

The Roles of Audience, Delivery Mode and Computer Ability in Second-language Writing Performance

Khaled Barkaoui

York University, Toronto, Canada
Email: kbarkaoui02@edu.yorku.ca

Several second-language (L2) writing tests allow students to either handwrite or type their response on the computer. Consequently, performance on these tests can be influenced by *both* the delivery mode *and* the computer skills required to write on the computer. Few studies, however, have examined the impact of delivery mode and computer skills on L2 writing performance. This study addresses this research gap by examining the writing processes that L2 learners engage in when responding to a L2 writing test and whether and how these processes are influenced by task characteristics, delivery mode (paper vs. computer), learner English language proficiency, and learner computer ability. Each of 16 L2 learners with different levels of English language proficiency (low vs. high) and computer skills (low vs. high, based on a typing test) responded to four writing tasks, two on paper and two on the computer. The writing tasks consisted in writing one message to a known reader and one to an unknown reader. Each participant then watched a video of their writing session immediately after completing each writing task and provided stimulated recalls about what they were thinking while completing each task. The stimulated recalls were coded in terms of the cognitive processes that the participants reported using and then the results were compared across delivery modes, tasks, and learners. The findings indicated that participants' writing processes varied significantly across tasks/audience, writing modes, and learner groups. The findings and their implications for L2 writing theory, assessment, and research will be discussed.