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The Effects of Planning on Accuracy in Argument/Compare and Contrast Writing of Iranian EFL Learners

Esmaeil Bagheridoust[1], Kobra Allahyari Fakoor[1]

Department of English, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Corresponding Author email: parvanehf2004@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: This study investigated the effects of strategic planning and unpressured-within-task planning on foreign language written production in accuracy based on Kellogg's (1996) writing model. The participants were 24 EFL university students majoring the English language teaching. They were asked to write an argument/compare and contrast writing task based on a given topic under three different conditions. In the no-planning (NP) condition, participants were asked to write immediately after reading the topic within a limited span of time. In the strategic planning (SP) condition, the participants were given ten minutes to plan in advance but were asked to complete the task within a limited time. In the unpressured within-task planning (WTP) condition, the participants were asked to write down their text immediately after reading the topic but encouraged to cope carefully their sentences before writing them down. No time limit was allotted to this group. After performing the writing task, participants in all three groups completed a questionnaire and were interviewed. Writings were evaluated on quantitative and qualitative measures covering the area of accuracy. ANOVA tests revealed that SP participants achieved statistically greater levels in one variable of accuracy than the two other groups. Data from questionnaires and interviews helped interpret the results. The findings of this study indicate that EFL learners benefit from planning in terms of accuracy.

Key words: Accuracy, Planning, Pre-Task Planning, Within-Task Planning

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important skills in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the significance of which has been recognized thoroughly by both learners and instructors. Alongside learner's interest, and due to the fact that writing abilities lead to learners' progress, both educators and teachers are interested in a more efficient method of teaching which can best meet learners' needs. Writing is a skill which helps language learners with concentrating and organizing their ideas, it also enables them to express their feelings and emotions. As a matter of fact, writing is a non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. Learners usually encounter different problems while writing in a foreign language. These problems are mostly because of not being familiar with purpose, organization, requirements and positioning of text (Paltrige, 2004).

While most of EFL teachers face this problem in their classes, they are incapable of finding an efficient solution. Most of the time teachers adopt only a product-based approach without giving students a twinge of help with process. Although the traditional approach for writing was product-oriented, it could not be helpful and practical anymore. In product-oriented instruction writing is seen just as arranging or fitting different words, sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns (Silva, 1990). Here writing means identifying, internalizing, and executing (Silva, 1990) these pre-existing patterns. Because of this focus on final products, learners have little chance to reformulate their text during writing task (Kim, 2001), so it seems totally natural for learners not to achieve a high level of writing proficiency.

Alongside with interest in process, researchers got interested to know how different activities could be done during the process of completing a task in order to achieve both fluency and accuracy which is the goal of all language learners. So many studies considering different processes of language learning were conducted in the area of TBLT, each devoting to different sub-processes. According to Kellogg (1999), the basic composition processes include planning, formulation and revision. While during recent decades the importance of these sub-processes has been recognized and almost everyone would accept that they have crucial effect on writing, few researches have focused on them.

Furthermore, in the same direction, numerous studies devoted to the effect of planning on oral proficiency represented that planning under different conditions have diverse impacts on fluency and accuracy of learners. Although during recent decades this focus of planning on oral performance has drawn language instructors and researchers' attention to its effect on written proficiency, few researches have been done in this area. So, the aim of this study is to shed light on one of these processes, planning, and their effects under different conditions: pre-task planning and within- task planning on writing skills.

Literature review
What is planning?

Planning is a goal-oriented mental activity which learners are involved in to achieve a specific goal. It leads to allocation of resources and the regulation of cognitive processes (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Das, Kar, and Parrila (1996) stated planning is oriented to the future, and may include the creation and selection of problems, as well as the anticipation of a sequence of actions to solve them. For Wendel (1997) planning in research on language production means retrieving and organizing the utterance. Foss and Hakes argued planning in language production means formulation of an idea, the choice of appropriate lexical items, and organizing them in a suitable semantic and syntactic framework. Having the same attitude Ochs (1979) believed that discourse can be planned or unplanned based on the presence or absence of thought preparation and discourse organization. Ellis (2005) is interested in different linguistic devices which are regarded as "problem solving activity" in his definition of planning. He argued that the aim of planning is to affect the audience in the desired way. Having the same attitude Farch and Kasper (1983) draw a distinction between the planning phase and the execution phase. By planning phase they meant using linguistic repertoire and selecting appropriate rules and items which help speakers to achieve their communicative goals. In the execution phase the rules and items from planning phase are executed for the purpose of original goal.

