



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF PLANNING ON SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) LEARNERS' NARRATIVE ORAL PRODUCTION

Zhonglan Guo^{a*}, Azlin Zaiti Zainal^b^aYancheng College of Mechatronic Technology, Jiangsu, China^bFaculty of languages and Linguistics University of Malaya*Corresponding Author Email: 39401832@qq.com

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated task planning and its effects on second language (L2) learners' speaking performance. Although previous studies have demonstrated that planning could positively affect L2 learners' speaking performance, there are no conclusive or systematic findings. This between-subject experimental design study attempted to fill in that gap by including another planning category: pre-task planning plus within task planning as suggested by Yuan and Ellis (2003, p. 24). The participants were randomly assigned to four groups, including three experimental groups and one control group in which they were required to perform a narrative task under four conditions: pre-task planning, within task planning, pre-task planning plus within task planning, and no planning. To explore the planning effects, the participants' speech was analyzed in terms of accuracy, complexity, and fluency. The results showed that pre-task planning can contribute more to learners' L2 speaking performance than within task planning in general. Furthermore, pre-task planning plus within task planning can positively influence learners' speaking performance; however, there is no significant difference in its planning effects compared with pre-task planning and within task planning. These findings suggest that language instructors can develop L2 learners' planning strategies to empower them to maximize their performance within the given time. In addition, the amount of time learners are given to plan before and/or during their performance should probably be considered, because being either too short or too long may not virtually be productive to learners' speech quality.

KEYWORDS

Planning effects; oral production; complexity; fluency; accuracy

1. BACKGROUND

Second language acquisition research findings were useful in illustrating how tasks can help promote language learners' inter-language development. One strand of research that contributes towards our understanding of task effects is the one on effects of planning conditions on learners' oral language production. Task based research on learners' oral production, which is often grounded on information processing theory, has shown that learners' performance in terms of fluency, accuracy, and syntactic complexity can also be influenced by the planning condition. As pointed out producing language in real-time poses a massive mental challenge for language learners (Khorasani, 2012; Skehan and Foster, 1999). Therefore, planning can be viewed to be a step to prevent learners from generating faltering or inaccurate language, which according to is due to learners' limited attention capacity (Skehan, 1998).

Meanwhile, researchers attempted to test predictions regarding the effects of planning from both performance and acquisition perspectives. From a performance perspective, it is suggested that planning may enable learners to access their upper limits of competence, which leads to language production that is most reflective of their language proficiency (Wendel, 1997). In terms of acquisition, researchers attempted to measure linguistic output in terms of accuracy, complexity and fluency as an outcome of planning.

The question is, what are the implications on pedagogy? What conditions can language teachers create to help learners balance their attentional resources on both form and meaning in order to allow learners to perform at the upper limits of their proficiency? Findings from the research on planning conditions may be informative towards decisions related to pedagogy. Planning conditions were categorized into pre-task planning (PTP) and within task planning (WTP)/online planning by (Ellis, 2005). The former refers to planning that occurs before learners begin working on a task whereas the latter refers to planning that occurs during task performance (p. 3). These different conditions were explored extensively by researchers (Abdi et al., 2012; Ahangari and Abdi, 2011; Bagheri and Hamrang, 2013; Li, Chen et al, 2014; Mehnert, 1998; Mehrang and Rahimpour, 2010; Ortega, 1999; Piri et al., 2012; Yuan and Ellis, 2003). More recently, there is a call to include another condition for future investigation of task effects: pre-task planning plus within task planning (PTPWTP), which was suggested by (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). In their study, L2 learners were not able to enhance their speech accuracy, complexity, and fluency simultaneously. Then the researchers posited that given more time to plan, L2 learners would probably boost all the aspects at the same time. Subsequently, they suggested PTPWTP condition for further research, which thus has been taken by the current study. Therefore, this paper investigates the impact of four different categories of planning conditions on L2 learners' narrative oral production and attempts to propose certain implications for L2 learning and teaching.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Levelt's (1989) Model of Speech Production

The speech production model details how a speech act takes place and when and where planning and monitoring happen during the speaking process in the first language (Levelt's, 1989). Grounded in a long tradition of research in psycholinguistics, this model was also widely used in studies of L2 oral production (Guerrero, 2004).

