

■ Introduction

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Although many, including ourselves (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001), have complained about the limited attention given to reading-writing interactions, the speaking-writing relationship, in fact, has been far more neglected (but see such recent works as Horowitz, 2007; Weissberg, 2006). This relative neglect is no doubt partly the result of second language (L2) writing specialists' desire to legitimize writing as a research and pedagogical area, to encourage a view of writing as more than a pale reflection and means of reinforcement of spoken discourse (for more nuanced views of the history of the field of L2 writing, see Matsuda 2001, 2003). Ken Hyland (2002) has suggested that viewing writing and speaking as though on opposite sides of a "great divide" is not only simplistic and unrealistic but may also be unhelpful to writers, as writing, like speaking, is a communicative act with interlocutors, an act for which "appropriate interactional tenor" (p. 52) does matter. We would like to argue that the current speaking-writing disconnect can be equally unproductive for speakers, not just because writing provides a means of practicing the language one is learning to speak (though it obviously does), but because the reflection that the act of writing inevitably calls for slows down cognitive processing of language, allowing for explicit attention, or noticing (see Adams & Ross-Feldman and Williams, this volume). Repeated use of explicit knowledge is likely to support, many SLA specialists now suggest (Nan Jiang, personal communication), an increase in implicit knowledge—that is, the automaticity needed for oral fluency.

The reasons just mentioned, however, are by no means the only reasons why a reconsideration of the speaking-writing relationships is needed. Since the "process" revolution in writing pedagogy, teacher-student conferencing and face-to-face peer responding have become common, if not universally accepted or widely enough researched, oral practices in writing instruction (see Ferris, 2003; F. Hyland, this volume; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). At the same time, those who teach spoken discourse, or speech communication, have long been aware of the value of writing as a means of organizing one's thoughts and mentally rehearsing what will be said. These pragmatic real-

izations, however, have not automatically translated into the attention from researchers, teacher trainers, curriculum and materials designers, and others that one might expect. Nevertheless, popular movements in language education have certainly been nudging practitioners toward more combined speaking and writing instruction—movements such as “whole language” at the pre-secondary level, content-based integrated-skills approaches in intensive language programs, and authentic/simulated task-based and problem-solving learning in English for academic or other specific purposes curricula. In other words, countless practitioners may already be teaching speaking and writing together in their language classes, yet they, like many others, may know far less than they would like about why, how, or whether or not this linkage actually is effective for L2 learners. Our volume attempts to bring such questions to the fore and provide a forum for those interested in both L2 speaking and writing, and in how the two modalities very probably synergistically contribute to each other and to L2 proficiency overall.

Overview of Contents

The organization of this volume proceeds from more theoretical and research-oriented issues to more classroom-based perspectives. The first of this volume’s four sections looks primarily at what research and theory with various foci can tell us about the L2 speaking-writing relationship, while the next three sections contain more classroom-oriented investigations and discussions. This theory-and-research/practice demarcation, as often the case in an applied field such as ours, is only a rough dividing line, as pedagogical insights are far from absent from Section 1, and Sections 2–4 are informed by theory and often report research findings. Of the latter, more pedagogical sections, the middle two, 2 and 3, consider directional scaffolding issues: how speaking works, ideally, to scaffold writing and the less commonly recognized ways in which writing can support speaking. Technology plays a role in a number of the chapters in this volume, but the final section, 4, focuses more directly on technology as a mediational tool capable of bridging spoken and written discourse by presenting both an occasion for and means of linking the two modalities for mutual support.

Part 1: Theory and Research on Speaking-Writing Interactions

Recent research on language learning, as Jessica Williams remarks in her masterful review essay opening the section, now provides abundant evidence

of the bidirectionality of L2 speaking and writing. As Williams notes, that talk aids writing, probably never much doubted, is increasingly well supported empirically. Research on student-to-peer/tutor/teacher talk about writing confirms the likelihood of draft-to-draft progress as a result of such negotiation. That writing can boost the underlying proficiency needed for L2 talk, however, has only more recently received much attention. Among the potential benefits of writing, as planned (not real-time or immediately public) production of language, it may lower the affective filter enough to make learners feel freer to try new forms of language, and hence gain a level of confidence that may eventually transfer to speech. We are likely to learn still more about speaking-writing interactions, Williams suggests, from ongoing research on genres that actually mix modes—for example, journaling and online chat.

From a more purely theoretical (or even philosophical) perspective, the increasingly popular work of Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin provides persuasive rationales for paying considerable attention to the speaking-writing relationship. Robert Weissberg, however, argues in Chapter 2 for a “weaker version” of Vygotskian socio-cultural theory, one that takes into consideration differences between first and second language learning, between younger and older learners, and among the varied learning styles likely in evidence in any language classroom. What Weissberg mounts a compelling case for is a “dialogue approach to L2 writing” that recognizes “not *all instructional dialogue need be external*, that we can appeal to the power of speech without always operationalizing it in the form of talk.”