In writing research, planning has been considered as a kind of reflection that is associated with other reflective processes like inferencing and decision making (Hayes & Gradwohle Nash, 1996). However, planning is believed to be different from other reflective processes because it happens in a different environment from the task itself. Based on their studies and considering their focus, Hayes and Gradwohle Nash (1996) divided planning into two types. The first type is process planning, which is related to the writer and the strategies used by him or her while writing and performing a task. The second type of planning according to them is text planning which refers to the content and form of written task.

Different Types of Planning

Planning for TBLT can happen in different levels, such as linguistic elements plan (eg. choice of words or phrases) sentences plan, structure plan (Clark & Clark, 1977). Ellis distinguishes between four different types of planning. According to him planning in task-based learning and teaching can be divided into pre-task planning and within-task planning. Pre-task planning is a kind of planning which happens before performing the task. Schmidt (2001) states that it involves 'prepatory attention' which helps learners with greater accuracy and speed while performing a task. The second type of planning according to Ellis is within-task planning which refers to the kind of planning which occurs during the time of performance of a task.

Pre-task planning can be cataloged into two kinds too, rehearsal and strategic planning. Rehearsal planning refers to the kind of planning in which students are given a chance to perform the task in advance to the final performance of the task. In fact in this type the first performance is viewed as preparation for the final performance. The other type which is strategic planning refers to student preparation of the content of the task and the way this content is expressed for the task. Strategic planning helps learners with preparation of the content of the task the will perform. In strategic planning learners "have accesses to the actual task materials" (Ellis, 2005, p.3). Within-task planning can also be divided into two kinds: pressured and unpressured. This division is based on the time given to students for preparing the task. Ellis (2005) states that, "within-task planning can be differentiated according to the extent to which the task performance is pressured or unpressured" (p.4). In an unpressured planning, students can have a careful planning of their task with no time restriction, and they are provided with enough time to plan on-line, while in a pressured one students must rapidly perform the task without any prior preparation, which means they should perform the task during a restricted time.

There are some other sub-types of planning which may occur simultaneously with one of the principal types of planning (i.e. pre-task planning and within-task planning). The first sub-type which is related to the amount of guidance draws a distinction between unguided versus guided planning. Unlike guided, in unguided planning learners receive no or a little specific advice about planning and performing the task (Ellis, 2005). The second division is based on the source of planning. Different source of planning which include teacher-led, group-based and solitary planning lead to different results in planning and performing a task (Foster & Skehan, 1999).

Kellogg's Model of Writing
Like earlier models of writing, Kellogg's (1996) model has three basic systems (Ellis & Yuan, 2004). Each of these three systems consists of two main processes. The first system which is Formulation includes: (i) 'planning' in which ideas are organized and goals are originated, and (ii) 'translating' which includes choosing lexical units and syntactic frames and representing them phonologically and graphologically and making them ready for execution. The second system is Execution which involves (i) 'programming' where the output from translation is changed into production schema, and (ii) 'executing' that is the actual production of a sentence. The third system is monitoring. It includes: 'reading' in which the writer reads his or her production, and (ii) 'editing' in which the writer pays attention to either macro aspects like text organization of the text or/and micro aspects such as linguistic errors.

Kellogg further explains that Execution system which its main role is solving problems and mental calculation is involved in all sub-processes. However, execution is an exception because it is achieved without controlled processing.

Ellis (2005) explains that Kellog's model considers an adult, native-like automaticity in handwriting and typing. He argues this may not exist with L2 learners because their proficiency is limited. He emphasizes this may not be true especially with those who have an L1 with a different script. He comes to the conclusion that execution system is likely to be used during executing by some L2 writers.

Levelt's (1989) model and Kellogg's (1996) model have many things in common (Ellis & Yuan, 2004). Kellogg's 'planning' is similar to Levelt's 'conceptualization'. 'Translating' is similar to 'formulation', and 'execution' is like 'articulation'. Both of these models illustrate different processes which are involved in speaking and writing. So, they "afford relatively precise hypotheses about the effects that planning will have on task performance" (Ellis, 2005, p.15).

