

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter reports the findings of the study based on the research questions presented at the beginning of the study. To recapitulate, the instruments for data collection were a set of pictures, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Using descriptive statistics, data from each NP, PTP and WTP group is presented below according to the independent variables (i.e. No Planning, Pre-task Planning and Within Task Planning) and the dependent variables (i.e. fluency, complexity and accuracy), followed by the questionnaire and interview data.

#### **4.1 Data from Independent Variables**

The means of the independent variables are shown in Table 4.1 below. The time, word and syllable count in the independent variables were meant as a check to distinguish the three planning conditions. The mean time taken by the participants of the WTP task condition to complete the written task was longer (M=12.20 minutes) compared with that taken by the participants of the NP and PTP tasks (M=11.00 minutes). The time allocated for the NP and PTP tasks was the same, although the task conditions were different. Therefore the WTP task could be differentiated from the NP and PTP task conditions according to the mean time taken to complete the task.

Words yielded by the NP and PTP groups were almost equal in number, that is 201.60 and 201.80 respectively, whereas the WTP participants wrote the most with an average of 216.70 words. In terms of syllables, the NP participants produced a mean of

262.60 syllables, while the PTP groups produced slightly more at 269.90. WTP participants wrote the most with a mean of 289.40 syllables.

Table 4.1 Mean of NP, PTP and WTP planning conditions in terms of time, words and syllables

<b>Means (M) of planning conditions</b>			
<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>NP</b>	<b>PTP</b>	<b>WTP</b>
Time	11.00	11.00	12.20
Words	201.60	201.80	216.70
Syllables	262.60	269.90	289.40

Even though the PTP subjects were given time to plan the writing task before they started writing, the average number of words and syllables they produced was not noticeably higher than that of the WTP or even the NP subjects. This showed that planning time given before the writing task did not spark more language production among PTP participants. On the other hand, although the WTP subjects did not have any allocated planning time before the writing task, the unlimited time given to them to complete the task enabled them to produce the most number of words. Similarly, the PTP subjects performed only slightly better than the NP subjects in terms of syllables produced although they had the advantage of planning time before they wrote. As can be seen from Table 4.1, at a glance, it seemed that the WTP task condition produced the best results. However, the findings on the fluency, complexity and accuracy of the written texts of the three groups of subjects, which will be discussed below, show mixed results.

## **4.2 Dependent Variables**

### **4.2.1 Fluency**

As discussed in Chapter Three, in this study, the measure of fluency used is the number of syllables per minute and as well as the number of dysfluencies. The higher the number of syllables, the higher the fluency. Dysfluencies are words that are cancelled out and changed during the course of the writing. The higher the number of dysfluencies, the lower the fluency. Details of the individual dysfluencies, words, syllables and syllables per minute produced by each group, together with the time spent are shown in Table 4.3. Comparing means, the PTP group wrote with the greatest fluency (24.54 syllables per minute) as shown in Table 4.2 below. The WTP group wrote with slightly less at 24.37 syllables per minute and the NP group wrote with the least fluency (23.87 syllables per minute). The difference in syllables per minute was minor between groups. However, in comparing dysfluencies, there was a great difference. The PTP participants wrote with the least dysfluencies (4.80) but coincidentally both NP and WTP groups produced the same mean number of dysfluencies (11.00).

However, standard deviation scores showed that the individual dysfluencies of the NP participants were close to each other with a standard deviation of 4.24, but for WTP participants, the distribution of the scores was more varied at 6.06. It can also be seen that individual fluency scores among WTP participants were very varied with the highest standard deviation in both syllables per minute and dysfluencies (6.25 and 6.06 respectively), while standard deviation in the syllables per minute and dysfluencies was the least in PTP learners (4.13 and 3.71 respectively). This indicated that fluency scores were stable and the least spread out in PTP participants. Table 4.3 also shows that the individual dysfluencies of PTP learners were mostly less than 9, and one PTP

participant did not produce any dysfluency at all, compared with those of NP and WTP participants. Thus it can be said that pre-task planning enhanced fluency.

Table 4.2 Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of syllables per minute and dysfluencies produced by each group

	Mean and Standard Deviation of Planning Conditions					
	Mean (M)			Standard Deviation (SD)		
Fluency variable	NP	PTP	WTP	NP	PTP	WTP
Syllables per minute	23.87	24.54	24.37	5.28	4.13	6.25
Dysfluencies	11.00	4.80	11.00	4.24	3.71	6.06

Table 4.3 Time spent, number of dysfluencies, words, syllables and syllables per minute produced by NP, PTP and WTP participants

Group	Name	Time (min)	Words	Syllables	Dysfluencies	Syllables per min
NP	1	11	129	176	15	16.00
	2	11	153	202	19	18.36
	3	11	185	225	7	20.45
	4	11	194	212	4	19.27
	5	11	198	243	11	22.09
	6	11	209	283	10	25.73
	7	11	223	318	9	28.91
	8	11	238	303	9	27.55
	9	11	239	324	13	29.45
	10	11	248	340	13	30.91
PTP	11	11	145	198	4	18.00
	12	11	174	236	2	21.45
	13	11	179	248	11	22.55
	14	11	195	263	8	23.91
	15	11	195	253	2	23.00
	16	11	198	266	8	24.18
	17	11	207	283	0	25.73
	18	11	211	271	4	24.64
	19	11	239	315	8	28.64
	20	11	275	366	1	33.27
WTP	21	5	111	155	14	31.00
	22	12	160	206	7	17.17
	23	16	161	212	14	13.25
	24	11	168	231	18	21.00
	25	13	197	254	5	19.54
	26	12	222	313	4	26.08
	27	10	232	298	12	29.80
	28	13	291	406	19	31.23
	29	15	293	403	15	26.87
	30	15	332	416	2	27.73

## 4.2.2 Complexity

Complexity was measured in terms of the number of verb tenses and modals produced. The greater the number of different grammatical verb forms and modals, the higher the complexity of the text.

