Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice (Second Edition)

By **William Grabe and Junko Yamashita**. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 582 pp. $39.99.

Reviewed by
Sachiko Matsunaga

This book, *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice* (hereafter *RSL*), is like a small encyclopedia on reading comprehension, covering a wide range of relevant topics—from the definition and theories of reading comprehension, neurocognitive processes of reading, and cognitive, educational, sociocultural, and institutional factors influencing reading development in L1 and L2, to research implications on teaching and assessment in support of reading development in L1 and L2. This is a second edition of the same title that has twenty chapters in five parts, and each chapter has numerous sections and subsections. At the beginning of each part and chapter, its content coverage is pre-announced in the order of appearance, and each chapter (except Chapter 5) concludes with relevant pedagogical implications based on research findings. Each section or subsection is relatively short but dense with detailed information on the given topic, which is highly specialized when discussing theories and research, or more practical when presenting pedagogical implications. The 486-page content is preceded by the table of contents, lists of tables and figures, and preface, and is followed by references, and author and subject indexes.

In the preface, the authors state two goals of the book: (1) "using research findings to describe reading comprehension skills and inform reading instruction" (xv); (2) providing "explanations for how fluent reading works and how research on reading can be used to promote reading development in both L1 and L2 reading contexts" (xvi). They then describe the content organization in five parts: Part I (Chapters 1 to 6) outlines "the cognitive foundations for understanding how reading works"; Part II (Chapters 7 to 10) examines "variations in reading abilities"; Part III (Chapters 11 to 14) highlights "the development of reading comprehension abilities" while "addressing the major requirements for becoming a fluent reader"; Part IV (Chapters 15 to 18) focuses on "skills and instructions…in reading contexts"; and Part V (Chapters 19 and 20) brings together "the research from the first four parts

in addressing curricular and instructional contexts, and reading assessment practices" (xvii-xviii).

The authors have at least two types of audience in writing this book: (1) "researchers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, and anyone interested in L2 reading" and (2) "intrepid teachers and graduate students." For the latter audience, they recommend three groups of chapters for ease of getting relevant information: Chapters 1 to 3 for building a theoretical foundation, Chapters 10 to 14 for developing reading comprehension abilities, and Chapters 15 to 19 for developing L2 readers' fluency (xviii). The authors also highlight three new chapters added to the first edition: Chapter 5 (the neurocognition of reading), Chapter 15 (reading-writing relationships), and Chapter 16 (digital reading), before concluding the preface with a core message saying: "We learn to read by reading, and by reading a lot" (xix).

Part 1, "Foundation of Reading," identifies cognitive factors in reading, starting with Chapter 1, "The Nature of Reading: Defining Reading." It first describes the nature of reading in terms of different purposes (e.g., to learn, and search for, synthesize, evaluate, and use information) and a definition of reading. According to the authors, reading is "a complex combination of processes" (16) that are "rapid," "efficient," "comprehending," "interactive," "strategic," "flexible," "purposeful," "evaluating," "learning," and "linguistic" (17). The chapter then offers general implications for teaching and learning to read (e.g., "identifying key purposes for reading and needed reading instruction to support skills development practices" [22]) with "reading to learn" (ibid.) as a long-term goal of curricular design, while cautioning that "there is no 'one size fits all' set of recommendations for [L2] reading instruction or curriculum development" (21). Chapter 2, "How Reading Works: The Building Blocks of Fluency and Comprehension," presents different types of processing involved in word recognition—orthographic, phonological, semantic, and morphological, as well as lexical access, syntactic parsing, and word-to-text integration processing. The chapter offers pedagogical recommendations focusing on developing these lower-level processes that need to become automatic. Chapter 3, "How Reading Works: Comprehension Processes," addresses higher-level processing by describing four main components: (1) "[a] 'text representation'…[which is] the outcome of word-to-text integration process"; (2) "a mental representation of what the reader constructs as his/her coherent interpretation of the text"; (3) "[a] set of processing skills and resources

that is often associated with WM [working memory]"; (4) "[e]xecutive function resources beyond WM" such as "attention, inferencing, [and] metacognitive awareness" (56-57). It then draws relevant pedagogical implications, stressing the necessity for learners to "*become strategic readers*" (83) who can monitor comprehension and repair it if needed.

