

*To my beloved parents, A.Yavuz Özpınar  
& Şule Özpınar*

THE ROLE OF TASK DESIGN  
IN STUDENTS' L2 SPEECH PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT  
THE ROLE OF TASK DESIGN  
IN STUDENTS' L2 SPEECH PRODUCTION

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The main objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of different task types with different task features – a decision making task, a problem solving task and a role play with planning time – have upon eight L2 learners' oral performance, in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity at Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University.

The data gathered by audio recording, were submitted to both qualitative and quantitative analysis by the researcher. In order to measure accuracy, fluency and complexity, three different criteria were decided on. Errors per a hundred words, the number of self-corrections and target-like use of plurals were used as measures of accuracy. The number of repetitions, reformulations and false starts were used in order to measure fluency. Lastly, complexity was measured by using amount of subordination, frequency of conjunctions and hypothesizing statements. In terms of

quantitative data, the numerical data obtained from transcriptions were computed as frequencies and percentages.

Results revealed that task 1, a decision making task (a convergent task) whose topic was not familiar to the students and no planning time was given to the participants , yielded more complex speech. Task 2 , a problem solving task (a convergent task) with a specific problem and in which the topic was familiar to the students , on the other hand, fostered more accurate speech. Task 3, a role play in which the participants were given 10 minutes planning time, yielded more fluent speech. Findings revealed the existence of two trade-offs operating in the participants' speech samples. The first trade-off is that between accuracy and complexity, whereas the second trade-off is that between fluency and complexity.

The results from the present study may call teachers' attention to the value of the design of oral task, so that teachers can evaluate learners' oral production successfully.

Key words: Task, task design, task features, task implementation factors.

## ÖZET

### GÖREVE DAYALI AKTİVİTE DİZAYNININ ÖĞRENCİLERİN İKİNCİ DİL ÜRETİMİNDEKİ ROLÜ

Özpınar, Pınar

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, farklı özelliklere sahip farklı görev tiplerinin – karar verme, problem çözme ve planlama zamanı verilmiş rol yapma – Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Hazırlık Okulu’ndaki sekiz öğrencinin sözlü performansları üzerindeki etkisini;doğru, akıcı, ve karmaşık dil kullanımı açısından incelemektir.

Kayıt yoluyla toplanan veriler, araştırmacı tarafından hem nitel hem de nicel incelemeye tabi tutuldu. Doğru, akıcı ve karmaşık dil kullanımını ölçmek için, üç farklı ölçüt belirlendi. Her yüz kelimedeki hata, öğrencinin kendi kendini düzeltme sayısı, ve çoğul eklerinin hedef dildeki şekliyle kullanımı; doğru dil kullanımının ölçüsü olarak kullanıldı. Öğrencilerin kendilerini tekrarlama, söylediklerini yeniden oluşturma,ve tümceye yanlış başlama sayıları akıcı dil kullanımını ölçmek için kullanıldı. Son olarak, karmaşık dil kullanımı ise, ikincil yan tümce , bağlaç ve varsayım ifadelerinin kullanım sıklığının ölçüt olarak kullanılmasıyla belirlendi.

Nicel veriler için, öğrencilerin dil kodlamalarından elde edilen sayısal veriler sıklık ve yüzdeler oranda hesaplandı.

Elde edilen sonuçlar, konusu öğrencilere tanıdık gelmeyen ve planlama zamanı verilmeyen birinci göreve dayalı aktivitenin (karar verme aktivitesi) daha karmaşık dil üretimine yol açtığını; belirli bir problemle konusu öğrencilere tanıdık gelen ikinci göreve dayalı aktivitenin (problem çözme aktivitesi), diğer yandan, daha doğru dil üretimine teşvik ettiğini, ve öğrencilere on dakika planlama zamanı verilen üçüncü rol yapma aktivitesinin ise daha akıcı dil üretimine yol açtığını gösterdi. Bulgular, çalışmaya katılanların konuşma örneklerinde iki farklı dil değişimine dikkat çekti. Birincisi doğru ve karmaşık dil kullanımı arasında, ikinci ise akıcı ve karmaşık dil kullanımı arasında meydana gelmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin dikkatini, göreve dayalı sözlü aktivitelerin dizaynına ve bunun önemine çekebilir. Bu sayede, yabancı dil öğretmenleri öğrencilerin sözlü dil üretimlerini başarılı bir şekilde değerlendirebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göreve dayalı aktivite, göreve dayalı aktivite dizaynı, göreve dayalı aktivite özellikleri, göreve dayalı aktivite uygulaması.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Speaking instruction in a second language as an integrated branch of teaching, learning, and testing is a relatively recent inquiry and has been studied in its own right for only about 20 years (Bygate, 2001). Investigated from different perspectives during this time, L2 speaking has been considered an intricate and puzzling human skill involving great cognitive complexity (Levelt, 1989).

In order to convert feelings and thoughts into speech, speakers perform several mental operations in a synchronized way and this process takes place with such speed that planning and execution occur simultaneously (Levelt, 1989). Moreover, as Skehan (1998b) states human beings have a limited processing capacity. Therefore, when producing speech, L2 speakers undergo processing pressure (Ellis, 2003). The L2 speaking “challenge”, thus, is to cope with communication on line and in real time. Amazingly, native speakers, universally, respond to this challenge fluidly and unconsciously.

In respect to non-native speakers; fluent, accurate and pragmatically effective use of the target language is the desire of L2 learners, that is, learners generally desire to speak without excessive hesitation and fragmentation, without making too many errors, and without offending their interlocutors. The learning process thus must focus on accuracy, fluency and complexity in speech production and in order to develop these three aspects, Task- based instruction (TBI) has been proposed as a way to create an atmosphere in which students are presented meaningful activities



having a relation to the real world and promoting the use of language communicatively in the classroom. As the main components of task-based instruction, tasks hold a central place in the learning of L2 production (Ellis, 2003). Engaged in purposeful activities, learners act as language users rather than language learners. They not only use tasks as a tool for communication but tasks also provide the opportunity for focus on different aspects of language production. As stated by Skehan (1996a), different types of tasks may focus on different aspects of language production, that is, on accuracy, fluency or complexity. In this way L2 learners' oral performance can be supported by integrating speaking tasks into on-going courses.

This study examines how different types of speaking tasks with different task features and implementation factors bring about development of different facets of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

### Background of the Study

Regarded as an alternative to traditional teaching methods, task-based instruction (TBI) is a part of a methodology in which communicative language use is aimed for (Brumfit, 1984; Ellis, 2003). Most TBI supporters regard it as a development of Communicative Language Teaching since it embodies several principles derived from the communicative language teaching movement of the 1980s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In TBI, the task is proposed as a central unit of planning and teaching, it is defined as a meaning-focused activity which learners undertake using the target language in order to reach a specific goal at the end of the task (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1996a).

The definition of the concept of “task” was early made by Long (1985, in Ellis, 2003). For Long, task was regarded as a goal-directed activity in which it was necessary to use language. However, activities in which the use of language was not necessary were referred to as tasks as well e.g. painting a wall. However, later definitions (e.g. Nunan, 1989, Skehan, 1996a) define task as an activity in which language is necessary and meaning is primary. The present study defines task as a contextualized, standardized activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which elicits data which may be the basis for research.

The research literature on the use of tasks reveals particular application of tasks in the development of oral skills. In this respect, both second language researchers (SLA) and language teachers examine tasks as a means of eliciting samples of language use from learners (Ellis, 2003). Researchers use these samples to investigate how second language learning occurs. Teachers, on the other hand, concentrate on the students’ learning so as to facilitate it and to check whether successful learning is taking place. Furthermore, both researchers and teachers agree that from different tasks, different outcomes will be reached. As proposed by Ellis (2003), simply filling in gaps, for instance, will make learners focus more on accurate speech, whereas samples elicited from more communicative activities will indicate how learners use language to transmit messages.

Researchers and language teachers seek samples that provide a better view of the learners’ ability to cope with real-world communication and, in order to obtain those samples, data must be elicited from activities in which learners are not only

focusing on accuracy . Teachers are aware that learners must experience activities in which they can develop fluent and natural communication.

According to Skehan (1996a), it is vital to set proper goals for TBI, and he suggests that TBI should focus on three main language learning goals: accuracy, fluency and complexity of language produced by task users.

As defined by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), *accuracy* refers to how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language; *fluency* refers to the production of language in real time without excessive pausing, while *complexity* refers to the extent to which learners produce elaborated language appropriate to the situation.

Emphasizing that distinct task types with different task designs may have different impact on L2 learners' speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity, Skehan and Foster (1997) also put forward the possibility of trade-off effects upon L2 learners' oral performances. While some tasks may promote more accurate and fluent but less complex language, others may promote more complex but less accurate and fluent language in relation to task features and task implementation factors.

Several studies (Skehan & Foster, 1997; Foster & Skehan, 1996) show the impact different task types can have on accuracy and complexity in L2 speech production. To illustrate, in Foster & Skehan (1996) the narrative task used led to more complex language but lower accuracy. On the other hand, the personal information exchange task led to greater accuracy but less complexity. Mehnert (1998) also investigated planning time and observed that 1 minute of planning time influenced accuracy whereas higher planning time affected complexity, but not

fluency. Based on the evidence provided by those studies (Skehan and Foster, 1997; Foster and Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998), it can be argued that task design and planning time are two major factors that affect oral performance.

The impact of task features and task implementation factors upon speech production of L2 learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity; as pointed out by Skehan and Foster (1997), are distinct and can be analyzed separately.

#### Statement of the Problem

Of the general objectives in foreign language teaching; maybe one of the most important is stimulating the learner to produce orally in the target language. As speech production is a puzzling mechanism for L2 learners in that they do not have the adequate capacity to devote their mental efforts both to planning what to say and execution of the planned utterance simultaneously, it has been regarded as a problematic issue in terms of language pedagogy (Levelt, 1989). Speech production is as a process requiring learners' great mental efforts and learners have difficulty finding enough opportunities to produce and practice language in EFL contexts.

Being systematized and arranged activities, tasks can play essential roles in classroom learning processes. By means of task-based instruction, tasks are implemented in the class and learners are provided with opportunities to experience language use that they cannot experience outside the class (Nunan, 1989). Despite all the research carried out on tasks in Turkey, no study has investigated whether there are any differences in speech production of learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity based on different task types with different task designs.

This study aims to examine the impact of task features and task implementation factors upon learners' speech production in terms of the three variables; accuracy, fluency and complexity in speaking classes at Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University. Due to the overloaded curriculum at Preparatory School of C.B.U, courses are found to be limited in their capacities to develop learners' communicative competence and stimulate their speech production. This situation may result from the fact that restricted numbers of hours are spent for the improvement of practicing language compared to the number of hours dedicated to grammar instruction. This year, for the first time, a speaking and listening course has been a part of curriculum of the Preparatory School of C.B.U. This may be a great opportunity for learners to practice language and find a suitable environment for the improvement of their communicative competence. As foreign language teachers, we aim for our learners to be fluent and accurate language users. Still, there isn't much chance to evaluate speech production of learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity due to the limited experience about tasks and their impact upon oral performances of L2 learners.

This study might be regarded as a pilot study which will create an opportunity to exam how task features and implementation factors shape learners oral production. A practical goal is to enable language learners to work and learn in groups interactively and thereby to develop their oral performance capacities in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

## Research Question

In this study, I will try to answer to this question.

1. In what way and to what degree do task features and task implementation factors bring about different types of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity?

## Significance of the Study

Since this research will be carried out in speaking and listening courses of Preparatory School of C.B.U in which instructional tasks have not been previously used, the results may provide information to find out in what way different tasks with different task features and implementation factors may have an impact on learners' communicative competence and L2 speech production. The study may also contribute to improving the speaking courses held in Preparatory Classes of Celal Bayar University. Some experience in task-based speaking instruction may assist teachers in designing tasks focusing on the specific needs of their own students and the teachers who have not previously used instructional tasks may be encouraged to use these kinds of tasks after seeing that they may be used in speaking classes while following the prescribed schedule.

The main value of the present study is to gain a better understanding of L2 speech production. Moreover, the results from the present study may call teachers' attention to the value of instructional tasks and to the critical variables in design of oral task activities. As well, knowing more about the effects tasks have upon performance may assist teachers when evaluating learners' oral production.