### 4.2.2.1 Verb Tense

WTP participants produced the most number of verb tenses with a mean of 29.9 (see Table 4.4). This was expected because they wrote the longest essays (from a range of 111 to 332 words). However, PTP participants produced the least number of verb tenses at 25.3 even though they had planning time before starting to write. One notable finding was that one WTP participant produced the only past perfect continuous tense across the three groups (M=0.1). Details of the individual number of verb tenses produced by each group are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4 Mean (M) number of verb tenses produced by NP, PTP and WTP groups

Group	Present	Present cont.	Present perfect	Past	Past cont.	Past perfect	Past perfect Cont.	Future	Future cont	Future perfect	Total	Total types
NP	6.5	0.2	1.0	16.6	0.2	2.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	27.3	9
PTP	10.1	0.6	1.0	9.9	0.7	2.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.1	25.3	9
WTP	12.6	0.7	1.0	13.3	0.1	1.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2	29.9	10

Table 4.5 Total number of verb tenses produced by NP, PTP and WTP groups

Group	Present	Present cont.	Present perfect	Past	Past cont.	Past perfect	Past perfect Cont.	Future	Future cont	Future perfect	Total
NP	65	2	10	166	2	23	0	3	0	2	273
PTP	101	6	10	99	7	20	0	9	0	1	253
WTP	126	7	10	133	1	15	1	4	0	2	299

Interestingly, NP learners used the most past tense (42%) in their written text compared with the PTP and WTP groups (Table 4.6). They also used past tense the most (61%) for their text compared to all other types of tenses. On the other hand, WTP participants favoured present tense in their written text, using it the most (43%) compared with the other groups. However, within the group, past tense usage exceeded present tense usage at 44%.

Table 4.6 Percentage of past and present tense between groups and within groups

Group	Between groups		Within groups	
	Past tense %	Present tense %	Past tense %	Present tense %
NP	42%	22%	61%	24%
PTP	25%	35%	39%	40%
WTP	33%	43%	44%	42%

#### 4.2.2.2 Modals

This section reports on the modals used by the participants of the study.

Table 4.7 Total modals used by each group

Group	can	cannot/ can't	could	couldn't/ could not	will/ 'll	would	may	might	must	shall	should	Total Modals	Total types
NP	0	1	4	2	4	4	2	1	2	0	0	20	8
PTP	2	1	4	1	9	1	1	0	0	1	3	23	9
WTP	3	3	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	15	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 4.8 Mean (M) of modal use by each group

Group	can	cannot/ can't	could	couldn't/ could not	will	would	may	might	must	shall	should	Overall mean
NP	0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0	0	2
PTP	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.3	2.3
WTP	0.3	0.3	0.1	0	0.6	0.1	0	0	0	0	0.1	1.5

Table 4.9 Comparison in percentage of modal use across groups

Group	can	cannot/ can't	could	couldn't/ could not	will/ 'll	would	may	might	must	shall	should	Total Modals
NP	0	20	44	67	21	67	67	100	100	0	0	34
PTP	40	20	44	33	47	17	33	0	0	100	75	40
WTP	60	60	11	0	32	17	0	0	0	0	25	26
% used	9	9	15	5	33	10	5	2	3	2	7	100

PTP participants used the most modals ( $M=2.3$ ) in their writings (Table 4.8). This was followed by NP ( $M=2.0$ ) and WTP ( $M=1.5$ ) participants. The overall mean is obtained by dividing the total modals by the number of participants per group. In particular, the modal “will” or the short form “ll ” was most frequently used overall across the groups, accounting for a third of all modals used (33%)(Table 4.9), or 19 out of a total of 58 modals (Table 4.7). It can also be seen that the modals “might” and “shall” were not popular among the participants, being the least used across the groups (2%)(Table 4.9). The modal “must” also was infrequently used, making it the second least used (3%) modal overall across groups (Table 4.9). This modal was used twice and only among the NP participants (Table 4.7).

Across groups, NP participants used “could”, “will/’ll” and “would” the most with 4 occurrences and did not use “can”, “shall” and “should” at all (Table 4.7). The modal “will” or the short form “’ll” was most used in the PTP and WTP groups, at 9 and 6 times respectively (Table 4.7). PTP participants did not use “might” or “must”, while WTP groups had even less variation in modals use because they did not apply the modals “could/couldn’t”, “may”, “might”, “must” and “shall”. Thus it can be surmised that not only did PTP participants use the most modals in their writing, they also used a wider variety of modals compared with NP and WTP participants.

In general, the pre-task planning (PTP) task condition did not seem to enhance complexity in terms of verb tense but helped in increasing the use and variation of

modals. Within task planning (WTP) seemed to be beneficial in improving verb tense but not in the use of modals.

### 4.2.3 Accuracy

Accuracy was measured by the percentage of error-free clauses and verb forms.

#### 4.2.3.1 Error-Free Clauses

Clauses were categorized into independent clauses, adverb clauses, noun clauses and adjective clauses. Tables 4.10 and 4.11 below give the mean and standard deviation of all the clauses and error-free clauses. The statistics for standard deviation are within parenthesis.

