Journal of Nusantara Studies 2021, Vol 6(2) 97-115
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
ISSN 0127-9386 (Online)
http://dx.doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol6iss2pp97-115

EFFECTS OF STRATEGIC AND UNPRESSURED WITHIN-TASK PLANNING ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' ORAL PRODUCTION

[1]Marjan Rahim Bakhtiary, [2]Ehsan Rezvani & [*3]Ehsan Namaziandost

[1,2] English Department, Isfahan (Khorasgan)Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.
[3] Department of English, Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran
[*]Corresponding author: e.namazi75@yahoo.com

Received: 27.09.2020 Accepted: 24.03.2021

ABSTRACT

Background/Purpose: This study is an attempt to investigate the effect of strategic planning and unpressured within-task planning on Iranian EFL learners' oral performance.

Methodology: Following a quasi-experimental research design, 60 intermediate EFL Iranian learners were recruited as the participants of the study and they were assigned into two groups of 30. In group one, the participants were asked to perform the task under unpressured online planning condition. In group two, the learners were asked to do the task under strategic planning condition. The pre and post-tests included story-telling narratives tasks followed with a 15-minute silent movie under two planning conditions for the two groups.

Findings: The results of data analysis showed that pre-task strategic planning and within-task planning (online planning) had a positive effect on learners' oral production; hence, planning time provided opportunity for learners to be able to produce more fluent, accurate, and complex language than no-planners. The results indicated that the participants in the strategic planning group (STPG) significantly outperformed the participants in unpressured within-task-planning (UWPG), leading us to claim that strategic planning was more effective than unpressured within-task planning in improving oral production.

Contributions: This study has numerous benefits for language teachers and specialists in content production. Teachers should incorporate strategic planning in their regular teaching programs to encourage learners to balance their level of speech. Moreover, providing learners with the ability to plan the success of a task allows them to create a more fluent and nuanced language.

Keywords: Accuracy, complexity, fluency, strategic planning, unpressured within-task planning.

Cite as: Bakhtiary, M. R., Rezvani, E., & Namaziandost, E. (2021). Effects of strategic and unpressured within-task planning on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' oral production. *Journal of Nusantara Studies, 6*(2), 97-115. http://dx.doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol6iss2pp97-115

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade or so, planning and its role have drawn remarkable attention from researchers within task-based language learning (e.g. Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Namaziandost, Hashemifardnia, & Shafiee, 2019; Saeidi, 2020). Accordingly, a number of researchers have explored the effects of planning on language production (e.g. Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Khoram, 2019; Valizadeh, Sadeghi, & Ghaderi, 2018). Most of these studies draw on information processing theory which claims that there are limits on the amount of information which human beings can process from input or for output (Hawkes, 2012). The issue of trade-off between form and meaning as well as the urge to raise all dimensions of language performance has caused second language acquisition (SLA) researchers to study the effects of strategic (planning before performing a task) and unpressured within-task planning (planning while performing a task) on L2 speech production. It is difficult for second language learners, especially those at lower level of proficiency in the second language, to deal with meaning and form simultaneously. Thus, we have to make decisions about how to dedicate their notice on one of these perspective of language over the other.

However, when language learners are given time to plan a task before they produce an L2 utterance, they have an opportunity to provide their speech to achieve their communicative goals. Therefore, it has been supposed that pre-task planning can play a key role in decreasing cognitive load during language processing, which in turn helps learners to attend to different aspects of language and thus leading to more successful task performance. In the methodology of task-based instruction, allowing learners to plan the language and content for their speech performance has been thought of as a key factor in implementing tasks in the classroom. Several attempts have been