This model distinguishes three stages in a speech act: Conceptualization, Formulation, and Articulation. At first, a speaker plans what to express, how to express it, and monitors his own productions in the conceptualization stage. Then, he translates the output of conceptualization into linguistic forms through grammatical and phonological encoding during formulation. The former involves lexical planning and syntactic planning (including selecting words, putting words together into an orderly string, and putting words and phrases into sentences). The latter involves turning words

into sounds. Eventually, the outcome of formulation, or internal speech, is executed through articulation.

According to model, a speaker can access both his external and internal speech, during which he can monitor the speech, which explains why dysfluency happens (Levelt's, 1989). The extent to which he can generate an accurate, complex and fluent speech is affected by his knowledge of language (p. 13).

2.2 Trade Off Effects

Researchers attempted to explore the reasons behind the difficulties that learners face in producing speech. It is proposed that a person's knowledge of language consists of two systems: the rule-based system (made up of abstract presentations of the rules of the language) and the exemplar-based system (including accumulations of a large number of formulaic items and discrete lexical items) (Skehan, 1998). Users of the former rely on analysis, while users of the latter attempt to match the current input with correct previous input (P. 53 and . 89).

In-line with Skehan, the rule-based system is generative, creative and basically analytic. The meanings can be expressed precisely. Nonetheless, the operation of rules results in a huge processing effort as language is being produced. It requires detailed attention during comprehension and particularly during production. Therefore, for L2 learners, they are likely to have capacity-stretching difficulties. Then they trade-off their attention resources to a certain aspect when performing a task. More specifically, during the actual task performance, learners, facing limited attention resources and performance pressure, tend to prioritize one aspect of the language and concentrate mainly on this aspect to make improvements. The other aspects, Skehan argues, receive less attention and will become worse or unchanged (1998, p. 73 & p. 168). In spite of all these, proposed that these problems in the speaking process may be compensated for through planning (p. 99) (Skehan, 1998).

2.3 The Effects of Planning Conditions

The effects of various planning conditions were explored extensively. The investigated whether the time length of planning influences the quality of L2 linguistic output (Mehnert, 1998). The participants were 31 German learners and they were assigned to four groups (three experimental groups and one control group). The three experimental groups experienced 1, 5, and 10 minutes planning time, respectively. Whereas the control group had no time for planning before their performance. Results showed that fluency increased with more planning time. Complexity was significantly higher for the 10-minute planning situation than in the other three conditions. Accuracy was boosted with 1-minute planning; however, it was not increased with more allotted planning time (pp. 98-99). Therefore, the researcher concluded that planning led to an enhancement in learners' speech performance, but not simultaneously due to the limited attentional resources that cannot be allocated to all of the aspects at one time.

The used a story-retelling task to investigate whether pre-task planning can better benefit L2 learners' linguistic output than within task planning (Ortega, 1999). The participants were 64 advanced-level Spanish learners and they were native speakers of American English. She found that learners from the pre-task planning group produced speech with higher fluency and more complex syntax than learners from the within task planning group. However, there were no different effects on lexical range. Furthermore, there was not much difference in accuracy between the two conditions (p. 138). The researcher argued that planning removed the

cognitive load and communicative pressure, which eased the online performance. It also created space for learners to prioritize their effort and attention resources to form, which resulted in greater development under the pre-task planning condition.

In the research planning was operationalized at three levels: no planning, pre-task planning, and within task planning by (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). The participants were 42 full-time undergraduates majoring in the International Business Department in a Chinese university. They found that pre-task planners performed more fluently in the oral narrative task than the within task planners. Furthermore, pre-task planning had positive effects on grammatical complexity and lexical variety. However, within task

planning had effects on grammatical complexity and accuracy (pp. 22-24). Based on the results, the researchers suggested that planning opportunities can enhance specific aspects of learners' speech.

Another study can be considered to be significantly relevant. Although it was conducted in the context of writing, the study included the pre-task plus within task planning condition in addition to the pre-task planning and within task planning conditions to explore their effects on fluency, complexity and accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' writing performances by (Piri et al., 2012). Forty-five senior students majoring in English literature and English Translation at University of Isfahan participated in the study. These participants aged between 20 to 27 years old and their first language was Persian. The task, adopted from was to write a story based on a set of black and white pictures (Heaton, 1975). The researchers found that a significant difference was only in one measurement of fluency in terms of syllabus per minute. There was no statistically significant difference in the number of dysfluencies or any measure in complexity/accuracy. In general, the pre-task planning plus within task planning group slightly outperformed the pre-task planning and the within task planning groups (pp. 162-163).

