

Writing processes in different languages

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English is omnipresent in the Netherlands and can be found in various contexts such as on television and in advertisement, all of which provide a lot of input. Because children already have some receptive knowledge of English before they enter school (Unsworth et al., 2014), English cannot entirely be considered a foreign language anymore (De Bot, 2014; Edwards, 2016). German however, can be seen as a foreign language as it is mostly learned as a third language through school, often in more explicit ways. This study aims to determine if and to what extent English and German are processed differently by Dutch students when writing. More specifically, pausing and revision behaviour of 19 participants are researched using keystroke logging and stimulated recall (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Participants were university students taking a German language course. They watched a video and after that, wrote one argumentative text in each language. Their writing processes were recorded using Inputlog (Leijten & Van Waes, 2013) and a screen recorder. After writing both texts, the participants reflected on their thoughts during writing using stimulated recall. Results revealed important differences between the languages. First, participants paused less, but longer in English. Second, there was a trend towards a relationship between pause length and German proficiency, with increased proficiency leading to relatively fewer small pauses (threshold 200ms) and more longer pauses (threshold 2000ms), whereas a higher proficiency in English was related to less pausing overall. Finally, the stimulated recall comments showed that the reasons for pausing and revising were mostly related to grammar and planning in German but of a more diverse nature in English. We discuss theoretical and pedagogical implications of our findings in light of earlier work into L2 writing processes.