

Exploring SL Writing and SL Sensitivity during Writing Tasks: Poor and Advanced Writing in a Context of Second Language other than English

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Abstract : This study integrates a larger research empirical project that examines second language (SL) learners' profiles and valid procedures to perform complete and diagnostic assessment in schools. 102 learners of Portuguese as a SL aged 7 and 17 years speakers of distinct home languages were assessed in several linguistic tasks. In this article, we focused on writing performance in the specific task of narrative essay composition. The written outputs were measured using the score in six components adapted from an English SL assessment context (Alberta Education): linguistic vocabulary, grammar, syntax, strategy, socio-linguistic, and discourse. The writing processes and strategies in Portuguese language used by different immigrant students were analysed to determine features and diversity of deficits on authentic texts performed by SL writers. Differentiated performance was based on the diversity of the following variables: grades, previous schooling, home language, instruction in first language, and exposure to Portuguese as Second Language. Indo-Aryan languages speakers showed low writing scores compared to their peers and the type of language and respective cognitive mapping (such as Mandarin and Arabic) was the predictor, not linguistic distance. Home language instruction should also be prominently considered in further research to understand specificities of cognitive academic profile in a Romance languages learning context. Additionally, this study also examined the teachers representations that will be here addressed to understand educational implications of second language teaching in psychological distress of different minorities in schools of specific host countries.

Keywords : home language, immigrant students, Portuguese language, second language, writing assessment

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