Previous Studies
Planning has been investigated in different studies since 1980. Different researchers have investigated its effect on language production (crookes, 1989; Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Ellis, 2009). Researchers in their studies had different focuses and perspectives towards planning and task performance.

Crookes (1989) investigated the effect of planning on monologic production tasks. In his study 20 Japanese learners of English as a second language performed an oral task with and without time for planning. In this study he used two different, but equivalent versions of the same tasks to minimize practice effects from one planning condition to the other. He operationalized planning time at two different levels. In minimal planning condition, participants were provided with no time for planning at all. They were asked to begin their explanation as soon as they had read the instructions. In the planning condition, participants were given 10 minutes time for planning. They also were instructed to plan their explanation in terms of words, phrases and ideas, and work independently. Based on the result of his study, Crook claims that learners under the planned conditions favored the planning time regarding the complexity and the number of lexis they used in their oral discourse. He also reported that planning condition had some effect on accuracy of speech, but this effect was not significant.

As was mentioned earlier, since 1980 different researchers have examined the effect of planning under different conditions on task performance with different attitudes, and focusing on different variables. They took different perspectives toward planning. Most of these studies were concerned with oral tasks. However, new studies tried to shed light on strategic planning and unpressured within task planning on written tasks. In some of the studies the term 'pre-task planning' has been used for strategic planning. Also some researchers have used the term 'online planning' to refer to within-task planning. The following is a review of the studies which have examined the effect of strategic planning and within-task planning on language production.

Among the first studies which investigated the effect of planning on language performance was Crookes' (1989) study. In his study he used twenty Japanese participants who were asked to do monologic tasks under two different conditions of planning. He named these two conditions as "minimal pre-task planning" and "ten-minute pre-task planning. In minimal pre-task planning condition, participants were provided with no time for planning while in ten-minute pre-task planning they were given ten minutes time for strategic planning. In order to make sure that participants are involved in planning they were asked to take notes during 10 minutes planning time. They also were informed that their notes were going to be drawn away before starting to speak. Crookes' (1989) hypothesis in this study was that the participants with a chance of 10 minutes planning time would perform more accurate and complex language. He also predicted that their performance would be of higher development level. However, the result of the study was not completely in line with his hypothesis. No significant difference in accuracy was found between two groups.

William (1992) studied the effect of planning on discourse markers, grammatical accuracy and complexity in 24 Korean and Mandarin teaching assistants. The participants were asked to perform two eight-minute presentation tasks. The planned group was supposed to choose a topic and perform their presentation during one-week time that they had for planning. The second group had neither the opportunity to choose the topic

themselves, nor was provided with any time before presentation. The topic for unplanned group was chosen by the instructor, and they had an only three-minute time for preparing their presentations. William (1992) found in his study that participants with one week opportunity for planning produced more discourse markers and greater complex tasks in comparison to second group with just three-minute time before production. Like Crookes (1989), William (1992) found no significant difference between planned and unplanned discourse when it comes to accuracy.

Wiggleworth (1997) examined the effect of strategic planning on oral performance in a testing situation. He also considered the impact of proficiency level, and tried to investigate whether or not it has any influence on the result of the research. He used 120 ESL participants who were divide into high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups, and performed eight tasks. He found that high-proficiency group benefited planning time, and performed more complex, accurate and fluent speech in tasks with high cognitive demands. However, these results were not seen with low-proficiency group.

Ellis and Yuan (2004) studied the effect of three types of planning condition (pre-task planning, unpressured on-line planning, and no planning) in second language narrative writing. The participants were 42 Chinese learners. They were asked to compose a written narrative based on a series of pictures. They were divided into three groups. The control group performed the task under no planning condition, and two experimental groups wrote respectively under pre-task planning and unpressured on-line planning conditions. Ellis and Yuan reported that whereas pre-task planning leads to greater fluency and syntactic variety, unpressured on-line planning results in greater accuracy. They added that two types of planning conditions (pre-task planning and unpressured on-line planning) have some effect of different aspects of L2 writing processes. That is, pre-task planning promotes formulation and unpressured on-line planning result in better monitoring. They also concluded that participants in no planning group had to formulate, execute, and monitor under pressure which lead to negative results for fluency, complexity and accuracy of the produced language in comparison to planning groups.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of numerous researches done in EFL area, still there are many unresolved fundamental questions regarding writing skill. For decades writing skill has been considered as teaching grammatical rules and vocabularies. It was believed that the more grammatical rules and vocabularies learners acquire the better they write. As a result most EFL teachers have just focused on these two constructs at the expense of other techniques like planning or organization. There is no considerable attention to process and activities which can be done during these processes for improving writing proficiency.

