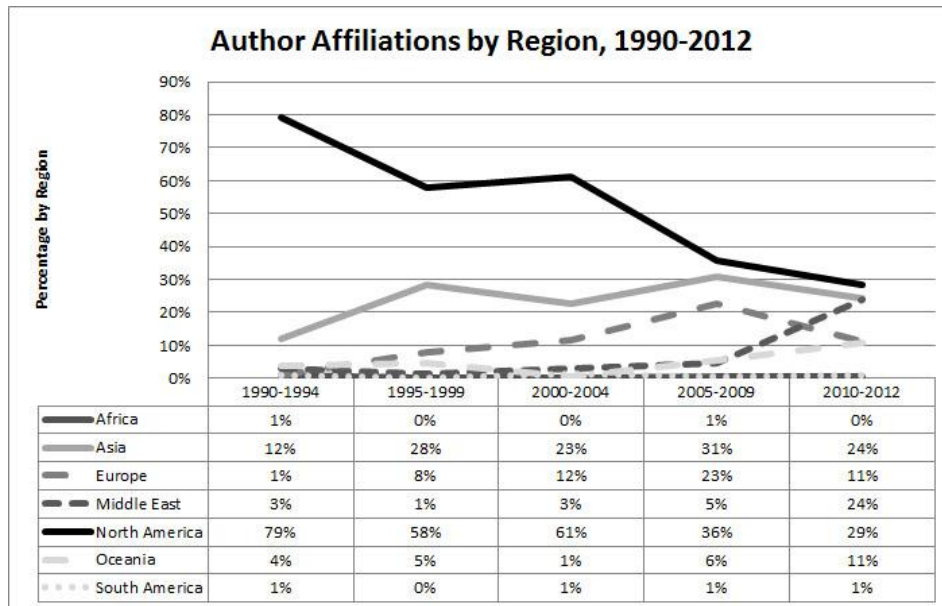
contexts by non-U.S. authors also could be partially attributed to the likelihood of non-U.S. authors pursuing advanced degrees abroad but returning to their home countries to conduct research locally; hence, this group of L2 authors creates ties with both local and international L2 writing communities. Other external factors contributing to increases in international scholarship include the availability of on-line submissions; new venues for dissemination of L2 writing work, including conferences, interest sections, etc.; journals' initiatives, including calls for papers and special issues; increased exposure for L2 writing in more geographic regions, etc. None of these correlating events could be identified as causal factors for the increase in L2 writing scholarship either by non-U.S. authors or reporting research from non-U.S. contexts. Yet, they do reinforce a general trend in the field's development to increase international representation in predominantly U.S.-based venues for L2 scholarship.



**Figure 1.** Research contexts and author affiliations for L2 writing scholarship by year. Each dataset represented accounts for 100%.

## Research Question # 2: Geographic Areas Represented by L2 Writing Scholarship

**Authors' Affiliations.** Although the trend towards more non-U.S. authors suggests a shift towards internationalization, a closer look at the global distribution of authors' locations, as seen in their institutional affiliations, continues to reveal gaps in geographic representation. As Figure 2 shows, in the early 1990s to mid-2000s, authors were most likely to work in the North American region. If authors worked outside the United States, Canada, and Mexico, they most likely worked in Asia (especially Hong Kong, Japan, China, and Taiwan), although increasingly, authors from Europe (e.g., The Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom) and Oceania (e.g., Australia and New Zealand) have contributed L2 writing research. From 2005 to 2009, authors were almost equally likely to represent North America, Asia, or Europe, with authors from Oceania also maintaining a steady presence in the scholarship. However, in the last few years, representation of regions has experienced a slight decline in scholarship from Europe, a slight increase in scholarship from Oceania, and a sharp increase in scholarship from the Middle East.



**Figure 2.** Author affiliations by region, 1990-2012

Nevertheless, as figure 3 suggests, the geographic distribution of authors is still limited because although broad geographic areas are represented (e.g, North America), the scholarship is concentrated in specific countries (e.g. U.S.) and other areas remain un-



underrepresented. Vast areas in Africa, Asia, and Europe remain unrepresented in the journals' authorship despite each geographic region including a multitude of countries where L2 writing occurs. In addition, many countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Iran, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Arab Emirates) are represented by only a handful of authors. Studying L2 writing may not be a priority in many of these contexts—for a variety of social, cultural, and economic reasons—and no single factor; for instance, journals, editors, etc can be blamed for the imbalance. However, the field needs to reflect on the generalizability of its research and acknowledge the limitations of our understanding of L2 writing practices in these regions given that they *are* underrepresented.