As a examined the effects of pre-task planning on 40 Iranian ESL learners' speech accuracy and fluency through a quasi-experimental design (Abdi et al., 2012). The participants were required to complete a decision-making task under a pre-task planning condition and non-pre-task planning condition (with and without a 10-minute planning time). The researchers found that learners' speech fluency could be significantly enhanced under pre-task planning condition. In terms of speech accuracy, it could be improved as well under pre-task planning condition; however, the result did not reach a statistically significant difference (p. 2286). The researchers then contended that due to a limited attention capacity, learners under pre-task planning condition tend to prepare the content of their speech rather than its form, which resulted in more fluency at the cost of accuracy.

Researchers also examined the influence of other variables, such as gender. For example, investigated the effects of gender and planning conditions on L2 learners' speaking performance (Bagheri and Hamrang, 2013). The subjects were 40 Iranian students of intermediate English proficiency level. The task for them was to narrate a story based on strips of pictures. The participants were first divided into planning and non-planning conditions, and then into male and female groups. The findings revealed that pre-task planning could significantly increase learners' speech complexity and accuracy simultaneously. Regarding gender, there was no remarkable difference in either complexity or accuracy (pp. 28-30). Researchers argued that the 10-minute planning time could assist learners to use a wide range of tenses and clauses, formulate linguistic forms, and select appropriate words, which resulted in significantly complex and accurate speech.

It has explored the influences of different lengths of pre-task planning time on L2 learners' spoken test performance in terms of three aspects: accuracy, complexity, and fluency. The planning time was set in five levels: nil, 30 seconds, 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, and 5 minutes. The subjects were 95 full-time non- English majors (Li et al., 2014). They were sophomores with an intermediate-level of English in the Integrated English Course. The study employed opinion-giving tasks. The researchers found that planning can positively affect the quality of learners' oral production, especially in terms of accuracy. However, a too short or too long planning time did not result in development in any aspect (pp. 21-24). They concluded that due to a limited working memory capacity, L2 learners felt it difficult to retrieve all that they planned earlier. Hence, they prioritized their attention resources to maintain accuracy under test conditions.

The conducted a research studying the effects of online planning on complexity, accuracy and fluency on L2 spoken and written performance (Kim, 2018). The research was designed in 2*2 with two independent variables: planning conditions and task modality. The findings suggested

that no planning condition support accuracy and fluency significantly than online planning group and no planning enhanced fluency in comparison with online planning in the written task.

Studied four forms of task preparation on L2 speech production (Lambert et al., 2020). 142 Japanese speakers of English learners completed an oral option task after 10 minutes of planning. Results illustrated that different planning options might support L2 learners' speaking performance in complementary ways by decreasing conceptualization, formulation and monitoring demands.

As a investigated the effects of planning on L2 writing concerning language proficiency level and task type (Yusun, 2022). The 157 subjects were asked to finish two writing tasks under different planning conditions. The study found that L2 learners' written output was affected by planned condition and proficiency, but not significantly due to the nature task type in terms of the five analytic features.

2.4 Research questions

- (1) What effects do the different types of planning have on the accuracy of L2 learners' oral production in a narrative task?
- (2) What effects do the different types of planning have on the complexity of L2 learners' oral production in a narrative task?
- (3) What effects do the different types of planning have on the fluency of L2 learners' oral production in a narrative task?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design

This study utilized a between-subject experimental design to examine the effects of different planning conditions on students' narrative oral production. The experimental groups (given time to plan) comprised a pre-task planning group (PTP), a within task planning group (WTP), and a pre-task planning plus within task planning group (PTPWTP). The control group was the no time planning group (NP). There were 31 participants in each group, as outlined in Table 1 (See Appendix).

