

Article

# “Second Language Writing” Publications in Web of Science: A Bibliometric Analysis

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**Abstract:** There are several indicators that distinguish an academic discipline, including journals, conferences, and graduate programs. One of them is the presence of academic publications in well-regarded citation indices such as Web of Science (WoS). This study explored the bibliometric characteristics of publications on “second language writing” (SLW) covered in the Social Sciences Citation Index and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index of WoS. We found that, while the first appeared in 1992 with a steady increase in recent years, there were a total of 266 SLW publications, mostly in the linguistics research area (92%), in the WoS between 1900 and 2013. The publications included articles, book reviews, and bibliographies written by 1.64 authors per publication, suggesting a low level of collaborations among SLW scholars. They cited 31.44 publications and received citations from 5.90 publications on average. An average SLW title had 2.49 different words and a total of 10.85 words, with an abstract of about five sentences and about six keywords and diverse topics including *second language writing*, *writing*, *academic writing*, *error correction*, and *plagiarism*. Our findings will be of value to second language writing scholars, graduate students, and practitioners for examining the status of their field.

**Keywords:** second language writing; Web of Science; bibliometrics

## 1. Introduction

“Second language writing” (SLW) is a relatively young field. Although its teaching has a much longer history, its beginnings lie in the 1980s as a metadisciplinary inquiry, both as a reflective enterprise and as an indicator of maturity [1]. The current study is conducted in the same spirit and aims to provide a bibliometric analysis of a group of SLW publications, one of the most significant signs of a discipline’s status.

There are several indicators of the success of an emerging or well established academic discipline, including discipline specific journals, conferences, and graduate programs. Among these is the presence of academic publications covered in well-regarded citation indices. Although citation indices provide a limited glimpse of the much larger picture of a discipline, the nature of these indices often reveals a great deal about the development and characteristics of a discipline. Moreover, in an academic world characterized by the motto ‘publish or perish’, having publications and being cited in prominent citation indices have significant real life effects for academics. Therefore, providing a profile of publications in distinguished citation indices can be very useful for scholars, since such high profile publications play an important role in their professional development—for example, in job hunting, and obtaining promotions and research funding [2–6].

The present study is the first to investigate the bibliometric indicators of SLW in two highly-respected indices of Web of Science (WoS): the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A & HCI). Bibliometric studies are not only important for the natural

sciences, but also for the social sciences and humanities. Supporting evidence for this comes from studies conducted as early as [7], which investigated scientific publications from the fields of social history, general linguistics, general literature, Dutch literature and Dutch language, experimental psychology, anthropology, and public administration; and [8], which analyzed publications and citations in general linguistics and general literature in A & HCI from a group of linguistics departments in The Netherlands, Italy, and the USA.

A few bibliometric studies have already been conducted on language and linguistics-related fields of study. By analyzing publications from general linguistics, it was showed that there are two kinds of outputs: Language and linguistics publications, and literature publications, suggesting that not only journal articles, but also book publications, should be analyzed in the bibliometrics of general linguistics [9]. Another study analyzed linguistics publications covered in SSCI between 1900 and 2013 and in A & HCI between 1975 and 2013 [10]. This study found that, as WoS coverage expanded, the number of linguistic publications increased over time. This study also showed that linguistics was ranked about No. 63 in SSCI and No. 9 in A & HCI in the *Language Linguistics* category of WoS, whereas it was ranked about No. 22 in SSCI and No. 8 in A & HCI in the *Linguistics* research area of WoS. In another study, a bibliometric study was conducted on publications in the field of computational linguistics by the Association for Computational Linguistics [11]. They showed citation patterns such as the networks of paper citations, author citations, and author collaborations in computational linguistics. Another study examined the bibliometric characteristics of publications on World Englishes (WE) in SSCI and A & HCI, between 1975 and 2013 [12]. The results showed that even though the first WE publication appeared in 1989, there was an exponential increase in the number of publications on WE: 96.07% of them appeared in the indices between 2005 and 2013. Another study focused on the bibliometric characteristics of publications on sign languages in SSCI between 1900 and 2013, and A & HCI between 1975 and 2013. Similar to what was found for WE publications, there was a rapid increase in the number of publications on sign languages in more recent years: 86.26% appeared in WoS between 1990 and 2013. Yet, the first study on sign languages appeared in SSCI in 1902 [13].