Among different processes involved in writing, planning is of prime importance. In most studies, planning has been defined as "the availability of a certain amount of time immediately before performing the experimental task" (Ortega, 1999, p. 113). However it is not clear enough how planning benefits writing performances. The main body of research on planning has mainly focused on oral performance in different conditions. (Crooks, 1989; Ortega, 1999, Wiggleworth, 1997).

Although the effect of different kinds of planning (pre-task planning, on-line planning and no-planning) in narrative writing has been investigated by Ellis, it is not clear enough whether planning under the same conditions has the same effect on other kinds of writing or not. So, this study is aimed to examine the effect of pre-task planning, on-line planning and no-planning on argument/compare and contrast writing. Accordingly, due to the paucity of research in this area, the present study was developed in an attempt to focusmainly on planning and the possible effects it might have on writing. Therefore, the following research questions were proposed:

Research Questions

Do EFL learners produce more accurate language when they have opportunity to plan an argument/compare and contrast writing task in advance than when they have no opportunity to plan it?

Do EFL learners produce more accurate language when they have opportunity to plan while producing an argument/compare and contrast writing task than when they have no opportunity to plan it?

Research Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in accuracy between pre-task planned argument compare and contrast writings and unplanned ones.

There is no significant difference in accuracy between with-in-task planned argument/compare and contrast writing tasks and unplanned ones.

There is no significant difference in accuracy between pre-task planned argument/compare and contrast writing tasks and within-task planned ones.

METHODOLGY

Participants

This study was conducted in a classroom setting at Islamic Azad University (South Tehran Branch).The participants were 24 BA Iranian adult students majoring Translation Studies. They all were taking a writing course related to their major in their third semester. This class, Advanced Writing, consisted of thirty female and three male EFL students. In terms of age, the participants were between 20 and 33. All are meant to have the same language background since their vernacular language is Persian. To carry out the study, the researcher picked up 24 candidates out of the pool of 33.

Overall, the participants were rather homogeneous in age, educational background, English language experience and proficiency. However, in order to make sure that they were at the same level of English language proficiency a questionnaire was filled by every participant. This questionnaire was about participants' English language learning experience and their own information (i.e., age, sex, and name). Also, to add to the validity of the study and to ensure the homogeneity of participants, a reliable pre-test of TOEFL was given to them. Prior to test administration, participants were divided into three groups. The scores obtained from this test were entered into SPSS and by employing a one-way ANOVA the researcher ensured that the treatment groups were not statistically different.

Instruments

In general, four instruments were used in this study including pre-test material, writing tasks, task conditions, and interview. As was mentioned above, a version of TOEFL test developed for non-native speakers of English was used as the first instrument to guarantee the homogeneity among the participants.

The second instrument, the writing task, which was selected in this study was an argument/compare and contrast writing task. The topic assigned to all three groups in this study was the same. It was adopted from the writing section of a test of TOEFL. Each participant was asked to complete the writing task under one of the three conditions (no planning condition, pre-task planning condition and unpressured within-task planning condition).

The third instrument was related to the task conditions. According to Skehan and Foster (1999), a task condition refers to "manipulation of what happens while the task itself is running" (p. 101). Here the task condition was operationalized at three levels. These three conditions include: strategic planning condition, unpressured within-task planning condition and no-planning condition. In pre-task strategic planning (SP) condition, participants were required to plan their writing task in terms of content, organization and language following. They were not given detailed guidance about planning, but were informed that they could have an outline of what they were going to compose. It was also explained that they could think of vocabulary, grammar and structure of their text. They were given a sheet of paper to take notes, but were asked not to write the whole text. They were also told that their notes were taken away before the completion of task. The second experimental group in this study was unpressured within-task planning group. Participants under this condition were expected to start the task immediately after receiving the topic. There was no time limit for completing the task; however, they were given no time in advance to plan their task. They were required to plan the task on-line while doing it. Unlike the two previous groups who were asked to write at least three paragraphs including six or seven lines, the participants in this group were not needed to concern for the length of the writing task "as this may be interpreted as requiring them to write quickly" (Ellis & Yuan, 2004, p.70).