In her chapter on Bakhtinian theory, Ludmila Marchenkova’s comments resonate with Weissberg’s when she points out the too-frequent neglect of the importance of internal, rather than merely external, dialogue in Bakhtin’s conceptualization of language. From the Bakhtinian perspective, Marchenkova informs us, speaking and writing share an internal orientation toward prior and anticipated utterances. What an understanding of inner dialogism offers, among other things, Marchenkova argues, is a window on how externally authoritative discourse can become internally persuasive—that is, transformed and taken ownership of in learners’ own spoken and written utterances.

A multifaceted view of dialogue is integral to the model of an “academic culture of collaboration” that Lisya Seloni presents in Chapter 4. Rejecting a more traditional context-free cognitive view of literacy, Seloni proposes a model that focuses on the dynamic inter-relationships of people, texts, and events, or the textualizing of experience that results when people interact through language, jointly constructing meaning and taking action. Seloni’s

“intertextual analysis” of a group of multilingual doctoral students’ oral and written grappling with advanced academic literacy practices, or in Bakhtinian terms, “externally authoritative discourse,” not only helps concretize her model but illustrates the power of collective interaction to help newcomers own their own discourse, to “resist, challenge, and eventually creatively construct the rhetorics and texts around them.”

Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin are invoked in Christine Pearson Casanave and Miguel Sosa’s argument for tackling intellectually and culturally “difficult” ideas in relatively risk-free classroom environments with multiple and varied opportunities for dialogue. Casanave and Sosa’s accounts of their own efforts to create and participate as learners themselves in such environments provide vivid examples of theory-put-into-practice—that is, use of writing and speaking to mutually scaffold the transformation of complex, multidimensional thoughts into lines of spoken and written words.

While writing and speaking are arguably and even demonstrably mutually supportive, Lucy Pickering and Pat Byrd remind us that there are, nevertheless, significant differences between written and spoken discourse that language educators should keep in mind. Pickering and Byrd’s analysis of common four-word lexical bundles in the Academic Word List and the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) calls attention to the fact that even the same phrases may be used for quite different communicative purposes by writers and speakers as a result of the varying resources available in the two modalities—for example, the intonational structure unique to speaking. Modal differences are not an argument for a return to discrete “skills” teaching, however. Pickering and Byrd suggest instead that “students will benefit from specific instruction on how to mediate between parallel written and spoken forms.”

Part 2: How Speaking Scaffolds Writing

Literacy, especially early literacy, is “influenced and shaped by story experiences,” argues Linda Blanton through her own compelling use of narrative in the opening chapter of this section. Images of loss from Hurricane Katrina, loss experienced by the author herself, serve as a poignant metaphor for lost opportunities for literacy in any language when formal education is truncated in the home language and replaced by prematurely accurate and rhetorical form-oriented instruction in a new language. For immigrant learners who have missed the crucial stage in early literacy development when oral language becomes written language, what’s needed, Blanton argues, is a re-linking of oracy and literacy: “Such students need to write themselves

back into the picture after an absence of long duration. Their thought [or Vygotskian “inner speech”], their expression, must have the chance to manifest itself in writing.”

For those fortunate enough to reach more advanced literacy development, oracy and literacy tend to become, as Blanton (this volume) has observed, more distinct, “settling into a co-existence,” yet remaining intertwined. Just how connected talk can be to the discipline-specific writing of highly literate language learners is made readily apparent in Luxin Yang’s chapter (8) examining the group writing projects of Chinese commerce students in English-medium university settings. One of the few L2 investigations of group work outside the language classroom, Yang’s Vygotsky-inspired study found that through multiple face-to-face and email interactions, group members managed to create “a group zone of proximal development,” where they learned as individuals and whole groups. Perhaps most interestingly, Yang saw this successful coconstruction resulting not just from positive reinforcement in the form of encouraging dialogue but also from “criticism, rejection, and resistance to dialogue,” which forced the groups to resolve conflict and work toward understanding of each other’s views and the task at hand, a process that, in the end, enhanced their performance as thinkers and writers.

Although peer interaction has become a mainstay in many writing classes, L2 specialists, Fiona Hyland reminds us in Chapter 9, have long cautioned that peer group interaction, particularly in culturally heterogeneous groups, is not necessarily supportive of the writing process. In her study, however, of two instructors with very different approaches to their culturally diverse ESL writing workshops—one creating small-group microcommunities, the other an inclusive whole-class macrocommunity—Hyland found that peer support thrived in both, as the students themselves seemed to recognize the value of such interaction. Hyland notes, though, that by not considering the interactions students engage in *outside* our classrooms, their self-selected use of resources for feedback, we may be missing an opportunity to help them learn to make the best use of the type of support networks they will likely rely on after leaving our writing classes.