In addition to bibliometric studies on language- and linguistics-related fields, some studies have conducted research on the bibliometrics of individual journals. One of them focused on *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)* and *Applied Linguistics* [14]. The author asked scholars about their preferences for publishing in those journals with respect to common indicators of journal quality, such as citation patterns, rejection rates, timely publication, and accessibility. The author found that scholars considered “relevance to context” or the review process, among other factors, to be more important than bibliometric factors, such as the citation frequency of the articles in those journals.

Another line of research focuses on specific research topics within language- and linguistics-related fields of study. One of them examined 201 articles on vocabulary acquisition published in *the Modern Language Journal* between 1916 and 2010 ([15], see also [16]). The results revealed that research topics about vocabulary acquisition varied over the years: between 1916 and 1950, research focused on reliable word lists for modern language teaching; whereas, between 1951 and 1980, research shifted to cognitive psychological and sociolinguistic approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, modern research, focusing mostly on reading, peaked between 1981 and 2000, while a new approach influenced by Paul Nation’s work emerged between 2001 and 2010.

The present study contributes to the bibliometrics of language- and linguistics-related fields of study, focusing on the bibliometric characteristics of publications on SLW covered in SSCI and A & HCI of WoS between 1900 and 2013, and between 1975 and 2013, respectively. WoS hosts the most important indices that cover the best regarded journals with high impact factors in many disciplines [17]. In addition to covering a wide range of prominent publications, WoS also provides comprehensive and reliable bibliometric information, which we collected and analyzed for SLW in this study. The present study focused on the number of publications over the years, the most prolific authors, the most second language writing friendly journals, and the top cited authors and publications, as well as analyses of titles, keywords, and abstracts. We then provided a basic comparison of the findings from WoS and a

number of databases. These included (1) Google Scholar, an online platform that provides comparable yet limited bibliometric data on scholarly outputs; (2) Linguistics and Language Abstracts (LLBA) by ProQuest, which is a database devoted to international literature on linguistics and language sciences in particular; and (3) all of the 42 databases by ProQuest, 18 of which are devoted to social sciences, including LLBA, MLA International Bibliography (by the Modern Language Association), Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), COS Conference Papers, and ProQuest Dissertation and Theses: Social Sciences, as well as e-books covered by ebrary. The bibliometric analysis presented in this study can be used to observe some disciplinary tendencies in SLW and/or as general guidelines by scholars interested in publishing on SLW; the findings will be of particular value to second language writing scholars, graduate students, and practitioners.

## 2. Materials and Methods

In order to investigate the bibliometric characteristics of SLW studies, as represented in the WoS, we first accessed the WoS website, through an R1 university library in the US in June 2014. Our search criteria included publications indexed in SSCI and A & HCI since 1900 for the former, and since 1975 for the latter, until the end of 2013. We conducted our search with the keyword “second language writing”. The search results included publications that had this keyword in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. We did not include the year 2014 because publications may still be forthcoming. After we had recorded our general search results, we focused on specific search results according to the variables which we wished to examine, such as journals, years, authors, and origins of publications. In addition to the general trends in the corpus of publications we came up with, we examined the citation patterns, for example, the average number of citations received and given, and the most cited publications. Finally, we investigated the titles, abstracts, and keywords to reveal the most frequently used words using a corpus linguistics software, AntConc [18]. We counted the total number of words (tokens) and word types, and explored phrasal patterns in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of SLW publications.

We then collected data from Google Scholar, LLBA, and all of the 42 databases by ProQuest. Our keyword was the same: “second language writing”. Here, we focused on the number of publications and the type of publications between 1900 and 2013, in order to compare the findings from WoS with those from the three databases. In Google Scholar, the patents and citations were excluded, i.e., “include patents” and “include citations” were unchecked. These data were collected at the end of January 2017, in response to reviewers’ comments.

