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Writing processes, text quality, and task effects
Empirical studies in first and second language writing

The research presented in this thesis was carried out in order to advance our understanding of the writing process by linking process and product characteristics to each other. The underlying question was: how does the way in which writers use different cognitive activities, such as planning, generating ideas, and formulating, during the writing process influence the quality of the texts they produce? The main aim was to compare how writers write in L1 (Dutch) and L2 (English), in order to investigate the influence of a specific task variable, language, on the writing process and on the relationship between the writing process and the quality of the text produced.

Results suggest that process-product relations change in a number of ways when writers switch from writing in L1 to L2. First of all, writing in L2 influences the moment at which cognitive activities are carried out during the writing process. Second, writing in L2 also seems to alter the moment at which these activities appear positively related to text quality. Finally, writers appear to vary their behaviour less between tasks when writing in L2 than in L1, perhaps because an increase in cognitive load inhibits them from doing so.

The research presented in this thesis is potentially of interest to researchers in many fields, including cognitive psychology, discourse studies, education, language teaching, text linguistics, and writing process research.