Table 4.10 Mean and standard deviation of all clauses

<b>Group</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Total</b>
NP	17.6 (4.17)	3.2 (1.03)	1.4 (1.26)	1.9 (1.37)	24.1 (5.28)
PTP	14.4 (4.70)	4.0 (1.33)	2.4 (2.76)	1.5 (1.18)	22.3 (6.02)
WTP	18.8 (6.01)	4.1 (3.14)	1.2 (0.83)	2.7 (1.70)	26.7 (7.85)

Table 4.11 Mean and standard deviation of error-free clauses

<b>Group</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Total</b>
NP	14.4 (5.58)	2.5 (1.51)	0.5 (0.71)	1.0(1.25)	18.4 (7.21)
PTP	9.7 (4.16)	2.6 (1.35)	1.4 (2.12)	1.0 (1.25)	14.7 (6.04)
WTP	13.6 (6.19)	2.1 (1.60)	0.6 (0.97)	0.7 (0.95)	17.0 (7.53)

In all the groups, independent clauses were the majority of all clauses produced, whilst the means of noun clauses and adjective clauses did not exceed 2.7 (Table 4.10). Adverb clauses were the next most frequently used after independent clauses with a mean between 3.2 and 4.1. Comparing the clauses across groups, WTP participants produced the most clauses (M=26.7) followed by NP (M=24.1) and PTP (M=22.3) (Table 4.10). However, NP participants had the most number of correct clauses (M=18.4), followed by WTP (M=17.0) and PTP (M=14.7) (Table 4.11). In terms of



percentage, NP participants produced the most error-free clauses at 76%, followed by PTP participants at 66% and lastly WTP participants at 64% (Table 4.12). Although PTP participants had planning time, they wrote the least number of clauses and yet had more errors than NP participants. Unlimited time also did not aid WTP learners to write with fewer errors, as their percentage of error-free clauses was the lowest.

Table 4.12 Percentage of error-free clauses

Group	Total clauses	Error clauses	Correct clauses	Error-free clauses %
NP	241	57	184	76%
PTP	223	76	147	66%
WTP	267	97	170	64%

#### 4.2.3.2 Error-Free Verb Forms

This section reports on the verb forms used by the participants of the study.

Table 4.13 Mean (M) of verb form errors in NP, PTP and WTP groups

Group	Tense	SVA	Modality	Spelling	Overall mean
NP	6.7	0.8	1.0	0.3	8.8
PTP	8.9	1.3	0.6	0.3	11.1
WTP	10.5	0.5	0.8	0.5	12.3

Table 4.14 Percentage of error-free verb forms in NP, PTP and WTP groups

Group	Total verbs	Total verb form errors	Total correct verb forms	Error-free verb forms (%)
NP	273	88	185	68
PTP	253	111	142	56
WTP	299	123	176	59

NP participants wrote with the least number of verb form errors (M=8.8) while WTP participants had the most errors (M=12.3) (Table 4.13). Tense errors were the most common type of error among all the groups and spelling mistakes were the least committed (Table 4.13). Although NP participants wrote the second most number of verbs at 273, the errors they committed were the least at 88, making them the group with the highest percentage of error-free verb forms (68%) (Table 4.14).

In general, planning had little effect on accuracy, with NP learners generating more clauses than PTP planners, yet having the least clause errors among the three conditions. NP participants also produced the least verb form errors.

### **4.3 Questionnaire results**

Data from the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed. Due to the differing task conditions, the answers given by participants will first be described according to each NP, PTP and WTP group. The data will then be summarized to show the analysis across the three task conditions.

#### **4.3.1 NP Questionnaire**

Based on the respondents' answers, 7 (70%) students rated the writing task as being of average difficulty, 2 (20%) said it was easy and only 1(10%) rated it as difficult (Table 4.15). Even so, only half of the group completed the task. Common reasons given by the participants for not being able to finish the task included insufficient time to write and difficulty in using the right words and sentences, which accounted for 80% of the reasons. 20% of the participants admitted that too much time was spent organizing and preparing the content of the story. As most of them found the task level to be of average difficulty, only one participant (10%) said the pictures were difficult to understand. Half of them (50%) responded that it took some time for them to understand the pictures but it was not too difficult. 3 of them (30%) felt that the pictures were easy to understand. One participant did not answer this question.

Table 4.15 Level of task difficulty rated by NP participants

<b>Level of Task Difficulty</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Easy	20
Average	70
Difficult	10

On the reasons for having difficulty in understanding the pictures, two participants said the pictures were confusing and another needed time “to digest” the pictures. One commented that the pictures were “not clear enough to understand” and another confessed that he did not look at the pictures carefully. There was also a participant who admitted that it had been “a long time” since she last wrote an essay guided by pictures.

Most of the participants (70%) encountered some problems during the task. Out of the total responses for problems encountered, 85.7% said they could not think of the right words to use, indicating possibly a weak vocabulary (Table 4.16). 28.5% of the NP participants misunderstood the pictures, felt under pressure to complete the task and attributed their problems to the lack of opportunity to plan the language to be used. 14.3% were unsure of the sentence structures to be used and felt that there was insufficient time to complete the task. One participant commented that she had a “hard time figuring out the pictures in a short time”.

Table 4.16 Difficulties faced by NP participants

<b>Difficulties in task</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Misunderstood pictures.	28.5
Unsure of sentence structures.	14.3
Could not think of right words to use.	85.7
Under pressure to complete task.	28.5
Not enough time to complete task.	14.3
Not allowed to plan organisation.	0.0
Not allowed to plan content.	0.0
Not allowed to plan language	28.5

Of the 30% who responded that they did not encounter problems in the task, one participant said she enjoyed doing such kinds of writing while 2 of them liked challenges in writing. NP participants were asked the aspects of language most difficult for them to achieve during the writing task. The highest percentage for each difficulty level denoted the majority's opinion. 70% of them indicated that language complexity was the hardest to achieve during the course of writing, followed equally by accuracy (60%) and fluency (60%) (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17 Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task for NP participants

<b>Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task</b>	<b>Difficulty level</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Complexity	Most difficult	70
Accuracy	Difficult	60
Fluency	Least difficult	60

Participants were asked which aspects of the narrative tasks they would have focused on if they had been given planning time. Of the total responses received, 60% would have emphasized planning the language to be used, 50% would have used it to understand the pictures, followed by 40% in planning the organization and content of the story (Table 4.18). This pointed to the fact that because of vocabulary problems,

words were not readily available and the participants had to use more time in order to come up with the appropriate words to write.