made to provide learners with opportunities for planning and effect of planning on language production. According to Skehan (2014), successful performance in task-based contexts include: complexity, defined as more advanced language, accuracy, in which the performer tries to make as few errors as possible, and fluency, the rate of speech production. Recently investigators have examined the effects of planning time conditions on complexity, accuracy, and fluency in English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) context. Therefore, this study wishes to report the effectiveness of task-based research by examining whether strategic planning task (SPT) and unpressured within-task planning (UWTP) has differential effects on L2 learners' oral production.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of SLA researchers have reported the concept of planning with reference to models of speech production (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011; Ellis, 2009; Fukuta, 2016; Namaziandost, Nasri, & Ahmadi, 2019). Levelt's (1989) speaking model is the prominent and popular theoretical framework of language production. According to Levelt (1989), the production of spoken language involves three stages: conceptualizing the message, formulating the language representation, and articulating the message. Levelt further indicates that the speech module also consists of a Speech Comprehension System that 'listens to' one's own internal speech (prior to articulation) and external speech (after articulation), monitors its accuracy and appropriacy, and performs self-repairs. The notion of speech production as conceptualized by Levelt could be reduced to one sentence: 'People produce speech first by *conceptualizing* the message, then by *formulating* its language representation (i.e. encoding it), and finally by *articulating* it' (Kormos, 2006, p. 7).

While Levelt's theory relates to the process of speech production, Skehan's (2014) Limited Capacity Model shed more light on the product. The basic structure of Skehan, speech performance is separated into three aspects: complexity (the willingness to take risks to use more advanced language), accuracy (the ability to use target-like language), and fluency (the extent to which one speaks without undue pauses and hesitations). Skehan claims that, for L2 speakers who have limited linguistic resources, it is difficult to focus on all three aspects because they have limited cognitive resources. As a result, a better performance in one area is achieved at the sacrifice of another. One way to bring learners' cognitive burden down and improve their task performance is to allow them some time to plan their speech.

Researchers have distinguished two broad types of planning: pre-task planning and within-task planning (online planning). These are distinguished based on when the planning happens either before the task or during the performance of task (Etemadfar, Namaziandost, & Banari, 2019). Pre-task planning can be further divided into rehearsal planning where learners are given the chance to rehearse before the main task, and strategic planning which allows learners to plan the language and content without rehearsing. Within-task planning occurs when learners are allowed to perform a task without time constraint, and therefore within-task planning can be restricted by imposing a time limit on the task performer. Clearly the incidence of within-task planning stands in a continuum rather than dichotomy, and human speech, be it in one's native or second language, always involves a certain degree of online planning. This led Ellis (2009) to make a further distinction between pressured and unpressured within-task planning, with the former referring to online planning that happens during pressured performance and the latter to the kind of planning a learner engages in during performance without time pressure.

2.1 Previous Empirical Studies

Over the last decades, many SLA researchers have done a number of studies on the impacts of task planning and its types on language performance and language acquisition of language learners. The entrance of planning into L2 research dated back to the late 1980s (Ahmadian, Tavakoli, & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2015; Atai & Nasiri, 2017; Baleghizadeh & Nasrollahi Shahri, 2013; East, 2014; Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Foster & Skehan, 2013; Guará-Tavares, 2008; Khoram, 2019; Namaziandost et al., 2019; Seifoori & Vahidi, 2012; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005; Van de Guchte, Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, & Bimmel, 2016). Findings of these studies showed that planning has obvious effects on language learners' task performance in terms of complexity and fluency but the findings regarding language learners' accuracy were not identical. Baleghizadeh and Nasrollahi Shahri (2013) investigated the consequences of ten minutes' pre-task planning time on the learners' performance while performing two information-gap tasks. He found that learners in planned condition produced more complex language than the learners without planning, but the performance of learners in planned condition was not more accurate than the others. Ellis (2009) conducted a study to investigate whether the amount of time available for L2 learners for pre-task planning and co-planning influences their morphological accuracy in narrative tasks. However, this study was not originally conducted to clarify two kinds of planning (pre-task planning and co-

planning). Seventeen intermediate ESL learners who participated were required to perform a task under three different conditions. The results showed that the amount of time given to learners can influence the accuracy of their oral performance.

Furthermore, Khoram (2019) investigated the effect of strategic planning on two groups of language learners from low intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. As a result, he found that planning affected the fluency and complexity of language learners. On the contrary, planning had a beneficial effect on the lexical complexity of just the low-intermediate participants and conversely, planned narratives were more accurate if they were produced by the advanced learners but not by the low-intermediate level speakers. In addition, Salimi and Fatollahnejad (2012) studied the effects of strategic planning and topic familiarity on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' written performance in TBLT. The results of the data analyses showed that strategic planning and topic familiarity did not have any significant effects on the learners' written task performance.

