

Abstract

The current study examined the extent to which measures of speed affect overall writing quality of Chinese children. In this longitudinal design, written composition samples were collected from 153 children. Batteries of tests assessing speed, including handwriting fluency tasks, cross out, visual matching, and speeded naming, were administered. Vocabulary knowledge, Chinese word dictation and phonological awareness, which were speculated to correlate strongly with writing performance, were also measured as control together with age. The written compositions were rated using a 7-dimension rubric, and the rubric total was operationally defined as overall writing quality. Overall writing quality correlated significantly with all the speeded measures even when the effect of age was partialled out. Speed as a whole was found to contribute a significant 10% of variance of overall writing quality on top of the control variables. Dictation, cross out and fluency of hand-writing Chinese sentences were the unique predictors in the model. Current findings suggest that the fluency of lower-level processes predicts the quality of writing output, and that handwriting fluency, as in English language, is important for writing quality even for Chinese. Further studies could explore the relations of speeded measures with English writing, and the developmental differences of writing.