To conclude, Skehan (1998a, p.177) emphasizes the value of research on the area when he states: “What this discussion shows is that the conditions under which tasks are done and the way conditions interact with performance are a fertile area for research.”

### Conclusion

This chapter gives a brief summary of the issues concerned with the background of the study, statement of the problem, research question and significance of the study. In the next chapter, a review of literature on background of tasks, task types and styles, L2 speech production, measuring L2 speech production is presented. In addition, tasks are discussed with reference to various aspects such as definition and categorization of tasks, and some studies on the TBI are reported. In the third chapter, the methodology of the present study in relation to participants, instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis is explained. The results are reported and discussed in the fourth chapter which contains a summary of collected data, the analysis and the findings. The last chapter presents the conclusion, some pedagogical implications, and some limitations of this study and some suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This study examines in what way and to what degree task features and task implementation factors influence L2 speech production of learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. An interventionist study was conducted to investigate the possible impact of task features and implementation factors on learners' speech production in an upper-intermediate level class at Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University.

In this chapter, section one provides information about background of tasks, task types and styles, and task variables. Section one is followed by discussion of L2 speech production and measuring L2 speech production. In section three, the relation between task design and L2 speech production is presented with respect to the additional studies explaining the relation between task features, implementation factors and language produced by L2 learners.



## Tasks

### Background of Tasks

The use of tasks as a unit in instructional planning goes back to the 1950s when task focus was on new military technologies and occupational specialties of the period. The analysis of tasks was initiated for solo psychomotor tasks in which there was limited communication or cooperation among task performers. Smith (1971) focused on specifying the task which was concerned with an outline of major duties in the job and more specific job tasks related to each study. In this process, the role of tasks and the proficiency level of students operators were important variables as the task design and the implementation decisions were being made accordingly (as cited in Richards& Rodgers, 2001). In these early stages of the analysis of tasks, the focus was on solo job performance of manual tasks rather than collaborative performance of decision – making tasks. Next, however, attention was directed towards team tasks, for which communication was required. In team tasks, members needed to generate and distribute information necessary to accomplish tasks and to combine their performances to complete the tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Four major categories of team performance function were recognized in team tasks:

1. Orientation functions (processes for generating and distributing information necessary to accomplish tasks);
2. Organizational functions (processes necessary for members to coordinate actions necessary for task performance);
3. Adaptation functions (processes occurring as team members adapt their performance to each other to complete the task);

4. Motivational functions (defining team objectives and energizing the group to complete the task);

(Nieva, Fleishman & Rieck, 1978 cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Many of these same functions hold in present- day design and use of second language learning tasks. One notices that even early-on, industrial tasks required engagement of a variety of communicative activities which in language teaching discussions have come to be referred to as “negotiation of meaning”. So, tasks moved from primarily occupational use into the broader field of general education. Doyle (1983) notes that in elementary education, the academics task is regarded as the mechanism through which the curriculum is enacted for students (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Academic tasks are defined as having four important dimensions:

1. the products students are asked to produce,
2. the operations they are required to use in order to produce these products,
3. the cognitive operations required and the resources available
4. the accountability system involved

These dimensions, again, sound very familiar to those engaged in current discussions about the characterization of the design and use of tasks in second language instruction.

Focused attention on the use of tasks in second language instruction was noted by Breen (1987). Breen (1987) states that a task is a work plan with its own particular objective, appropriate content upon which the learners work, and a working procedure including the instructions. A task can be only a simple and brief exercise, but it can also be regarded as a complex and comprehensive work plan in

which the learners are required to achieve spontaneous communication of meaning or to solve problems in learning and make task –related decisions. So, any language materials with their particular organization of content and the procedures could be regarded as a task (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Long (1985) attempted to define the concept of “ language task” in more specific terms. He noted that the term “task” referred to activities in which language was necessary. But he also noted that task referred, as well, to activities in which there was no use of language, such as painting a fence. Long suggests that things that people do in everyday life, at work, and at play are regarded as tasks. The tasks Long points out are real-world tasks that learners do outside the classroom (as cited in Nunan, 1989). Later definitions (Nunan, 1989, Ellis, 2003, Skehan, 1996a) define task as an activity in which language is necessary and meaning is primary.

A somewhat different slant on tasks was proposed by Ellis (2000), who defined task as a work plan which takes the form of materials for instruction, research and assessment. According to Ellis (2000), a work plan typically involves the following; some input which can be regarded as information that learners are required to process and use, secondly some instructions about how to achieve the desired outcome, and thirdly, a specification of outcome. In order to reach the desired outcome, the learners are required to work on the input which may give them the chance to progress during task implementation and to play with input to produce an output as a product. Of the above commentators, Ellis comes closest to defining the elements and procedures central to my own study.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), in Task- Based Instruction, tasks are regarded as tools to promote interaction and real language use. Real language use

can be achieved by means of carrying the discourse learned in the classroom setting outside the classroom. The role of tasks is thus, to promote interactive and authentic language use rather than to serve as a framework for practice on particular language forms and functions (Richards& Rodgers, 2001).

These definitions of task have been noted critically by several second language researchers. Cook (2003) comments that “the way task has been defined in the last 20 years has been a journey of contradictions in spelling out what task is not”. As noted throughout, the issue of task definition remains unsettled and constantly argued. So, there is not an agreed on definition for the term “task”.

In this study, the focus is on the interactional aspect of research tasks and task definition is not critical to the current study. What is more critical is definition and exemplification of contrasting interactive conditions of the task-based research activities. The study focuses on the distinctions between convergent – divergent task goals, topic familiarity – unfamiliarity within tasks and availability and non-availability of planning time in task preparation. The study examines the manipulation of these distinctions in task design and the effect of these variations on the language performance of task participants. My own study might be best defined as a goal directed two person interactional conversation study in which several design distinctions are manipulated and their effect on output noted and measured.

Interest in these distinctions derived from changing classroom patterns in which student teacher and student-student interactional patterns became of central interest. These interactional patterns were stimulated by small group and pair work activities in which the aim was to increase learners’ speaking focus and speaking time. Rather than placing the introduction and practice of specific rules at the center

of the syllabus, classroom use of tasks which encourage the use of target language in problem - solving and decision - making situations, was regarded as a suitable way to promote interaction and maximize language production (Pica & Doughty, 1986). Paralleling Pica & Doughty (1986), Seedhouse (1999) points out the place of group work in language classrooms. Agreeing that language classrooms provide a suitable environment for interaction and for introduction of negotiated comprehensible input, Seedhouse (1999) supports the centrality of pair and group work for interaction. As suggested by Nunan (1989), group work increases the opportunity for learners to use the language, improves the quality of student talk, promotes a positive climate and increases motivation. So tasks based on pair work and group work can be a suitable tool to promote interaction among students and to increase their speaking time in a friendly classroom setting. It also provides the format for this and other studies on the use of tasks in assessing pair interaction in classroom research.

Foster (1998) deals with the issue of interaction in a more precise way and puts forward the notion that engaging in communicative language tasks helps a learner develop an L2 in several ways. According to her, tasks provide an opportunity not only to produce the target language, but also, through conversational adjustments, to manipulate and modify it. It can be said that checking and clarifying utterances during task performance may indicate that participants receive comprehensible input and produce comprehensible output while working on a task. Foster (1998) mentions another advantage of engaging in group work or pair work which is the decreased time the learners spend listening only to the teacher. It also decreases anxiety that prevents students from “performing” in front of the whole class and the teacher. When interacting in small groups, students talk more than they

do in teacher fronted activities (Foster, 1998). So, giving the learners the opportunity to work in pairs and in groups can be influential in reducing their personal fears and increasing the amount of language they produce.

Rivers (1987) points out the importance of interaction in language learning classes suggesting that through interaction the learners can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic materials. The output of their peers in discussions, problem solving tasks, or in sharing dialogue journals may help them to use all they possess, all they have learned or absorbed in real-life exchanges.

To sum up, the concept of task has been reviewed by different researchers since 1950s in both military field, second language education and on interactional basis. Despite the fact that there is not an agreed on definition for the concept of “language task”, there is a general opinion that tasks are regarded as tools in which the meaning has primary importance. In the following section, task types and task styles will be explained with respect to the background previously presented.

### Task Types and Tasks Styles

In this section tasks types are overviewed by interactional style. This is critical to my study in that each task selected for research inquiry must be in a certain style or of a certain type (Listing, Information Gap, Problem Solving, etc). However the primary focus in the present study is not on comparing task types, but rather on features of task design, such as impact of planning (planned vs. unplanned), participants’ goals (convergent vs. divergent), and familiarity of topic (familiar vs. unfamiliar) and their role in shaping participant language output. In particular, the study attempted to measure the impact of these variables on accuracy, fluency, and

complexity of participant spoken language. It was necessary to choose task types in which these features of task design could be investigated. Before moving on to impact of these particular variables, a discussion of task types as made in the literature will be presented. In addition, the tasks for my research purposes were chosen from among these tasks types.

Willis (1996) regards a task as a goal oriented communicative activity with a specific outcome, where the emphasis is on exchanging meanings not on producing specific language forms. According to her, tasks are the activities in which the students use the target language for communicative purposes in order to achieve an outcome. Taking this definition as a basis for her categorization of tasks, Willis (1996) groups tasks into these six groups:

- 1) Listing,
- 2) Ordering and sorting,
- 3) Comparing,
- 4) Problem solving,
- 5) Sharing personal experiences,
- 6) Creative tasks.

In listing tasks, learners try to create a list sets involving e.g. countries of a continent, irregular English verbs, world leaders or characteristics of particular individuals who might be chosen to people a new civilization. In ordering and sorting tasks, participants rank items or events in a logical or chronological order and classify them under appropriate categories. In comparing tasks, participants try to find similarities and differences and perhaps make judgments on the basis of these. (Such as listing characteristics of candidates to people a new civilization, comparing

the characteristics of these people, and deciding the most useful ones for the new civilization). In problem solving tasks, learners are encouraged to arrive at a solution to a problem by using their intellectual and reasoning capacities (such as cross word puzzle or an anagram decipherment). Sharing personal experience tasks lead learners to talk about themselves and share their own experiences, likes and dislikes, etc. Lastly, in creative tasks, learners deal with projects, in pairs or groups, at the end of which they create their own imaginative products. Short stories, art works, videos, magazines, etc. can be the products in creative tasks.

According to Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001), tasks are classified as follows:

1. Jigsaw tasks: In these tasks, learners form a whole by putting different pieces of information together. In order to construct the whole, learners holding different parts collaboratively work to complete task.
2. Information – gap tasks: In these tasks, learners who have different parts of an information block (half of some travel directions, parts of mystery, etc) text have to come together and interact in order to pool their information.
3. Problem – solving tasks: Learners are provided with a problem (How to light a fire without matches? How to solve a word puzzle? etc.), and they are jointly required to propose a solution to the problem.



4. Decision – making tasks: In these tasks, learners are given a situation in which there are a number of possible options to decide on. They are required to choose one or more by negotiating and discussing the options (Which applicant to hire for a job?, What is the best route to get from Ankara to Timbuctoo? etc).
5. Opinion exchange tasks: These tasks lead learners to discuss and exchange their ideas about a controversial subject. (Smoking in restaurants. Who will win the World Cup?) However, learners here do not have to come to a joint agreement.

#### Task Variables

Task options of a very different type than those previously presented are proposed in Richards & Rodgers (2001). These variables are the main concern of the present study. The Richards and Rodgers categorization lists the following task distinctions:

- 1) One-way or two way,
- 2) Convergent or divergent,
- 3) Collaborative or competitive,
- 4) Single or multiple outcomes,
- 5) Concrete or abstract language,
- 6) Simple or complex processing,
- 7) Simple or complex language,
- 8) Reality based or non-reality based.

In *one-way* information gap activity, one person holds the information within a group and the others do not yet know it but have to get it from the “knower”. A *two-way* information gap activity occurs when pairs each hold a unique piece of information and they have to come together to form a complete and coherent text. In one way and two-way tasks (e.g., a speech vs. a debate), there is the exchange of information by one person or two or more people. Long states (1989) that when there is a mutual relationship of request and supply of information, negotiation of meaning is more likely to occur since two-way tasks make the exchange of meaning obligatory (cited in Fotos & Ellis, 1991).

