The Effect of Strategic Planning on Students' Argumentative Writing Performance

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This study aims at measuring the effect of strategic planning in different formats: guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning and acting without planning in terms of local and global aspects. This study was conducted in a university in Malang, Indonesia in which 21 students majoring in English Language all in their fourth semester took part actively in this study. The students were given three different topics in three meetings to write argumentative essays. The results show that by using counterbalanced effect of order, the students who got the treatment of guided strategic planning obtained better performance marks than those that used unguided strategic planning and those that performed without planning. This study suggested that the students should be more familiarised with the planning time in order to get better writing performance, teachers need to be trained in the activities of planning.

Key words: *Strategic planning, writing performance, local aspect, global aspect.*

Introduction

There are two aspects in writing performance, namely local and global aspects. Local aspects contain complexity and accuracy, meanwhile, global aspects contain fluency (Ellis, 2009). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency play an important role in producing language, and they are the indicators for the success of tasks-based in language performance (Skehan & Foster, 2012).

Complexity is defined as the advanced level of language, meanwhile accuracy is the language produced with minimum errors. Complexity concerns the complicated features of language;

therefore, it influences error and can be narrowed down into linguistic performance, such as lexical, morphological, syntactic or phonological complexity (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Accuracy is related to the production of work without error (Housen, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2012). Pallotti (2009), Housen et al., (2012) states that accuracy relates to grammatical errors and adequate communication of the target language. It is common when L2 learners focus more on the correctness in producing language, they will disregard what they said or vice versa.

Fluency is how the language and speech is produced by the speaker. According to Skehan & Foster, (2012), fluency is the capability of using language to emphasise on meaning, and how it is used in a real life situation. Ellis, (2012) states that fluency is seen as the ability to produce L2 with the natural condition, spontaneously without any planning. It can be said that fluency is an automatic process.

This problem of using complexity, accuracy, and fluency is often faced by the students with the lower proficiency, so they encounter difficulties in attending the form and meaning at the same time. One of the solution for this problem is giving the chance to plan before they produce the composition. When the L2 learners have enough time to plan in doing the task, their speech or written production will be improved.

Research on planning has become a widely debated issue recently, since some previous studies have shown the effects of planning on students' task performance (e.g., Rahimpour & Safarie, 2011; Ghavamnia, Tavakoli, & Esteki, 2013; Tabari, 2017; Tavares, 2011; Ellis, 2009; Ellis, 2012; Skehan & Foster, 2012; Salimi & Fatollahnejad, 2012; Xhafaj, Muck, & D'Ely, 2011; Saeedi, 2015; Goctu, 2017). Some researchers investigated the effect of strategic planning on writing performance (e.g., Tabari, 2017; Skehan & Foster, 2012; Rahimpour & Safarie, 2011; Ellis, 2009; Salimi & Fatollahnejad, 2012; Ahmadian, 2012). The results of those papers show that by giving the students increased chances to plan their idea before writing, the students get a significant effect in terms of complexity, accuracy and fluency.

Planning is the process of thinking before doing the task and is an aspect that sticks in all task performances, planning can be considered a problem-solving activity (Ellis, 2009). Planning is related with the language, content, lexical item, and other linguistic devices in writing performance. The purpose of giving planning time is to balance the form and meaning focus in task completion. Tavares (2011) states that planning makes the learners focus on the form and meaning at the same time. Meanwhile, Ellis (2012) ensures that the learners will get a better accuracy level in the writing performance while if given an appropriate amount of planning time.

There are two stages in planning, namely pre-task planning and within-task planning. In the pre-task planning, the learners should make planning prior to performing the task. In pre-task planning, there are two categories namely strategic planning (the learners should plan the use of content and language before practising to write) and rehearsal (before practising to write the learners should perform the task completely). Meanwhile, within-task planning is done while doing the task performance, and has two components, namely pressured and unpressured planning (Ghavamnia et al., 2013).