**Figure 3.** Chronopleth mapping of authors' locations as seen in institutional affiliations, 1990-2012

**Research Contexts.** Findings on authors' reported research contexts reflect similar trends to those seen in authors' institutional affiliations as can be seen by comparing figures 3 and 4, with one difference: a significant number of articles (25%) did not include information on research location in spite of them using the term empirical to refer to their own studies. Much like analysis of authors' institutional affiliations showed, though, the diversity of reported research contexts has increased, but there are great gaps in representation from country to country, with the majority of studies still generating much information about L2 writing—typically in English and in second language settings or settings where English is used predominantly, which is consistent with Ortega's claim that the field was/is ESL-oriented (2004).



**Figure 4.** Chronopleth mappings of research contexts represented, 1990-2012

Unsurprisingly, the North American region is still the most represented, followed by Asia, and Europe, as Figure 5 shows. While the gap between scholarship coming out of the U.S. and Asia has progressively narrowed to the point that between 2005 and 2009, the representation of Asian contexts surpassed that of the U.S., the representation of North American countries, especially the U.S., remains high. Between 1990 and 2012, there were 199 articles with research contexts in the U.S, which ranked first in terms of geographic representation, and only 29 articles with research contexts in Canada, demonstrating a great difference in representation from country to country in a specific region. The same phenomenon is observed in other areas too. In spite of growth in the scholarship coming out of Asia, the majority of research is concentrated in only three countries: Hong Kong (36 articles), followed by Japan (29), and China (24). This is in sharp contrast to the under-representation of other Asian countries like Korea or Vietnam. Likewise, the majority of research in Europe comes from the UK (22) and Spain (14), and while other European countries are represented, they have been minimally so. As these examples illustrate, the geographical spread of the scholarship is tangible, but there tend to be regions that are underrepresented or unrepresented, including Central America and Africa. This lack of representation might be the result of several contextual factors, including the lack of emphasis on writing development in these regions, limited viability of research and publication, and other larger issues having to do with access to education and literacy. All of these findings support the assertion that the L2 writing scholarship has not been sufficiently geographically diverse, in spite of attempts to move into this direction (e.g. call for papers, international conferences, etc).

