Patterns of pauses in draft and final versions of texts handwritten by 5th grade children

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Résumé

Teachers often recommend the use of a rough draft in writing activities. Literature has shown that children use rough drafts in a variety of ways: when writing the final version, they may simply copy their drafted version, edit it for spelling or refine the text (Boré, 2000). These strategies can be identified by comparing the linguistic features of the two versions. In this study we suggest that additional evidence can be gleaned by analyzing the temporal patterns of (re)writing.

In this study 40 10-year-old French children (5th grade) were asked to write two texts: a personal narrative and an expository text. They produced the written texts in two different contexts of production; either preceded (spoken-written condition) or followed by the production of an oral text (written-spoken condition). For each of these texts we first asked for a draft version and then a final version. Data were collected using the Eye & Pen © software with digitizing tablets, which allows for the observation of the temporality of writing.

The present study examines how the writers treat the different versions of their texts by 1) examining how patterns of pauses vary between the two versions as a function of text types and contexts of production and 2) relating these patterns to the differences observed at the linguistic level between the draft and final versions.

Our first results show that about two thirds of our participants adopt simply a recopying strategy by producing a final version very similar to their draft version. Final versions of texts written in the written-spoken condition are more likely to be different from their draft version than final versions which were produced in the spoken-written condition. The recopying strategy is reflected in the chronometric data with fewer pauses in the final version than in the draft version. Participants who modify the content of their texts show longer pauses in the final version than in the draft version and longer pauses than those in the final version of participants who do not modify content of their text.

BORÉ, C. (2000) : " Le brouillon, introuvable objet d'étude ? ", Pratiques, 105-106, p. 23-48.

Mots-Clés: writing, pauses, drafting strategies

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