In Chapter 4, "Cognitive Issues in Reading," the authors first discuss implicit learning (e.g., skilled readers' automatic word recognition skills) and explicit learning (e.g., learning word meanings by using flashcards); the former involves repeated and extensive exposure to print, while the latter involves direct attention to specific information to be learned and practiced. Both are needed to develop reading skills. The authors then touch upon: (1) the frequency of exposure and statistical learning (e.g., implicitly learning that 'h' is likely to follow 't' in print); (2) associative learning (e.g., forming semantic network relationships); (3) "Chunk-and-Pass" processing, in which "[t]he input is chunked into larger units that can be retained in WM for a longer period of time" (97); (4) Connectionism, "a neural representation of what the brain might actually do while learning a language" (98); (5) speed of processing as a reading research measure; (6) long-term memory and background knowledge. This is followed by pedagogical recommendations to use or provide "appropriate background knowledge" and explore "possible inferences to understand challenging texts better" via "a number of prereading and during-reading activities" (109).

Chapter 5, "Neurocognitive Processing and Reading Ability," reviews neurolinguistic research on reading and its research methods, while illustrating major brain structures and language-associated brain areas as well as networks and pathways for language processing. This is followed by an appendix, which summarizes timelines for "[f]luent, automatic word processing and word-to-text integration (ventral) pathway" and "[a]ttentional phonological-orthographic-semantic process route (dorsal pathway)" (128). In Chapter 6, "Explaining Reading Comprehension: Models of Reading," the authors first introduce five empirically driven models of reading: "Simple View of Reading," "Construction-Integration Model," "Landscape Model of Reading," "Verbal Efficiency Model," and "Reading System Framework Approach" (131). The last approach is described as "the best overall way to translate new research on reading comprehension and development" (140). The authors then point out the challenges of creating frameworks specific to L2 reading comprehension, for which greater variants such as L2 proficiency need to be considered,

though component skills and developmental paths are very similar to L1. This is followed by pedagogical recommendations focusing on the development of L2 component skills, such as automatic word-recognition skills via fluency practice, and efforts to increase learners' exposure to reading texts and their reading rates.

Part II, "Patterns of Variation in Reading," examines variations in the reading abilities of learners in different L1s and in more than one language and explores social factors and motivation that affect reading development. Chapter 7, "Reading in Different Languages," identifies a number of linguistic differences that influence reading in different languages and describes how different orthographies represent phonological and morphological information. Japanese, for example, "combines three script systems to reflect syllables (Hiragana, Katakana) and morphemes in Kanji" (153). The chapter presents "The Orthographic Depth Hypothesis" (ibid.), which captures the impact of the depth of a script on word recognition and its consequences on reading processes in L1, as well as other factors such as the roles of visual processing skills, morphological awareness, and syllable reading effects. The authors underscore the influences of L1 orthography in L2 reading development (e.g., L1-L2 transfer effects) while also acknowledging "universal aspects of reading abilities" (162). They conclude the chapter by advocating the "consistent inclusion of extensive reading in the curriculum" (166) to develop automatic lower-level processing and enhance vocabulary learning.

Chapter 8, "L1 and L2 Reading Relationship," first describes three major sets of differences between L1 and L2 reading: (1) linguistic and processing differences (e.g., L2 readers having to work with resources of two languages while developing L2 reading comprehension skills), (2) cognitive and educational differences (e.g., L2 academic readers' highly developed cognitive skills in L1 while lacking the amount of exposure to L2 print in their early schooling), and (3) sociocultural and institutional differences (e.g., different text organizations in different cultures). The chapter then outlines similarities between L1 and L2 reading (e.g., language resources needed for reading comprehension and variables that predict it) and evaluates L1 transfer theories, such as "the Independence Hypothesis" and "the Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis" (181). After evaluating these theories with research evidence, the authors argue that "L2 development is a dual-language process" (191) and that "facilitation transfer effect [of automated L1 process] supports L2 reading on an ongoing basis" (193). This is followed by pedagogical recommendations

for "explicit L2 reading instruction" (ibid.) to "explore ways that L1 reading skills can support L2 reading development" (194) with consistent implementation of "some form of extensive reading" (ibid.).

Chapter 9, "Social Contexts of Reading," provides commentaries on: (1) U.S. demographic information on students and reading development; (2) societal factors influencing L1 and L2 literacy, including socioeconomic status, family beliefs and values, and language stimulation in the home; (3) teacher professional training and teacher effectiveness; (4) language-minority learners in language majority K-12 schools; and (5) ESL students in academic settings and EFL students. By putting the contextual research into context, it then pinpoints "the very powerful influence of early word exposure and vocabulary learning on later reading comprehension development" (221). The authors call for more research to be done on social factors and reading development before drawing pedagogical implications on the needs of teachers to recognize "sociocultural influences from both L1 and L2 social and educational experiences" (222) of learners.