Of those who would have focused on planning the organization of the story, there were 3 participants (75%) who indicated that they would have outlined the key events in the story and made links between each picture. One (25%) responded that he would have organized the story into paragraphs. For participants who would have emphasized planning the content, all of them indicated that they would have tried to make the story interesting, and half of them would have put as many details as possible into the story and made a draft of the story (Table 4.18).

Amongst those who would have planned the language to be used, 66.7% of the participants would have read through and restructured the sentences during the course of writing. 50% would have written down key words and sentences to describe the pictures and would also have planned the grammatical verb forms. 33.3% would have written down phrases to describe the pictures. Modality and voice did not appear to be very important to this group of participants. Only 33.3% would have planned the modality and voice of the story. Table 4.18 summarizes the findings if the NP participants were given planning time.

70% of the NP participants commented that there was insufficient time overall to write the narrative. If more time had been given, 60% of the respondents indicated that they would have written the events in the story in a more organized manner and also produced a more interesting story (Table 4.19). 30% said they would have written with less dysfluencies i.e. words crossed out or changed, and also used more appropriate sentence structures. 20% said they would have used more appropriate words in the story.

Table 4.18 Aspects of writing task focused on if planning time given to NP participants

<b>Aspects of writing task focused on</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Detailed breakdown (%)</b>	
Understanding pictures	50	-	
Planning organization	40	organize story into paragraphs	25.0
		outline key events in story	75.0
		make links between pictures	75.0
Planning content	40	try to make the story interesting	100.0
		put as many details as possible into the story	50.0
		make a draft of the story	50.0
Planning language	60	write down key words to describe pictures	50.0
		write down phrases to describe pictures	33.3
		write down sentences to describe pictures	50.0
		plan grammatical verb forms	50.0
		plan modality	33.3
		plan voice of the story	33.3
		read through and restructure sentences while writing	66.7

Table 4.19 Performances of NP participants if more writing time given

<b>Performances of NP participants if more writing time given</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Would have written events in the story in a more organized manner	60
Would have written with less words crossed out or changed	30
Would have written a more interesting story	60
Would have written story using more appropriate words	20
Would have written story using more appropriate sentence structures	30

Half of the NP participants felt it was necessary to have planning time to write the narrative. All were asked to give reasons for it. One explained that the planning

time would enable her to plan the storyline in a more orderly and understandable manner. Another participant said it would help the writer to create an interesting story rather than “making it another predictable redundant narrative”. Another 5 participants also commented that planning would help in writing an *interesting story* (my emphasis). One participant mentioned that planning time would help in writing a *correct story* (my emphasis) based on the pictures.

Participants were asked to rate their emphasis when writing essays, where 1 indicates the highest level of importance and 5 means the least important. The highest percentage from each level was used to denote the majority of the participants' emphasis. As can be seen from Table 4.20, in general, the study showed that avoiding errors in language and sentence structures was most important in writing an essay, with 50% of the participants rating it so. Of second importance was planning the content of the essay at 60%. 30% of the participants replied that planning the organization of the essay was third in importance to them. Of less importance was writing the intended meaning without difficulty, which was fourth in importance with 60% of the participants rating it so. Lastly, 60% of them rated using advanced language and complex sentence structures as being of least importance. This showed that achieving accuracy was most important to most of the participants, followed by planning the content and organization, achieving fluency and attaining complexity.

Table 4.20 NP participants' emphasis when writing essay

<b>Emphasis when writing essay</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Level of importance (1 to 5) based on highest percentage</b>
Avoiding errors in language and sentence structure	Accuracy	<b>1</b> (50%)
Planning content of essay	Planning	<b>2</b> (60%)
Planning organization of essay	Planning	<b>3</b> (30%)
Writing intended meaning without difficulty	Fluency	<b>4</b> (60%)
Using advanced language and complex sentence structures	Complexity	<b>5</b> (60%)

All of the NP participants thought it was necessary to have planning time to write essays in general. They also always planned their essays in advance before writing them. One participant said planning helps in writing an essay with the least mistakes yet with the most interesting storyline. Another said planning enables her to write in a more organized manner and makes the writing process easier. For another participant, planning helps her not to repeat the same points and enables her to write fluently. Planning also helps one participant in avoiding grammar mistakes and missing out details of an essay, and helps to bring out creativity for another participant.

### **4.3.2 PTP Questionnaire**

None of the PTP participants rated the task as difficult. Most of them (70%) felt that the task was average in terms of difficulty level and 3 (30%) said it was easy (Table 4.21). Half of the participants completed the task in the limited writing time allocated. Of those who could not finish in time, all said they did not have enough time to write and one revealed that he had some difficulty in using the right words and sentences.



Table 4.21 Level of task difficulty rated by PTP participants

<b>Level of Task Difficulty</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Easy	30
Average	70
Difficult	0

Based on the level of task difficulty, 40% of the participants said it took some time to understand the pictures but it was not too difficult, while 60% replied that the pictures were easily understandable. One participant commented that the pictures gave him a “simple and straight idea” on how to write the story, another said “the pictures clearly stated the message” and a third participant explained that the pictures were “simple and straight to the point”. 60% also responded that they did not encounter any difficulties while carrying out the task. 4 participants felt that the task was easy and one said he wrote well. Another mentioned he enjoyed such kinds of writing.

There was one participant who missed out details from the pictures because they were not clear to her at first, and another participant said it took some time for her to understand the pictures. Of the 40% who encountered problems during the task, all of them responded that they could not think of the right words to use. There were also 3 (75%) who were unsure of the sentence structures and one (25%) mentioned that there was not enough time to write (Table 4.22). During the course of writing, most of the PTP participants labeled complexity as the hardest to achieve, with 60% of them rating it so. This was followed by accuracy (60%) and fluency (50%). The highest percentage for each difficulty level denoted the majority’s opinion. (Table 4.23).