3.2 Participants

The participants were non English majors who achieved Band 4 in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), which is an English language proficiency test for university admission in Malaysia. MUET is graded in 6 bands, with Band 6 being the highest and Band 1 being the lowest. A student who achieves Band 4 is regarded to be a competent user with a satisfactory grasp of the English language. He or she can understand and use English fluently and appropriately, but with occasional inaccuracies. In general, Band 4 achievers can utilize the English language satisfactorily. The participants were freshmen from the Faculty of Law at University Malaya, and their age ranged from 19 to 21 years old. In order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, those who traveled abroad, had working experience, studied abroad, or stayed overseas for a significant time were excluded from the study. These participants have studied English for about 13 years. There was no native speaker of English in these participants' immediate family, and the participants regularly participated in some activities that involved speaking English, such as giving presentations. They also had opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. Normally, they had to attend an English speaking class for 1.5 hours every week. A total of 124 participants were selected, including 99 female students and 25 male students. They were randomly assigned to four groups of 31 each.

Before data collection, the participants were informed that the study was for research only and all the data gathered from them would be treated confidentially and had nothing to do with their academic results. Furthermore, they were informed that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time they wish. Finally, their gender and race were not regarded as variables in the current study.

3.5 The task

The task of the study was for the students to narrate a story orally based on a strip of related pictures taken from Piri, et al. (2012, p. 167) under four planning conditions: PTP condition, WTP condition, PTPWTP condition and NP condition. Participants in PTP and NP conditions had to complete the task within a certain time limit.

A time limit is essential to pre-task planners and no planners because it is vital to ensure as little within task planning occurrence as possible in the

PTP and NP conditions (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). A pilot study was administered to five freshmen from the Faculty of Islamic Law under the WTP condition. The participants were given the same task utilized in the present research. There was no PTP time or time limit to finish the task. They were required to narrate at least four sentences for each picture. The time the participants used in the task were recorded, and these participants took between 2.12 minutes to 3.34 minutes to complete the task, with a mean of 3.01 minutes. All of the five undergraduate participants achieved Band 3 in MUET. The participants selected for the main data collection all achieved Band 4. The maximum time these five participants used was probably longer than that used by the participants who achieved Band 4. To ensure that the NP participants and PTP participants would have adequate time to complete the task, four minutes was decided to be the time limit for them to complete the task.

4. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used for the study comprised a questionnaire and a set of six related pictures. The questionnaire, was used to gather the background information of the participants. The strip of pictures used in this study was the same as the pictures used by in their study concerning planning effects on L2 learners' writing (Piri, et al., 2012). The general instructions for the task were given in English. All the participants were told to narrate at least four sentences based on each picture describing what happened in the pictures. The story began with "This evening, John...!"

4.1 Data Collection Procedure

In gathering the data, the researcher arranged to meet the participants from the four planning groups individually in a quiet classroom.

For PTP group: Participants were given the questionnaire for background information. After the completion and collection of questionnaires, the task and a blank sheet of paper were given to the participants. They were told to take 10 minutes to prepare their speech. During the 10 minutes, they could write down notes on the paper. They were told that when the planning time was up, the planning notes would be taken away, and they had to start speaking. Taking away the notes was to ensure that the language was elicited orally (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). When they were planning and speaking, the researcher was sitting beside them. While speaking, their voice was recorded. The recordings were used for later transcription, data coding and analyzing. They were told to complete the task within four minutes.

For the WTP group, the whole procedure was similar to PTP, but with two differences. Unlike the PTP group, participants in the WTP were not given 10 minutes to prepare the speaking task, they were told to start narrating 30 seconds after they received the task. Secondly, the participants in the WTP group were not given any time limit to complete the task, they were told to use as much time as they needed.

For the PTPWTP group, the data collection procedure resembled that of the PTP group, except that the participants in this group were not given a time limit to complete the task. They were told to take as much time as they needed to prepare for their narration.

For the NP group, the general procedure was roughly the same as the WTP group. The difference was that the participants in this group had to finish the task within four minutes. Therefore, in comparison with participants under PTP, WTP and PTPWTP conditions, these participants were restricted from planning (by the time limit to complete the task and no pre-task planning time) when performing the task.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Measuring planning

Planning was measured by the length of time taken to complete the task by each participant, which was similar to studies conducted by (Sim, 2010; Yuan and Ellis, 2003). Based on their studies, this study counted the number of seconds each participant utilized in task completion. Then, the mean time participants used was compared across the four planning conditions.