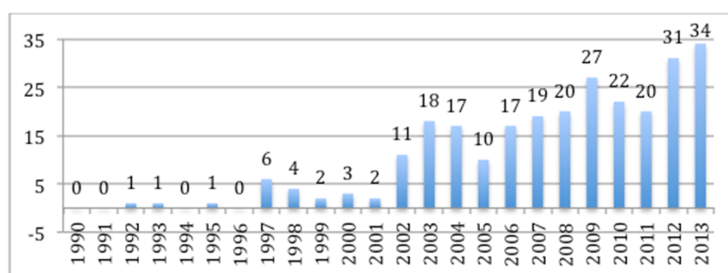
## 3. Results

### 3.1. Second Language Writing Publications

We found that the first SLW publication in the indices was published in 1992, in the journal *Written Communication* [19]. In total, our search criteria yielded 266 SLW publications in the WoS between 1900 and 2013. There were no publications before the 1990s that fitted our search criteria. The numbers showed a steady increase in SLW publications over the years. A significant spike in the number of publications occurred in 2002; this was probably due to the inclusion of the *Journal of Second Language Writing* in WoS. There were more than 30 publications in each of the last two years—31 in 2012 and 34 in 2013 (Figure 1). We grouped the number of publications according to five-year periods to show this huge increase in the publications covered in SSCI and A & HCI (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The number of the SLW publications in SSCI and A & HCI indices with five-year periods.

Years	No of Publications	Percentages
1990–1995	3	1.13
1996–2000	15	5.64
2001–2005	58	21.80
2006–2010	105	39.47
2011–2013	85	31.96
Total	266	100



**Figure 1.** The number of the SLW publications appeared in SSCI and A & HCI indices per year.

### 3.2. Web of Science Categories

WoS assigns the publications it covers WoS categories, such as *history*, *literature*, and *psychology*. The WoS categories used for the SLW publication are given below (Table 2). In Table 2, we only included the categories that had more than five SLW publications. Because each publication could be categorized in more than one category, the numbers did not add up to the total number of SLW publications. Our analysis showed that the vast majority of SLW publications were regarded as *linguistics*-related publications (281). The second most common WoS category was *education/educational research* with 67 publications, constituting 25.19% of all SLW publications. These results indicate the strong influence of linguistics and education in SLW.

**Table 2.** Distribution of SLW publications according to WoS categories.

WoS Categories	No of Publications	Percentage (of 266)
Linguistics	241	90.60
Education/Educational Research	67	25.19
Language Linguistics	40	15.04
Communication	9	3.38
Psychology Educational	6	2.26

### 3.3. Research Areas

Another bibliometric tool that WoS provides is information about the research areas covered. Table 3 below summarizes the distribution of SLW publications in our corpus, according to their research areas. Not surprisingly, the results for the research areas were very similar to the findings on the WoS categories. A total of 244 of the 266 SLW publications (92%) were coded as *linguistics* publications. This research area was followed by *education/educational research* (67 publications), *communication* (nine publications), and *psychology* (nine publications).

**Table 3.** Research areas for SLW publications with the number of publications and their percentages in WoS.

Research Areas	No of Publications	Percentage (of 266)
Linguistics	244	91.73
Education/Educational Research	67	25.19
Communication	9	3.38
Psychology	9	3.38

### 3.4. Authors

WoS also provides information about the authors of publications. Our analysis showed that the SLW publications had an average of 1.64 authors per publication. Table 4 below gives a summary of this, according to the document type. Two of these publications had the highest number of authors, with a value of seven [20,21]. The bibliographies had two authors, whereas the book reviews were single-authored.

**Table 4.** The most published authors in SSCI and A & HCI.

Authors	No of Publications	Percentage (of 266)	Document Types (Counts)
T. Silva	47	17.67	Bibliography (44), Article (2), Editorial material (1)
T. Cimasko	15	5.64	Bibliography (12), Article (2), Correction (1)
C. McMartin-Miller	9	3.38	Bibliography (9)
J. L. Kapper	8	3.01	Bibliography (8)
E. Patton	7	2.63	Bibliography (7)
P. K. Matsuda	6	2.26	Editorial material (3), Review (2), Article (1)
K. Hyland	5	1.88	Article (2), Review (2), Editorial material (1)
J. M. Paiz	5	1.88	Bibliography (5)