The last instrument used here was a questionnaire as well as a retrospective questionnaire administered to participants after completing the task. The questionnaire was designed in order to figure out how participants felt about different task conditions.After administering the writing task, participants were asked some questions. Some participants were chosen randomly from each group to explain what they felt about planning conditions, and whether they benefited from it to organize their task in terms of content and structure, and if they applied what they planned. The information obtained from the questionnaire and interview was utilized for analyzing the result.

Procedures

The participants of this study were divided randomly into three groups, two experimental groups and one control group. To ensure that they were from the same level of proficiency a pre-test was used. Then the participants in all three groups were asked to write an argument/compare and contrast essay based on the given topic. They wrote based on the same topic, but in different conditions. The control group was under the no-planning condition (NO) in which participants were not given time for planning, and in order to prevent them from on-line planning a time limit was established. The first experimental group was under pre-task planning condition (PP)in which participants were given 10 minutes time to plan what they want to write prior to performing writing task. They were allowed to write notes on a sheet of paper. These notes were taken away before they perform the task. A time limitation was assigned to this group too. The second experimental group

was under the within task planning or on-line planning condition (OP) in which participants were required to start performing the task of writing immediately , but they were given as much time as needed to complete the task. Thus they were not given any time in advance but were allowed an unlimited time to plan while performing the task.

The results obtained from these writing tasks performed under different conditions were compared and analyzed. In line with Ellis and Yuan (2004) the following measures were used:

Planning which was the independent variable was measured as follows:

1. Length of time: the total number of minutes which were consumed for completing the task.

2. Words: the total number of words produced by each participant in the process of task completion.

3. Syllables: the total number of syllables which were produced by each participant for performing the task.

Accuracy that was dependent variable was estimated by following measures:

1. Error-free clauses_ the percentage of clauses that did not contain any errors.

2. Correct verb forms_ the percentage of accurately used verbs in terms of tense and subject-verb agreement.

All the written texts were coded using so-called measure as mentioned. Also, a second researcher coded the data in each group to ensure the reliability of measures. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed that the scores ranged by two coders were highly correlated. Ultimately, a series of one-way ANOVAs was performed to analyze the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative data for independent variable

Following Ellis and Yuan (2004), planning was estimated by the total number of minutes, words and syllables used by each participant in the study. These results are also important to measure each group's productivity. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1. Mean scores for independent variables

	NP	SP	OP
Length of time	29.87	18.5	37.87
Number of words	186.87	192.42	150.250
Number of syllables	189.87	195.250	154.125

Participants in pre-task planning and no-planning group were given thirty minutes to complete the task. However, some of them performed it in less than allotted time. As shown in the above table, the mean length for pre-task planning and no-planning group was 18.50 and 29. 8750 minutes respectively. On the other hand, participants in unpressured within-task planning were provided with as much time as needed. The average time for this group reached to 37.8750 minutes. It was 19.37 minutes longer than pre-task planning group and 8 minutes longer than no- planning group.

In order to see that whether these differences are statistically significant, the ANOVA and Post Hoc statistical operations were applied. Table 2 and 3 show the results.

Table 2.ANOVA for independent variables

	source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Length of time	Between Group	1567.750	2	758.375	34.194	.000
	Within group	465. 750	21	22.179		
Number of words	Between Group	8389. 750	2	4194.875	1.722	.203
	Within Group	51152. 250	2			
Number of syllables	Between Group	7995.250	21	3997.625	1.654	.215
	Within Group		2			

Table 3. Post Hoc Scheffe results for length of time

	Mean Difference	Sig.
On-line planning _ Pre-task planning	19.3750	.000
On-line planning _ No-planning	8.0000	.007
No-planning _ Pre-task planning	11.3750	.000

According to the result of ANOVA test presented in the table below, this difference in the length of time consumed by each group is a significant one because the p-value is less than .05. The post hoc results reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the unpressured within-task planning group with both pre-task strategic planning and no-planning group. Participants under on-line planning condition spent considerably longer time for task completion in comparison to those in the two other groups.