Measuring accuracy

Accuracy was measured by errors per hundred words and percentage of error-free clauses, adopted from (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). For the former, the lower the number, the higher the accuracy. For the latter, a higher percentage implies higher accuracy.

Measuring complexity

Complexity was examined through the ratio of indefinite to definite articles and the amount of subordination, adopted from (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). A higher ratio or a higher amount is an indication of more complex speech.

Measuring fluency

The number of pauses and repetitions, adopted from were used to examine learners' speech fluency (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). More pauses or repetitions indicates a less fluent speech. defined a pause as silence or fillers for the length of two seconds or longer on the basis of pilot study (Nakakubo, 2011; Tajima, 2003). This study adopted measurement in the time length for pauses (Tajima's, 2003).

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PLANNING TIME

The time the participants used to complete task in each planning condition was analyzed and compared in Table 2 (See Appendix).

The data in Table 2 shows that participants under the WTP condition employed 176 seconds for the task on average. The mean time participants used under the PTP condition was 168 seconds. While the participants under the PTPWTP condition utilized the longest time (182 seconds) and those who were under the NP condition spent the shortest time (127 seconds) on the task. Moreover, participants under NP conditions used a significantly shorter time than those who were under WTP, PTP and PTPWTP conditions ($p = .009$, $p = .020$, and $p = .005$, respectively), which may reflect that participants under planning conditions did spend time preparing their performance.

Few research reviewed measured the time each participant took to complete the task, except (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). In the mean time taken by WTP participants was 243.6 seconds, which was also the longest (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). The mean time used by NP and PTP speakers was 189.3 seconds and 186.4 seconds, respectively. The time WTP participants used was much longer than that used by NP or PTP speakers. The difference of results between the current study and theirs was that in the present study, PTP participants used a much longer time than NP participants, while in their study, participants from PTP and NP conditions spent close amount of time on the task. Additionally, the time participants used in the current study was much shorter than the time participants used in (Yuan and Ellis, 2003).

6.1 Accuracy

Percentage of error-free clauses

Participants under the PTPWTP condition achieved the highest mean rate (.50). Whereas those who were under the NP condition, obtained the lowest mean ratio, which accounted for .33. WTP participants garnered a slightly higher mean (.37) than NP participants. PTP participants achieved a slightly lower proportion (.48) than their counterparts under PTPWTP (.50). Detailed statistics are shown in Table 3 (See Appendix).

Table 3 indicates that there is a significant difference ($p = .022$) among the four planning conditions in participants' speech accuracy, which exists between NP condition and PTPWTP condition ($p = .047$), as identified by a post hoc test.

Errors per hundred words

Participants under the NP condition made the highest number (.39), whereas those who were under the WTP condition made the second highest number (.35). PTP speakers made the third highest number (.29), while the PTPWTP speakers made the lowest number (.24). A one-way Anova ($p = .215$) demonstrates no significant difference in errors per 100 words across the four planning conditions. Table 4 illustrates the related statistics (See Appendix).

Discussion

The findings of these two measurements demonstrate that learners' speech accuracy can be improved through any types of planning: WTP, PTP and PTPWTP. However, in terms of these two measures, the difference of planning effects does not reach a statistical significance, except PTPWTP condition in percentage of error-free clauses.

In accordance with dual-mode system (the rule-based system and the exemplar-based/memory-based system), users of a rule-based system rely on analysis, whereas users of an exemplar-based system attempts to match

current input with correct previous input (Skehan's, 1998). To yield fluent language, learners normally access the exemplar-based system. To generate more accurate or complex language, learners' attention is drawn on their rule-based system and involves more syntactic processing (p. 53 & p. 89). Moreover, argued that 'the operation of rule-based system results in a heavy processing burden during the ongoing language use, which needs more detailed attention and more time than lexically stored knowledge (the exemplar-based system) during comprehension and production' (p. 73) (Skehan, 1998).

Therefore, it can be inferred that WTP generated more accurate speech than NP, probably because the former had unlimited time to access rule-based knowledge when speaking. For the PTP condition, participants had a time limit to complete the task, but they were given 10 minutes to prepare their speech in advance. During that time, they had access to rule-based knowledge. The situation is more evident in PTPWTP because it provides both PTP opportunity and unlimited time to complete the task for participants.