*Convergent and divergent tasks* differ according to the task requirement that interactors have to agree on a single outcome or can complete the task by presenting several different, even competing views. Discussing the pros and cons of television for children is an example of a divergent task in which students are assigned different viewpoints on an issue and expected to defend their position and refute their partner's. In *convergent tasks*, students are required to agree on a solution such as deciding what items to take on a trip to the moon. As pointed out by Long (1989), tasks with divergent goals like debates have been found to have an impact on longer turns and more complex language use than tasks with convergent goals like decision-making discussions (as cited in Fotos & Ellis, 1991).

Collaborative and competitive tasks are concerned with students' working in a cooperative manner in order to complete the task rather than challenging each other as individuals to see who wins.

In addition to these, there is the variable of open tasks vs. closed tasks.

Open tasks are loosely structured activities with less specific goals, so that there may be multiple outcomes. Opinion gap tasks, debates, discussions, free conversation tasks and making choices are all open tasks. Conversely, closed tasks are those with only a single possible outcome. (Solving an anagram, a puzzle or computing the total cost of building a certain house). Thus, these are structured tasks with specific goals. As cited in Ellis (2003), Long (1990) claims that students are more likely to negotiate meaning in a group or in pairs when they are engaged in closed- tasks, because students aim at finding the correct answer, rather than offering individual opinions discussing as various possible answers.

The other variables in the categorization of tasks described by Richards & Rodgers (2001) are concerned with the concreteness of language used in task performance - whether the students talk about concrete issues like physical appearance of a person or their own house, or about some abstract issues like love, freedom, or friendship. Simple or complex processing is related to the detailed cognitive skills that the students are required to employ to achieve the task. The simplicity or complexity of language is concerned with how syntactically or discursively involved is the language the students are expected to use in order to complete the task, and lastly the concept of reality and unreality is related to whether the task offers a lifelike situation or an imaginary one atmosphere to the students. (“Suggesting improvements for school cafeteria” contrasted with “recommending a set of imaginary citizens to people a new civilization”).

Apart from this classification of tasks described by Richards & Rodgers (2001), Long (1989) also divided the tasks into three groups: 1) open task vs. closed task, 2) two-way task vs. one-way task, and 3) planned task vs. unplanned task (cited

in Ellis, 2003). The category of planned vs. unplanned tasks is a central one in the present study and so this category is integrated to the list of task variables proposed in Richards & Rodgers list previously identified.

Planned and unplanned task variable is an important one both in respect to interaction and the degree of and to the kinds of language outputs anticipated. In planned tasks, learners have time to think about what they will actually say in the task itself. Long (1989) states that planned tasks, where learners prepare their speech or think about what they will say beforehand, encourage more negotiation than unplanned tasks where the learners do not have the opportunity to prepare their performances (as cited in Ellis, 2003). Skehan (1998a) states that in unplanned tasks the focus is on the spontaneous use of language opposed to the planned use of language. So in unplanned tasks, the students have to deal with production and interaction in real time and online.

As stated above, the categorization of tasks shows several variations. These variations can be related to the way the researchers interpret tasks in EFL setting. Besides the variations in the categorization of tasks, the impacts that different tasks have on interaction and L2 speech production also vary depending on task features and task implementation factors.

### L2 Speech Production

The main concern of the present study is particularly on the impact of previously discussed task variables and task implementation factors on speech production of learners. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on L2 speech production,

how it occurs and how it is measured in terms of different dimensions of language production, that is, accuracy, fluency, and complexity.

The question how the spoken language is produced is a complicated issue to be discussed in second language acquisition. Levelt (1989) sees language production as complex, multi-faceted phenomenon, involving a series of stages. Levelt's model contains three principal processing components. The first stage is the *Conceptualizer* which is speaker's establishing a communicative goal. The next stage is the *Formulation* in which the speaker creates a phonetic plan for what is to be said. This process involves selecting appropriate phonological, grammatical, and lexical features and combining them all together. Finally, in the *Articulation* stage, the plan made by the speaker is transmitted into an actual speech (Levelt, 1989).

Bygate (1999) compared L1 speech production to L2 speech production. He states that, on the one hand, there are similarities. In both L1 and L2 production, learners have to organize the message to be conveyed, have to focus on the appropriate component concepts, have to formulate and articulate the message, and have to make corrections, if necessary. On the other hand, the two processes have some distinctions. According to Bygate (1999), L2 speakers may undertake different processes than those used in L1. These differences may be in terms of lexical access, pauses, communication strategies, and in an access to and use of formulaic chunks. In order to accomplish the on-line demands of speaking, L2 learners must have language automatized (Bygate, 2001).

According to Skehan (1998a), the way L2 knowledge is represented in the human mind reflects the way it needs to be employed in production.

Parallel to this notion, a complex skill such as speaking requires the performance of a number of simultaneous mental operations. According to Skehan (2001) speaking is possible because of the way language is represented. He also states that there are likely to be trade-offs since L2 learners struggle to conceptualize, formulate and articulate messages. Therefore, attention to one aspect of the language production is likely to be at the expense of another.

Building on Swain's Output Hypothesis, Skehan (2001) suggests that production requires attention to form which is not necessarily the primary focus in task-based instruction. He distinguishes three aspects of production as accuracy, fluency, and complexity. Accuracy implies "rule-governed", "grammatical" and "correct". He regards fluency as the capacity of the learner to mobilize his/ her system to communicate meaning efficiently in real time and give the appearance of ease in communication. Complexity deals with the appropriate employment of interlanguage structures which are as elaborate and structured as necessary to fit the task.

Skehan (1996a) suggests that individual language users vary in the extent to which they emphasize fluency, accuracy, or complexity in their communication. So, this is a difficult personal dimension to control in research designs. Thus, most studies, including this one, restrict the study of impact variables to those that can be somewhat controlled via task design. While some tasks prepare participants to focus on fluency or accuracy, others prompt learners to focus on complexity. Furthermore, these different aspects of language production require different systems of language control. For example, fluency requires learners to draw on their memory-based of system of ready made chunks available for rapid access. In contrast, accuracy and

complexity are grounded in learners' rule-based system, linguistically structured systems (Ellis, 2003). Wray (2000) points out that language users, during rule based processing, store knowledge of abstract rules that can be used to compute an infinite variety of well formed utterances or sentences (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). According to Wray, the advantage of such a system is that it allows complex propositions to be expressed clearly and concisely. However, the disadvantage is that it requires great effort to operate in online communication, especially where planning is limited. As for memory- based processing, Wray (2000) states that it consists of a large number of formulaic chunks such as fixed expressions, frozen phrases, idioms, prefabricated routines and patterns (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen). In addition, Skehan (1996a) points out that memory – based processing enable language users to access information rapidly and relatively effortlessly, as a result of this, language users can formulate speech even when there is limited time for planning.

### Measuring Speech Production

Another point that interests SLA researchers is that what effect task design and task implementation have on language production. Before moving on to the possible effects of task design and implementation factors, the issue of measuring language production, especially oral production, will be reviewed. While the question of learner speech production occurs interests second language researchers, they also want to investigate how language production variables could be analyzed and measured.

Different ways of measuring each of these aspects of language have been developed. There are a number of suggestions made by different researchers in

second language field. For example, Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000) have suggested “*the analysis of speech unit*” (*AS-unit*) as a response to the problem of analyzing and measuring oral performance. They regard an AS-unit as a single speaker’s utterance which consists of either an independent clause or a sub-clausal unit. They propose that if the utterances of the learners were broken into AS-units, then analyzing utterances would be reliable and more feasible. By this approach, the researcher will be able to focus on specific elements of speech - such as use of subordinate clauses or conjunctions- in order to interpret data in terms of the aspects he/she desires to analyze.

Task-based researchers have used a wide range of other specific measures of language production. For example, Tong-Fredericks (1984) state that in an early study, that measurement was accomplished by counting the number of words learners produced per minute, the frequency of turns, and the amount of self correcting that occurred (as cited in Ellis, 2003). In contrast, Brown (1991) tried to measure task performance in terms of subject repetitions, prompts, rephrasing and repairs. Still other researchers (e.g. Newton and Kennedy (1996)) dealt with task-based production in terms of counting specific linguistic features, such as, prepositions and conjunctions. It is seen that these sorts of measurement did not depend on any specific theories, but were mostly data driven and chosen intuitively.

Skehan (1996a), however, proposed three “theory-based” measures. Considering that the goal of the majority of the L2 learners is to stive to become native-like in their performance, Skehan (1996a) established the division of this general goal into the following features: accuracy, fluency , and complexity. Skehan



(1998b) argued that these three features are in mutual tension, that is, one develops at the expense of the other.

In addition, there are several ways of measuring these three dimensions – accuracy, fluency and complexity- as proposed by Skehan. As prelude to this discussion, it is necessary to consider how these three concepts are perceived in the literature.

The terms fluency and fluent are frequently used as nontechnical terms and admit a variety of different meanings, which differ from what applied linguistics researchers intend in discussing “fluency” and a “fluent speaker”. In this vein, Schmidt (1992) explains that most native fluent speakers are considered fast talkers who easily fill time with speech; hence, they can be compared to disk jockeys or sports announcers. Additionally their speech is coherent, complex and dense; fluent speakers are creative and use imagination to express themselves, they are able to use metaphors and know how to joke as well as having an exceptional control over the aesthetic functions of the language (Schmidt, 1992). With respect to second language, nonnative speakers must be aware of these qualities, but according to Skehan (1996a), fluency in a second language is achieved when the learner owns ability to prompt an interlanguage system to communicate meanings in real time. Therefore, fluency means being able to comprehend and produce speech at plausibly normal rate and approach native-like speech rate and maximize use of their interlanguage system. It doesn't mean necessarily speaking like a native speaker. Above all qualities, however, fluent speech must be automatic. That being so, fluent speech cannot require much effort and attention from the speaker (Schmidt, 1992). Thus, in order to be accepted as a satisfactory interlocutor, learners must have adequate

degree of fluency. Poor fluency will produce difficulty of interaction, which may lead the speaker to feel frustrated because she/he will not be able to express his ideas in real time (Skehan, 1996a).

To consider the next of the three dimensions in more detail, accuracy is connected to learners' mastery of norms, and to performance which is rule-governed and native-like (Skehan, 1996a). Lack of correct forms and accurate speech may ruin effective communication and incorrect forms can become fossilized. Learners who perceive these inaccuracies may feel frustrated and depressed.

Considering that learners are pursuing production of accurate language, a key question appears: how is accuracy promoted? Skehan (1996a) claims that some accurate learners are those who have a tendency to avoid taking risks and who use only structures they are certain of. Furthermore, accurate learners appear to be predisposed to great concern in regards to correctness and conformity to norms.

As opposed to accuracy, complexity requires learners to be risk-takers and to try new structures, even though these structures may not initially be correct. These learners are constantly willing to assume greater challenges in terms of the target language, therefore, interlanguage grows more elaborate, complex, and more native-like. Complex language is desirable, because complexity predisposes the learner to succeed in communication, and it is often necessary to express complex ideas causing the learner to be well – accepted as a target-language speaker.

As in the same way that accuracy, fluency and complexity are perceived as different, the measures used to analyze these three also show variation. There are a number of studies, in the literature, analyzing language production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

Table 1 classifies some of the specific measures of accuracy used in various studies conducted by Foster & Skehan (1996), Menhert (1998), Skehan & Foster (1997), and Wigglesworth (1997b).

Table 1

Measuring Accuracy in Second Language Speech Production

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Study</b>
* Number of self- corrections	the number of self corrections as a percentage of the total number of errors committed	Wigglesworth (1997b)
Percentage of error-free clauses	the number of error-free clauses divided by the total number of independent clauses, sub-clausal units and subordinate clauses multiplied by 100.	Foster and Skehan (1996)
* Errors per 100 words	the number of errors divided by the total number of words produced divided by 100.	Menhert (1998)
Percentage of target-like verbal morphology	the number of correct finite verb phrases divided by the total number of verb phrases multiplied by 100.	Wigglesworth(1997)
* Percentage of target-like use of plurals.	the number of correctly used plurals divided by the number of obligatory occasions for plurals multiplied by 100	Skehan and Foster (1997)

Note.\* =Measures used in the present study (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005,p.151)

As can be seen in Table 1, in order to measure accuracy in oral performance of learners in different studies, different criteria were employed by different researchers.