### 3.5. Journals

We also examined the journals listed in SSCI and A & HCI which covered the SLW publications in our dataset. We focused on the journals and information about their publishers and impact factors, according to the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) 2012 via WoS website, accessed through an R1 university library in the US. Our analysis indicated that *Journal of Second Language Writing*, which has been in SSCI since 2002 with an impact factor of 1.138 in 2012, is ranked No. 28 in Linguistics, and includes 120 published works, constituting 45.11% of all SLW publications covered in SSCI and A & HCI. This journal was followed by *English for Specific Purposes* and *Modern Language Journal* with 13 publications each; *TESOL Quarterly* with 12 publications; *Language Learning* with 10 publications; *System* with nine publications, *Language Testing* and *Written Communication* with eight publications each; *Canadian Modern Language Review* with seven publications; *Foreign Language Annals* with six publications; and *Language Teaching Research* with five publications on SLW.

### 3.6. Universities

Our examination of the affiliations of scholars with SLW publications showed that the top universities were Purdue University with 51 publications, followed by Georgia State University with 11 publications, and Arizona State University and Brigham Young University with seven publications each. In our analysis, we only considered institutions with five or more SLW publications, resulting in a total of nine bodies: seven in the USA and two in Canada (Table 5).

**Table 5.** The affiliations of the scholars who published SLW publications (five or more).

Universities	Country	Numbers	Percentage (of 266)
Purdue University	USA	51	19.17
Georgia State University	USA	11	4.14
Arizona State University	USA	7	2.63
Brigham Young University	USA	7	2.63
Michigan State University	USA	6	2.26
University of Iowa	USA	6	2.26
University of Toronto	Canada	6	2.26
University of British Columbia	Canada	5	1.88
University of Tennessee	USA	5	1.66

### 3.7. Document Types

Of the 266 publications in our dataset, we found that 143 were articles, 49 were book reviews, 44 were bibliographies, 10 were editorial materials, eight were review articles, four were proceedings papers, and two were corrections (Table 6). The results showed that more than half of the publications were articles, followed by book reviews (18.42%) and bibliographies (16.54%).

**Table 6.** Document types for SLW publications (Proceedings papers\* considered as articles).

Document Type	Count	Percentage (of 266)
Article	143	53.76
Book review	49	18.42
Bibliography	44	16.54
Editorial Material	18	6.77
Review	8	3.01
Proceedings Paper*	4	1.50
Correction	2	0.75
Total	266	100

### 3.8. Countries

Our examination of the data showed that, unsurprisingly, the USA was the leading country with 174 publications, with 65.41% of all SLW publications covered in SSCI and A & HCI (Table 7). It was followed by Canada and China (18 publications each), Japan (14), England (10) Australia (eight), Taiwan (seven), and Spain and Sweden (six each), when considering countries with more than five publications.

**Table 7.** Countries publishing SLW publications (more than five).

Countries	Count	Percentage (of 266)
USA	174	65.41
Canada	18	6.77
China	18	6.77
Japan	14	5.26
England	10	3.76
Australia	8	3.01
Taiwan	7	2.63
Spain	6	2.26
Sweden	6	2.26

### 3.9. Giving References

In order to investigate the extent to which the SLW publications covered in WoS were cited by other publications, we looked at the “total times cited in” section of SSCI and A & HCI. We first analyzed the reference sections of the publications and found that the SLW publications cited an average of 31.44 publications. However, the number of references greatly varied, depending on the document type (Table 8). The articles cited 49.70 publications on average. The greatest number of citations was in [19], which cited 105 publications. The book reviews cited 2.67 publications on average. The editorial materials cited an average of 20 publications. One of them cited the most publications out of all the editorial materials (75) [22]. The review articles cited 95.12 publications on average, with the most citations being included in [1] (139). The bibliographies did not cite any works in their reference sections.



**Table 8.** Received citations and cited references according to document types.

Document Types	No. of Publications	Author/Publication	Average	
			Received Citation	Cited References
Article	143	1.73	9.73	49.70
Book review	49	1	0	2.67
Bibliography	44	2	0	0
Editorial Material	18	1.17	2.22	20
Review	8	2.62	17.25	95.12

A closer examination of the data showed that the top three authors most frequently cited were: Ferris (128 times), Leki (100 times) and K. Hyland (98 times) (Table 9).