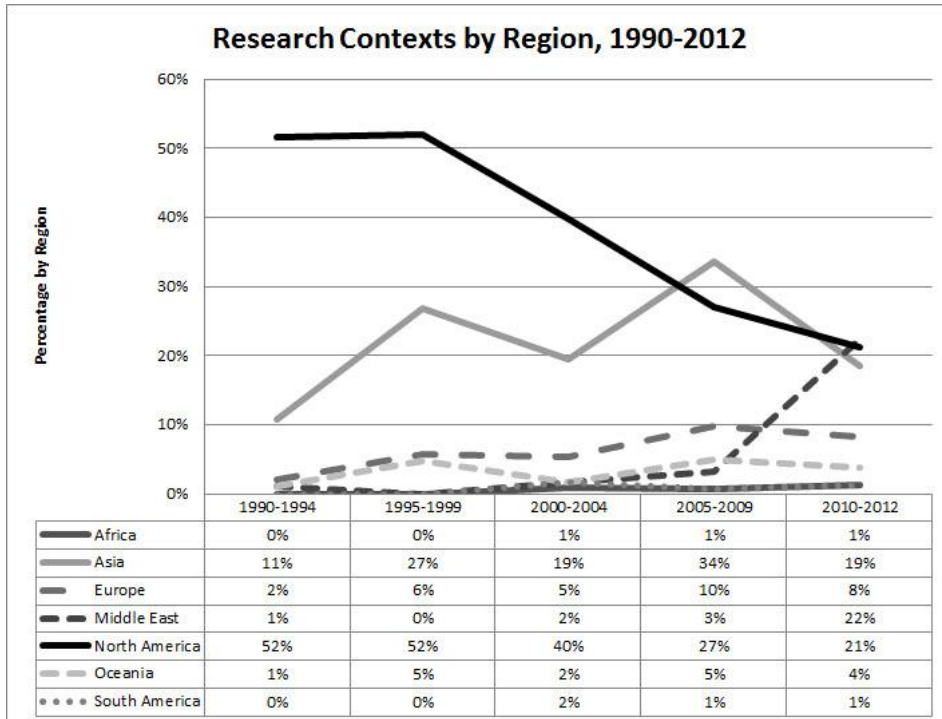


Figure 5. Research contexts by region, 1990-2012

Two points regarding gaps in representation are worth emphasizing. First, there is a 63-publication gap between the first and second most represented countries in the L2 writing scholarship examined: the U.S (99 articles) v.s Hong Kong (36), which occupy the first and second place in terms of representation. A significant number of countries were represented by 1 or 2 publications only. Granted, these countries have different population densities and some contexts have more scholars actively working on L2 writing research. Nevertheless, as the field considers the *generalizability* of research, scholars should reflect on the geographic regions – and corresponding languages and cultures – actually represented by the field’s scholarship. Second, a surprising finding regarding research contexts is the increase in research conducted in the Middle East, which surpassed research conducted in the U.S and in East Asia in 2011-2012. However, this increase of L2 writing scholarship from the Middle East has been tied primarily to publications in lower-tier journals, which tend to attract fewer readers; therefore, the diffusion of this scholarship is limited. While the gaps in representation would appear unavoidable, they are nonetheless relevant to a discussion of the generalizability of the L2 writing scholarship and potential areas for growth in the field.

**Research Question #3: What Do Research Contexts and Author Affiliations Suggest about the State of Research in the Field?**

As the field develops theories and practices about L2 writing, it should strive to build them based on research conducted in a variety of contexts to illuminate different, contextually-bounded, aspects of writing development, learner and linguistic profiles, and contextual issues facilitating or hindering writing development. To illustrate, Ortega (2004) explains how students in Japan are generally introduced to the analysis of exemplary texts as a way to develop good writing rather than using process-oriented approaches, which have become staples of mainstream composition and ESL writing instruction in the U.S. Using this example and others, she makes the case for how the automatic use/transfer of common views about writing, in this case, that process writing works across contexts, is detrimental, all of which leads her to argue that L2 writing research should "...avoid the pitfalls of treating teachers, students, and teaching contexts...as if they didn't matter or as if they were all the same." (2004, p. 8). Even fourteen years later, findings from this research support Ortega's argument and they point out that geographic diversity has been a neglected area of study in the field of L2 writing, one with potentially great implications for the teaching and researching of L2 writing across the globe. While the question of generalizability is still unanswered, results from this research are also encouraging as they demonstrate a continued interest in and representation of diverse geographic contexts.

One way to have a more nuanced picture of L2 writing would be to use the global distribution of authors' locations and research studies to identify potential new research contexts that would ideally enrich our understanding of L2 writing. For instance, we know that we have a very robust understanding of L2 writing development in the North American region (47%) and to a lesser extent of the Asian region (29%), but this research is concentrated in a handful of countries (U.S, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, and China in that order). Because contextual conditions, including learners' profiles, the role of writing, etc, can vary by location, other countries within these regions merit research too, as do countries in other regions, which are less represented, for instance, the Middle East (9.3%) and Europe (8.6%). Many areas around the globe may merit more research on L2 writing; for instance, while there have been some countries in Central America represented by authors, places like Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama are absent from this list. Therefore, these could be potential contexts for future research on L2 writing. To be clear, studying L2 writing may not be a priority in these countries, but if they remain absent from the field's research, scholars should be cautious about the scope of generalizations regarding L2 writing in the region(s).

Findings indicate that collaborations have greatly contributed to increases in geographic diversity and they can continue to be a venue to further increase the geographic diversity of the scholarship, while strengthening ties among members of the L2 writing community at large. Co-authored articles suggest that scholars in geographic regions with established L2 writing communities are working with scholars in other regions to extend the field's research and scholarly communities (e.g. researchers in the U.S., U.K., New Zealand, and Australia are pairing with researchers in countries such as Turkey, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Mexico). Other collaborations occur within the same region (e.g. China and Hong Kong). Publications coming out of the periphery greatly

contribute to our understanding of L2 writing and enrich and supplement existing views on L2 writing practices. Therefore, collaborations are a good way to generate interest in and support the production of geographically diverse L2 writing scholarship.

While collaborations currently exist and they are helpful, work remains to be done. First, even when authors are conducting research in multiple areas of the world and engaging in collaborations across geographical contexts, institutional ties of the L2 writing research published in the journals examined, and in many others, are rooted in English-speaking countries. Half of the articles identifying South American research contexts, for example, are written or co-written by scholars with institutional affiliations in the U.S. Second, while collaborations currently exist, most of them tend to focus on countries or regions we already have robust knowledge about (e.g. the U.S, Hong Kong, etc.) and often focus on English writing only. Therefore, it would be helpful if, in cases of collaborations, researchers were to conduct research studies in the lesser known contexts, in spite of logistical concerns (e.g. proficiency in the local language, the ability to secure IRB approval, etc.). Increases in geographic diversity can also positively impact the linguistic diversity of the existing L2 writing research since as Pelaez-Morales (2017) demonstrated, the scholarship in the field, as seen in research published in *JSLW*, has been linguistically homogeneous. Since language informs meaning and identity and the journals examined are published in English, the geographic distribution of authors also might correlate with the predominance of English in the authors' countries, but as a field, we need to avoid falling in the trap Ortega cautioned us against back in 2009 when she maintained that "knowledge about ESL writing gets naturalized inadvertently as being about L2 writing more generally, with the implication that it is universally valid and easily generalizable across writing contexts" (p. 232); therefore, we need more research in diverse contexts but also about languages other than English, as other researchers like Reichelt (2001) have already noted.