Other researchers focused more on specific dimension and divided instructions for what to plan for, producing both improved complexity and fluency. For example, Valizadeh et al. (2018) only used intermediate learners of German, under 1- ,5- , and 10-minute pre-task planning periods, to plan both what to say and how to say it before leaving phone messages. She found that accuracy was improved most significantly with 1 minute of planning time, but complexity and fluency improved more with 10 minutes. Mochizuki and Ortega's (2008) study concentrated on the relationship between proficiency level and pre-task planning condition. They found that the pre-task planning condition did not have any effects on participants' oral performance at the beginning level. Ellis and Yuan (2004) determined the effects of pre-task planning and on-line planning on oral performance. They found that pre-task planning group produced more syllables than other groups and was the most fluent group. In terms of accuracy, the on-line planners produced more accurate speech than the pre-task planning group, supporting Gilabert's (2007) claim. Reviewing the literature so far, no specific study was done on the effects of strategic and unpressured within-task planning on intermediate EFL learners' oral production in Iranian educational context. Considering this gap in the literature, this study attempted to answer the following research questions.

2.2 Research Questions and Null hypotheses

The following research questions were raised for investigation:

1. Does strategic planning have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency (CAF)?
2. Does unpressured within-task planning have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF?
3. Is there any significant difference between strategic and unpressured within-task planning with regards to their effects on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF?

Regarding the mentioned questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

H0 1. Strategic planning does not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF.

H0 2. Unpressured within-task planning does not have a significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF.

H0 3. There is not any significant difference between strategic and unpressured within-task planning with regards to their effects on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

Seventy intermediate learners of English from a language institute participated in this study. They were female and male, and their age ranged from 18 to 26 years. All were native speakers of Persian, learning English as their second language. Nevertheless, to make sure that the participants were sufficiently similar in terms of their overall language ability, their level of proficiency was determined by Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Based on results of OPT, 60 Homogenous intermediate learners were selected. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups: each planning condition consisting of 30 EFL learners. In group one, the participants were asked to perform the task under unpressured online planning condition. In group two, the language learners were asked to do task under strategic planning condition.

3.2 Instruments

The first instrument employed in this study was Oxford placement Test. OPT removed the students whose level did not match with our target level of language proficiency. The pre and post-test were based on story-telling narratives tasks. In fact, different narratives were used in the pre and post-test which were based on the tasks used in Mochizuki and Ortega (2008) and Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2011). Each participant was asked to narrate the story in a monologue format to the researcher who acted as the listener. The participants in all groups were required to watch a 15-minute episode of a silent classical film (*The Lucky Dog*: Robbins, 1921) and then they were asked to narrate the story of that film under the conditions specified for each group.

3.3 Procedures

First of all, in order to ensure students' homogeneity, Oxford Placement Test was administered. Based on OPT results, 60 homogeneous intermediate learners were selected. At the beginning of procedure, all the participants received the pre-test narrative to measure their oral production by measuring CAF. In this study, the participants were asked to retell the story without any task condition. After the pretest, participants were randomly placed into two groups, strategic planning group (STPG) and unpressured within-task-planning group (UWPG) with 30 participants in each group. Then, all learners were required to watch a 15-minute episode of a silent film and they were asked to narrate the story of the video under two task conditions. After watching the movie, participants in the strategic planning group (STPG) (which they were allowed to plan the language and content before performing a task, and they were allowed to write and later read the notes) were given 10 minutes to prepare for the task and plan what they would say about the video. Participants in unpressured within-task-planning (UWPG) (which allows learners to plan while performing a task without a time constraint) were required to start their movie description as soon as they finished watching the video clip, and they were not allowed to plan before they start the narration and they were allowed to take as much time as they needed to think about the content of film while retelling the story. All narrations produced under the abovementioned conditions were audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed narrations were then segmented, coded and scored based on the measures chosen for assessing complexity, accuracy and fluency. After the treatment, the post-test that was similar to the pretest was given to all participants in order to find the gains for assessing (CAF) compared with pre-test.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Result for the First Research Question