Strategic planning contains two types of planning, namely guided strategic planning and unguided strategic planning. In the guided strategic planning, the students are guided by the teacher in the pre-writing activities. This can abe done through the useof diagram, listing, brainstorming, or mind mapping. In unguided strategic planning, the teacher does not assist the students to plan. The students plan the pre-writing activities independently so that they can prepare the task freely.

There are some similarities and differences between guided and unguided strategic planning. First, it exists on the stage of writing which begins with planning. Some strategies should be followed by the students in the planning activities, such as brainstorming, cubing, clustering, listing, and freewriting (Mealia, 2011). Second, planningdeals with the function of how to use guided and unguided strategic planning. In this step, teachers play an important role to help students understand what they need to do in accomplishing their task, including planning (Sulistyo, Mukminatien, Cahyono, & Saukah, 2019) .The function of those strategies are to generate and organise the ideas and finally the students can arrange and achieve their purpose of the composition since the guided and unguided strategic planning are conducted in the initial stage of planning (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Besides the similarities, guided and unguided strategic planning also have some differences. The first is on the format of writing. Since in unguided strategic planning, the teacher does not give any guidance so that the students write with unsystematic, loose and unorganised planning. On the other side, guided strategic planning is implemented more systematically since the teacher assists the students so that they can order and organise their composition easily (Setyowati & El-Sulukiyyah, 2017). Tabari (2017) explains that the learners can conceptualise and formulate their ideas by using strategic planning. Ahangari & Abdi (2011) explains that strategic planning in the narrative essay has asignificant effect in the complexity, accuracy, and fluency of pieces of writing.

Skehan & Foster (2012) show that when learners have enough time to plan before doing the task, they will produce language that is more fluent and complex. Geng & Ferguson (2013) prove that planning has positive impacts in language production, especially on fluency and complexity. Studies done by Nejadansari & Alijanian (2012), Tabari (2017), Skehan & Foster

(2012) showed that pre-task planning has a significant effect on the learners' fluency. Ellis (2012) also said that pre-task planning has a significant effect on complexity and fluency even when done by students with low ability.

The research that measures the effect of planning is not only about speaking, but also some previous studies show that planning has positive effects on writing context. Seyyedi, Mohamed Ismail, Orang, & Nejad (2013) conducted research about planning in different variables of writing. It showed that by giving planning time, the capability of students in writing improved. In addition, there is a lot of evidence that shows that by giving the learners an increased chance to plan when doing speaking and writing, their performance will be better than if the tasks are done without planning. So far, the results of the previous studies only emphasise the effects on fluency and complexity. Meanwhile, the result of previous studies about accuracy are still inconsistant. Therefore, the researchers would like to investigate the issues concerning guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning, and performance without planning both in local (complexity and accuracy) and global (fluency) aspects. Third, the argumentative essay is still regarded as the most complicated essay by students. The teachers often find difficulties in preparing students in logically organising their ideas, and thinking critically specifically for academic argumentation.

The researchers conducted this experimental research in the academic essay writing class since the current study subject is argumentative writing. There are some reasons for choosing the argumentative essay. First, the students should be able to write a thesis. It is the chance for students to express their opinion and ideas appropriately based on logical and organised opinion to persuade the readers. Second, mostly Indonesian students do not have a habit of expressing their voice. By making the argumentative essay, they can express their voice and ideas in the written form.

Therefore, the research questions were formulated as follows:
1. Is there any significant difference between the use of different formats of strategic planning and EFL learners' writing performance in terms of local aspects?
2. Is there any significant difference between the use of different formats of strategic planning and EFL learners' writing performance in terms of global aspects?

Method

There were 21 students who actively participated in this project to measure the effect of different formats in strategic planning (independent variable) for writing performance (dependent variable). The independent variable is divided into three formats: without planning (WP), unguided strategic planning (USP), and guided strategic planning (GSP) in terms of local and global aspects.

Participants

The participants were the students of Kanjuruhan University of Malang. They were in the fourth semester of the English Education Study Program and all were students in the Academic Writing class. They were 15 females and 6 males having the similar capability in writing before the treatment. Based on the pre-test scores capability was about 70-85.