In Table 2, some of the specific measures of fluency used in different studies are classified. These studies were conducted by Ellis (1990b), Robinson et al. (1995), and Skehan & Foster (1999).

Table 2

Measuring Fluency in Second Language Speech Production

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Study</b>
Number of pauses	the total number of filled and unfilled pauses for each speaker	Robinson, Ting and Unwin( 1995)
Pause length	this can be measured as either total length of pauses beyond some threshold (e.g. 1 second ) or as the mean length of pauses beyond threshold.Pause length provides measure of silence during a task.	Skehan and Foster (1999)
Speech/ writing rate	this is usually measured in terms of the number of syllables produced per second or per minute on a task. The number of pruned syllables is counted and divided by the total number of seconds/ minutes the text(s) took to produce.	Ellis(1990b)
*False starts	utterances/ sentences that are not complete.	Skehan and Foster(1999)
*Repetitions	words, phrases or clauses that are repeated without any modification.	Skehan and Foster (1999)
*Reformulations	phrases or clauses that are repeated with some modification	Skehan and Foster (1999)

Note.\*=measures used in the present study (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005p.157)

There are a number of criteria for measuring fluency described in Table 2.

Table 3 classifies some measures of complexity used in the studies conducted by Brown (1991), Foster & Skehan (1996), Robinson (1995b), and Yuan & Ellis (2003).

Table 3

Measuring Complexity in Second Language Speech Production

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Study</b>
*Frequency of some specific language function (e.g. hypothesizing)	the total number of times a specific language function is performed by a learner is counted.	Brown (1991)
*Amount of subordination	the total number of separate clauses divided by the total number of AS-units.	Foster and Skehan (1996)
Use of some specific Linguistic feature (e.g. different verb forms)	the number of different verb forms used.	Yuan and Ellis (2003)
Type-token ratio	the total number of different words used ( types) divided by the total number of words in the text (token)	Robinson (1995b)

Note\*=measures used in the present study (as cited in Ellis& Barkhuizen, 2005,p.153)

In Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, measures of accuracy, fluency and complexity are presented with reference to studies carried out with the purpose of analyzing second language speakers' speech production.

To sum up, as previously stated, there a number of ways to measure the three dimensions of speech production in second language research. All of these measurements were developed by the researchers so as to have a better understanding of speech production occurring in language learners' minds. In the

following section, the relation between task design and speech production will be discussed with respect to studies in the field.

### Task Design and L2 Speech Production

As mentioned previously, factors of accuracy, fluency, and complexity are said to be in constant tension. Improvements in these different aspects are not simultaneous, largely because learners' attentional resources are limited. There is not enough capacity of L2 speakers to devote their attention to each aspect at the same time (Mehnert, 1998; Skehan, 1996a, 1998b), and there appear to be trade-off effects operating while L2 learners wrestle to conceptualize, formulate, and articulate messages (Ellis, 2003). It seems that improvement in one area is gained at the expense of improvement in another area. In other words, the more complex the language the less accurate it will be; the more fluent the language, the less accurate and complex it will be (Skehan, 1996a).

How task design can influence language production in relation to these three dimensions of learner output is a critical question within task-based instruction and task-based research. To measure the effect of task variables on performance, task design is of paramount interest to researchers. Recent research into task based learning claims that manipulation of task characteristics and processing conditions can distribute learner's attention between the goals of accuracy, fluency and complexity. The task designer's role is therefore to select and/or design tasks, which channel learners' attention towards the desired pedagogic outcome (Murphy, 2003). According to Skehan (1998a), there should be a selective channeling of attention which can be directed towards various aspect of discourse - accuracy, fluency , and

complexity- and use of certain structures. Skehan (1998a) claims that one rationale behind this channeling is that the aim in the selection of tasks is to foster better and more balanced language development, encouraging learners to focus on accuracy as well as fluency and on more complex structures.

While designing a task leading learners to focus on different aspects of language, there are several variables critically involved in task design: (1) The type of input the task provides for learners, (2) the conditions within which the task is completed, (3) the expected task outcomes. Each of these aspects of task design can have an impact on the oral production of learners (Ellis, 2003).

In the following sections, type of input, task conditions and task outcomes will be discussed with reference to empirical studies conducted in this field.

### Type of Input

The first item which is considered as an important variable within the task design is the *type of input*. Under this heading, there are three important items to be analyzed; *contextual support*, *the number of elements in a task* and *topic*. Contextual support can be a picture, a map or a diagram, the contents of which must be communicated verbally to a partner. The tasks having contextual support provide a non-verbal organizational device to the speaker. It can be hypothesized that tasks with contextual support, “here-and-now tasks” may result in greater fluency while “there-and then tasks” may result in greater complexity, and perhaps accuracy (Ellis, 2003, p.118). Robinson (1995b) found that oral narratives produced while the speakers were able to look at a picture strip tended to be more fluent; however, the speakers performing the same task who couldn’t see the picture strips tended to

display less fluency but greater accuracy. Parallel to this study, Skehan and Foster (1999) pointed out the effects of contextual support by comparing learner production in a *watch- and – tell* task and *watch-then-tell* task. In this study, the British television series Mr. Bean was chosen as an ideal source of narrative tasks as the episodes are thought to be short, last about 8 minutes and have a proven international appeal. In the first one, learners watched a Mr. Bean video and spoke simultaneously. In this restaurant episode, Mr. Bean goes alone to a restaurant, gets the menu, orders steak, and then spends sometime trying to hide the food on and around the table. There is a predictable sequence in restaurant episode. In the latter task, learners told the story after they had watched the video. The second episode was about golf in which Mr. Bean is playing Crazy Golf, makes a very bad shot, and hits the ball outside the golf area. Then he hits the ball all over the town in events that have no predictable sequence. Skehan and Foster (1999) found that watch-then –tell condition led to more complex language. It is suggested by the results of these studies that when there is a contextual support, production is fluent; when there is an absence of contextual support, production is more complex and accurate.

The second important item to be argued about task design is *the number of elements* in a task. Brown *et al.* (1984) proposes that the number of elements in a task should affect the task performance. Robinson (2001) compared learners' performance on two map description tasks with different amounts of information. He reports that learners produced more fluent language while dealing with the simple map, however, the learners who were describing a more detailed map produced a more complex language.



The last item is the familiarity of the topic to the learner. In a study conducted by Lange (2000), there were two tasks with similar designs involving exchanges of information and opinions. The tasks differed only in terms of topic. One task focused on selecting a candidate for a heart transplant, while the other focused on deciding on a person to release from prison. The prison task resulted in more talk since it was held to be more social interest to the participants. Discussion was more controversial and demanding which promoted more complex language (as cited in Ellis, 2003). On the other hand, according to Skehan (1998b, 2001), familiar situational task content will cause learners to perform more fluently and accurately. He observed that when learners are familiar with the task they are performing, they do not need to focus on understanding the content, hence, more attention is available to focus on accurate form.

#### Task Conditions

There has been less research on the effects of different task conditions on production than on other task variables. One apparent critical task condition variable contrasts shared information tasks vs. split information tasks (Ellis, 2003).

*Shared information tasks* typically involve decision-making and argumentation where both task participants have similar information, for example, deciding on a new layout for a zoo. According to Newton & Kennedy (1996), in shared information tasks, interlocutors are engaged in arguing a situation or case depending on the information they share. In the study conducted by Newton & Kennedy (1996), the use of conjunctions was greater in shared information tasks than in split information tasks. This can be related to the reasoning or argumentation that led the interlocutors to make use of conjunctions. Newton and Kennedy (1996) also

suggest that shared tasks are effective in promoting learners' production more than *split information tasks* which mostly results in description (e.g. describing a part of the house to the partner, describing clothes of a person to encode who he/she is).

In addition, Robinson attaches significance to the depth of task demands. He (2001) hypothesized that whether learners are asked to fulfill a single task demand or a multiple task demand will influence their language production. His study included two map tasks one of which was a simpler version while the other was a more complex one. The simpler version required the speaker to give directions from A to B using a map covering a small area of which they had prior knowledge. The complex version required them to give directions from A to B using a map of a larger area they were likely to be unfamiliar with. The hearer was asked to fulfill multiple task demands such as listening to the speaker, drawing the routes described by the speaker and identifying point B in each task. Robinson found that learners tended to be more fluent while fulfilling a single task demand than fulfilling multiple task demands. However, he found no effect on production in terms of accuracy or complexity (Robinson, 2001).

#### Task outcomes

In terms of task outcomes, there are two different kinds of tasks that have received attention; *open* and *closed* tasks (Ellis, 2003, p.89). In open tasks, there are no predetermined solutions. Tasks involving making choices, surveys, debates, and general discussion can be included in this category. Learners are free to decide on a solution. In contrast to open tasks, closed tasks are those that require learners to reach a single, correct or predetermined solution (Ellis, 2003). Tong & Frederiks (1984) compared three tasks; a problem solving task, a role-play task and an

authentic interaction task. The problem-solving task was closed and the other two tasks were open. Tong & Frederiks found that the problem-solving task elicited more spontaneous speech. In contrast, the two open tasks promoted question and answer discourse as the students had to find out from their partners what they had done the previous night. These two tasks also elicited attention to accuracy and more complex language.

Open tasks also vary depending on whether the speakers are required to converge on a single outcome or allowed to diverge with different viewpoints. Duff (1986) reported that tasks with divergent goals promoted longer task performances and led to more complex language use than tasks with convergent goals. This can be exemplified as a comparison between debate type tasks and decision-making tasks (as cited in Yule, Powers & Macdonald, 1992).

The anticipated cohesiveness of the outcome is another significant item in analyzing language production in relation to task design. Skehan and Foster (1999) reported a study investigating the relation between planning and task structure. The study involved learners' narrating Mr. Bean episodes on video. One episode was in a restaurant with clearly structured events, while the other which was taking place in a golf area had a loose structure with sequence of events difficult to predict. In both tasks, there was opportunity for learners to plan their narrations. However, the structured task promoted more accurate language use in contrast to the less structured one. Moreover, in the structured task, there were fewer repetitions, false starts, and replacements that are typical measures of fluency. However, task structure was not found to have any effect on complexity.

Discourse mode can be regarded as another variable affecting task performance and learner output. Bygate (1999b) compared learners' output on four tasks. In two of the tasks, students were required to narrate, and in the other two, they were required to argue. According to the results, narrative tasks promoted a greater amount of production, but there was no difference in complexity. However, argumentation led to greater use of complex structures.

It can be concluded that the factors that have been investigated are likely to overlap and interact with each other. Therefore, it can be difficult to be sure which factors are responsible for the outcomes observed. It also isn't possible to claim that one task is better than another one. Rather, different kinds of tasks have different contributions to language production.

Some ideas about type of input, task conditions and task outcomes were presented in the former section. In the next section, other factors that have an impact on oral production will be presented. These factors are the task implementation factors involving planning and rehearsal.

#### Task implementation factors

Any task can be performed in different ways depending on how the speakers adapt themselves to the task by using their background knowledge and abilities. In this respect, it is possible to influence task performance by modifying the way the task is performed (Ellis, 2003).

Planning is one of these task implementation variables that have an impact on the language product. Ellis (2003) divides planning for task completion into two types: online and strategic planning. The former examines how the planning that

takes place during a performance of a task affects production. While the latter examines how planning before task inception influences production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

Foster and Skehan (1996) report that giving planning time to learners has a strong impact on fluency, accuracy and complexity. Hulstijn and Hulstijn (cited in Ellis, 2003) concentrate on two variables: time and focal attention. In the time concept, learners have the opportunity to use as much time as they need in order to speak during a task performance, or they have to speak quickly. In the focal attention concept, learners are expected to focus specifically on either form or meaning. In the light of the results of the study, learners who spend more time on the correct use of grammar rules produce more accurate language. On the other hand, when they used the time to organize content relating to what they are going to say, no effect on accuracy was observed.