Since the first research question of the study sought to figure out whether strategic planning had any significant effects on EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF, the pretest and posttest scores of the learners in the SPG were compared using paired-samples *t* test. This statistical test was three times: 1. running for the learners' complexity scores; 2. running for their accuracy scores; 3. running for their fluency scores on the pretest and posttest:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the CAF Pretest and Posttest Scores of the SPG Learners

	N	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
Complexity Pretest	30	.53	.05	.01
Complexity Posttest	30	.61	.05	.03
Accuracy Pretest	30	.58	.04	.02
Accuracy Posttest	30	.80	.05	.07
Fluency Pretest	30	4.31	.33	.06
Fluency Posttest	30	6.31	.34	.06

As Table 1 shows, the SPG learners obtained the mean scores of .53 on the complexity pretest and .61 on the complexity posttest. In the same vein, their accuracy mean score improved from the pretest (M = .58) to the posttest (M = .80), and they witnessed an improvement in their fluency mean score as well from 4.31 to 6.31. In order to determine whether the differences between the CAF mean scores on the pretest and posttest were statistically significant or not, the researcher needed to consult the paired-samples *t* test table (Table 2):

Table 2: Results of Paired-Samples t Test Comparing the CAF Pretest and Posttest Scores of the SPG Learners

	Paired Differences					*t*	*Df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Complexity	-.08	.01	.00	-.08	-.07	-33.00	29	.00
Accuracy	-.22	.01	.00	-.22	-.22	-111.27	29	.00
Fluency	-1.99	.02	.00	-2.01	-1.98	-389.79	29	.00

In Table 2, the most important pieces of information are the *p* values under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column. The *p* values should be compared with the pre-specified significance level (i.e., .05) to see if the difference between the pretest and posttest scores for the three measures of CAF had been statistically significant or not. A *p* value less than .05 would indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, while a *p* value larger than .05 would imply the pretest-posttest difference failed to reach statistical significance. Because the three *p* values under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column in Table 2 were smaller than the significance level (.00 < .05), it could be construed that the differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the SPG learners for the three measures of CAF were of statistical significance. Based on the results, the SPG learners improved considerably from the pretest to the posttest in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency, indicating that strategic planning had significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' oral production with respect to CAF.

4.2 Results for the Second Research Question

To find out whether unpressured within-task planning also had significant effects on the EFL learners' CAF, the pretest and posttest scores of the learners in the UWPG were also compared via paired-samples *t* test:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the CAF Pretest and Posttest Scores of the UWPG Learners

	N	Mean	*SD*	Std. Error Mean
Complexity Pretest	30	.53	.05	.00
Complexity Posttest	30	.57	.05	.00
Accuracy Pretest	30	.58	.04	.00
Accuracy Posttest	30	.64	.03	.00
Fluency Pretest	30	4.38	.40	.07
Fluency Posttest	30	5.82	.40	.07

As it could be seen, based on the information presented in Table 3, the UWPG learners improved from the mean scores of .53 on the complexity pretest to the mean score of .57 on the complexity posttest. Moreover, the UWPG learners' accuracy mean score improved from the pretest to the posttest (.58 vs. .64); they also experienced improvements in their fluency mean score from pretest (M = 4.38) to posttest (M = 5.82). To find out whether the differences between the UWPG learners' CAF mean scores on the pretest and posttest were statistically significant or not, the researcher had to examine the paired-samples *t* test table below (Table 4):

Table 4: Results of Paired-Samples t Test Comparing the CAF Pretest and Posttest Scores of the UWPG Learners

	Paired Differences					*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Complexity	-.03	.01	.00	-.04	-.03	-18.66	29	.00
Accuracy	-.05	.02	.00	-.06	-.04	-15.20	29	.00
Fluency	-1.44	.05	.00	-1.46	-1.42	-155.38	29	.00

Since the three *p* values under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column in Table 4 were smaller than the significance level (.00 < .05), it could be understood that the differences between the pretest and posttest scores of the UWPG learners for the three measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency were statistically significant. The magnitudes of these differences were calculated through the eta squared formula, and it was found that there were large effect sizes for complexity (.92), accuracy

(.88), and fluency (.998). As a result, the UWPG learners had significant improvements from the CAF pretest to the CAF Posttest. This means that using unpressured within-task planning also had significant effects on EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF.

