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The Relationship between Spoken and Written L2-Production

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Spoken and written production are the productive skills in second language acquisition. While there have been studies comparing second language (L2) learners' productive and receptive vocabulary (e.g. De La Fuente, 2002; Webb 2008), the relationship between spoken and written L2 production still remains unclear.

Speaking and writing involve different cognitive processes. Research has shown that speech production needs to incorporate the following stages: conceptual, syntactic, lexical, phonological and phonetic (Field, 2004). Writing, on the other hand, is governed by other processes. Flower and Hayes (1981) point out that writing evokes the writer's long-term memory followed by planning, translation and revising.

A comparison of the grammatical skills that learners utilise in written and spoken production could help us better understand the relationship between them. The crucial assumption of this research is that language production (performance) is related to grammatical knowledge (competence).

Research questions of this study will be:

1. Which grammatical knowledge do learners access in written and spoken production under different conditions and time constraints?
2. When does the situation arise when learners access the same grammatical knowledge in both kinds of production?
3. Does the L1 play a role in access to grammatical knowledge?

This PhD project has begun with a pilot study in May 2019 investigating both written and spoken production of L2 English learners with various proficiency levels and L1 backgrounds. The focus of language production is morpho-syntactic structures, which are benchmarks of developmental stages in Processability Theory (PT), including the 3rd person singular *s*, *ing* forms and questions (Pienemann, 1998). Linguistic tasks are being conducted with them to elicit speech data. These structures will then be compared to see if there are any similarities between the two kinds of production and if there is a correlation between proficiency levels and the structures produced.

The actual study will involve automatic language profiling (ALP), which is a computer-assisted procedure for the analysis of L2 learners' language development. The use of ALP is of huge significance since it has several advantages in the assessment of language proficiency and in language pedagogy at large. As Keßler and Keatinge (2008) point out, ALP can serve as a good basis for transition of schools as it records the language proficiency of individual learners in a standardized manner. Potential informants will be advanced English learners with different L1 backgrounds, including Chinese, German, Polish and Russian, which are languages spoken by the author of the present study.

As for methodology, linguistic tasks, which aim to elicit the important structures in PT, will be assigned to the informants. Examples of tasks will be habitual actions, picture description and picture differences. An instant messaging program, in which the researcher can interact with the informants, will be used in the collection of written production data. For oral production, apart from the abovementioned linguistic tasks, elicited imitation (EI), which requires informants to repeat a sentence including the targeted morpho-syntactic structures, can also be applied. (486 words)

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