A study conducted by Yuan and Ellis (2003) compared the effects of pre-task planning and online planning on learner performance of a narrative task. In the pre-task planning stage, learners were given ten minutes to prepare their performances, however they performed the task under time pressure. In the online planning condition, learners were given no time to get prepared but were allowed to perform the task at their pace. The results emphasized that online planning without performance time restriction contributed more to accuracy and complexity than the pre-planning with performance time restriction, but inhibited fluency and preplanning.

Parallel to on-line planning, the essential role of strategic planning is also investigated by a number of studies. Several of these studies have shown that

strategic planning helps to promote fluency (Foster, 1996; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Foster (1996) and Foster and Skehan (1996) state that the frequency of pauses by learners who had a chance to plan strategically were less than the learners who didn't plan their performances beforehand. In addition, Wigglesworth (1997) found only tentative support for the hypothesis that planners are more fluent in a testing situation in which the planning time was only one minute. However, even this limited opportunity for participants to plan their performance helped them to self-repair themselves less in a task which involved summarizing a conversation. Moreover, Foster and Skehan (1996) investigated the effects of more guided planning in which the learners were given some advice about how to organize syntax, lexis, and content. According to the results of the study, the guided planners were more fluent than the unguided planners.

It appears that strategic planning generally favor fluency and complexity as it emphasizes the importance of conceptualizing what has to be communicated rather than how it is said (Ellis, 2003).

Another procedural factor that has an impact on task performance is rehearsal, in other words giving learners time to practice a task. This can also be regarded as a kind of strategic planning. Bygate (as cited in Ellis, 2003) compared one learner's telling and retelling of a Tom and Jerry cartoon. He stated that rehearsal had an impact on complexity and the learner used more lexical verbs, more regular past tense forms and a wider range of vocabulary in the retelling. It appears that rehearsal encourages learners to provide more detailed content and have opportunity to rely on their rule-based systems.

## Conclusion

Considering the variables mentioned above, both the task design and task implementation have impact on language production. As well manipulation in other task variables leads to variation in learners' production.

However, although the researches we have reviewed in this chapter have presented us so much detail about language production, they don't give so much information about L2 acquisition. In this respect, it may be only possible to say that the kind of productions the learners engage in during task performances may have long-term acquisitional effects. For example, tasks, which are designed to promote fluency, should improve that aspect of a language learner language use in the long run.

The studies in this chapter and my study as well, should assist to the language teachers in terms of their design of tasks for their students. In the light of these studies, teachers are able to influence the kind of language that their students produce in a classroom. This chapter may also give some clues to language teachers about how to achieve a balance between three aspects of language production – accuracy, fluency, and complexity – and contribute to the development of their proficiency. The next chapter will give information on the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The objective of the present study is to investigate in what way different tasks with different task designs and task implementation factors have an impact on students' L2 speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

The present study was conducted in order to attempt to answer the following research question:

1. In what way and to what degree do task features and task implementation factors bring about different types of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity?

In order to find out whether task features and task implementation factors have an impact on oral production of L2 learners in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity, this study was conducted at Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University. Three tasks were implemented during the study, and they were completed by all the class students. Four pairs – one male and one female in each pair – were chosen as the subject group for this study. Each of these pairs completed the three tasks and was tape-recorded while the whole class was performing the tasks. The tasks were implemented in three speaking and listening courses.

This chapter is divided into four main subsections that deal with the following topics: (1) the participants of the study, (2) the instruments used in data collection, (3) data collection procedures and, (4) data analysis.



## Participants

The participants are one English teacher working at Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University and 8 students of this teacher in an upper intermediate speaking class.

In Preparatory Schools in Turkey, university students are taught the foreign language (English, German etc) in an intensive way for a year, and after completing two semesters, they are allowed to start studying in their own departments. At the Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University, the listening and speaking course is a new one both for teachers and students. I preferred to conduct my study with a volunteer teacher who was willing to participate in the study. The teacher in the study is a Turkish male English teacher with seven years of experience in teaching main course including grammar instruction, writing, reading and computer based courses. In order not to have a confounding effect of different teachers on students' performance, the same teacher taught three speaking courses which were investigated for the present study.

The teacher who took part in the study was a volunteer one, and parallel to the teacher, 4 pairs from upper intermediate level students were also randomly chosen from 13 volunteer pairs in the same class. In my study, the aim was not to see the improvement of students in their speaking skills; rather, it was to see the impacts of task features and implementation factors on the forms of language production of the students. So, upper intermediate level students were preferred due to the fact that they had a reasonably good command of spoken English. The participants were

between the ages of 18 and 21, and they were paired as one boy and one girl during task implementation. In table 4, participants are presented in terms of their gender.

Table 4

Distinction of Participants' Gender

Participants	Gender
Participant 1	Male
Participant 2	Female
Participant 3	Female
Participant 4	Male
Participant 5	Male
Participant 6	Female
Participant 7	Male
Participant 8	Female

### Instruments

In this study, three different tasks with different task features and implementation factors were used to collect data. The tasks were designed with the expectation that they would promote different kinds of language production and performance. The aim of these tasks was to see in what way different types of tasks influenced students' L2 speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity.

Table 5 presents the features of the three tasks implemented in the present study. The categorization was made in terms of flow of information, information distribution, task outcome, topic familiarity, and planning time.

Table 5

Features of Task1, Task 2, Task 3

Task type	Flow of Information	Information Distribution	Task outcome	Topic Familiarity	Planning Time
<i>Task 1 Decision-Making task</i>	two-way	shared	convergent	no	no
<i>Task 2 Problem-Solving task</i>	two-way	shared	convergent	yes	no
<i>Task 3 Role play</i>	two-way	shared	divergent	yes	yes

As can be seen from table 5, the first task was designed as a two way, shared information decision making task in which the participants were expected to decide on ideal citizens for a new civilization (See Appendix A) In this activity, “*Starting a New Civilization*”, students were introduced to ten different people with ten different personality types and by sharing their ideas in pairs were asked to agree on six of these as “citizen” for this new civilization. The characters which were in the list to be chosen for the new civilization were a biology teacher, a homosexual doctor, a policeman with a gun, a warrior with a spear, a university student, a female singer, a lawyer, a cook from a five star hotel, a man of religion and a pregnant African woman. As there was not a right answer for the task, the pairs were required to deal with the activity by exchanging their ideas to choose the characters. However, they were required to come to a conclusion at the end of the task. So, the students were

anticipated to converge on specific characters. As Duff (1986) stated, tasks with divergent goals, like debates, yield to longer turns and more complex language use than tasks with convergent goals (as cited in Ellis, 2003). Shared information tasks as contrasted with split information tasks that typically require description have been found to be effective in pushing learners in production. So Task 1 requires the participant to argue their case and share their ideas rather than focusing on the accuracy of information shared. Another feature of task 1 is the unfamiliarity of the topic to the participants. As Skehan (1998b) states, when familiar topics, situations or events are given to the participants in a task performance, they tend to use the language in a less elaborate or complex way. So Task 1 may lead the participants to use more elaborate and complex language forms due to their being presented an unfamiliar topic. In Task 1, the participants were not given extra planning time to prepare their performances before the actual task performance.

The second task was a problem solving activity in which student pairs were expected to suggest some solutions to a specific real-world problem (see Appendix B). The problem was quite familiar to the students and the task was designed in the form of two- way task in terms of the flow of the activity. In task 2, the problem involved a new café opened next to the Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University. The pairs were expected to come up with some proposal to make it a better café for students. As the problem was familiar to them and required convergent ideas rather than divergent ones, the task was thought to have an impact on their language production in terms of accuracy. As the problems in the café are specific and familiar, then the solutions to the problems should be specific as well. According to Skehan (2001), speakers tend to use more accurate language when they discuss familiar

topics or known information, situations or events. I hypothesize that students may use more accurate language forms discussing to encode familiar situations with well-established language.

In the third task which was a role-play activity, the participants were given extra time for preparation before the actual task performance (see Appendix C). They had ten minutes for planning to present their dialogues strategically. “Strategic planning” occurs before a speaker engages in a communicative activity, as contrasted with “online planning” which occurs at the same time as a speaker is engaged in a communicative activity (Wendel, 1997 as cited in Ellis, 2003). In this task, the students were expected to act, respectively, as a tourist and as a person working in a tourism agency. In pairs, they prepared a conversation in which the tourist was asking questions about what to do and where to go in Istanbul, and the person in the tourism agency was answering him/ her. The extra ten minutes for preparation was thought to have an impact on fluency. Moreover, the topic was familiar to the students, as they had enough background information to talk about İstanbul. The combination of topic familiarity and strategic planning was the main feature in Task 3. According to Skehan (1998b), topic familiarity may lead the learners to interact more fluently due to the easy access to information. This task requires only limited demand on attention and draws on ready material for speech. In addition, planning time may enhance fluency as the given time to the participants is employed to decide on and practice the message they want to convey, which is assumed to ease the processing load during task performance (Menhert, 1998).

These three tasks; decision making, problem solving and role play with ten minutes planning time; were not borrowed from any textbook or adopted from

another study. They were designed with the assistance of the study teacher for the purpose of this study and according to the level of the participants.

#### Data Collection Procedure

In December, the Head of Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University gave me permission orally to conduct my study in the school.

The teacher responsible for the group of students in which the tasks would be implemented was contacted first. He showed his interest in the study and scheduled the days we would implement the tasks. On the day of the first contact with the students, I introduced myself to them and introduced them to the research project. Most students expressed some interest in the study and some immediately volunteered to take part in the research.

On the first day of the data collection, I familiarized the teacher with study design and with the tasks which would be implemented during the study. Although I was present in the class on all days, all the explanations as to how to engage in the tasks were made by the responsible teacher.

I started the implementation of my study on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February in a speaking and listening class of an upper intermediate level of students. It took 25 minutes for the teacher and class to implement the first task. The other two tasks of about equal times were implemented in the following week on two different days.

In order to collect data, tape-recorders with external microphones were used during task performances. External microphones were used intentionally so as to get a good voice quality. Since 13 class pairs performed the tasks simultaneously, using external microphones for four pairs who were included in the main research project

was particularly helpful. The pairs whose performances would be recorded were placed to different parts of the classroom. This placement prevented the confusion of pairs' voices with each other and eliminated information on language cross over. This solution was also significant for the data analysis procedure which involved transcribing the audio recordings. The pairs were also formed as one boy and one girl on each pair so as to make it easier to differentiate between their voices. I had brought all the equipment and devices to the class before the study teacher gave them the instructions and they started to work on the tasks. All the important items like microphone on/ off switches and tape recorders' recording buttons were checked both by the study teacher and me before students started to perform the tasks. The volunteer pairs recorded remained constant in the three different tasks carried out in three different speaking and listening course.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained from the study were submitted to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. In the qualitative analysis, the data was transcribed for the first seven minutes for each recording. Seven minutes were thought to be adequate in terms of obtaining enough data (speech samples of participants) to analyze in the present study. The excerpts of the participants were studied to interpret the type of the language production so that the reader could see the actual samples. Qualitative analysis also constructs a basis for quantitative analysis. The criteria for measuring accuracy, fluency and complexity were selected from among the criteria used in similar studies (see Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 in Chapter 2) Table 6 presents the

criteria used to measure accuracy, fluency and complexity in general including the ones used to interpret data in the present study.

Table 6

Measures of Accuracy, Fluency and Complexity

Dimension	Measures
Accuracy	* <i>Number of self corrections</i> Percentage of error free clauses Target-like use of verbs tenses Target-like use of articles Target-like use of vocabulary * <i>Target-like use of plurals</i> Target-like use of negation Ratio of indefinite to definite articles * <i>Errors per a 100 words</i>
Fluency	Number of words per minute Number of syllables per minute Number of pauses of one/ two seconds Mean length of pauses Number of repetitions * <i>Number of false starts</i> * <i>Number of reformulations</i> * <i>Number of words per turn</i>
Complexity	Number of turns per minute Lexical richness e.g. number of word families used Proportion of lexical words to copula Percentage of words functioning as lexical verbs Percentage of occurrence of multi prepositional utterances * <i>Amount of subordination</i> * <i>Frequency of use of conjunctions</i> Frequency of use of prepositions * <i>Frequency of hypothesizing statement</i>

Note. \* = Measures used for the present study

As for the quantitative analysis, the speech samples of 8 participants were analyzed in terms of the variables of accuracy, fluency and complexity. Fluency was



measured considering the number of reformulations, the number of repetitions and the number of false starts; accuracy, in terms of errors per a hundred words, target like use of plurals and the number of self corrections; and complexity in terms of amount of subordination, frequency of the use of conjunctions and hypothesizing statements.