4.3 Results for the third Research Question

The last research question of the study was aimed to see whether there was a difference between strategic planning and unpressured within-task planning with respect to oral production of Iranian EFL learners in terms of CAF. To answer this research question, the researcher had to compare the CAF post-test scores of the SPG and UWPG learners, for which three separate independent-samples *t* tests could be conducted. However, to control for any possible pre-existing differences between these two groups in terms of the variables under investigation, and compare their post-test scores accordingly, one-way ANCOVA was conducted three times. Tables 5 and 6 present the merged results of these ANCOVA tests:

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the CAF Post-test Scores of the SPG and UWPG Learners

Oral Production Measures	Groups	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*N*
Complexity	SPG	.61	.05	30
	UWPG	.57	.05	30
Accuracy	SPG	.80	.05	30
	UWPG	.64	.03	30
Fluency	SPG	6.31	.34	30
	UWPG	5.82	.40	30

In Table 5, it could be seen that the post-test mean scores of the SPG learners for the three measures of CAF were larger than the corresponding post-test mean scores of the UWPG learners. To find out whether these differences between the complexity post-test mean scores of the two groups, between their accuracy post-test mean scores, and between their fluency post-test mean scores were statistically significant not, the researcher had to look down the *Sig.* column and in front of the Groups row for each of the CAF measures in Table 6:

Table 6: Results of One-Way ANCOVA for Comparing the CAF Post-test Scores of the SPG and UWPG Learners

	Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*Sig.*	Partial Eta Squared
Complexity	Corrected Model	.17	2	.08	642.51	.00	.95
	Intercept	.00	1	.00	42.06	.00	.42
	Pretest	.14	1	.14	1101.54	.00	.95
	Groups	.03	1	.03	221.27	.00	.79
	Error	.00	57	.00			
	Total	21.18	60				
	Corrected Total	.18	59				
Accuracy	Corrected Model	.50	2	.25	947.16	.00	.97
	Intercept	.01	1	.01	40.40	.00	.41
	Pretest	.10	1	.10	387.62	.00	.87
	Groups	.42	1	.42	1562.40	.00	.96
	Error	.01	57	.00			
	Total	31.87	60				
	Corrected Total	.52	59				
Fluency	Corrected Model	11.65	2	5.82	3394.17	.00	.99
	Intercept	1.28	1	1.28	748.01	.00	.92
	Pretest	8.03	1	8.03	4681.49	.00	.98
	Groups	4.60	1	4.60	2681.12	.00	.97
	Error	.09	57	.00			
	Total	2224.99	60				
	Corrected Total	11.74	59				

In the Complexity section of Table 6, checking the row labeled Groups and reading across this row, under the *Sig.* column, the relevant *p* value can be found, which should be compared with the alpha level of significance (i.e., .05). The *p* value here was smaller than the alpha level of significance ($.00 < .05$), which indicates that the difference between the complexity post-test mean scores of SPG ($M = .61$) and UWPG ($M = .57$) was not statistically significant. Similar results were also obtained for accuracy and fluency: that is, the accuracy post-test mean score of the SPG learners was significantly larger than the accuracy post-test mean score of the UWPG learners, and SPG learners significantly outweighed their UWPG counterparts on the post-test of fluency. All

this means that strategic planning was significantly more effective than unpressured within-task planning when it comes to improving the oral production of Iranian EFL learners in terms of CAF.