Participants in pre-task strategic planning and no-planning group were required to write a three or four paragraph text consisted of at least 200 words. Unlike these groups, the task performers under unpressured

within-task planning condition were asked to write as many words as they could because it was thought that asking them to compose a minimum of 200 words "may be interpreted as requiring them to write quickly" (Ellis & Yuan, 2004, p.7). The average words produced by each group are represented in table 1.The average number of words produced by participants in pre-task strategic planning was 192 words, 8 words fewer than needed. For those in unpressured within-task planning it averaged 150 words. The average number was 186 words for no planning group. As shown in table 2, the result of ANOVA test reveal that there is no significant statistical difference across three groups.

The number of syllables used by participants in the tree treatment groups is a similar index to the number of produced words. As with the number of words, the participants in the pre-task strategic planning group devoted the highest mean score to themselves (195.25 syllables). The mean score of the no planning group was intermediate (189.87 syllables), while the average mean score for unpressured within-task planning was the least (154.72). Based on the test of ANOVA (Table. 2), and Post Hoc Scheffethere is no considerable difference between any pair of groups.

The results obtained from analysis of independent variable measures reveal that planning time has no significant statistical effect on productivity of learners. Within-task planning group spent 8 minutes longer than no planning and 19 minutes longer than pre-task strategic planning group, but produced 42 words less than those in pre-task planning and 36 words less than no planning group. It indicates that participants hesitated in the process of task completion, which resulted in significantly longer time to perform the task in comparison to the two other planning groups.

Quantitative data for dependent variables

For measuring the accuracy, percentage of error-free clauses and percentage of correct verb forms were calculated. In table 4 below the mean scores of these variables are represented.

Table 4. Mean scores and standard deviation for accuracy

	NP		SP		OP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Error-free clause	52.1250	14.5103	75.5000	11.13553	72.5000	10.35098
Correct verb forms	71.5000	9.33503	72.3750	8.50105	82.0000	12.81740

As shown above, the descriptive statistics for accuracy represent that strategic planning and unpressured within-task planning group received a higher score for accuracy variables compared to no-planning group. The mean score for error-free clauses was 75.5 for pre-task strategic planning, which was the highest. It averaged to 72.5 and 52.12 for on-line planning and no planning group respectively. This average score is higher for on-line planning than no planning group. On the other hand, the highest average score for correct verb forms belong to unpressured within-task planning group, with strategic planning group in intermediate and the no planning group the lowest. The results of ANOVA test (table 5) reveal that the difference of mean scores for error-free clauses is statistically significant. However, no statistically considerable difference was found for correct verb form due the fact that the p-value for this variable was more than .05.

Table 5. ANOVA for accuracy variables

	source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Errror-free clauses	Between Group	2588.083	2	1294.042	8.786	.002
	Within Group	3092.875	21	147.280		
correct verb forms	Between Group	543.083	2	271.542	2.517	
	Within Group	2265.875	21	107.890		
S=Sum of Square; df= degrees of freedom; MS=Means Square						

Regarding error-free clauses, the post hoc results in Table 6.below indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between Pre-task strategic planning and Unpressured within-task planning group. However, this difference was statistically considerable between pre-task planning and no- planning group. That is, having an opportunity to plan in advance resulted in more error-free clauses for participants compared to those in no planning group. On the other hand, the difference of mean scores between unpressured within-task planning and no-planning group was significant statistically too. It means, planning on-line resulted in less wrong clauses in this group in comparison to control group.

Table 6. Post Hoc Scheffe results for error-free clause

	Mean Difference	Sig.
Pre-task planning_On-line planning	3.0000	.875
Pre-task planning_ No planning	23.3750	.003
On-line planning_No planning	20.3750	.008

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of quantitative data, the first hypothesis of the study can be rejected. It was hypothesized that planning in advance had no effect on accuracy in comparison to no planning condition. As mentioned two variables for accuracy were defined and measured. Although this hypothesis received support from correct verb form variable and no significant statistical difference was found, for error-free clauses it can be rejected thoroughly. That is, learners in pre-task planning group produced more accurate clauses compared to unplanned ones. Based on the result of ANOVA and Post Hoc test this difference of the mean scores for error-free clauses is statistically considerable.

The second hypothesis predicted that there was no difference in accuracy between unpressured within task planning in comparison to no planning group. Regarding correct verb form, participants in on-line group produced more accurate verbs than no control group. The difference of mean scores is not statistically significant, however. On the other hand, the post hoc test result reveals that the difference of mean scores for error-free clauses is statistically considerable at the .05 level. That is planning on-line results in more error-free clauses than without planning.