**Table 9.** The top ten authors frequently cited in SLW publications.

Rank	Author	No. of Citations
1	Ferris	128
2	Leki	100
3	K. Hyland	98
4	Swales	81
5	Johns	72
6	Cumming	63
7	P. K. Matsuda	63
8	Connor	62
9	Truscott	61
10	Silva	54

We also examined the data to discover the most frequently cited publications out of all the publications covered by SSCI and A & HCI. The data revealed that there were 45 publications which received at least 10 citations; 27 of them received more than 10 citations. The data also revealed that [23] was the top cited publication (29 times), followed by [24] (22 times) (Table 10). Among the top publications (a total of eight), five were articles and three were books.

**Table 10.** The top five publications frequently cited in the SLW publications.

Rank	Author	Year	Times Cited	Document Type
1	Swales	1990	29	Book [23]
2	Connor	1996	22	Book [24]
3	Kaplan	1966	17	Article [25]
3	Pennycook	1996	17	Article [26]
3	Silva	1993	17	Article [27]
4	Kroll	1990	15	Book [28]
5	Cumming	1989	14	Article [29]
5	Spack	1997	14	Article [30]

### 3.10. Receiving Citations

We found that the SLW publications received citations from an average of 5.90 publications. Similar to the number of publications cited, the number of citations received greatly varied, depending on the document type (Table 9 above). Articles cited 9.73 publications on average. One of them was cited 80 times, which is the highest number of citations for articles [25]. The editorial materials cited 2.22 publications on average. One of them was received the highest number of citations, a figure of 25 [22]. The review articles cited 17.25 publications on average. One of them was received the highest number of citations, with a figure of 32 [21]. The book reviews and bibliographies did not receive any citations.

### 3.11. Full Titles of the Scholarly Publications

SSCI and A & HCI provided 266 titles of SLW publications, which were analyzed using AntConc. The results showed that the total numbers of word types and word tokens were 663 and 2885, respectively, suggesting that a title had an average of 2.49 different words and a total of 10.85 words. Excluding the most common words such as *in*, *on*, *the*, *a/an*, *and*, *of*, and *so on*, the ten most common words and their number of occurrences were: *writing* (232), *language* (191), *second* (168), *bibliography* (45), *scholarship* (45), *recent* (44), *selected* (42), *research* (30), *English* (15), and *instruction* (15). The n-grams analysis showed that, as expected, the most common phrase was *second language writing* (158), followed by *in second language* (83).

### 3.12. Abstracts

We reviewed a total of 149 abstracts. The total number of word types and tokens in the abstracts were 3325 and 25,073, respectively. Therefore, an abstract had about 168.28 words and consisted of 22.32 different words, on average. Excluding the most common words in the English language, the ten most frequent words in the abstracts were: *writing* (478), *language* (314), *students* (237), *second* (174), *study* (173), *English* (155), *research* (119), *use* (95), *writers* (85), and *learning* (82).

The n-grams analysis showed that, as expected, the most common phrase was: *second language writing* (78), followed by *of second language* (31). In addition to generic phrases such as *the/this study addresses/examines/analyzes/explores/investigated/showed*, the authors referred to themselves very frequently. An analysis of the use of person markers indicated that *I* was used 26 times, *we* 57 times, *us* three times, and generic *authors* six times in the abstracts. The authors also referred to people who took part in their studies as *students* (237 times), *participants* (22 times), *instructors* (16 times), and *subjects* (three times), among other terms. In order to analyze the number of sentences in the SLW abstracts, we counted the number of periods “.” with an empty space afterwards, excluding dots in other places such as “Swales, J. M”. In total, there were 811 sentences, indicating that an abstract consisted of about five (5.44) sentences on average.

### 3.13. Author Keywords

A total of 120 publications provided author keywords. Out of these, there were a total of 711 keywords consisting of 466 different words or phrases. Therefore, these publications had about six (5.92) keywords on average, four (3.88) of which were different from keywords in any other publications, suggesting that the articles were on very diverse topics. The five most common keywords were: *second language writing* (54 times), *writing* (14), *academic writing* (11), *error correction* (nine), and *plagiarism* (eight).

