

Dutch young learners' development of English L2W in terms of complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexis: Exploring the mediating impact of primary English and exposure to English outside the language classroom

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There is a paucity of research on L2W to inform educational policy and practice in the Netherlands. Though L2W is not a core aim in Dutch primary or lower secondary education, some English L2W ability is assumed by the age of fifteen. This study is aimed at gaining understanding in the L2W development (in CALF) among sixty Dutch YLs, while also investigating the possible mediating effects of English (writing) instruction in primary school and exposure to English outside of school. Data are gathered by using a questionnaire, a descriptive writing task, and a persuasive writing task at the beginning (time1), middle (time2) and end (time 3) of the YLs' first year in secondary education. The CALF measures include: The learners' ability to use subordination, their accurate use of verb tenses, the type-token ratio in their texts, the number of low frequency words used, and number of words written in 20 minutes. A MANOVA is used to explore the relationships between variables (time, exposure and previous education). The time1 data show that on average YLs who leave primary school are able to write at A2 level of the CEFR. Initial results show that a more complex task prompt the YLs to use more complex language structures, including subordination. The YLs report varied experiences of primary English and limited exposure to written English outside of school, but frequent exposure to spoken English via music, films, and gaming. Positive correlations are observed between exposure to spoken English and CALF scores.