The third hypothesis which stated that there is no difference in accuracy between pre-task strategic planning and unpressured within-task planning group cannot be rejected. Due to the result of ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffe test, although pre-task strategic planning group devoted a higher mean score for error-free clauses than on-line planning group, this difference is not statistically considerable. On the other hand, the mean score for correct verb forms is higher for on-line group than pre-task strategic group, which is not statistically considerable either.

Based on the descriptive results, it can be concluded that there is a positive tendency for learners who have time for planning in advance or on-line to produce more accurate language in comparison to those who have no opportunity to plan due to the fact that the mean scores for both accuracy variables for both planning groups are higher than no planning one. Moreover, participants who were provided with the opportunity to plan on-line gained a higher score for correct verb form. On the other hand pre-task planning group were more accurate regarding error-free clauses. It indicates that performing argument/compare and contrast writing task under different planning condition has different effects on different aspect of accuracy.

Qualitative Data

As was previously mentioned, the instruments used in this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Along with quantitative data, qualitative measures made use of a questionnaire as well as an interview in which some of the participants participated voluntarily. In fact, the qualitative data obtained corresponded and added to the validity of the results some of which are mentioned below.

As for what they were engaged in during 10 minutes of planning time, all task performers in pre-task strategic planning stated that they first tried to cope with the topic to learn what exactly they were required to write. Three of them claimed that they focused more on content and language organization of their text, as one of them stated "what to write and how to write…". All participants in this group concerned both grammar and vocabulary. 6 out of 8 mentioned that they considered the kind of sentences (e.g., compound, complex) they wished to use too during planning time in advance. Regarding content planning (e.g., trying to be clear, seeking to make the text interesting, and adding details) most of them reported working on it. The number of participants who engaged in content planning was higher for pre-task planning group. They mentioned that during planning time they concerned content of the text. No planning group had the least number among the two other groups.

According to what participants mentioned in questioners and interview, all participants in within task planning group concerned language planning while writing. All of them stated that they concentrated on both grammar and vocabulary. 3 of them mentioned that organization of the text was important too, and they coped with it while performing the task. One of them mentioned that she concerned punctuation in addition to grammar and vocabulary.

It seems that participants in this group focused on grammar at sentence level due to one of them wrote "when I was writing, I was concentrating on both grammar and vocabulary, I thought about past and present tenses… ". The other one mentioned that "subject-verb agreement and correct tense was important for me, and I put more emphasis on them while writing." The other one wrote she concerned the correct preposition too.

Based on such a data, it can be inferred that participants in unpressured within task planning group put more emphasis on form with no worries on time. This is compatible with the results of the study which indicate that participants in this group produced more accurate language in comparison to control group. As participants mentioned, they concerned grammar at sentence level, and concentrated on tense, preposition, subject-verb agreement, etc. the quantitative data obtained from the study confirms this, due to the fact that participants in on-line group produced more correct verb forms compared to two other groups.

Table 7 summarizes the result obtained from qualitative data. None of the participants in the three groups reported feeling any anxiety while performing the writing task. However, a number of learners in control

group commented that they felt under pressure because of time restrict which resulted in some problems for them with remembering vocabularies.

Table 7. Number ofparticipants in each group attending to different aspects of writing task

group	Topic comprehension	Rhetorical planning	Content planning	Language planning	Use of L1
PTP					
Before task	8	7	7	6	0
During task	0	1	2	3	0
OLP					
During task	8	3	6	6	0
NP					
During task	8	4	3	3	0

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In different studies which have investigated the effects of pre-task strategic planning on written language production it has been found that strategic planning leads to increased fluency and complexity of language performance (Ellis and Yuan, 2004). However, regarding accuracy mixed results have been reported (Ellis, 1987; Crookes, 1987). In the present study, statistically significant differences were found between strategic planning group and no planning group regarding error-free clauses which is one of the variables for accuracy. It means that having an opportunity to plan in advance resulted in more error-free clauses for participants compared to those in no planning group. Taking into account another variable of accuracy, correct verb forms, the mean score of strategic planning group were more than no planning group, but it was not statistically significant. That is, having an opportunity to plan prior to main performance had a weak effect on producing correct verb forms.