### 3.14. Google Scholar

There were 12,600 publications with the keyword, “second language writing”. Unfortunately, Google Scholar did not provide much data to further analyze the results. However, it included all kinds of materials, books, articles, and electronic documents.

### 3.15. LLBA

We found that there were 1957 scholarly outputs in LLBA. Most of them were journal articles (1650), which were followed by 170 dissertations and theses, 118 book reviews, 10 books, eight book chapters, and one general information piece (Table 11). A total of 1300 of these publications were peer-reviewed. We also found that these outputs were written in 15 different languages, but the majority of them were in English (1789 publications, 91.42%).



**Table 11.** Document types for SLW publications in LLBA.

Document Type	Count	Percentage (of 1957)
Journal articles	1650	84.31
Dissertations & Theses	170	8.69
Book review	118	6.03
Book	10	0.51
Book chapter	8	0.41
General information	1	0.05

### 3.16. ProQuest

We conducted a similar analysis on all of the 42 databases of ProQuest, including LLBA. We found that there were 8309 scholarly outputs and 564 e-book results. Of them, 4101 were peer-reviewed. We also found that there were 4521 articles, 4064 (cross-listed) features, 2942 dissertations and theses, 300 book chapters, 167 reviews, and 68 books, among others (Table 12). These outputs were written in 22 different languages, but the majority of them were again in English (7911 publications, 95.21%).

**Table 12.** Document types for SLW publications in ProQuest.

Document Type	Count	Percentage (of 8309)
Articles	4521	54.41
Feature	4064	48.91
Dissertations/Theses	2942	35.41
Book chapter	300	3.61
Review	167	2.01
Undefined	107	1.29
General information	91	1.10
News	86	1.04
Book	68	0.82
Others	133	1.60

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, we investigated SLW publications as indexed in SSCI and A & HCI of WoS. We found that there were a total of 266 SLW publications in the WoS between 1900 and 2013, with the first appearing in 1992 [19]. Starting from 2002 with the inclusion of the *Journal of Second Language Writing* in WoS, there was a steady increase in the number of SLW publications. This observation leads us to expect an even greater increase in the number of SLW publications in the near future. Elsewhere, we observed that the number of publications has increased over the years for linguistics in general [10], World Englishes [12], and sign languages [13]. However, the rate of increase in the SLW publications is similar to World Englishes and sign languages, rather than linguistics in general. Furthermore, compared to other language-related disciplines, the number of SLW publications was rather low, perhaps because it is still an emerging field of study. For example, there were 12,349 publications in linguistics, which cover all language-related fields; 1226 in second language acquisition; 731 in applied linguistics; and 317 in TESOL, during the same period. However, the number of SLW publications (266) was higher than that of World Englishes publications (153) in SSCI and A & HCI.

We also found that a vast majority of SLW publications were regarded as linguistics-related publications: 92% of SLW publications were in the linguistics research area. This was followed by education/educational research, communication, and psychology. Our results showed the strong influence of linguistics and education in SLW. Composition Studies and Applied Linguistics are not included in the WoS categories; thus, it is not possible to assess the specific sources of influence. For the same reason, it is hard to support the observation that the two primary influences on SLW came from applied linguistics and composition studies when using our data [31]. It is reasonable to assume that, in the absence of more specific WoS categories such as applied linguistics, composition studies, foreign language education, and TESOL, WoS will continue to label SLW publications as linguistics, language linguistics, and education/educational research.

We found that the most prolific SLW scholar was T. Silva, who published 44 bibliographies, two articles, and one piece of editorial material. The majority of the SLW publications were from universities in the USA and Canada, notably Purdue University, Georgia State University, Arizona State University, and Brigham Young University. We also showed that 45.11% of all SLW publications covered in SSCI and A & HCI were from the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, followed by *English for Specific Purposes*, *Modern Language Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Language Learning*, and *System*, among others.

The data showed that the most common document types of SLW publications in WoS were articles, book reviews, and bibliographies, with an average of 1.64 authors per publication; this suggests that collaborations among SLW scholars are quite low. Nevertheless, compared to natural science publications, publications in the humanities tend to have fewer authors in general [32], which has been previously observed in the domains of general linguistics [10], World Englishes [12], and sign languages [13]. Thus, SLW is not an exceptional case in this respect. SLW publications included a moderate number of bibliographies, constituting 16.54% of all SLW publications covered in SSCI and A & HCI. Compared to other fields such as World Englishes, this finding is unique.