Table 4.22 Difficulties encountered by PTP participants

<b>Difficulties in task</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Unsure of the sentence structures	75
Could not think of right words to use	100
Not enough time to write	25

Table 4.23 Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task for PTP participants

<b>Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task</b>	<b>Difficulty level</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Complexity	Most difficult	60
Accuracy	Difficult	60
Fluency	Least difficult	50

The participants were asked which aspects of the task they focused on before writing and during the course of writing. Before commencing the writing task, all of them took time to understand the pictures (Table 4.24). This was followed by 80% of them who planned the organization of the story. Planning the content was the priority of 70% of the learners and only one participant (10%) planned the language before writing. However, during the writing time, all of them focused on planning the language to be used. 40% planned the content of the story while 20% planned the organization. Only one participant (10%) still took time to understand the pictures while writing (Table 4.24).

For those who planned the organization of the story, they were asked how they planned it. Of the total responses received, 50% made links between each picture, 30% organized the story into paragraphs, and 20% outlined the key events in the story. Participants who planned the content of the story were asked to explain how they planned it. 40% said they tried to make the story clear and interesting. 30% put as many details as possible into the story and 20% made a draft of it (Table 4.24).

Participants were asked to explain how they planned the language in their writing. 40% of the PTP participants read through and restructured their sentences during writing. 30% wrote down sentences to describe the pictures and also planned the grammatical verb forms. 20% wrote down key words to describe the pictures. 10%

wrote down phrases to describe the pictures and planned the voice of the story. The details are summarized in Table 4.24.

Only 4 (40%) PTP participants had sufficient time to complete the narrative task. Half of the participants claimed that if more time had been given, they would have planned and written the story using more appropriate words (Table 4.25). 40% would have planned and written the events in the story in a more organized manner, while 30% would have produced a more interesting story and used sentence structures which were more appropriate. None said they would have written with less words crossed out or changed. This corresponded with the fact that PTP participants already had the least dysfluencies.

Table 4.24 Aspects of task focused on by PTP participants

<b>Aspects of writing task focused on</b>	<b>Before Writing (%)</b>	<b>During Writing (%)</b>	<b>Breakdown of planning detail (%)</b>	
Understanding pictures	100	10	-	
Planning organization	80	20	organize story into paragraphs	30
			outline key events in story	20
			make links between pictures	50
Planning content	70	40	try to make the story clear	40
			try to make the story interesting	40
			put as many details as possible into the story	30
			make a draft of the story	20
Planning language	10	100	write down key words to describe pictures	20
			write down phrases to describe pictures	10
			write down sentences to describe pictures	30
			plan grammatical verb forms	30
			plan modality	0
			plan voice of the story	10
			read through and restructure sentences while writing	40

Table 4.25 Performances of PTP participants if more writing time given

<b>Performances of PTP participants if more writing time given</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Would have written events in the story in a more organized manner	40
Would have written with less words crossed out or changed	0
Would have written a more interesting story	30
Would have written story using more appropriate words	50
Would have written story using more appropriate sentence structures	30

All PTP participants agreed that it was necessary to have planning time to write the narrative. Two participants said that planning would make the course of writing easier and another two commented that it would enable them to make the story more interesting. Three participants said it would help them to write in an organized manner.

Table 4.26 Effects of removing planning notes on PTP participants' performance

<b>Effects of removing planning notes</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Could not remember some of the words and/or phrases planned	30
Made errors in grammar and vocabulary	30
Problems organizing the story	0
Problems writing what was planned in terms of the content	20
Did not affect me, I was able to write what I had planned	20
Would prefer it not to be taken away so that I can refer to it	40

As the planning notes were taken away from the PTP participants before they started writing, it resulted in 30% of them forgetting some of the words and phrases they had planned and making errors in grammar and vocabulary (Table 4.26). 40% would have preferred that the notes were not removed so that they could have referred to them. 20% of the participants had problems writing what they had planned in terms of the

content. 20% revealed that the removal of the notes did not affect their performance because they were able to write what they had planned. In general, removing the planning notes had a negative effect on 80% of the participants.

Participants were asked about their emphasis in writing essays in general, with a list of 5 items to rank according to the level of importance. 1 indicates the highest importance and 5 means the least important. One of the PTP participants did not answer this question. The highest percentage from each level was taken to indicate the majority of the participants' opinion. Of top importance was writing the intended meaning without difficulty, which was selected by 55.6% of the group (Table 4.27). A third (33.3%) of the participants rated planning the content and organization of the essay as being of second and third in importance respectively. Of fourth importance was avoiding errors in language and sentence structure with 44.4% of them rating it thus. Lastly, a third (33.3%) of the participants rated using advanced language and complex sentence structures as being least important. It can be summarized that the PTP participants focused on achieving fluency, followed by planning the content and organization, achieving accuracy and lastly emphasizing complexity.

Table 4.27 PTP participants' emphasis when writing essay

<b>Emphasis when writing essay</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Level of importance (1 to 5) based on highest percentage</b>
Writing intended meaning without difficulty	Fluency	<b>1</b> (55.6%)
Planning content of essay	Planning	<b>2</b> (33.3%)
Planning organization of essay	Planning	<b>3</b> (33.3%)
Avoiding errors in language and sentence structure	Accuracy	<b>4</b> (44.4%)
Using advanced language and complex sentence structures	Complexity	<b>5</b> (33.3%)

In general, all the PTP subjects felt that it was necessary to have planning time to write essays and 9 (90%) of them said they always planned their essays before writing. One participant commented that having planning time meant she could jot down all her “sudden ideas on the paper” and later focus on her writing. Two participants mentioned that planning has always been their habit. Planning also helps another participant so that he can have a “clearer view” of the essay. Three of the participants explained that planning helps them to write more interesting essays.