In this writing section, the students were given 3 topics differently. Then, the students were divided into 3 groups (7 students for each group) to get the treatment differently in 3 meetings. They were without planning (WP), unguided strategic planning (USP), and guided strategic planning (GSP).

Task

In the first meeting, the students were required to write an argumentative essay about how "smartphones can be the tool for learning". In the second meeting, the essay topic was "foreign language should be taught in kindergartens" and in the third meeting, the topic was "smoking should be banned in public areas". The students were given pictures about those topics. The teacher asked them to write their argumentation about the strengths and weaknesses of those conditions.

Task Conditions

In this research, the treatments were operationalised in those three conditions. The 21 students were divided into 3 groups in every meeting. Therefore, each student got the same treatment. The students who got the treatment of guided strategic planning were given 10 minutes to plan writing. The teacher assisted them to plan the composition, started from arranging the main idea, supporting idea, and the conclusion. The students who got the treatment of unguided strategic planning were also given 10 minutes to plan. The teacher did not engage in the process of planning; the students planned and arranged the argumentative essay freely. The last group of students had to write the argumentative essay directly, without any opportunity to plan before writing.

Table 1: The Experiment Condition

	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Treatment 3
A	WP	USP	GSP
B	USP	GSP	WP
C	GSP	WP	USP

Note:
GSP: Guided Strategic Planning

USP: Unguided Strategic Planning
WP: Without Planning

Measurement of the Variables

Planning in this study was a dependent variable divided into three kinds: guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning and without planning. Planning measures the amount of time in completing the argumentative essay task. This is the same as Ellis (2009) where they use planning as the independent variable.

This study used the local (accuracy, complexity) and global (fluency) aspects as the dependent variable to measure the students' written production (Table 2). The previous researches conducted by Ahmadian (2012), Skehan & Foster (2012), Mohammadzadeh Mohammad Abadi, Dabaghi, & Tavakoli (2012), Nakakubo (2011) Mochizuki & Ortega (2008) Alanazi (2016) also use those aspects to measure the oral production. However, in this study, fluency is measured from the dysfluencies of the total word numbers produced by the students. Complexity is measured from the complexity of syntactic task, the ratio of T-units in the students' production. Accuracy is measured from the number of error-free clauses and the clauses that do not contain errors.

Table 2: Variables

Variables	Type of Variable	Measured
Planning (guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning)	Independent	The amount of time in completing the narrative task
Accuracy	Dependent	The number of clause error
Complexity	Dependent	The complexity of syntactic
Fluency	Dependent	The dysfluencies number

Data Analysis

The results of the argumentative essays written by the students were scored by two independent inter-raters who have experienced in teaching writing classes. The scores obtained of each format then was analysed by using a One-Way ANOVA statistical computation of SPSS version 24.

Result

The authors used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 in order to measure the differences between guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning and

without planning, and their possible effects on the global and local aspects of student' writings.

First, descriptive statistics were used to know the spread of scores, especially the mean and standard deviation. Then, to get a better and clearer understanding of the exact differences among the students in terms of writing performances, a One-Way ANOVA was conducted.

Since the number of students was 21, the researchers used Kruskal Wallis to measure the different formats effects and the EFL learners' writing performance in terms of local and global aspects.

Local Aspect

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Score	63	22.94	4.457	15	30
Strategy	63	2.00	.823	1	3

Table 3 shows that the minimum score of students is 15 and the maximum score of students is 30. The mean of students' score is 22.94, and the standard deviation is 4.457.

Table 4: The Mean Rank of Each Treatment

Ranks			
	Strategy	N	Mean Rank
SCORE	GSP	21	46.67
	USP	21	29.29
	WP	21	20.05
	Total	63	

The research question of the present study is aimed at measuring the effect of using different formats of strategic planning and EFL learners' writing performance in terms of the local aspect. Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference between the means of guided strategic planning, unguided strategic planning and without planning. In other words, the guided strategic planning results were better than unguided planning and without planning. Therefore, it can be said that guided strategic planning has been effective in improving the students' written production in terms of local aspects.