In Chapter 10, "Motivation for Reading," the authors first define motivation, which "involves a set of beliefs, values, and expectations, and is associated with a set of defining behaviors [such as] engagement" (225), and provide explanations for motivation theories, namely: "expectancy-value theory," "attribution theory," "social-cognitive theory," "global orientation theory," and "self-determination theory" (ibid.). They then outline major dimensions of motivation and review recent research on reading motivation and its relationship to comprehension in L1 and L2. This is followed by factors that support reading motivation (e.g., "Strategy instruction" [248]), as well as recommended pedagogical practices to promote motivation.

In Part III, "Developing Reading Comprehension Abilities," Chapter 11, "Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension," explores the role of vocabulary in development of reading skills. It presents various types of "corpora analyses" that "provide meaningful ways to consider what vocabulary needs to be learned, and potentially at what level" (269) and how many English word families are expected to be achieved by L2 learners. In addition, three ways to learn words from context are provided: (1) via incidental extensive exposure to new words, (2) use of vocabulary learning strategies, and (3) guessing of meanings from context. The chapter then focuses on L2 word learning, addressing "the importance of background knowledge, passive resonance, and implicit inferencing while

reading" (277). The authors discuss direct vocabulary instruction (e.g., learning key words before reading), and offer "eight key implications for planning vocabulary instruction" (e.g., use of "visual support and mapping techniques") (281) while emphasizing the necessity to "engage students in a lot of extensive reading" (282).

In Chapter 12, "Building Main Idea Comprehension: Syntax and Strategies," the authors first focus on syntactic knowledge and processing skills that support the development of main idea comprehension before identifying nine types of reading strategies that impact reading abilities such as predicting, inferencing, using graphic organizer, and mental translation. The authors then stress the importance of using multiple strategies to become strategic readers and offer implications for grammar instruction as well as strategy instruction.

Chapter 13, "Becoming a Strategic Reader," elaborates strategies instruction. The chapter first describes the relationship between reading skills and strategies, combined strategies that skilled readers use, and their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness of, and control over these strategies. Next, it summarizes research findings on reading strategy use (e.g., "Reading strategies can be taught effectively" [320]) as well as strategies used by engaged readers (e.g., "Identify important information" [321]). It then provides discussions on the eight empirically-supported multiple-strategy approaches to strategy instruction (e.g., "Questioning the Author" [323]), and mentions the challenge of disciplinary reading that requires students to become strategic readers. The chapter concludes with pedagogical implications with general teacher guidelines for strategic reading instruction (e.g., "Work toward automatizing strategy use for fluent reading through practice" [336]).

In Chapter 14, "Building Awareness of Discourse Structure," the authors first review two historical strands of discourse research and investigate how texts signal discourse structure by examining cohesion, coherence, information structure, and anaphora. They then pinpoint the importance of genres for reading comprehension of narrative and expository texts with various discourse structures (e.g., chronological sequence in the former and cause and effect in the latter). The chapter highlights research findings on discourse structure and reading comprehension, which include that: (1) "greater knowledge of connective forms predicted reading comprehension abilities" (351), (2) "students with a better awareness of higher-level text structuring recall more information from the texts and recall more top-level, main idea information" (ibid.),

and (3) "graphic representations of discourse organization enhance reading comprehension and the learning of new information from texts" (355). This is followed by the authors' discussions on "[w]ays in which the metalinguistic awareness of discourse structure can improve comprehension and learning" in terms of "refutations," "simplification," and "revision" (356), and their review of research on teaching "discourse structure awareness" (359), all of which reported increased comprehension and learning. Accordingly, their pedagogical recommendations include discourse awareness activities such as use of "Discourse Based Graphic Organizers of texts" (361).