Some restrictions were brought to using the indicated criteria of the analysis of accuracy, fluency and complexity. Most previous studies used a selected subset of possible criteria (see Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, chapter 2) in analyzing task production data for evidence of task variable influences on accuracy, fluency and complexity of participant production. Three criteria for each dimension are typical of these studies.

In addition, as for accuracy, the reason to include “errors per a hundred words” is related to its being a general measure of accuracy used in several studies which aimed to investigate accuracy. For example, in the case of using “error free clauses” which is also a general measure for accuracy, some problems may occur about deciding what constitutes a ‘clause’, especially if the data is derived from interaction just as the situation in the present study. So, “errors per a hundred words” is a more appropriate measure of accuracy as the problem disappears with this measure. In the case of “errors per a hundred words”, it is necessary to determine what constitutes an error which may be more feasible and easier than to determine what constitutes an error free clause. As I included a general measure for accuracy in the present study, as an additional measure, I preferred to include “target-like use of plurals” which is a more specific measure of accuracy focusing on learners’ grammatical competence. As a third measure, number of self-corrections was

included in the present study in order to see to what extent language users are oriented towards accuracy rather than to see how accurately a learner uses L2. Self-corrections should be regarded with respect to the errors committed during speech production. Because, after committing an error, one has an opportunity to correct the incorrect utterance. So, self-corrections might be indicative of how successfully learners use this opportunity to correct their errors. In this respect, this measure also makes a pair with “errors per a hundred words”.

As for fluency, temporal variables such as speech/writing rate, number of pauses, and pause length were not included in the present study. The reason not to include such variables in the study is related to the fact that the participants performed tasks in pairs. Although, they are regarded as general measures of fluency, it would be hard to obtain exact time spend on speaking and pauses while participants were interacting. If the tasks were based on individual performance, then it would be more feasible to obtain time both for production and silence. Therefore, other variables which were thought to be indicative of fragmentation of the flow of speech during task performance were included as fluency measures which are number of self corrections, repetitions and reformulations. Despite the dialogic nature of tasks, interpreting the data in terms of these variables was feasible. Lastly, for complexity measurement, amount of subordination was included in the present study. It was thought that subordination might serve as an effective indicator of complexity as the participants were upper-intermediate level students who were thought to have acquired some of the subordinating devices. So, this choice of subordination was dependent on the level of students participated in the study. This measure of complexity would not probably be appropriate with beginner or

elementary students. The rationale in choosing frequency of the use of conjunctions as a measure of complexity was similar to that of subordination. In addition, the frequency of the use of hypothesizing statement was thought to be indicative of detecting complex structures used by participants to discuss, claim, counter-claim, support, and counter-support the ideas in any of these three tasks.

Since there were nine different variables for three aspects of language production, nine different charts were formed to see the numerical data. The data obtained from the transcriptions were analyzed by using percentages and frequencies so as to compare the oral performances of the participants.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, general information is given about the aim of the study, research question the researcher attempts to answer, the participants in the study, the instruments used to collect data, data collection procedures and data analysis.

The next chapter will give detailed information about data analysis done using the quantitative and qualitative methods specified in respect to answer the research question.

## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The objective of the present study is to investigate in what way and to what degree different tasks with different task features and task implementation factors have an impact on students' L2 speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. This chapter presents the qualitative and quantitative analysis carried out in order to address the research question proposed in the present study.

1. In what way and to what degree do task features and task implementation factors bring about different types of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity?

This study was conducted with four pairs of upper-intermediate students in their speaking courses. Three different speaking tasks – decision-making task, problem solving task and a role play - with different task designs were implemented by the teacher of the class. The data to be analyzed in this chapter were obtained by tape-recorders and transcribed by the researcher.

This chapter includes the findings about students' L2 speech production for three aspects of language production ; accuracy, fluency and complexity. In the first part, the findings about qualitative data and the criteria with which qualitative data are analyzed will be presented. The definitions of the criteria used for each aspect of language production will be stated step by step and the way qualitative data are treated by each specific criterion will be explained in detail.

In the second part, the quantitative data will be given in tables and their interpretation in relation to different tasks will be presented and discussed.

### Qualitative Analysis

In order to interpret the quantitative data reflecting the amount of accurate, complex and fluent language production of the participants, the qualitative analysis was conducted first to be able to apply the appropriate criteria for quantifying each aspect of language production; accuracy, fluency and complexity. In this section, some extracts from the transcriptions of oral performances of students will be presented with explanations. The qualitative data concerning accuracy analysis is given in this next section.

### Measuring Accuracy

Despite the fact that there are a number of different measures of accuracy used by researchers, in the present study, three criteria were used for measure of accuracy.

The first criterion is the number of errors per 100 words. In the present study, all errors concerning syntax, morphology, and lexical order were counted. A syntactic error is grammatical incorrectness concerning word order. Morphological error is related to the form and the structure of a word; and lexical error is concerned with choice of vocabulary. Mispronounced words were also counted although they did not prevent the listener from comprehension. Errors per hundred words serve as a general measure for accuracy and for this reason has been widely used. Skehan and Foster (1999) suggest that this generalized measure of accuracy is more appropriate

in terms of detecting differences between experimental conditions. For this reason this criterion was included in the present study.

The second criterion for measure of accuracy is self-correction. In self-correction, the speaker identifies an error either during or immediately after the production and stops and reformulates her/his speech. This shows the extent to which the learner is oriented towards accuracy. A learner who makes many errors obviously will have a greater opportunity to correct the errors. For this reason, this measure needs to be calculated in relation to the number of errors a learner makes. So self correction is related to errors committed during production. However, this does not mean that the more self correction a learner makes the more he/she will be accurate in his/ her speech. In the present study, self-corrections of each participant were counted and were used as percentage to the total number of errors committed.

The third criterion for measure of accuracy is the target-like use of plurals in L2 production. This is a more specific measure of grammatical accuracy. Although the participants in the present study are upper-intermediate level students and are expected to have no problems with a grammar subject like plurals, the target like use of plurals was included in the study as a measure of accuracy so as to focus specifically on one aspect of grammatical accuracy of high priority in ELT in Turkey. Also, it is more feasible to identify the plural usage than to identify target-like use of morphology and vocabulary in students' speech production. Therefore, obligatory use of plurals and correctly used plurals were counted. Percentages were calculated depending on this data.

These three criteria for measures of accuracy were applied to the three speaking tasks for each participant. Use of accuracy criteria is exemplified in the

following citation. Transcription conventions for measures of accuracy, fluency and complexity are presented in Appendix D.

In the following Transcript taken from Task 2 (a problem solving task), treatment of errors and self-corrections is presented by examples.

#### Transcript 1

- 1     A     Ok. We can solve this problem. Maybe we can give a job to a new  
2           staff.  
3     B     two **“mans is working ...are working”** here and we take two  
4           workers too.  
5     A     two workers (**isn't**) enough.

As can be seen from the Transcript 1, several kinds of errors (morphological, syntactic and lexical) are taken into consideration. These lines are taken from Task 2 (a problem solving task), in which the students are trying to find a solution to the staff problems in a café near the Preparatory school of Celal Bayar University. The error **“mans”**, committed in line 3 by student B is an example of misuse of plurals and is categorized as a morphological error in L2 speech production. Student B, again in line 3, notices his mistake **“two mans is working”** which is a morphological error again and makes a self-correction immediately after the production by adding **“... are working”** which is the correct form. Although the participants sometimes correct the errors in speech production, the corrected utterances or phrases are counted as an error, as well. Although the participant corrects his/her utterance, still there is an error committed by him/her.

In Transcript 2 taken from Task 3 (a role play), examples of the misuse of plurals and articles are given.

## Transcript 2

- 1     B     Yes. I want to drink something before. Are there any (**pub**) or and  
2           (**bar**) in Taksim Square?  
3     A     of course there are a lot of (**pub**) and (**bar**). For example, there (**are a**)  
4           big teras pub, it is beautiful, it is a good place for you. You will like it.

The lines in Transcript 2 are taken from Task 3 in which students were expected to perform their conversations after ten minutes planning time. This is an extract from the dialogue between a tourist trying to travel in İstanbul and a tourist guide giving some tips about the city. In line 1 and 3, student B and A use “*pub*” instead of “*pubs*” although the sentence structure is correct. In line 3, student A uses an extra article “*a*” although the auxiliary verb is “*are*”. So, morphological errors in participants’ oral performances can be observed in Transcript 2.

In Transcript 3 taken from Task 2, some examples of lexical errors and self-corrections are introduced.

## Transcript 3

- 16    A     you think that (**truely**) I think. We = **start ...we must start**= it today  
17           and = **we have an advertisement... we will have an advertisement**=  
18           and then we (**hag...hang**) it on the window and some students will  
19           come to work with us I think.

In Transcript 3 , in line 16, student A uses the word “*truly*” which gives the main idea, and she is able to get the message across to her partner. However, what she tries to convey is “thinking in the right way , thinking correctly or accurately”. So there is a lexical error in this utterance. In line 18, student A notices what is wrong in her production and makes a self correction for the word “*hag*” and corrects it as “*hang*”.

In this part, examples from different kinds of errors in participants’ L2 speech production are presented, and the way how they are treated is shown in detail in the



transcripts. After the analysis of accuracy in different transcripts, in the following section, measure of fluency with specific criteria will be given with examples from different transcripts.

### Measuring Fluency

In general, the measures of fluency can be analyzed under two titles; *temporal variables* and *hesitation phenomena*. Temporal variables are concerned with the number of pauses, pause lengths and speech rate. Hesitation phenomena are related to number of false starts, repetitions and reformulations that occur in oral productions. Skehan (1999) reports that a factor analysis of a range of fluency measures produced a two- factor solution. The first factor is related to “breakdown fluency” which corresponds to temporal variables and the second one is “repair fluency” which corresponds to hesitation phenomena in L2 oral production.

Speech rate as a temporal variable temporal variable was not used in the present study as the participants performed the tasks in pairs. It would be hard to obtain the exact time that each participant spent on speaking interaction and time spent disengaged from speaking. In addition to difficulties measuring speech rate, it would not be feasible to ascertain the exact length of pauses due to the participants’ performing the tasks in pairs and in an interactive manner.

For these reasons, number of false starts, repetitions and reformulations in relation to hesitation phenomena were employed as fluency criteria in the present study. Skehan and Foster (1999) suggest that hesitation phenomena are connected to moment - by - moment decisions by individuals made during oral performances, reflecting adjustments and improvements that are feasible within the pressure of real

time communication. Since the oral productions of the participants were analyzed as individual performances, then it appears appropriate to focus on the number of false starts, repetitions and reformulations as individual measures of fluency.

The first criterion for measuring fluency is the number of false starts. False starts are defined as the utterances or sentences that are started but not completed. While some of these are followed by reformulation, some of them are not (Skehan, Foster, 1999).

The second criterion is the number of reformulations. Reformulations are the phrases or clauses that are repeated with some modification. The third criterion is the number of repetitions. Repetitions are defined as words, phrases or clauses that are repeated without any modification (Skehan, Foster, 1999).

In the present study, these three criteria were employed to analyze fluency. The number of false starts, reformulations and repetitions of each participant were counted one by one in each task performance.

In the following transcription samples, examples of reformulations, false starts and repetitions will be given with explanations to differentiate between these three criteria in a more precise way.

In Transcript 4 taken from Task 3, the examples of reformulations found in the utterances are exemplified and analyzed.

#### Transcript 4

55 A you can drink it with fish. It is really delicious but you must drink  
56 small.  
57 B why... =**It is very strong...Is it very strong?**=  
58 A if you drink a little, it isn't very dangerous. Do you want to visit  
59 historical places?  
60 B of course. Especially =**I came İstanbul, I came to İstanbul**= for  
61 historical places.