The present results agree with the findings of most research reviewed, with the exception of (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). Previous studies, such revealed that planning can contribute to learners' speech accuracy, especially PTP as (Mehnert, 1998; Abdi et al., 2012; Bagheri and Hamrang, 2013). It can contribute more to learners' speech accuracy than WTP. It has found that learners' speech accuracy under a PTP condition were significantly more accurate than those who were under non- PTP condition (Bagheri and Hamrang, 2013). also reported that accuracy was the most fostered under PTP condition (Li et al., 2014). However, In WTP, rather than PTP, contributed more to learners' speech accuracy (Yuan and Ellis, 2003).

6.2 Complexity

The ratio of indefinite to definite articles

Participants under PTP and PTPWTP conditions achieved a much higher rate (.62 & .63, respectively) than those under WTP and NP conditions (.46 & .41, separately). PTPWTP planners obtained the highest percentage and NP planners garnered the lowest rate. A one-way Anova illustrates no significant difference ($p = .224$) across the four planning conditions, as displayed in Table 5 (See Appendix).

The amount of subordination

PTPWTP participants got the highest mean (2.77), followed by PTP participants (2.72). WTP participants gained the third highest (2.59). Those who were under the NP condition scored the lowest (2.44). A one-way Anova demonstrates no significant difference ($p = .267$) across the four planning conditions. Related statistics are described in Table 6 (See Appendix).

Discussion

Based on the results outlined above, PTPWTP participants produced the most complex speech, followed by PTP participants. WTP participants generated less complex speech than PTP participants, but it was more complex than their counterparts from the NP condition.

The reason why PTP participants can yield more complex speech was proposed by Yuan and Ellis (2003, p. 20). In-line with their rationale, when learners have time to do PTP, most of them will develop propositional plans. In order to encode those propositional plans, learners have to access a rule-based system (the grammar), which could result in greater speech complexity.

Furthermore, according to dual-mode system, the operation of a rule-based system entails more detailed attention and time than lexically stored knowledge (Skehan's, 1998). The WTP and NP groups had 30 seconds to prepare their speech, therefore, the immediacy of the task resulted in scant time for them to pre-plan thoroughly.

However, WTP could produce slightly higher complex speech because they had unlimited time to operate from a rule-based system and during this period, they could plan their language. While PTP and PTPWTP groups had the opportunity to access a rule-based system and prepare thoroughly before speaking, thus they generated more complex speech than the NP and WTP groups. In addition, PTPWTP participants had another advantage: unlimited time to complete the task. That could be the reason why they generated more complex speech than those who were under the PTP condition.

The findings obtained in this study lend support to the studies reviewed,

except (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). As showed that planning, especially PTP, can boost learners' speech (complexity Mehnert, 1998; Bagheri and Hamrang, 2013). In study, significant differences existed in speech complexity between PTP condition and non-PTP condition (Bagheri and Hamrang's, 2013). The reported improvement in lexical diversity under PTP condition (Li, et al., 2014). In PTP planners resulted in the same level of syntactical complexity as WTP planners (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). In the case of lexical variety, pre-task planned speech was significantly more complex than that of within task planned. As for syntactic variety, the results pre-task planners achieved were the same as those of within task planners.

6.3 Fluency

The number of filled and unfilled pauses

WTP participants made the largest number of pauses (21.44). Those who were under NP and PTPWTP conditions produced the second largest (14.44 & 14.39, respectively). While PTP participants generated the smallest number (6.11). Statistics on pauses are illustrated in Table 7 (See Appendix).

The Post Hoc Test reveals that significant differences in terms of the number of pauses exist between PTP condition and the rest three planning conditions: PTP vs WTP ($p = .000$), PTP vs NP ($p = .018$), and PTP vs PTPWTP ($p = .019$).

The total number of repetitions

As shown in Table 8 (See Appendix), participants under NP scored the highest mean of repetitions (5.11), followed by WTP participants (3.72). Those who were from PTP and PTPWTP conditions obtained a close mean (2.28 & 2.67, respectively). The mean number of repetitions of the PTPWTP condition is slightly higher than that of the PTP condition. The Post Hoc Test shows that participants can significantly profit from PTP and PTPWTP conditions ($p = .002$ & $p = .008$, respectively).