### 4.3.3 WTP Questionnaire

None of the WTP participants found the writing task difficult. 80% of them deemed it as average and 20% rated it easy (Table 4.28). One participant admitted to having some difficulties in using the right words and sentences. A second participant said time was needed to understand the story; another said she needed to think of the points to write. One participant said the meaning in the pictures was not very clear, while another was confused by the pictures. However there were 2 participants who thought the meaning in the pictures was clear.

Table 4.28 Level of task difficulty rated by WTP participants

<b>Level of Task Difficulty</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Easy	20
Average	80
Difficult	0

Half of the participants responded that it was easy to understand the pictures, while the other 50% mentioned it took some time to understand but was not too difficult. This corresponded well with the fact that no WTP participant rated the task as difficult. Yet half of this group encountered problems while carrying out the writing task. 3 of them (60%) were unsure of the sentence structures, 4 (80%) could not think of

the right words to use and one (20%) felt under pressure to complete the task, despite the unlimited writing time (Table 4.29). Of the rest who did not encounter difficulties during the task, 20% said the task was easy and that their level of English was good, and they liked challenges in writing. 3 of them (60%) said they enjoyed such types of writing.

Table 4.29 Difficulties encountered by WTP participants

<b>Difficulties in task</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Unsure of the sentence structures	60
Could not think of right words to use	80
Under pressure to complete task	20

WTP participants were asked the aspects of language most difficult for them to achieve during the writing task. The highest percentage for each difficulty level denoted the majority's opinion. 50% of this group of participants found accuracy the most difficult to achieve. This was followed by complexity for 60% of the learners, and fluency was least difficult for the participants, with 70% of them listing it so (Table 4.30).

Table 4.30 Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task for WTP participants

<b>Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task</b>	<b>Difficulty level</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Accuracy	Most difficult	50
Complexity	Difficult	60
Fluency	Least difficult	70

Table 4.31 Aspects of writing task focused by WTP participants

Aspects of writing task focused on	Percentage (%)	Detailed breakdown (%)	
Understanding pictures	40	-	
Planning organization	30	organize story into paragraphs	100
		make links between pictures	33.3
Planning content	60	try to make the story clear	50
		try to make the story interesting	33.3
		put as many details as possible into the story	50
		make a draft of the story	16.7
Planning language	50	write down key words to describe pictures	0
		write down phrases to describe pictures	0
		write down sentences to describe pictures	60
		plan grammatical verb forms	100
		plan modality	0
		plan voice of the story	20
		read through and restructure sentences while writing	40

60% of the participants focused on planning the content of the story during the task and 50% emphasized planning the language to be used (Table 4.31). 40% took time to understand the pictures while writing and only 30% planned the organization of the story. Of those who planned the organization, all of them organized the story into paragraphs, while only one (33.3%) made links between each picture.

50% of the learners who planned the content of the story tried to make the story clear and put as many details as possible into the story. One third attempted to make the story interesting and 16.7% made a draft of the story. For those who planned the language, all of them planned the grammatical verb forms. 60% said they wrote down



sentences to describe the pictures, 40% read through and restructured some of the sentences while writing, and only one (20%) planned the voice of the story. The details are summarized in Table 4.31.

All but one felt it was necessary to have planning time to write the narrative. One participant commented that planning time would help in having a clearer idea on what the pictures were depicting. Another participant said that planning was the most important part of writing an essay. Making the story interesting and organized by planning it was another comment. Planning would also help the writer to elaborate the points, according to one participant. With planning, one participant said the writer would be able to write using better grammar and vocabulary.

As the participants in this group were asked to write immediately without time to plan, this affected their performance. Most of them (80%) said they made errors in grammar and vocabulary (Table 4.32). Half of them could not plan the appropriate words and phrases to be used. 40% responded that they could not plan the content well. Two (20%) replied they had difficulty in writing down their intended meaning immediately and one (10%) could not organize the story well. If planning time had been given, 60% said they would have planned the content in a more interesting manner, made less errors in grammar and vocabulary, and would have organized the story better. Half of the group said they would have planned more appropriate words and phrases for the story while 20% responded that they would have written their intended meaning with less difficulty. Although they were given unlimited time, one participant focused on completing the task “as soon as possible” and this may have affected her writing performance.

Table 4.32 Effects on WTP participants' performance due to lack of planning time prior to writing task

<b>Effects on performance due to lack of planning time</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
I could not plan the content well	40
I could not plan the appropriate words and phrases to use	50
I made errors in grammar and vocabulary	80
I could not organize the story well	10
I had difficulty writing down my intended meaning immediately	20
It did not make any difference to me	0

Participants were asked about their emphasis in writing essays in general, with a list of 5 items to rank according to the level of importance. As with the NP and PTP questionnaires, 1 indicates the highest importance and 5 means the least important, and the highest percentage from each level was taken to denote the majority's emphasis. Of top importance was avoiding errors in language and sentence structure, which was selected by 40% of the group (Table 4.33). Of second and third importance was planning the content and organization of the essay respectively, which were both rated so by 40% of the participants. Of fourth importance was writing the intended meaning without difficulty, which 30% of them rated thus. Lastly, 50% of the participants rated using advanced language and complex sentence structures as being least important. It can be summarized that the WTP participants focused on achieving accuracy, followed by planning the content and organization, attaining fluency and lastly emphasizing complexity.

Table 4.33 WTP participants' emphasis when writing essays

<b>Emphasis when writing essay</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Level of importance (1 to 5) based on highest percentage</b>
Avoiding errors in language and sentence structure	Accuracy	<b>1</b> (40%)
Planning content of essay	Planning	<b>2</b> (40%)
Planning organization of essay	Planning	<b>3</b> (40%)
Writing intended meaning without difficulty	Fluency	<b>4</b> (30%)
Using advanced language and complex sentence structures	Complexity	<b>5</b> (50%)

All the WTP participants agreed that planning time is necessary before writing essays in general. However, only two (20%) always planned their essays in advance before writing them. Two participants said that planning helps them to write with fewer errors in grammar and vocabulary. Another two mentioned that planning helps them to organize ideas and their writing. Of the two participants who claimed they did not plan their essays, one said he had no time to plan while the other thought it was a waste of time to plan.