5.0 DISCUSSION

This research has tried to investigate the impact of strategic and within task planning on EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF. The first research question addressed the impact of strategic planning on L2 oral production in terms of CAF. The results of the study reveal that accuracy was significantly advantaged by strategic pre-task planning time. The obtained result was consistent with other studies such as (Ahmadian et al., 2015; Foster & Skehan, 2013; Guará-Tavares, 2008; Mochizuki & Ortega, 2008; Seifoori & Vahidi, 2012; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005; Valizadeh et al., 2018). We also found a beneficial effect of pre-task planning time on the complexity of foreign language learners' oral production. Thus, our findings can be interpreted in line with a number of previous studies (e.g. Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2014; Baleghizadeh & Nasrollahi Shahri, 2013; Foster & Skehan, 2013; Guará-Tavares, 2008; Khoram, 2019; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005). This enhancement can be explained by the fact that planners tend to focus on meaning in order to plan the content of their performance and thus to produce more complex language. Pre-task planning time facilitates the processing and planning of the content and organization of the output. It may also help increase learners' confidence. Regarding fluency, the current result supports the presence of a beneficial effect of pre-task planning time on the fluency of foreign language learners' oral production, this finding is in line with the results of many previous studies on this topic (e.g. Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2014; Baleghizadeh & Nasrollahi Shahri, 2013; Bygate, 2016; Gilabert, 2007; Khoram, 2019; Robinson, 2011; Seifoori & Vahidi, 2012; Skehan & Foster, 2005; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005; Valizadeh et al., 2018). Providing the foreign language learners the pre-task planning time is definitely beneficial for them to use it to plan for the task and reduce their processing load. A likely explanation for this effect is that pre-task planning helps planners set goals and make use of time given to organize the content of what they are going to say.

While fluency is focused on meaning through using a memory-based method in Skehan and Foster's (2005) account of L2 performance, accuracy and complexity will benefit from a rule-based system that focuses on form that can be acquired by controlling or restructuring. Moreover, taking into account Levelt's (1989) perceptual loop theory of monitoring, It looks reasonable to

postulate that providing time for strategic preparation helps L2 learners to concentrate more of their attention on conceptually monitoring their pre-verbal message through conceptual loop; however, their restricted and sporadic attention capability in combination with online processing requirements induced by the time limit (i.e. five minutes) taxes their processing capacity and thus prohibits them from recognizing encoded errors concurrently and controlling their online speech through pre-articulatory and external loops.

These results reinforce those of Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2014) that by encouraging learners to use more E-repairs and, of course, less D- and A-repairs, the ability to consciously prepare L2 speech when executing a narrative task significantly affects the cognitive processes underlying L2 speech output. As careful online planning is specifically targeted at the formulation stage of speech production (Ellis & Yuan, 2004), one may conclude from these findings that carefully planning L2 speech provides a focus-on-form framework (Ahmadian et al., 2015) that enables task performers to participate in managed processing by dedicating much of their limited capacity attentional resources to identifying and correcting encoding errors at formulation and articulation stages through pre-articulatory and external loops, hence more accurate oral performance.

The second research question focused on the impact of unpressured within-task planning on Iranian EFL learner's oral production. The result of this study displayed that the within-task planning leads to improvement of accuracy, fluency and complexity in oral production. This means that using unpressured within-task planning also had significant effects on EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF. In our finding, it could be clearly understood that the differences between the pretest and posttest score of the UWPG for three measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency were statistically significant. According to the third hypothesis, it was concerned that "There is not any significant difference between strategic and unpressured within-task planning with regards to their effects on Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of CAF". Two previous studies have compared the effects of strategic and unpressured within-task planning on L2 oral production. Ellis and Yuan (2004) showed that both planning types had a positive influence on syntactic complexity in an oral narrative task. However, there was a trade-off effect between accuracy and fluency: Strategic planning favored fluency as well as lexical variability, while the limited research on unpressured within-task planning shows that it enhanced both accuracy and complexity but not fluency, compared with no planning. Nakakubo (2011) examined the effects

of six combinations of three types of planning, pre-task planning, unpressured within-task planning, and trained within-task planning on L2 Japanese oral performance. Our study, however, showed that strategic and unpressured within-task planning has positive effects on oral production but strategic planning was significantly more effective than unpressured within-task groups.

