



education review // reseñas educativas

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

Arizona State University

ISSN 1094-5296

April 20, 2010

Koda, Keiko (Ed.) (2007). *Reading and Language Learning*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Pp. iv + 300 ISBN 9781405175746

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There has been extensive research conducted on reading in a second language (L2), and still continuous effort to establish well-founded theories and research frameworks on the field of study is being made. Some theoretical foundations for L2 reading development came from cumulative findings of first language (L1) reading research, but the implications derived from L1 reading studies cannot capture the whole picture of the unique nature of L2 reading (Koda, 2004). As Keiko Koda, the editor of this book *Reading and Language Learning* (2007), argues, L1 and L2 reading essentially differ because the latter involves multiple languages. This book facilitates our understanding of the complex, multifaceted nature of L2 reading, and it is intended for students, researchers, and scholars who are interested in L2 reading and language learning.

Citation: Mizuno, Mariko; Cheng, Ying-Hsueh; & Lee, Yoojin. (2010 April 20) Review of *Reading and Language Learning* by Keiko Koda. *Education Review*, 13. Retrieved [Date] from <http://edrev.asu.edu/reviews/rev908.pdf>

This book contains six chapters, each of which was originally published in an academic journal *Language Learning* between the years of 2001 and 2005. They were re-printed in 2007 as a supplement issue, 57(1), in the same journal. The first three chapters are literature reviews, providing comprehensive conceptual framework for the topic under study, while the last three attempt to expand the existing knowledge in L2 reading research by conducting empirical studies.

Chapter 1, serving as an introduction for the book, examines “the specific ways in which L2 reading is constrained by language-specific demands both within and across languages” (p. 2); chapter 2 deals with the influence of bilingualism on L2 literacy development; chapter 3 reviews the schema theory and proposes an alternative model that can be applied to L2 reading comprehension; chapter 4 studies inhibition and compensation hypotheses and their influence on L1/L2 reading processes; chapter 5 focuses on incidental vocabulary acquisition in the process of reading comprehension; and chapter 6 looks into the impact of L1/L2 knowledge on L2 reading. All chapters look upon L2 reading as more complex and dynamic than L1 reading and examine a variety of sub-skills of L2 reading, exploring “the reciprocal relationship between reading and language learning” (on the back cover of the book).

In the first chapter, “Reading and Language Learning: Crosslinguistic Constraints on Second Language Reading Development,” Keiko Koda synthesizes extensive research to illuminate the ways in which L2 reading is constrained by the two languages involved. She begins with two conflicting views of reading pervasive in reading research: “reading as an indivisible whole” (p.3) and reading “as a constellation of distinct components” (p.3), and articulates her position in support of the latter. Delving into linguistic knowledge in each of the major components of reading – decoding, text-information building, and reader-model construction, Koda convincingly demonstrates that reading involves distinct componential operations and that reading difficulties could be caused by a defect in a skill or a compound of two or more defects. Also, careful consideration is crosslinguistically given to a number of components

affecting the development in L2 reading, such as metalinguistic awareness, L1 transfer in literacy and reading skills, linguistic distance between the two languages involved, and L2 proficiency. Drawing on the comprehensive synthesis of research on dual-language involvement in L2 reading development, this first chapter adequately provides an overview of the intrinsically, inevitably complex nature of L2 reading, which effectively prepares readers to read the following chapters. In the last section, Koda briefly talks about the other chapters. However, it would be more reader-friendly in terms of the structure of the book if Koda had provided a preface or introduction *before* the first chapter and introduced the organization of the book and the question and the main argument of each chapter.

The second chapter, “Acquisition of Literacy in Bilingual Children: A Framework for Research”, digs deeply into how bilingualism affects literacy acquisition in bilingual children. This literature review by Ellen Bialystok clarifies that monolingual children need three prerequisite skills to acquire literacy – oral competence, conceptual development of print, and metalinguistic awareness – and discusses the ways in which each of them develops in bilingual children. Based on a wide range of existing research, Bialystok concludes that the relationship between each of the three skills and bilingualism varies; that is, the influence of bilingualism on constructing oral proficiency is negative, that of bilingualism on developing concepts of print is positive, and no decisive effect is acknowledged in metalinguistic awareness. This chapter preserves a nice continuity from the previous chapter, because it takes the same stance as Koda’s componential view on reading in the sense that the factors affecting bilingual children’s literacy acquisition are examined respectively in relation to bilingualism. What deserves special mention is the effective use of several figures in the chapter. They facilitate readers’ understanding of the author’s argument, and Figure 1, “Relation between first- and second-language literacy acquisition and bilingualism”, especially well captures how bilingualism relates to L1 and L2 reading.