In Transcript 4 taken from Task 3, it can be seen that there are two reformulations by student B. In line 57, student B notices that the phrase “*It is very strong*” is not in the form of a question, and the phrase is changed into the question form with a minor modification in the structure. It seems as if the participant repeats the phrase, however, she reformulates it by reversing verb with pronoun. In line 60, again student B notices that the preposition is missing in the utterance, and she reformulates the sentence by adding preposition “*to*” to the sentence. This cannot be scored as a self-correction as what the interlocutor said originally is not incorrect. So this is not a correction of an incorrect item. This explanation may help in understanding the sometimes confusing nature of self correction and reformulation.

Focusing on Transcript 5 taken from Task 2 (problem-solving task), it can be seen that there are some examples of false starts either followed by reformulation or not.

#### Transcript 5

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | maybe no smoking.   |
| 2 | B | no smoking not. Because <no smoking >...maybe <i>some people</i>          |
| 3 |   | <b>=don't want to ...don't want to sit=</b> in a place where if someone   |
| 4 |   | smokes cigarette. So we can only take out no jokes sign.                  |
| 5 | A | I think we can build another place to smoke.                              |
| 6 | B | yes, you are right. A different place. And [ <b>if someone wants...if</b> |
| 7 |   | <b>someone wants</b> ] to smoke cigarette, he can smoke of course.        |

In Transcript 5 from Task 2, in line 2, student B doesn't complete his utterance and the utterance “ because *no smoking*...” remains without reformulation. This statement can be accepted as a false start as it is not followed by a completing phrase and this leaves the structure meaningless. If student B had redesigned his/ her sentence by starting it in the same way and also completing it, then what the student did would have been called a false start with reformulation. In line 2, the utterance

“*some people don’t want to...*” is repeated once more, but there is an additional verb at the end of the sentence which makes this a reformulation with a minor modification.

In Transcript 6 taken from Task 3, examples of repetitions are presented with the explanations.

#### Transcript 6

- 1     A     ok. We are in İstanbul now and İstanbul has a lot of historical places  
2           and we can go a lot of historical places you know. [**If you want first...  
3           if you want first**] we can go Dolmabahçe Palace which was the last  
4           palace of Ottoman Emperor .  
5     B     it is too important for us.  
6     A     [**we can find ...I think ...we can find** ]and see some important things  
7           about Ottoman Emperor there. Because you know there is a big  
8           museum in there. And then we can go Ayasofya Mosque[**restorated  
9           restorated**] by Mimar Sinan.

In Transcript 6, in line 2, student A repeats the sentence “*if you want first*” once more without any modification or addition. Again, in line 6, student A repeats the sentence “*we can find*” once more, just after the phrase “*I think.*” And in line 9, the word “*restorated*” is used as in the same way without any change by Student A. As there are no additional phrases or modifications after the uttered sentence or word, these examples can be put into the category of repetitions.

These three criteria for measuring fluency may point out that the more a learner employs any of these criteria the less fluent he/she will be in his/ her oral production.

To sum up, in this section, the criteria for measures of fluency have been presented with some examples from the transcripts. In the following section, the qualitative analysis of complexity will be considered with its various specific measures and examples from transcriptions.

### Measuring Complexity

In the present study, complexity concerns to what extent learners produce elaborated language, and as Skehan( 2001) suggests, learners may differ in their willingness to use more difficult and challenging language.

Despite the fact that there are a number of measures of complexity used in different studies, in the present study, the kinds of measures that were most feasible were chosen from complexity criteria used in previous studies.

The first criterion is the amount of subordination (also used as a measure of complexity in Foster and Skehan's (1996) study). For this measure, the total number of subordinate clauses and total number of c-(or AS) units were counted. In another word, the transcriptions of oral performances were analyzed into AS- units and subordinate clauses. Defined by Foster, AS-Unit is a single speaker's utterance consisting of an independent clause or subclausal unit, together with any subordinate clauses(s) associated with it (Foster, 2000, p.365).

Before the analysis of the texts of the participants, segmenting each text into AS- units gave me the opportunity to deal with the transcriptions in a systematic way.

Subordination can be taken as an acceptable measure because it reflects a greater degree of internal structuring of speech and captures a great deal of useful variance (Foster, Skehan, 1996). Therefore, being upper intermediate level students, the participants had the capacity to employ subordinate constructions and as an effective indicator of complexity, the amount of subordination was used as a measure of complexity in the present study.

Another criterion for measuring complexity is the frequency of use of a language function that is linguistically and cognitively difficult. The frequency of

hypothesizing statements in a task performance can be taken as an indication of this measure of complexity. Depending on the task demands, participants' use of constructions concerning claims, counter-claims, supports and counter- supports were examined. As these constructions would show the extent to which the participants used this kind of complex language in their oral performances, this criterion was included in the study.

Another means of measuring complexity is the frequency of conjunctions. In oral performances of the participants, the use of conjunctions was analyzed in terms of coordinating conjunctions; *and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*; correlative conjunctions; *both...and, not only...but also, either...or, neither...nor, whether...or*; and subordinating conjunctions; *after, although, as, because, before, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, and while*. The use of conjunctions also reflects how the participants link their ideas, and longer sentence formulations with the help of conjunctions may reflect the extent to which the participants are oriented towards complexity.

In this study, I have employed these three criteria to measure complexity in students' oral performances.

Some examples are now presented from different transcriptions about the application of the complexity criteria upon the data.

In Transcript 7 taken from Task 1 (a decision making task), the examples of AS-Units and subordinate clauses are presented.

#### Transcript 7

1     A     it isn't important // ***If he won't that age::*** he can't give...teach  
2           his doctorness to people, doctor knowledge // When he dies:: , they  
3           can continue that job //

As seen in Transcript 7, the lines taken from the decision making task (Task 1) in which the students were required to decide on six people for a new civilization, show both AS-units and subordinate clauses. ‘//’ is the boundary for AS-unit and “ ::” is the boundary for subordinate clause ( see Appendix D). In line 1, the clause “ *if he won’t that age*” is a subordinate clause and a dependent clause to the sentence which follows it. That sentence does not have any function by itself. However, in line 1 again, the sentence “he can’t (...) give...teach his doctorness to people, doctor knowledge” is an AS unit as it stands as an independent and complementary clause. In line 2, the clause “when he dies” is a subordinate clause which is dependent on the sentence following it. So in these sorts of segmentation of constructions, it becomes easier to perceive what constitutes an AS unit and what constitutes a subordinate clause.

In Transcript 8 taken from Task 1, some examples of subordination are presented concerning adverbial clause and noun clause.

#### Transcript 8

1     A     anyway *if you... if you want::, we can ... we can* discuss the  
 2           policeman then// We can choose *the other...the other* people// I  
 3           think we need a male lawyer:: Like you said :: if someone did  
 4           some illegal...works ... illegal things:: , we could need  
 5           a...law//.

In transcript 8 from the decision making task (Task 1), the utterances of student A were analyzed focusing on the sentence structure. In both examples, the use of *adverbial clauses* and *noun clauses* is clearly seen and can be accepted as an indication of complexity. In line 1, student A starts the sentence with *if conditionals* which puts it in the category of adverbial clauses. In 3, there is a hidden “that” in the utterance and it can be put into the category of noun clauses.

In Transcript 9 taken from Task 2, the examples of noun clause, adverb clause, adjective clause and hypothesizing statement will be given with explanations.

#### Transcript 9

- 20 B I wish we have got a musicbox ::  
21 A It is possible **I think**:: It will be good for students// **because there is**  
22 **no music in this cafe**:: and students don't come for it//**so it is**  
23 **necessary**::  
24 B music box or (**liv..live**) music?//  
25 A Music box // because the students can play music:: **which they**  
**want**::so we can buy a music box::

The lines in Transcript 9 were taken from Task 2, a problem solving task, in which the students were required to find solutions to the problems of a cafe which has just been opened next to the preparatory school. The lines are rich in terms of subordinate clauses; noun clauses, adjective clauses and adverb clauses. In line 21, student A explains the reason why a music box is needed in the café by using **because** which can be put into the adverbial clause category. In line 21, the phrase **I think** not only introduces subordinate clause but also it can be accepted as an example of a hypothesizing statement through which the student A puts forward his claims or counter claims. In line 25, student A explains the kind of music he intends by using **which** that introduces an adjective clause.

In Transcript 10 taken from Task 1, the use of conjunctions with some examples is shown and explanations offered.

#### Transcript 10

- 1 A we choose him for his job you think. **Because** definitely we will  
2 get illnesses.**Because of that**, we must choose that doctor. It is not  
3 important he is homosexual **or not**.  
4 B I don't care about his female or male, his sexual choice **but** he is or  
5 she is a bit old, his age is 42.  
6 A it is not important **if** he won't that age, he can't give ...teach his  
7 doctorness to people doctor knowledge. **When** he dies, they can  
8 continue that job.



In Transcript 10, the lines show that there is a great number of conjunctions such as: *because, because of that, or not, but, if, when*. All of them have been used to link ideas of the participants. In line 1, student A explains why they choose homosexual doctor by using “*because*”; a *subordinating conjunction*. In line 4, student B uses “*but*” in order to explain the contradiction between his ideas about the sexual choice of doctor and about his age. And in line 6 and 7, *if* and *when* have been used by student A as subordinating conjunctions which join two clauses together.

All these samples from Transcript 10 point out that interlocutors make use of conjunctions so as to present their ideas in a more complex syntactic manner.

In this section, some extracts from the tasks implemented in the study were given in detail so as to show how a second aspect of language production, complexity, has been analyzed in this study complex syntactic manner.

The measures of three aspects of language production – accuracy, fluency and complexity – have been analyzed in detail with examples from the transcriptions of the oral performances of the participants. In the qualitative data section, in the next section, it will be shown how the qualitative data are quantified into tables, percentages and frequencies with their interpretations in relation to different tasks with different task features and task implementation factors.

### Quantitative Analysis

After the analysis of qualitative data, the percentages and the frequencies of the participants’ oral performances were calculated according to the criteria explained above. The quantitative data obtained from the oral performances of the

participants will be shown in the tables which have been formed to explain the relation between tasks and the oral performances of the participants. The tables will be presented concerning each criterion of each aspect of language production.

### Accuracy

#### Number of Errors

Errors per hundred words are the first criterion for accuracy. In order to find out the percentage of participants' making errors per hundred words, all the lexical morphological and syntactic errors were found. The frequencies and percentages were determined by computing number of errors over number of words produced in seven minute data period.

Table 7 shows the frequencies and percentages of errors for all participants for all tasks.

Table 7

#### Errors per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>E/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>E/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>E/WP</i>
Participant 1	4.9%	6/122	3.5%	5/139	3.6%	4/109
Participant 2	1.2%	3/240	1.7%	4/233	2.1%	7/327
Participant 3	2.9%	7/240	1.6%	5/310	0.6%	1/158
Participant 4	4.4%	17/384	2.9%	10/344	2%	7/345
Participant 5	3 %	10/327	2.2%	9/400	2.5%	12/472
Participant 6	1.6%	6/362	2%	6/300	1.1%	3/256
Participant 7	3.3%	10/296	1.5%	4/262	1%	3/282
Participant 8	3.1%	6/188	2%	4/200	2.1%	4/188
<b><i>Average % errors</i></b>	<b>3 %</b>		<b>2.1%</b>		<b>1.8%</b>	

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study.
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) E/WP is Errors/ Words actually produced in 7 minute data period.
- (4) Errors also expressed in terms of percentages (Errors/words actually produced in 7 minute data period)

As seen in Table 7, the actual number of words produced by each participant and errors produced by each participant varied widely. However, error percentages were consistently low, averaging less than 3% of total words produced for all participants for all tasks.