In view of Skehan's (2014) dual-processing paradigm, which suggests that L2 information is processed in terms of rule-based and lexical structures, these prominent results could be taken. The former needs more time and energy to access, according to Skehan. Building on this paradigm and considering that L2 speech accuracy depends on what students do when executing a task (Ellis, 2009), it can be argued that providing learners with the ability to participate in both strategic and comprehensive online planning greatly decreases the amount of cognitive demand put on them and, Consequently, it promotes an ideal environment for them to conceptually track their expression and, at the same time, allows them to reach their rule-based information to identify and correct errors at the level of the formulator and articulator.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

SLA researchers with a cognitive tendency have sought over the past two decades to consider task design elements and execution variables that could reduce the cognitive burden of tasks for language learners and channel the attention ability of task participants to various aspects of language in consistent ways (Skehan, 2014). The main contribution this research brings to the current literature is the finding that the speech accuracy of EFL learners is profoundly influenced by various pre-task planning environments. The results of this research are reinforced by the principle of information processing (Skehan & Foster, 2005), in which the processing ability of human beings is constrained and does not permit the speaker to concentrate his attention at the time of task completion on all forms of language. According to Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, learners have to really speak in order to speak. With regards to the results of the task, learners will be pushed to note their issues and attempt to fix them with their real performance.

The present study has provided some major conclusions that are presented in brief: On the basis of the results of the present study, it can be concluded that planning time benefits the accuracy, complexity and fluency of the oral language production in Iranian EFL learner. It means that when foreign language learners are given time for strategic pre-task planning (STPG) (which allows learners to plan the language and content before performing a task) or within-task planning

(UWPG) (which allows learners to plan while performing a task without a time constraint), they make use of that time to plan lexical and communicative strategies for getting meaning across. In sum, it was concluded that Pre- task strategic planning and within-task planning (online planning) as implementation variables had a positive effect on learner's oral production. Finally, it was found that the participants in the strategic planning group (STPG) significantly outperformed the Participants in unpressured within-task-planning (UWPG).

The present study confirms the results of prior strategic planning studies. The most significant benefit of this research is that it gives a straightforward explanation to L2 and L2 educators of how strategic planning has influenced the cognitive strategic planning systems of L2 learners, (b) their execution of strategic planning, and (c) the content of their voice. For pedagogy, the current study has consequences. The results of this study indicate that pre-task planning will facilitate an effective balance of focus between the planning of content and the planning of form in terms of educational practice. Furthermore, the results suggest that strategic planning should balance the level of speech of the learners. Eventually, this research has some consequences for language teachers and specialists in content production. To encourage learners to balance their level of speech, teachers should incorporate strategic planning in their regular teaching programs. Providing students with the ability to plan the success of a task allows them to create a more fluent and nuanced language.

During the time of this study the researcher faced some drawbacks. Due to time limitation, only 70 participants were included in this research. The other limitation refers to the treatment duration which was short. The study was limited to Iranian EFL learners; it can be conducted in other EFL and ESL contexts. The present research was carried out on Iranian intermediate EFL learners, so its results should be generalized to all language learners very carefully. The other limitation is that the study included only participants that were 18 to 26 years old. So, the results cannot be generalized to the other age groups.

REFERENCES

Ahmadian, M. J., & Tavakoli, M. (2014). Investigating what second language learners do and monitor under careful online planning conditions. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 70*(1), 50-75.

Ahmadian, M., & Tavakoli, M. (2011). The effects of simultaneous use of careful online planning and task repetition on accuracy, fluency, and complexity of EFL learners' oral production. *Language Teaching Research*, *15*(1), 35–59.

Ahmadian, M., Tavakoli, M., & Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2015). The combined effects of online planning and task structure on complexity, accuracy, and fluency of L2 speech. *The Language Learning Journal, 43*(1), 41-56.

Atai, M. R., & Nasiri, M. (2017). An investigation into the effects of joint planning on complexity, accuracy, and fluency across task complexity. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, *20*(1), 49–74.

Baleghizadeh, S., & Nasrollahi Shahri, M. (2013). The effect of online planning, strategic planning, and rehearsal across two proficiency levels. *The Language Learning Journal, 10*(1), 1-14.

Bygate, M. (2016). Sources, developments and directions of task-based language teaching. *The Language Learning Journal, 44*(4), 381–400.