Discussion

The results illustrate that planning can greatly enhance L2 learners' speech fluency, especially PTP and PTPWTP conditions. They can remarkably contribute to learners' speech fluency probably due to the relatively adequate time for planning in advance. L2 learners face a big challenge and are under great pressure during the actual task performance such that their attention load becomes too heavy, which results in increasing pauses to let the three stages (i.e., conceptualization, formulation and execution) compete with each other (Levelt, 1989). While planning compensates for a heavy attention load and offers time for learners to conceptualize and formulate their speech, this could boost fluency (Ellis, 2005). However, for NP or WTP participants, the immediacy of the task pushed them to plan their speech as they speak. This may put pressure on them, especially to NP participants owing to the time limit to complete the task. Under this pressure, NP participants tended to edit and correct their speech more frequently than WTP participants, because the latter had unlimited time to conceptualize and formulate their speech.

Furthermore, concluded that learners' L2 proficiency was less complete than their first language proficiency (Guerrero, 2004; Poulisse, 1997). Therefore, planning, especially PTP may compensate for the lack of L2 proficiency where fluency is concerned. This may be one explanation why PTP (and PTPWTP in repetitions) can significantly enhance learners' speech fluency in this study. Additionally, we found that PTP and PTPWTP participants seemed more confident and less anxious than those from NP and WTP conditions, which may affect their speech fluency as well.

The reviewed studies, such as addition to the current study demonstrates that planning can contribute to learners' speech fluency, as well as learners' speech fluency under a PTP condition was higher than those under a WTP condition or NP condition (Mehnert's, 1998; Abdi, et al., 2012; Li et al., 2014) in. This is at odds with Yuan and Ellis (2003) to a certain extent. They found that pre-task planned speech was also more fluent than that of within task planned or non-planned speech. Nevertheless, within task planned speech was less fluent than that of non-planned speech in both measurements. More specifically, the current findings in terms of pauses agreed with (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). However, concerning repetitions, this research demonstrated that within task planned speech was more fluent than that of no planned speech.

6.4 Trade-Off Effects

According to owing to the limited attentional resources, L2 learners, especially those with limited proficiency, generally assign a priority to one

aspect of language when performing a task in real-time (Skehan (1998). The aspect they attend could be boosted and the others would remain unchanged or become even worse. Take previous findings for example, some learners prioritize accuracy over others. Some prefer allocating their attention to complexity, while others give priority to fluency. This phenomenon would be more obvious when giving opportunity to plan for the performance for the task (Wendel, 1997; Skehan and Foster, 1997; Yuan and Ellis, 2003).

While performing the real task, 'giving opportunities to prepare in advance would predispose learners to concentrate upon organizing and encoding propositional content, which could result in greater fluency' (Wendel, 1997). In the present study, the PTP group significantly outperformed the NP group in fluency; however, in terms of accuracy and complexity, there were no significant differences. Therefore, based on, it could be explained that under a PTP condition, learners prioritized fluency over accuracy and complexity (Skehan, 1998; Wendel, 1997). Alternatively stated, learners traded planning effects between fluency and accuracy/complexity.

6.5 Implications

In this study, the PTPWTP group did not seem to benefit from pre-task planning plus within task planning opportunity to a great degree. They were given more time to plan than their counterparts in PTP condition and WTP condition. Nevertheless, the quality of PTPWTP group's speech was not significantly boosted. PTPWTP planners yielded merely slightly more accurate and complex speech than their counterparts in PTP and WTP groups. As for fluency, it was somewhat deteriorated in PTPWTP. Evidently, increasing opportunities to plan may not necessarily better learners' performance. Therefore, when executing task planning in L2 learning and teaching classroom activities, the amount of time learners are given to prepare their performance should probably be considered. Taking too much time may be a waste and not actually be productive to learners' speech quality, which echoes (Mehnert, 1998; Li et al., 2014). Moreover, how much time should be given for planning ought to take test purpose, test type, the proficiency level of test takers, and so forth into consideration.

Furthermore, planning did improve L2 learners' speech performance in this study, which suggests that planning time could be worthy to provide. However, PTP condition selectively improved L2 learners' speech performance to a statistical degree, which indicates that L2 learners may not make full use of the given planning time. Therefore, L2 instructors can provide guidance to ensure that the planning opportunity is more efficient and productive to L2 learners. Meanwhile, L2 learners are expected to master explicit knowledge, which is probably the best policy. Then when given an opportunity to plan, they could make use of it more effectively.