In Part IV, "Expanding Reading Comprehension Skills," Chapter 15, "Reading to Learn and Reading-Writing Relationships," reviews recent research on the relationship between reading and writing, and answers affirmatively to the following questions: (1) whether "reading improve[s] writing abilities" and vice versa, (2) whether "reading and writing together develop both skills more effectively," (3) whether "reading more" and "writing more improve content learning," and (4) whether "more content knowledge improves reading and writing skills" (373). However, the authors conclude that more research is called for to answer the question of whether "reading and writing together lead to better content knowledge learning" (ibid.). Next, the chapter examines two specific "reading-responsible writing tasks" (380) that support the development of reading comprehension: "Summarizing and synthesizing information" (379-380), both of which are challenging particularly to L2 learners. It then explores intervention studies that demonstrated improved summary and synthesis writing from sources in L1 and L2 before summarizing the research on reading and writing relations by mentioning five key themes (e.g., "Reading and writing have bidirectional developmental paths" [384]). This is followed by pedagogical suggestions focusing on "explicit attention on reading comprehension activities with the text" with "many practice opportunities…on reading/writing tasks," and raising awareness of "the tasks and corresponding expectations [e.g., to avoid plagiarism]" by guiding students in "being responsible for text source information" and "developing effective paraphrasing skills" (385) particularly in L2 context. The chapter provides "a set of reading-support activities, reading-writing support activities, and awareness support activities" for teachers "[t]o help L2EAP [English for Academic Purposes] students succeed in their acquisition of academic literacy" (386).

Chapter 16, "Reading in Digital Contexts," tackles the topics of "The Growth of Digital Literacy" and "Print and Digital Reading in Academic Contexts" (389-390). The chapter also presents (1) "five major distinctions between print and digital reading, and among types of digital reading" (390), (2) categories and variables that "*need to be considered*" (391) for digital reading research, (3) assessment of digital literacy and the limits (e.g., Internet access) to reading online, and (4) "The Unique Challenges of Advanced Online Digital Reading" (397). The authors then provide strategies needed to perform advanced online reading tasks such as "Avoid distractions from the Internet environment" (399). This is followed by pedagogical implications that include, on one hand, challenges for students who can "become easily distracted" (401) and for teachers who "may, themselves, feel uncomfortable with technology" (ibid.), and, on the other hand, opportunities to "build students' capacities to self-regulate" on "navigation, selection, and evaluation" (402) among others.

Chapter 17, "Reading Fluency, Reading Rate, and Comprehension," defines fluency as "the ability to read rapidly with ease and accuracy and to read with appropriate prosodic word stress and phrasing while understanding the text" (404). It then discusses: (1) four components of reading fluency (i.e., "automaticity," "accuracy," "rate," and "prosodic expression" [405]); (2) multiple settings for fluency development (e.g., L1 vs. L2); (3) L1 fluency research. It then offers L2 perspectives and instructional research on reading fluency (particularly with repeated reading) and pedagogical recommendations of a variety of fluency activities, including rereading for different purposes. The authors conclude this chapter by stating that "fluency instruction needs to be incorporated along with vocabulary and comprehension instruction" (417), and that "a much greater effort needs to be made with respect to L2 [fluency development]" (ibid.). A list of L1 reading rates by grade is provided in the appendix as a reference.

Chapter 18, "Extensive Reading" (ER), first presents research evidence for the importance of ER (i.e., "an extensive amount of reading, exposure to print" [419]) for developing reading comprehension, reading fluency, and vocabulary knowledge in L1 and L2, as well as conceptual and cultural knowledge in L1, particularly "when guided by students' intrinsic motivation" (424) and "when carried out consistently and appropriately over an extended period of time" (426). The chapter then provides pedagogical recommendations to engage students in ER, emphasizing the importance of "having students read materials that they want to engage with and continue reading on their own" (430), while supporting "a balanced approach, including both intensive and extensive

reading combined with other skill-based instruction" (ibid.). It restates here "the simple fact that one learns to read by reading (and by reading a lot)" (ibid.).

In Part V, "Applications of Reading Research: Instruction and Assessment," Chapter 19, "Reading Curriculum and Instruction," offers "guidelines to develop coherent approaches to reading instruction by building on the many implications suggested in the first eighteen chapters" (433). Specifically, the chapter introduces five "Core reading curriculum principles," five "Reading-skills development principles," and six "Instructional design principles" (435). It then focuses on four reading curricula approaches such as integration of reading and content learning goals, arguing that "reading instruction can and should be more than a curriculum that is driven by a textbook" (449). This is followed by a discussion specifically on "content and reading instruction" (CRI) (448). One of the major points touched on in the discussion is that "*CRI can easily accommodate the explicit instruction for both content and reading development*" (451), which is accompanied by key activities.