Both groups were given 30 minutes to complete the writing task. Strategic planning group performed the task in 18.5 minutes which means 12 minutes sooner than what they were expected, while no planning group consumed 29.87 minutes for task completion. It means participants in this group used all the time given for writing; however, participants in control group produced poorer quality essays compared to strategic planning group. This is supported by the data obtained from retrospective interviews in which they claimed being restricted by time they did not have enough chance to cope with structure and vocabulary. In fact they concentrated on meaning at the expense of language.

Ellis and Yuan (2004) argue that strategic planning helps Kellogg's (1996) formulation process. The qualitative and quantitative data of this study indicate that participants in strategic planning group benefited planning. Planning and translation are the two stages of the formulation process in Kellogg's model.

In most studies that examined the effect of planning and time-on-task on text quality, researchers attributed the effect of planning to time-on-task (Kellogg, 1987; Nelson, 1988). Hayes and Gradwohl Nash (1996) stated that it is the amount of time spent for performing a task which leads to a better text quality not planning. They mean the greater opportunity to plan, the better language quality because of better monitoring. The result of present study does not support this claim, though. It seems that the higher level of accuracy for on-line group is due to putting more emphasis on form. The different in mean score of error-free clauses for on-line and no planning group is statistically significant. That is being provided with a chance to plan on-line resulted in producing more accurate clauses compared to no planning condition. However, regarding another accuracy variable, correct verb forms, although participants in on-line group achieve a higher mean score than those in no planning group this difference in mean score is not statistically significant. It indicates that planning has different effects on different aspects of language.

On the other hand, the amount of time spent by on-line group for completing the task was higher than no planning. The average time consumed by this group is 37.87 minutes while this amount reached to 29.87 minutes for no planning group. According to Post Hoc Scheffe test results this in length of time is statistically significant. However, there was no statistically considerable difference between the mean scores of the number of the words and syllables produced by participants in each group. Considering this weak non-significant difference between these two groups in the number of words and syllables, while the difference in time length is statistically significant, it can be concluded that this additional time for on-line group was used for the sake of accuracy. Consuming more time WTP group obtained higher level for one of the accuracy variables. According to the data gained from questionnaires and interviews it is clear that the participants put more emphasis on form. No planning group, on the other hand focused on content. Being in lack of time as reported in questionnaires and interviews participants in control group had no enough time to cope with structure. It can be concluded that the additional time and higher level of accuracy for on-line group cannot be attributed to participants' monitoring, because as mentioned in interviews and questionnaires the participants concerned form. So, it cannot be claimed that having more time resulted in better monitoring for participants in WTP group. If it was the case, on-line planning group which spent more time in comparison to SP group should have

produced more accurate written language as a result of additional time and better monitoring. But it was not the case. There is no significant difference in mean scores of accuracy variables for these two groups.

Based on his post-task interviews, Wendel (1997) stated that within-task planning increases accuracy in language use, while strategic planning causes more fluent and complex language. Ellis and Yuan (2004) supported this claim and stated that this difference is due to the fact that strategic planning assists Kellogg's (1996) formulation process, while on-line planning provides more opportunity for monitoring. The above comparisons supported this claim to some extent, due to the fact that participants in WTP produced more accurate language in comparison to NP group. However, no statistically significant difference was found between SP and OP group regarding accuracy.

It seems that planning has considerable effect on accuracy of language production in comparison to no planning condition. However, according to the results obtained from this study there is no statistically significant difference for accuracy of written language produced under different planning conditions.

Considering the findings of the present study certain implications can be drawn some of which are mentioned here. Although writing is one of the most important skills in English language, and almost all EFL learners feel a kind of need to learn it, most EFL teachers are untrained as writers or as writing teachers. One of the reasons for poor quality of learner's written work can be teachers' deemphasizing of effective writing process such as planning. Being informed of these processes and trained in them can be helpful for both teachers and learners to improve their writing skills.

In order to eliminate the shortcomings of teaching writing skill, attention should be drawn toward cognitive processes and strategies rather than exclusive concern for the final product. In other words learners should be aware of different writing processes and sub-processes including planning, and know how to use them. Applying these processes in learning is referred to as self-regulation (Flavell, 1985). Planning is considered to be one of the most important self-regulation processes.

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