Table 5: The Result of Kruskal Wallis Analysis

Test Statistics[a,b]	
	Score
Chi-Square	25.526
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

The result of statistical calculation in Table 5 shows that the P value is .000. This means that there is a significant difference between the use of different formats of strategic planning and EFL learners' writing performance in terms of local aspect. Therefore, the hypothesis of problem number one is accepted.

Global Aspect

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Score	63	36.59	6.079	20	50
Strategy	63	2.00	.823	1	3

Table 6 shows that the minimum score of students is 20 and the maximum score of students is 50. The mean of students' score is 36.59, and the standard deviation is 6.079.

Table 7: The Mean Rank of Each Treatment

Ranks			
	Strategy	N	Mean Rank
SCORE	GSP	21	48.60
	USP	21	29.45
	WP	21	17.95
	Total	63	

In terms of the global aspects, the mean of guided strategic planning is also better than unguided strategic planning and without planning. It means that the students performed better in their writing by using guided strategy planning rather than unguided strategy planning and without planning.

Table 8: The Result of Kruskal Wallis Analysis

Test Statistics[a,b]	
	Score
Chi-Square	31.843
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

The result of statistical calculation in Table 8 shows that P value is .000 so that P value is less than .05. It means that there is a significant difference between the use of different formats of strategic and EFL learners' writing performance in terms of global aspects. Lastly, it shows that hypothesis number two is accepted.

Discussion

This study is aimed at measuring the effect of strategic planning condition on local and global aspects in EFL students' written production. The researchers summarise the results of the study related to other previous studies.

The results show that the students who got the treatment of performing without planning and unguided strategic planning found difficulties in writing rather than when they received guided strategic planning. Therefore, it can be said that guided strategic planning is operationalised successfully. Related with the first question, the effect of different formats in terms of local aspects found that the guided strategic planning group was considered to have better writing performance. This finding is the same with the result obtained by Goctu (2017), Skehan & Foster (2012), Rahimpour & Safarie (2011), Ghavamnia et al., (2013), Salimi & Fatollahnejad (2012). Those studies claim that the learners should receive enough time and guided planning to improve their complexity and accuracy in writing performance. Hunter (2009) also suggests that EFL learners should be given as much time as they need, and it must be ensured that they are not pressured while making the composition.

Related with the second question, it indicates that guided strategic planning also has a positive effect on the EFL learners in terms of global aspect. During the writing process, the group with guided strategic planning treatment were assisted to organise the information from the pictures. They also wrote the argumentation essay without any pressure. The result were the same as the previous studies done by Skehan & Foster (2012), Shin (2008), Setyowati, Sukmawa, & Latief (2017) as the students given guided planning performed with better fluency.

Finally, the researchers summarise that guided strategic planning has a better effect than unguided strategic planning and performing without planning. Guided strategic planning is an effective strategy used for writing performance both on local and global aspects. It is also supported by Ellis (2009) that such planning ensure that students display greater complexity, accuracy, and fluency.

Conclusion

Finally, the researchers conclude that guided strategic planning is effective when taught in L2 writing although this study has used a counter balanced effect of order. By providing planning time, the students have an increased potential in language acquisition. The students have enough time, and the role of the teacher's guidance can improve the students' writing performance. Giving planning time is recommended for the teachers in the teaching and learning process so that the students could experience the benefits of planning.

The researchers suggest teachers should be more active and creative in teaching writing. EFL teachers still need to be trained to combine the planning time into their teaching-learning process since planning is one of many effective strategies in teaching writing.

The finding of this study supports the theories that giving guided strategic planning before writing will lead to better language production. There are others strategies that can be used to measure task performance.

Due to the possible limitations of this study, such as the number of students involved, hopefully, future researchers can improve how other planning strategies measure the students' writing performance by adding to the number of subjects and maybe adding some possible other variables, such as learning styles and levels of students' anxiety when writing.

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