Hossein Nassaji's chapter, "Schema Theory and Knowledge-Based Processes in Second Language Reading Comprehension: A Need for Alternative Perspectives", directs the focus from the close examination of each component of L2 reading to the critical analysis of schema theory. Nassaji skillfully presents his argument in an orderly way with great clarity. He elaborately reviews the major assumptions schema theory holds and evaluates them in view of the mental representation of knowledge and the role of knowledge in comprehension. While acknowledging the major strengths and usefulness of schema theory, Nassaji persuasively demonstrates its limitations and proposes alternative perspectives based on construction-integration models, by comparing different explanations offered by schema-theoretic and construction-integration approaches. He problematizes the simplistic view of schema theory on a complex, multifold nature of L2 reading comprehension, and clearly shows a future direction for the more in-depth research on the mechanisms of L2 reading comprehension grounded on the alternative models. Schema-theoretic perspectives *are* important and useful, as Hauptman (2000) points out that they facilitate "understanding how successful L2 readers use their background knowledge to compensate for linguistic deficiencies" (Hauptman, 2000, p. 623). However, this chapter brings new light to the field of research on L2 learners' use of their background knowledge and the problems underlying the application of schema theory.

The next chapter, "Inhibition or Compensation? A Multidimensional Comparison of Reading Processes in Dutch and English" written by Marie Stevenson, Rob Schoonen, and Kees de Glopper, shifts the course of the book in the direction of empirical studies. Drawing upon the comparative study of 22 Dutch high school students' reading strategies in their L1 (Dutch) and FL (English), the authors investigate the notion of inhibition in FL reading – whether "the lack of fluent linguistic processes inhibits the amount of attention devoted to conceptual processes" (p.115) – and the notion of compensation – whether FL readers can evade "comprehension problems by actually devoting more attention to global, conceptual reading processes" (p.115).

Employing the think-aloud tasks and coding scheme in penetrating quantitative analysis, Stevenson et al. found that readers used considerably different strategies in their L1 and FL, but did not get sufficient or adequate evidence to support either the notion of inhibition or that of compensation in FL reading. The study provides the in-depth description of research methods and how carefully the participants were chosen (taking into account a lot of different variables), but one major limitation of the study is obvious. As the authors themselves admit, the sample size, 22, is not large enough to generalize the result of the study. Especially in quantitative empirical studies like this, the sample size exerts immediate impact upon the generalizability and validity of research. Also, the finding would have been more reliable if the study had conducted the triangulation of the think aloud tasks with other qualitative methods.

Next, introducing another empirical study, the book shifts its focus to vocabulary development in L2 reading. Diana Pulido's chapter, "The Relationship between Text Comprehension and Second Language Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition: A Matter of Topic Familiarity?," examines "the role of text comprehension in various stages of L2 incidental vocabulary gain and retention in the presence of ... background knowledge" (p.162). Pulido studied 99 adult L2 learners (L2: Spanish) ranging from beginner to advanced levels, using four narrative passages as the texts and a series of quantitative methods. The finding illustrates that passage comprehension consistently contributes to vocabulary gain and retention, and that the more efficient learners become in processing passage information and constructing the meaning of it, the greater memory they have for vocabulary in reading L2. This result supports the view of reading L2 as a complex, multifaceted cognitive activity entailing multiple concurrent lexical and syntactic processing. What is worth noting here is that, although it is only a short paragraph, the author offers valuable pedagogical implications from the study. It has been said in general that the gap between the field of educational research and teaching practice should be filled, and thus the author's consideration of the application

of the research findings to pedagogical practice deserves appreciation.