Analysis of sources with no specific information on research location, which accounted for 25% of the research published, also provides a window into potential ways to strengthen the geographic diversity of the scholarship in the field. Many of the articles with unspecified research contexts were empirical studies, what MacNealy (1999) defines as "research that carefully describes and/or measures observable phenomena in a systematic way planned in advance of the observation" (p. 6). To the best of their ability, all authors, especially those of empirical investigations, should provide specific details about their research, including research location, to guide replication studies. Although there are good reasons to keep contextual information on their research minimal, for instance, to protect research participants' identity, not having access to information on context for empirical studies reduces the reliability of the claims made and leaves readers missing a key piece of information to place the study in its larger context. Although outside of the scope of this research, the same could be said of non-empirical investigations. For instance, authors of meta-analyses should provide information on the research contexts of the original studies they review to help both authors and readers contextualize findings in the studies. This information also fosters replicable, aggregable, and data supported (RAD) research (Haswell, 2005), which helps the field assess the generalizability of claims made and their applicability to different settings.

Last, for the field to establish a broader geographic scope, L2 writing must continue to build spaces for professionalization. Spaces like graduate programs and

conference-bound activities are excellent steps in this direction, but creating specific initiatives to help periphery scholars and novice scholars learn strategies to publish in high-tier journals might be even more helpful in adding to the body of research on L2 writing in currently under or un-represented contexts. After all, scholars in the periphery might not be exposed to the same research methodologies, research protocols (like applying for IRB), they might lack financial resources, and they might also face linguistic obstacles since the majority of journals publishing L2 writing research do so in English and not in other languages. In this sense, journals have an important role to play in supporting this process. For instance, findings show that contributions to the L2 writing scholarship by authors from countries where English is an additional language skyrocketed with the emergence of *English Language Teaching* in 2008. *ELT* accounts for a third of the authors in the sample who are affiliated with countries where English is an additional language. *ELT* offers free access to its online version, potentially extending its reach into geographic contexts previously underrepresented in L2 writing scholarship, and its articles are double-blind peer-reviewed. Yet, the journal charges a publication fee (\$400 U.S.) for manuscripts accepted for publication. Iran was a country extensively represented in *ELT*. Certainly Iran's scholars are reaching a broader international audience for their work, but the fee could introduce confounds to the publishing process: would other journals consider the work, if a financial incentive is not in place? Is the fee alienating scholars who cannot afford a fee associated with publication? Is *ELT* and other journals that charge a fee more able to disregard writing issues than other journals? Regardless, even as *ELT* is extending L2 writing communities (both geographically and disciplinarily), the fee likely excludes other scholars from contributing their research.

To be clear, expanding the geographic scope and overall diversity of the scholarship is not solely the responsibility of journal editors. All members of the field who occupy places of privilege should reflect on how they can extend apprenticeship opportunities to underrepresented contexts of L2 writing, remaining attentive to the collaborative partnership goals of communities of practice. Ultimately, developing broader global representation of L2 writing requires strengthening communities of practice so that high-quality research happens in more contexts and so that researchers have local and regional peers and mentors who can help them submit high-quality reports of their work for publication.

### Conclusion

The participation of scholars from different areas in the world has begun to enrich our current understanding of how L2 writing develops in different geographic, educational, and linguistic settings. Although it is impossible to predict the growth of the scholarship in future years, the trends discussed here are encouraging but they also demonstrate that there is significant room for growth and improvement. Overall, findings from this research are in line with findings from earlier investigations suggesting a positive trend in the increase of international L2 writing scholarship and are consistent with the claim that the field has been geographically diverse to some extent, as its score continues to expand. In spite of this clear trend towards internationalization in L2 writing scholarship, the dominance of the U.S. in the literature is still significant and this is consistent with earlier investigations, which suggests that while the geographic diversity has increased,

the *quantity* of geographically diverse research is still uneven even after two decades of research on L2 writing (1992-2012). Instead, the majority of the field's scholarship focuses around geographic pockets, particularly the U.S., Hong Kong, Japan, and Canada, with growing representation of L2 writing research from select areas in the Middle East, Europe, and Oceania. These distributions suggest that our current understanding of what L2 writing entails internationally is partial, at best, which supports the need for more research originating from diverse contexts.