In addition, the review of previous studies indicated that the generation of mixed results in planning effects of the three aspects may be due to the different measurements, learners' proficiency level, the types of tasks, or the amount of time learners were given before/during task performance. Nonetheless, the comparison of current findings with those of indicates that giving learners different task instructions could influence the planning effects, as stated planning effects can be channeled through instructions, consequently, speech accuracy, complexity and fluency may be affected selectively (p. 167) (Yuan and Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998). Based on this, language teachers, therefore, can help learners to train and develop planning strategies in order to enable them to plan efficiently and ultimately, to optimize their performance.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the effects of planning on L2 learners' speaking performance in terms of accuracy, complexity, and fluency. The results demonstrated that planning can positively affect learners' oral performance. However, planning did not simultaneously affect all of the three aspects significantly due to learners' limited attention resources. During the actual task performance, they tend to give priority to one aspect of a language over the others and make improvement. This is what referred to as, the 'trade-off effects' (Skehan, 1998). In the current study, under a PTP condition, learners traded-off the planning effects between fluency and/or accuracy. Therefore, their speech fluency significantly improved whereas their speech accuracy and complexity were also boosted, but not significantly.

The planning effects in terms of PTP and WTP in the current study did not echo those in study, or at least to a certain extent (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). Through the comparison of these two studies, it was found that giving learners different task instructions could influence the planning effects, which supports (Skehan, 1998). In researchers gave specific task

instructions only to WTP participants. For example, 'if you think you say something not correct or not to your satisfaction, you can correct it as many times as you can' (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). Therefore, during the process of speaking, there is a possibility that within task planners channeled their attention resources on accuracy and complexity, which resulted in greater planning effects.

Finally, this study investigated the planning effects on adult L2 learners' narrative oral production in a Malaysian context, the generalization of the results to other areas or context that needs to be explored. Apart from that, participants' gender and race can be considered to be variables in future research.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Participants of The Study Non-English Majors

Non-English Majors			
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Pre-task planning	Within	task planning	Pre-task planning plus within
PTP	WTP	PTPWTP	NP
Experimental group	Experimental group	Experimental group	Control group
N=31	N=31	N=31	N=31

Table 2: Statistics on Planning Time

Length of time	Means				F-value	Sig.	Locations of significance		
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTPWTP			NP vsWTP	NP vsPTP	NP vs PTPWTP
Sec.	127	176	168	182	5.355	.002	.009	.020	.005

P < .05

Table 3: Statistics on Percentage of Error-Free Clauses

Percentage of error-free clauses	Means				F-value	Sig.	Locations of significance
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTPWTP			NP vs PTPWTP
Accuracy	.33	.37	.48	.50	3.430	.022	.047

P < .05

Table 4: Statistics on Errors Per Hundred Words

Errors per hundred words	Means				F-value	Sig.
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTPWTP		
Accuracy	.39	.35	.29	.24	1.634	.215

P < .05

Table 5: Statistics on The Ratio of Indefinite to Definite Articles

The ratio of indefinite to define articles	Means				F-value	Sig.
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTPWTP		
Complexity	.41	.46	.62	.63	1.494	.224

P < .05

Table 6: Statistics on the Amount of Subordination

The ratio of indefinite to define articles	Means				F-value	Sig.
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTPWTP		
Complexity	2.44	2.59	2.72	2.77	1.344	.267

P < .05

Table 7: Statistics on The Number of Filled and Unfilled Pauses

The number of filled and unfilled pauses	Means				F-value	Sig.	Location of significance		
	NP	WTP	PTP	WTP			PTP vs NP	PTP vs WTP	PTP vs PTP WTP
Fluency	14.44	21.44	6.11	14.39	10.632	.000	.018	.000	.019

P < .05

Table 8: Statistics on The Total Number of Repetitions

The total number of repetitions	Means				F-value	Sig.	Location of significance	
	NP	WTP	PTP	PTP WTP			NP vs PTP	NP vs PTPWTP
Fluency	5.11	3.72	2.28	2.67	5.872	.001	.002	.008

P < .05