#### **4.3.4 Summary of particular findings from the NP, PTP and WTP questionnaires**

There were common questions across the NP, PTP and WTP questionnaires. This section compiles and compares the data from these questions which have been separately discussed in the previous sections. In essence, this section highlights similarities or differences in the data from these questions across the three task conditions.

Table 4.34 Level of task difficulty rated by NP, PTP and WTP participants

<b>Level of Task Difficulty</b>	<b>Percentage (%) NP</b>	<b>Percentage (%) PTP</b>	<b>Percentage (%) WTP</b>
Easy	20	30	20
Average	70	70	80
Difficult	10	0	0

It can be seen that only one participant (10%) from the NP group, out of all the participants, rated the task as difficult (Table 4.34). On the whole, the written narrative task seemed to be relatively unchallenging to them. However, many of them encountered difficulties and very few participants performed well in terms of fluency, complexity and accuracy.

Table 4.35 Difficulties encountered by NP, PTP and WTP participants

<b>Difficulties in task</b>	<b>Percentage % NP</b>	<b>Percentage % PTP</b>	<b>Percentage % WTP</b>
Misunderstood pictures.	28.5	-	-
Unsure of sentence structures.	14.3	75	60
Could not think of right words to use.	85.7	100	80
Under pressure to complete task.	28.5	-	20
Not enough time to complete task.	14.3	25	-
Not allowed to plan organization.	0	-	-
Not allowed to plan content.	0	-	-
Not allowed to plan language	28.5	-	-

Of all the difficulties encountered by the NP, PTP and WTP participants, the most common difficulty was the inability to employ the right words in their written narrative (Table 4.35). Most of them were also unsure of the sentence structures to be used. It can be seen that NP participants, who had the most constraints in the task condition, had more difficulties compared to the WTP and PTP participants.

Table 4.36 Aspects of language difficult to achieve across NP, PTP and WTP task conditions

Difficulty level	Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task	NP Percentage %	PTP Percentage %	Aspects of language difficult to achieve during task	WTP Percentage %
Most difficult	Complexity	70	60	Accuracy	50
Difficult	Accuracy	60	60	Complexity	60
Least difficult	Fluency	60	50	Fluency	70

In the questionnaires, complexity was described as “using advanced language and complex sentence structures”. Accuracy was “avoiding errors in language and sentence structure” and fluency was “writing my intended meaning without difficulty”. All participants were asked to rate these in terms of difficulty level during the writing task. Comparing all three groups, it was found that all of them said fluency was the least difficult. NP and PTP participants found language complexity most difficult to attain followed by accuracy. WTP participants however, thought that accuracy was most difficult followed by complexity in language.

Table 4.37 Performances of NP and PTP participants if more writing time given

Performances of participants if more writing time given	Percentage (%) NP	Percentage (%) PTP
Would have written events in the story in a more organized manner	60	40
Would have written with less words crossed out or changed	30	0
Would have written a more interesting story	60	30
Would have written story using more appropriate words	20	50
Would have written story using more appropriate sentence structures	30	30

Both NP and PTP participants would have appreciated more writing time allocated for the task (Table 4.37). Many of them indicated that they would have written the story in a more organized manner and a more interesting story. WTP participants had unlimited time and were not asked this question. Though all the essays were not assessed in terms of content, organization and vocabulary, unlimited time given to WTP participants did not result in higher quality essays.

Table 4.38 Aspects of writing task focused by NP, PTP and WTP participants

Aspects of writing task focused on	Percentage (%) WTP				Detailed breakdown (%)			
	PTP		WTP	NP		WTP	PTP	NP
Understanding pictures	100	10	40	50	-	-	-	-
Planning organization	80	20	30	40	organize story into paragraphs	100	30	25
					make links between pictures	33.3	50	75
					outline key events in story	0	20	75
Planning content	70	40	60	40	try to make the story clear	50	40	0
					try to make the story interesting	33.3	40	100
					put as many details as possible into the story	50	30	50
					make a draft of the story	16.7	20	50
Planning language	10	100	50	60	write down key words to describe pictures	0	20	50
					write down phrases to describe pictures	0	10	33.3
					write down sentences to describe pictures	60	30	50
					plan grammatical verb forms	100	30	50
					plan modality	0	0	33.3
					plan voice of the story	20	10	33.3
					read through and restructure sentences while writing	40	40	66.7

PTP participants had the advantage of planning time. In either before or during the writing task, PTP participants focused on each aspect of the task more than the NP participants, if they had had planning time. PTP participants also focused on each aspect of the task more than the WTP participants (Table 4.38). During the writing process, all the participants emphasized on language planning relatively more than other aspects. In particular, the organization of the story was not of high priority when they were writing. In the planning details of all the participants, no general pattern emerged.

Table 4.39 Emphasis of NP, PTP and WTP participants when writing essays

Emphasis when writing essays	Category	Level of importance (1 to 5) based on highest percentage		
		NP	PTP	WTP
Avoiding errors in language and sentence structure	Accuracy	1(50%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (40%)
Planning content of essay	Planning	2 (60%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (40%)
Planning organization of essay	Planning	3 (30%)	3 (33.3%)	3 (40%)
Writing intended meaning without difficulty	Fluency	4 (60%)	1 (55.6%)	4 (30%)
Using advanced language and complex sentence structures	Complexity	5 (60%)	5 (33.3%)	5 (50%)

Participants of this study had varied emphases when it came to writing essays in general. The highest percentages of each category are indicated above (Table 4.39). It can be seen that NP and WTP had almost similar priorities when composing essays. Many of the participants in both groups stressed on accuracy the most and on complexity the least. A majority of all the participants regarded content planning and organization planning as of second and third importance to them. For PTP participants



however, 55.6% focused on fluency as the most important aspect of essay writing. Generally it can be said that complexity is not emphasized by all the participants, and that planning the content and organization was relatively important to all participants.