East, M. (2014). Encouraging innovation in a modern foreign language initial teacher education programme: What do beginning teachers make of task-based language teaching? *The Language Learning Journal, 42*(3), 261–274.

Ellis, R. (2009). The differential effects of three types of task planning on the fluency, complexity, and accuracy in L2 oral production. *Applied Linguistics*, *30*(1), 474–509.

Ellis, R., & Yuan, F. (2004). The effects of planning on fluency, complexity, and accuracy in second language narrative writing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 26*(1), 59–84.

Etemadfar, P., Namaziandost, E., & Banari, R. (2019). The impact of different output-based task repetition conditions on producing speech acts among Iranian advanced EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 9*(12), 1541-1549.

Foster, P., & Skehan, P. (2013). Anticipating a post-task activity: The effects on accuracy, complexity, and fluency of second language performance. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *69*(1), 249-273.

Fukuta, J. (2016). Effects of task repetition on learners' attention orientation in L2 oral production. *Language Teaching Research, 20*(3), 321-340.

Gilabert, R. (2007). The simultaneous manipulation of task complexity along planning time and (+/- Here-and-Now): Effects on L2 oral production. In M. Garcia-Mayo (Ed.), *Investigating tasks in formal language learning* (pp. 44–68). Multilingual Matters.

Guará-Tavares, M. (2008). *Pre-task planning, working memory capacity and L2 speech performance.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil.

Hawkes, M. L. (2012). Using task repetition to direct learner attention and focus on form. *ELT Journal, 66*(1), 327–336.

Khoram, A. (2019). The impact of task type and pre-task planning condition on the accuracy of intermediate EFL learners' oral performance. *Cogent Education, 6*(1), 1-15.

Kormos, J. (2006). *Speech production and second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Levelt, W. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. The MIT Press.

Mochizuki, N., & Ortega, L. (2008). Balancing communication and grammar in beginning level foreign language classrooms: A study of guided planning and relativization. *Language Teaching Research, 12*(1), 11–37.

Nakakubo, N. (2011). *The effects of planning on second language oral performance in Japanese: Processes and production.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Iowa, Iowa, IA.

Namaziandost, E., Hashemifardnia, A., & Shafiee, S. (2019). The impact of opinion-gap, reasoning-gap, and information-gap tasks on EFL learners' speaking fluency. *Cogent Social Sciences, 5*(1), 1-16.

Namaziandost, E., Nasri, M., & Ahmadi, S. (2019). The comparative effect of content-based language teaching and task-based language teaching on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' reading skill. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 9*(10), 1278-1286.

Robbins, J. (1921). *The lucky dog* [Motion picture]. Sun-Lite Pictures.

Robinson, P. (2011). Task-based language learning: A review of issues. *Language Learning, 61*(1), 1-36.

Saeidi, M. (2020). The effects of simultaneous use of task-based strategic and careful online planning on EFL learners' self-repairs. *Research in English Language Pedagogy, 8*(1), 147-166.

Salimi, A., & Fatollahnejad, S. (2012). The effects of strategic planning and topic familiarity on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' written performance in TBLT. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *2*(11), 2308–2315.

Seifoori, Z., & Vahidi, Z. (2012). The impact of fluency strategy training on Iranian EFL learners' speech under online planning conditions. *Language Awareness*, *21*(1), 101-112.

Skehan, P. (2014). *Processing perspectives on task performance*. John Benjamins.

Skehan, P., & Foster, P. (2005). Strategic and on-line planning: The influence of surprise information and task time on second language performance. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 193–218). John Benjamins.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235–252). Newbury House.

Tavakoli, P., & Skehan, P. (2005). Strategic planning, task structure and performance testing. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 239–273). John Benjamins.

Valizadeh, N., Sadeghi, K., & Ghaderi, F. (2018). The effect of task repetition under different time conditions on EFL learners' oral performance and grammatical knowledge gain. *Applied Research on English Language*, 7(4), 487-514.

Van de Guchte, M., Braaksma, M., Rijlaarsdam, G, & Bimmel, P. (2016). Focus on form through task repetition in TBLT. *Language Teaching Research, 20*(3), 300–320.