Access to support networks is, in fact, a major concern of Christine Tardy, who focuses in Chapter 10 on the needs of graduate students as newcomers to discipline-specific communities of practice. Eager to equalize “resource availability” for “off-networked” students, Tardy advocates an approach to advanced academic literacy that includes use of spoken texts to build knowledge of the patterns of communication—for example, types of argumentation—essential to written texts as well. Tardy acknowledges that no classroom can replicate disciplinary settings and the complex systems of oral

and written genres unique to each, but instructors can provide a supportive environment for gradual genre engagement, where learners can “explore, analyze, and critique ... to build a meta-awareness of individual genres *and* the systems that they exist within.”

Part 3: How Writing Scaffolds Speaking

As Williams (this volume) has pointed out, when attention has been given to the L2 speaking-writing nexus, it has tended to be somewhat lopsided, with more focus on the role of speaking in scaffolding writing than on the reverse. Don Rubin and Okim Kang, in the opening chapter of Section 3, help us understand both the likely reasons for this imbalance—from ontogenetic, phylogenetic, and cognitive vantage points—and the reasons why it should be remedied. Rubin’s own highly influential earlier conceptualization of the bidirectionality of literacy and oracy is revisited in this chapter, and a more complex double-helix configuration proposed to “capture the recurrent interplay between writing and speaking both in individuals’ development as language users and in social and organizational uses of language.” Rubin and Kang argue that if language educators are “serious about cultivating synergy between speaking and writing and about the primacy of social interaction,” they should pay more attention to the teaching of valued oral genres, such as the briefing report and poster presentation.

Striking evidence for writing as a means of mediating speaking is presented in Gayle Nelson and Yanbin Lu’s chapter (12). Mindful of the theoretical lens of legitimate peripheral participation, Nelson and Lu chart Lu’s own increasingly fuller participation in her new community of practice as a doctoral student at first reluctant to engage in class discussion. Writing, in the form of posting on class discussion boards, became a virtual point of entry for later face-to-face class discussion. Through engagement in online interaction with her peers, Lu began to see learning as collaboration, to appreciate that she could learn from fellow learners and they from her. While the authors, understandably, make no claims of a direct causal relationship between posting and speaking, Lu herself is certain that her experience with online communication contributed to greater self-confidence and interest in participating in her peer community that accompanied her into the classroom.

Whether writing can contribute to greater accuracy in language production is, as Rebecca Adams and Lauren Ross-Feldman note in Chapter 14, of increasing interest to SLA researchers. One reason why writing may lead to more productive noticing, Adams and Ross-Feldman report, may be that

for writers, language is necessarily both object and communication tool (see Williams, this volume). In their own research, Adams and Ross-Feldman have observed that writing before engaging in spoken interaction does appear to encourage learner attention to form, and that giving learners a chance to process content orally before writing may lead to more successful resolution of form-focused oral interactions. Thus, both writing and speaking-then-writing before engaging in spoken interaction appeared to offer distinct language learning opportunities, or ways of taking advantage of them, that educators may want to make available to learners.

Part 4: How Technology Bridges Speaking and Writing

Though many are convinced of the value of corpus linguistics not just for linguistic research but also for the language classroom, pedagogical corpus use has so far not been much examined. As both a corpus-oriented researcher and highly experienced language instructor, Lynne Flowerdew brings her knowledge of both realms to Chapter 14, where she considers how corpus activities can bridge speaking and writing in the L2 classroom. Flowerdew's goal in her own classroom, she reports, was not just to get writing students talking but to get them talking about language issues they had a vested interest in, and, as a result, learning how to critically assess electronic resources' ability to shed light on those issues. Corpus tasks, it is suggested, can serve as catalysts for talk about language that heightens awareness of lexis and grammar in ways that can improve writing. As Flowerdew eloquently observes, "The role that corpora can play in this partnership of [speaking and writing] modalities opens up many as yet relatively unexplored but tantalizing possibilities."

Computer-mediated-communication (CMC) has for several decades attracted the attention of language researchers and educators as, in Joel Bloch's words (this volume), an interesting "amalgam of both oral and written forms of discourse." Blogging, now among the most popular of all CMC forms, is especially intriguing, Bloch argues, in its ability, via easily updated web pages, to archive and inspire dialogue. Bloch reports in the capstone chapter of the volume on efforts to enlist blogging as a means of helping immigrant language learners, or "students interrupted" as Blanton (this volume) would say, in their transition from a more vernacular, speech-like literacy to a more formally academic literacy. Bloch suggests that blogging can give "the oral voice a sense of textuality" and facilitate "shuttling" between modalities. Technologies such as blogging, however, Bloch provocatively asserts, are far more than just helpmates on the road to other learning objectives; they

are significant new modes of communication that merit attention in and of themselves. The implication we are left with as readers (and editors) at the end of the final chapter of this volume is that, perhaps more insistently than any other intellectual developments, new communication technologies are challenging us to rethink the value of continuing to envision speaking and writing as two entirely separate modalities.

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