

Effects of collaborative writing on young learners' texts: L2 vs. FL

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Collaborative writing (CW) seems to develop learners' written performance in second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) contexts alike. Recently, more studies have taken up to examine how learner-related variables interact with task conditions and shape the outcomes of learners' performance. Patterns of interaction, the engagement level, learners' dispositions, or context have been recognized to mediate students' outcomes. Studies dealing with the effects of the context or teaching/learning environment are multisite, and to date, no study has addressed how the social status of the language students write and engage in interplays with students' performance. The present classroom-based study, therefore, explores the effects of CW on the L2 and EFL of 11-12-year-old primary education students from a school in northern Spain. Participants wrote three compositions per language: the first and the third were written individually, but the second (the experimental task) was written individually by the control group (CG) (n = 17) and in pairs by the experimental group (EG) (n = 10 pairs). Texts were examined quantitatively for fluency and accuracy measures as well as qualitatively by means of an analytic rubric. The analysis revealed that, all students wrote fewer words in each task and language. Similarly, global qualitative scores also did not vary much and no differences were attested across tasks or languages. Accuracy effects were only attested for the collaborating pairs. Collaboration seemed to bring about enduring effects, as the accuracy effects were also observable in the post-test. When differences by language were examined, the CG was shown to behave differently depending on whether they wrote in their L2, Basque, or FL, English, while no language-dependent differences emerged for the EG. Collaborative writing seems to counterbalance students' attention to form and therefore it seems to be an expedient tool to increase students' attention to language.