Next, the authors propose "a Six Ts approach" to build a CRI curriculum. The six Ts represent "*Themes, Topics, Texts*, and *Tasks*, further supported by *Threads* and *Transitions*" (457) particularly in L2 settings. "Text materials…provide the core input for themes and topics"; "[t]hreads represent additional concepts that can be used to link content across the themes and topics"; "[t]ransitions represent explicit linkages from one task [day-to-day lessons and learning activities] to the next, one text to the next, and one topic to the next" (ibid.). However, they add that it is not easy to implement CRI, which "requires a significant commitment to reading resources, teacher training and development, instructional time, time for instructional preparation, instructional willingness to innovate, and skills in developing integrated curricula" (458). They recommend needs analysis to "determine which reading skills and academic abilities require the highest priority, the most attention, and the most consistent practice," and suggest not to "overfocus on the content information and lose sight of the reading skills development goals" (ibid.). The authors offer closing thoughts on innovation, saying: (1) "start small"; (2) "support teachers" with compensation and professional development opportunities; (3) "give teachers time" and "encouragement"; (4) "bring a consultant"; and (5) "work with teachers to create detailed action plans [for implementation, assessment, and revision of the piloted innovations]" (459).

Chapter 20, "Reading Assessment," presents a framework in which "reading assessment is organized and described in terms of five assessment purposes": "Reading proficiency assessment", "Assessment of classroom learning" (commonly referred to as achievement testing), "Assessment for learning" (e.g., work in groups to find the best response to a comprehension question), "Placement and diagnostic assessment," and "Assessment for research purposes" (461). The chapter also explores new reading assessment methods such as "Content and Language Assessment for Learning," which focuses on "comprehending reading materials and learning new information/knowledge by integrating text content with prior knowledge/experience" (477). The authors then discuss "Future Issues for Reading Assessment": specifically the recognition of the "consequences of assessment" and the importance of "teacher training for effective and appropriate reading assessment" (481).

This is followed by pedagogical implications with a goal "to consider how assessment in classroom contexts can make a difference in student learning" (483), while arguing that "appropriate and effective assessment practices [e.g., consistent and ongoing] should lead to better student learning" (484). The final section of this chapter emphasizes that "teachers need to develop ways to improve timely and useful feedback as well as help students understand that they are expected to make improvements based on teacher feedback" (485), adding that "[t]his process is much like what a coach provides for musicians or athletes, who then expect to improve their performance through self-assessment" (ibid.).

To summarize, this volume presents a wealth of information across a broad spectrum of topics relevant to reading comprehension. It covers extensive theories and research in both L1 and L2 contexts, along with detailed pedagogical implications. Despite its initial appearance of being overwhelming, the book's organization into twenty chapters across five parts, each with well-numbered sections and subsections featuring clear titles and headings, facilitates easy navigation. It functions effectively as a compact encyclopedia, allowing readers to directly access specific topics of interest (e.g., Chapter 10 for motivation) and detailed information within (e.g., 10.12 for pedagogical strategies to enhance motivation). Alternatively, readers can opt to review the introductory sections of chapters for an overview before delving into specific sections of interest. For educators focused primarily on practical applications, the concluding section of each chapter (excluding Chapter 5) offers beneficial information. However, for more concrete instructional activities and assessment

techniques, particularly those presented in tables, the latter portions of the book prove most useful.

In conclusion, *RSL* effectively achieves its stated goals and appropriately targets its intended audience, providing valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners across its chapters. However, three points merit consideration. Firstly, regarding content, the guidance on handling orthographical challenges in reading pedagogy (discussed in Chapters 7 and 8) may be too general, particularly for teachers of Japanese who are encouraged to promote extensive reading with these challenges. Secondly, a practical issue arises when using the hard copy of the book: the abundance of acronyms (e.g., PACT, CORI, CLIL, DET, and GISA) throughout the text, not all of which are fully spelled out in the Subject Index, can be challenging for readers. While the online version's search function alleviates this issue, a separate list of acronyms would enhance accessibility and convenience. Lastly, concerning timing, the publication in 2022 unavoidably missed the opportunity to include the impact of generative AI (artificial intelligence) publicly released in November 2022, which significantly influences reading, writing, and their educational practices. If this second edition were published now with such developments incorporated, Chapter 16 on digital reading could have been enriched significantly and thereby appreciated greatly.

Literature in Heisei Japan, 1989 – 2019 平成文学における様々な声

Edited by **Angela Yiu**. Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 2024. 310 pp. ¥2400.

Reviewed by
Francesca Pizarro

Literature in Heisei Japan, 1989–2019 presents a rich collection of scholarly essays that showcase the broad spectrum of artistic expression produced during the Heisei era, illuminating "the literary landscape of this thirty-year period" and offering "a glimpse into what is new and exciting in contemporary literature in Japan" (12). The volume contributes to the