The closing chapter, “Commonalities and Differences in Word Identification Skills among Learners of English as a Second Language” by Min Wang and Keiko Koda, discusses word identification (“one of the important early skills for learning to read” (p.202)), by comparing the performance of 16 Korean and 18 Chinese ESL learners in the experimentally designed naming task and auditory semantic category judgment task. The results showed that both groups of ESL learners recognized high-frequency and regular words faster and more accurately than low-frequency and exception ones. Also, Korean ESL learners outperformed Chinese ESL learners in the speed and accuracy of naming all categories of words and in retrieving the meaning of words. However, Chinese ESL learners suffered fewer regulation errors of low-frequency exception words than their Korean counterparts. The authors attribute the differences observed in the performance of the two groups of ESL learners to the L1 transfer from their different L1 writing systems: the Korean alphabet and the Chinese nonalphabetic, logographic orthography. This is plausible in the sense that “L1 literacy can facilitate or interfere with L2 literacy” (Birch, 2007, p. 27) and “crosslinguistic research on L2 learners with divergent L1 orthographic backgrounds repeatedly attests to the faster and more accurate recognition performance among those with related L1 orthographic backgrounds” (Koda, 2004, p. 42). However, while the chapters in this book “share one thing in common: They treat L2 reading as a complex, multilingual, multifaceted construct” (pp. 31-32), this last chapter of the book hastily concludes that the differences come from L1 transfer, underestimating other factors attributable to L2 reading. Clearly, the authors do not consider differences in participants’ childhood experiences with L2, present L1 reading ability, age (the mean age of the Korean participants was 4 years younger than the Chinese participants), or personality. The participants self-rated their English proficiency with no significant difference, but there is no guarantee that the Koreans and the Chinese interpreted the 4-point scale in the same way: some personality factors

might have affected their self-ratings. For example, some Asian peoples are socialized to be self-effacing and modest when they talk about themselves, and it is certain that the Koreans and the Chinese are not socialized in the same way. In all, a quantitative study with a relatively small sample like this should be triangulated with qualitative accounts from the participants; otherwise, the interpretation of the findings cannot be fully convincing.

All in all, this book is successful in achieving its purpose of exploring “the reciprocal relationship between reading and language learning” and clarifying “the unique nature of reading development in a second language” by examining a range of reading sub-skills from different angles. Koda, as the editor, picked out articles appropriate for the cause of the book, and put them in the right order, so that readers would first become familiar with the existing research and theoretical perspectives on L2 reading, and then become informed about the recent empirical studies on the topic. The interrelationship among the chapters in the book helps readers draw a broader picture about the interdependence between reading and language knowledge. This book would serve well in awakening the readers’ additional interest in the cognitive mechanisms of L2 reading, how it develops, and the way each component of L2 reading contributes to L2 literacy development. Furthermore, for those who are planning to conduct L2 reading research, this book would serve as an excellent starting point of entry and as a reference/guidance for future study. It should also be noted that this book well presents the consistent, overall theme that L2 reading involves complex processing in multiple languages.

However, for all its strengths, the book could have been more revolutionary, informative, and contributory to the existing research, had it tackled the challenge of traditional bias toward quantitative, experimental studies in L2 reading research. Such qualitative methods as Think-Aloud protocol and interview protocol could shed considerable light on the metacognitive knowledge of bilingual readers (Jimenez et. al. 1995). Whereas this book is well-balanced in literature-based and empirical research chapters, it is disappointing to see

imbalance in research methods employed in some of the chapters and failure to incorporate L2 learners' voices into research. Furthermore, as a book with a virtuous cause, a major failure is obvious: while the first chapter by the editor Koda nicely and comprehensively synthesizes research on L2 reading development, the book does not have a preface or introduction to present the editor's aims or synthesize the chapters, nor a concluding chapter to wrap up the main theme and major arguments. In this respect, it can be said that the book is reader-unfriendly, and fails to accomplish its goal. With these additional few pages, the book would have been much more coherent and unified, and its intention much clearer.

Nonetheless, this book is worth publishing and appeals to students and researchers who want to learn more about the complex, multidimensional, and reciprocal nature of reading and language learning. The different ways of analyzing and interpreting how reading and language learning are related will give readers a chance to be well versed in the development of research on L2 reading development, and also to reconsider their own L2 learning experience.

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