Collecting two different types of geographic data provided a comprehensive picture of geographic diversity of the L2 writing scholarship, and some implications from this methodological choice are worth mentioning. First, there is much overlap between research contexts and institutional affiliations, especially in single-authored research, which suggests that researchers are conducting research in the countries where they work. In the case of collaborations, however, findings are slightly different: *generally*, collaborations tended to take place in inner-circle countries including those we have seen a lot scholarship from; for instance, collaborative studies with researchers from the U.S and South/central American authors, generally took place in the U.S. While there might be many external factors accounting for this finding and *not all* collaborative research studies took place in inner-circle countries, this finding has implications for research on geographic diversity. More research in this area is needed to confirm or reject this preliminary finding. Second, collecting two types of data also demonstrated that while all authors listed an institutional affiliation, not all empirical studies provided information on research location—over 20% of the total sample. This finding highlights the need for researchers to be more specific about their methodological choices in their studies.

If the field's goal is to represent L2 writing comprehensively, it will likely have to adjust its theories as it learns more about L2 writing in additional and in under and un-represented contexts. This is not because writing is different depending on where a person writes, but because contextual conditions can shape several factors, including but not limited to, the value placed on writing skills, writing instruction/practices, learners' profiles, levels of literacy, etc. Learning more about writing across diverse contexts can help us expand our definitions of what writing is and how writing skills are acquired and for what purposes. In other words, while it is common for researchers in the fields of L1 and L2 writing to think of writing as "composing," for some learners writing could mean transcribing, taking notes, etc. This is not to diminish the role composing should play in writing development but to point out the need for alternative and context-driven definitions of what L2 writing entails, and more importantly, an acceptance by researchers in the field that these are legitimate forms of L2 writing.

Expanding the field's scope to more geographic areas will require multifaceted efforts. As a field, we must increase opportunities for apprenticeship, allowing "newbies" to learn from experienced members in the field. We also must increase common spaces for exchange of knowledge, perhaps making better use of online networks to supplement and extend the opportunities created by journals, the Symposium on Second Language Writing and other conferences, the SLW-IS at TESOL, and the SLW SIG at CCCC. At the same time, we must pursue additional research in under un-represented areas through international collaborations. The 2013 Symposium on Second Language Writing in China, in New Zealand (2015), and in Thailand (2017), and Canada (2018) are good examples of this type of effort. The field must also continue to invite scholars from

underrepresented areas into well-established common spaces (i.e., the Symposium, the SLW SIG, SLW-IS). Only through a conscientious effort to nurture and extend its communities will the field continue to expand its geographic scope and better represent a broader array of L2 writing practices in its scholarship and theories. Yet the tremendous gains in the field's geographic diversity during the past decade give us hope that these goals are achievable.

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### İkinci Dil Yazmada Coğrafi Kapsamın Etkisini Anlama

#### Özet

Coğrafi bölgelerin karşılaştırılması içeren çok sayıda araştırma vardır. İkinci dilde yazmayı inceleyen araştırmacılar da alanın coğrafi kapsamı hakkında çeşitli varsayımlarda bulunabilirler. Bununla beraber, önceki çalışmalar, araştırmaların ortaya koyduğu coğrafi örüntüleri ve bunları alanın durumu hakkında ne önerdiğine dair net bir resim sunamamıştır, ancak bu yönde bazı çabalar vardır (Matsuda 1997; Kapper 2002; Pelaez-Morales, 2017 ve daha yakın zamanda, Riazi, Shi ve Haggerty, 2018). Bu araştırma, 1990 ve 2012 yılları arasında yedi uygulamalı dilbilim dergisinde yayımlanan ikinci dilde yazma araştırmalarını yazarların coğrafi konularıyla ilgili olarak incelemiştir. Araştırmanın amaçları şunlardır: a) alanın coğrafi çeşitliliğine dair iddiaları desteklemek veya reddetmek için görgül kanıtları ortaya koymak, b) temsil edilen, az temsil edilen veya temsil edilmeyen bölgeleri ve ülkeleri belirlemek ve c) ikinci dilde yazma araştırmalarının genellenebilirliğine dair bir tartışma başlatmak. Bu projenin özgünlüğü kapsamının genişliğinden ve diğer araştırmaların aksine, yazarların kurumsal bilgileri ve araştırmaların bağlamı gibi iki tür coğrafi veriyi incelemesinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bağlamlar, coğrafi çeşitlilik