The tables above summarize particular findings from common questions posed in the NP, PTP and WTP questionnaires. The following section discusses findings from the semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.4 Data from Semi-structured Interviews**

Two participants from each task condition were selected to be interviewed based on the quality of their essays and their willingness to be interviewed. One of the selected learners was a good writer while the other was a poor writer. By interviewing both good and poor writers, the study could elicit more comprehensive insights into the importance of planning in writing from the perspective of both groups of writers. The interviews were conducted after the task was completed and the questionnaire administered. Data from the interviews are described according to each NP, PTP and WTP group.

##### **4.4.1 NP Participants**

Participant 1's narrative was poorly written with many grammatical errors and almost illegible handwriting. She finished writing even before the time was up and took time to revise her text. Participant 2's narrative was well written with neat handwriting compared with Participant 1. She committed very few grammatical errors. The two participants were interviewed because the quality of their essays was vastly different.

#### **4.4.1.1 Participant 1**

According to Participant 1, she strives to gain good marks in her writing tasks in general. For this narrative writing task, she felt that she did not write well because it was written in haste. She felt unprepared and surprised when told by the researcher that she had limited time to write. To her, the most important audience for her writing is the person who grades the essay.

Participant 1 did not plan at all for this task because she was in the NP group. However, generally she would plan her writing with points listed prior to writing and would revise her work upon completion of the task. Although Participant 1 managed to complete the task, she commented that the pictures were confusing. After writing half way through, she realized that the plot was different from how she first understood it, and thus wrote quickly to change the storyline in time to meet the time limit. Participant 1 therefore felt that the NP task condition prevented her from writing a better essay. In other words, she felt that planning was crucial.

Participant 1 revised her work only at the end of the writing process. However, she read through each paragraph after writing it. Usually she makes slight changes to her first draft in her writings. She checks for grammatical errors, sentence structure errors, but does not make changes in vocabulary.

#### **4.4.1.2 Participant 2**

Participant 2 said that her written work was important to her in general but she felt that she could have produced a better essay if she had been given more time. She did not feel tensed or pressured when told that she had limited time to write. However, as she had not written stories since her lower secondary school days, she needed time to think of how to write the story.

For written tasks, if it is part of an examination, she usually does not revise her work due to the time constraint, but if it is a written assignment she would revise it upon completion of the assignment. In written assignments therefore, her first draft would not be her final draft. Overall, Participant 2 did not seem handicapped by the no-planning condition, but wished she had more time to write because she could not complete the task in time.

#### **4.4.2 PTP Participants**

Participant 3 wrote in neat handwriting and wrote relatively well compared with all the other PTP participants. He wrote with the least errors among all the 10 PTP participants. Participant 4 did not write very well compared to Participant 3 and was willing to be interviewed.

##### **4.4.2.1 Participant 3**

Participant 3 did not feel pressured because he did not look at the time. The pictures for the essay contained no words or character names but Participant 3 gave names to the characters in his planning notes. However, the essay that he wrote was different from his notes because he changed the character names. He said he could not remember all the names he had written in his planning notes. He had written about half a page of planning notes.

He elaborated the details as he was writing the story but could not complete the story due to the time constraint, and he did not manage to write about some parts of the story which he had planned. Usually he plans and adds details as he writes. Under this task condition, the notes written by participants were removed prior to the start of writing task. As a result, Participant 3 could not write about all that he had planned and did not complete the story.

#### **4.4.2.2 Participant 4**

Participant 4 feels satisfied when a writing task is completed. Moreover, she feels happy when she manages to achieve the word limit in any writing task. Her most important audience in her writing is the person who grades her essay. She felt pressured when told that the planning notes would be taken from her.

She felt that too much time was given to plan but not enough time to write. She planned broadly, judging by the minimal amount of notes on her planning paper, and added details during the course of writing. According to her, she always adheres to her planning notes when writing.

However, she found difficulty in expressing her meaning in writing and could not complete the writing in time. Generally when she finishes elaborating a point, she will revise it. For this task, revision was made after each picture was elaborated. She read through each point after elaborating it.

#### **4.4.3 WTP Participants**

Participant 5 wrote relatively well compared with Participant 6 who wrote poorly. Participant 6 did not elaborate on the details in each picture and thus did not describe the plot development clearly.

##### **4.4.3.1 Participant 5**

Participant 5 always tries her best in any writing task as it is important to her to do so. Generally she likes what she writes. Her most important audience is the person who grades her written work. When asked about planning, she explained that she usually plans mentally and then writes the essay and generally would always plan her written task.

She revises her work upon completion of the task. For this story, she revised her work after completing it. Usually she would revise her work after each paragraph is written. However, for assignments, her first draft would be the final work. Although no time limit was given, she felt tensed when performing the task. She felt that for any written assignments, there should always be a time limit so that one is disciplined to finish it on time.

#### **4.4.3.2 Participant 6**

For Participant 6, the importance of his writings depends on his mood at the time of writing. However, if it is a graded assignment, he would put in his best effort. He did not feel pressured during the writing task but he did not particularly like what he had written. To him, the person who evaluates his work is his most important audience.

For this task, he planned, wrote and revised all at the same time and in general this was his method in writing. He did not put much elaboration into the story because he felt that there was not much to write about, which explained the reason he took less than 10 minutes to finish writing. He felt that his grammar was weak and that what he wrote was not very interesting. His writing was influenced by the way he wrote text messages on his mobile phone, resulting in errors like spelling mistakes. Generally he revises while writing and also revises after writing each paragraph. He also always makes changes to his first draft.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data collected from the study. Data from the essays was tabulated and analyzed. Questionnaire and interview data were described. The