Our examination of citation patterns in SLW publications revealed that each publication listed 31.44 references on average, and each publication received 5.90 citations on average. The most frequently cited authors were Ferris (128 times), Leki (100 times), and K. Hyland (98 times), whereas the most frequently cited works included two books: [23] and [24]. The most frequently cited article covered in SSCI was [33], which was cited 80 times. These citation patterns seem to be similar to what has been observed in the social sciences and humanities [34–38]. These studies suggested that an analysis of citation patterns in the social sciences and humanities should also include books and book chapters, in addition to journal articles. Future research will consider this suggestion for SLW analysis.

We also showed that, on average, an SLW title had 2.49 different words and a total of 10.85 words including, not surprisingly, the phrase *second language writing*. An average SLW abstract had about 168.28 words consisting of 22.32 different words, which constituted about five (5.44) sentences on average, with the following common phrases: *second language writing* and *of second language*. We showed that abstracts not only included a generic voice, but also a first-person voice, such as *I* and *we*. Our analysis of keywords indicated that the SLW publications had about six (5.92) keywords on average, four (3.88) of which were different from keywords in any other publication, suggesting that the articles covered diverse topics in SLW, including *second language writing*, *writing*, *academic writing*, *error correction*, and *plagiarism*.

Our study has some limitations, which open up new avenues for future research. For one, we sought information on the titles, abstracts, keywords, etc., using the phrase “second language writing”. Yet it is still possible to have publications on the same topic, without including the same phrase in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. Nevertheless, since this is an emerging field, although a specialization within Applied Linguistics, it reflects the research on second language writing better than other phrases, such as “writing in a second language”. In order to show this, we conducted a search by using this phrase on WoS, Google Scholar, LLBA, and Proquest in general, and we found that there were only 14 scholarly outputs in WoS (vs. 266 for SLW); 2810 links in Google Scholar (vs. 12,600 for SLW); 1190 results and 176 Ebook results in Proquest (vs. 8306 results and 564 Ebook results for SLW); and 48 scholarly outputs in LLBA (1957 for SLW). These numbers clearly indicated that “second language writing” is a preferred name for the field, over “writing in a second language”.

Future research will be conducted qualitatively, focusing on what SLW researchers consider to be SLW research, thus expanding the current type of research. For another, we focused only on WoS publications, which limits the scope of our study—a common limitation of bibliometrics of the social sciences and humanities [39]. Examining data from linguistics-specific indices such as LLBA on ProQuest, may provide another picture of SLW publications (see [40] for on linguistics in LLBA). In order to demonstrate this, we conducted a study on LLBA and ProQuest in general. We found that there were more publications covered in LLBA and ProQuest in general than SSCI and A & HCI of WoS. While SSCI and A & HCI results showed that there were 266 publications, LLBA and ProQuest

indicated that there were 1957 and 8309 publications, respectively. These databases covered more journal articles (1650 and 4521) and dissertations and theses than WoS (143), as well as including books which SSCI and A & HCI did not. Nevertheless, in contrast to the articles in SSCI and A & HCI, some of the articles in LLBA and ProQuest were not peer-reviewed. Similarly, we also conducted a study on Google Scholar, to compare the results. Google Scholar indicated that there were 12,600 publications. Yet, the information provided on Google Scholar was not compatible with the information provided in any one of the databases we covered. Future research will be conducted to further examine the data obtained from other databases.

Bibliometric data obtained from the databases such as WoS and ProQuest provide information in terms of, for example, keywords in English, even if the original scholarly output is written in a language other than English. Even though WoS covers a variety of journals from various countries, the majority of publications in scholarly disciplines (and in linguistics in general [10]) are in English, which may create a *language barrier* for international scholars whose native languages are not English [41]. We also examined data from LLBA and ProQuest in general to investigate whether this was the case. We found that most of the publications, 91.42% and 95.21%, respectively, were publications written in English. Therefore, investigating publications outside of WoS, but in languages other than English, may also provide another interesting picture of SLW publications. Of course, these indicators are not the only indicators showing the quality of publications [42].

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