Fluency in young EFL learners' digital writing: the effect of models as written corrective feedback

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This study aims to explore whether and to what extent Written Corrective Feedback (WCF), a very frequent EFL teaching practice, might affect L2 English children's writing fluency. The latter will be measured from two perspectives: the product or final written text (off-line measure) and the process (online measures), that is, linear fluency and fluency during bursts. This work is motivated by two factors. Firstly, most previous digital writing research on L2 fluency has either dealt with adult participants performing different types of tasks, or it has compared adolescents' L1 and L2 writing processes (e.g. Lingdren et al., 2008; Palvanien, 2012; Van Waes & Leijten, 2015). To the best of our knowledge, no previous works have focused on the effects of WCF on both aforementioned perspectives of L2 fluency jointly considered. Secondly, Truscott's (2004) claim that length of writing (as a product) may decrease after WCF processing due to learners' purposeful avoidance of making mistakes by writing less has hardly been empirically tested. In this study, keystroke-logging was used since it is an ecologically valid technique to tap into the writers' fluency and writing processes (Leijten & Van Waes, 2013). Eighteen 10-11 year-old L1 Spanish upper-primary school children were divided into experimental and control groups (10 and 8 participants respectively). All of them wrote an L2 English text based on a six-frame picture story task on the computer. The experimental group received a model text as WCF and was asked to detect similarities and differences between their own texts and the models. The control group self-edited their texts. Afterwards, all the children performed the same writing task without any access to either their initial texts or their revisions. Ongoing analyses are being performed. Despite much further research being required, the results are expected to contribute to profiling L2 children's writing fluency and to shedding light on if and how WCF may impact it.