Task 3 (Role Play) yielded the most accurate (error-free) speech from participants in terms of the percentage of errors per total words produced. In this task the average measured accuracy is 1.8 errors per 100 words. Task 2 (Problem-solving) produced the next highest accuracy ranking with a measured percentage of 2.1% per total words produced. The greatest percentage of errors per words produced was found for Task 1 (Decision-making) with an average percent 3% per total words produced

In task 3, the participants were required to prepare a conversation taking place between a tourist and a person working in a travel agency. The participants were instructed about the task and how they would perform it. The teacher of the class participated in the study had also explained that the participants had already been familiar with such kinds of activities from previous courses. The average accuracy measures in Task 2 (2,1) and Task 3 (1.8) are very close to each other. The factor that might have contributed for Task 3 to yield the most accurate speech might be the planning time participants were given before the actual task performance, as the participants were given ten minutes to strategically plan what they would say in their actual performances. The participants might have practiced on the correct grammar structures while preparing their speeches and this might have led them to produce more accurate speech with the help of strategic planning. Skehan (1996a) states that planning reduces the cognitive load and the pressure of performing a task, releasing

more attention for the language that is being used to accomplish the task. However, according to many studies made about the impact of strategic planning on L2 speech production, it has been found out that strategic planning may influence accuracy as well as fluency (Foster, 1996; Foster& Skehan, 1996; Skehan& Foster 1997; Yuan& Ellis, 2003).

Task 2, a problem-solving task, in which the students were required to come up with some convergent ideas so as to try to solve specific problems of a café near the school, yielded nearly the same amount of accuracy as Task 3. Factors that might have contributed to Task 2 getting nearly the same result as Task 3 may have been familiarity of the topic to the participants. As students, the participants are well aware of the fact that the cafe which has just been opened near the Prep School should be revised in terms of food, entertainment, rules, service and prices. As the problems are specific, so the solutions should be specific as well. In this respect, Skehan (2001) suggests that speakers are more accurate in tasks with known information because they tend to use well-established language to encode familiar situations. According to studies, the tasks with convergent outcomes have been found to have impact on accuracy as the learners focus their attention on formulating specific ideas in order to accomplish a task. In Task 2, participants didn't have to deal with new information. So, rather than discussing what should be done for the café, they may have spent more time organizing their solutions cooperatively.

Another factor is that some participants avoid taking risks. Indeed, learners who tend to use only what they know and avoid using structures they are not certain of, may be more accurate (Skehan, 1996). In this respect, they may be less complex in their performance of Task 2 and Task 3.

After the analysis of errors, the second criterion for accuracy, self corrections of participants, will be analyzed for each task.

### Self-Correction

As the second criterion for accuracy, the times students noticed their errors and corrected themselves have been counted and taken as a percentage of the total number of errors committed. In self-correction, the speaker identifies an error either during or immediately after production and stops and reformulates his/her speech. Table 8 gives the results obtained from transcriptions of the participants concerning self-corrections of individuals in each task in terms of percentages and frequencies. Frequencies and percentages were determined by computing the number of self – corrections over the number of errors committed in seven minute data period.

Table 8

### Self-corrections per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>SC/E</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>SC/E</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>SC/E</i>
Participant 1	0%	0/6	20%	1/5	0%	0/4
Participant 2	33%	1/3	50%	2/4	29%	2/7
Participant 3	29%	2/7	60%	3/5	0%	0/1
Participant 4	18%	3/17	10%	1/10	29%	2/7
Participant 5	30%	3/10	11%	1/9	33%	4/12
Participant 6	50%	3/6	50%	3/6	33%	1/3
Participant 7	10%	1/10	75%	3/4	33%	1/3
Participant 8	16%	1/6	25%	1/4	0%	1/3
<b>Average %</b>	23.2%		37.6%		19.6%	
<b>Self corrections</b>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) SC/E is Self-corrections/ Errors committed in 7 minute data period
- (4) Self-corrections also expressed in terms of percentages. (Self-corrections/ Errors actually committed in 7 minute data period)

As can be seen from Table 8, the actual number of errors committed by each participant and self-corrections employed by each participant vary widely. While some participants corrected the errors in their utterances, some of them did not correct the errors. The participants with %0 self-correction show that they had errors with their utterances; however, they did not make any attempt to correct them. The highest score for self-correction was obtained from Task 2, a problem-solving task, with an average measure of %37.6. This result doesn't, necessarily show that the performances of the participants in Task 2 yielded the most accurate language, because the more errors a learner makes, the more opportunities a learner gets to correct what he formed inaccurate. This might only suggest the extent to which the participants attempt to correct their errors and the extent to which they are oriented towards accuracy.

As can be seen in Table 7, the percentages for errors per 100 words are nearly the same for Task 2 (% 2.1) and Task 3 (%1.8) which means that the participants committed fewer errors in these tasks than they did in Task 3. However, in Table 8, it is clear that participants in Task 2 corrected more errors than they did in Task 1. This can be interpreted to mean that Task 2 promoted more accurate language than Task 3 did.

Analyzing participants' individual errors in each task in Table 7, the highest percentage for the errors committed by the participants was in Task 1 with %3 showing that the participants committed more errors than they committed in other two tasks. Task 1 was a decision making task in which the participants were required to decide on six people for a new civilization. The task was designed in a way that the students were expected to discuss the issue by interacting with each other,

exchanging their opinions and putting forward ideas so as to reach a conclusion.

While focusing on the content, it was difficult for them to give the same amount of attention to form. Thus, percentage of error for Task 1 is more than the percentage of the errors in Task 2 and Task 3. In this respect, a discussion atmosphere apparently led participants to try to get the message across and led them to give less importance to correcting the errors in their utterances.

After the analysis of percentages of self-correction and errors, percentages of target-like use of plurals will be analyzed as the third criterion for measurement of accuracy.

#### Target-like use of Plurals

As the participants in the study are upper intermediate level students, their ability to use target like noun plurals likely correlates with their overall grammatical competence. It was intentionally included in the study so as to see participants' capability on a grammatical area of high instructional focus. So as to analyze the target-like use of plurals, correct plural usage relative to obligatory occasions for plurals were computed. Table 9 gives the results obtained from the individual performances of the participants concerning the target-like use of plurals in terms of percentages and frequencies.

Table 9

Correct use of plurals per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>CP/OP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>CP/OP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>CP/OP</i>
Participant 1	80%	4/5	88.8%	8/9	62.5%	8/5
Participant 2	100%	9/9	94%	16/17	80%	6/9
Participant 3	100%	10/10	95.6%	22/23	100%	4/4
Participant 4	80%	8/10	100%	19/19	88.8%	8/9
Participant 5	88.8%	8/9	86.3%	19/22	91.3%	21/23
Participant 6	94%	16/17	95%	19/20	93.7%	15/16
Participant 7	93.3%	14/15	100%	15/15	100%	5/5
Participant 8	66.6%	4/6	81.8%	9/11	100%	2/3
<b><i>Average %</i></b>	%87.8		% 92.6		%89.5	
<b><i>Correct plurals</i></b>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) CP/OP is Correct plurals/ Obligatory plurals produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) Correct plurals also expressed in terms of percentages (Correct plurals/ Obligatory plurals in 7 minute data period)

As shown in Table 9, the highest score for the target like use of plurals was obtained from Task 2 with a percentage of 92,6. The percentages concerning the correct use of plurals for each task are nearly the same. The participants with %100 correct usage of plurals haven't committed any errors related to plurals, and they have used the correct plural forms in all obligatory occasions. In contrast, participant 4 used 8 correct plurals in Task 1, whereas, number of the obligatory occasions for correct use of plurals was 10, therefore, participant 4 was %80 successful in terms of using correct plural forms of the words produced in Task 1. For the second task, he committed no errors with plurals. There were 19 correct plural forms used by Participant 4, and the obligatory occasions for plural use were also 19. So he missed none of the obligatory occasions for plurals. For Task 3, the obligatory occasions for



plural use were 9; and participant 4 used eight of them correctly yielding percentage of 88.8

The criteria for measures of accuracy have been described and exemplified in the qualitative analysis section and the frequencies and percentages of grammatical errors, self-correction and target-like use of plurals, have been explained in this section in relation to the three tasks.

Taking into consideration Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9, it can be concluded from the tables that Task 2 (Problem - solving) yielded, generally, the most accurate performance. Having discussed accuracy in this section, in what follows I will discuss fluency measures for different tasks.

### Fluency

In the present study, three criteria – the number of false starts, the number of reformulations and the number of repetitions- were used to measure fluency in oral performance of the participants. It is assumed that that the more false starts, reformulations or repetitions the participants employ the less fluent they will be in their utterances.

#### The Number of False Starts

The first criterion that is used to measure fluency is the frequencies and the percentages of false starts in oral performances of the participants. False starts are the utterances and the sentences that are incomplete and may constitute fragments in oral production. This fragmentation may lead the speakers to be experienced as less fluent in their oral performances. In this study, the percentages of false starts were

measured as a ratio of the number of false starts to the words produced by each participant in each task in seven minute data period. In Table 10, the number of false starts found in individual performances is presented in terms of percentages and frequencies.

Table 10

False starts per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>FS/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>FS/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>FS/WP</i>
Participant 1	2.4%	3/122	1.4%	2/139	0.9%	1/109
Participant 2	2%	5/240	1.7%	4/233	0.6%	2/327
Participant 3	2.5%	6/240	0.9%	3/310	0.6%	1/158
Participant 4	2%	8/384	1.4%	5/344	0.5%	2/345
Participant 5	2.1%	7/327	1.5%	6/400	0.6%	3/472
Participant 6	1.6%	6/362	0.6%	2/300	1.1%	3/256
Participant 7	2.3%	7/296	1.5%	4/262	1%	3/282
Participant 8	2.1%	4/188	1%	2/200	0.5%	1/188
<b><i>Average use of False starts</i></b>	2.1%		1.2%		0.7%	

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) FS/ WP is False starts / words produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) False starts are also expressed in terms of percentages (False starts / words produced in 7 minute data period)

Table 10 presents the results for the number of false starts in frequencies and percentages. As shown in Table 9, the lowest score for the number of false starts is obtained from Task 3 with an average rate of 0.7 %., followed by Task 2 whose average use of false starts is 1.2%, and Task 3 with an average use of 2.1% per 100 words. So in Task 3, the participants were subject to fewer false starts than they were in Task 1 and Task 2.

In Task 3, participants’ actual task performances were preceded by ten minutes planning time without teacher guidance. The participants were just

instructed about the topic and they were told to prepare their dialogues in ten minutes. After ten minutes were over, they performed what they had prepared during this time. In Task 3, I aimed to see the impact of topic familiarity with strategic planning on fluency. As Skehan (1998) proposes that familiarity with the topic may lead to greater fluency due to the easy access of information, which will require only limited demands on attention to content access and make material for speech come easier. In addition, planning time is supposed to enhance fluency because learners employ the given time to decide on the message they want to convey, which is assumed to facilitate the processing load during task performance (Menhert, 1998).

Before the implementation of Task 3, all the participants were asked if they knew İstanbul in detail or not. The reason why such a question about Istanbul was asked was to see the extent to which the participants were familiar with Istanbul. Depending on their replies to this question, the task was designed in such a way that the participants shared roles as a tourist and a tourist guide in Istanbul. So the participants used their own knowledge and experiences to perform this role play. As they were all familiar with İstanbul, its historical, natural and popular places, they had a chance to access the data more easily and fluently.

#### The Number of Reformulations

The second criterion that was used to measure fluency is the average number of reformulations per 100 words in oral performances of the participants. Reformulations are the phrases or clauses that are repeated with some modification, and if one of the participants attempts to reformulate his/ her utterance while

performing a task, it may be interpreted as that this is an interruption in the flow of his/her speech appeared as a lack of fluency.

In this study, the percentages and frequencies of reformulations were measured as a ratio of the number of reformulations to the words produced by each participant in each task. In Table 11, the number of reformulations found in individual performances is presented in terms of percentages and frequencies.

Table 11

Reformulations per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>RF/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>RF/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>RF/WP</i>
Participant 1	2.4%	3/122	1.4%	2/139	0%	0/109
Participant 2	2%	5/240	1.7%	4/233	0.9%	3/327
Participant 3	1.6%	4/240	0.9%	3/310	0.6%	1/158
Participant 4	1.5%	6/384	1.1%	4/344	0.5%	2/345
Participant 5	1.5%	5/327	1.2%	5/400	0.4%	2/472
Participant 6	1.3%	5/362	0.3%	1/300	1.1%	3/256
Participant 7	1.6%	5/296	1.1%	3/262	0.7%	2/282
Participant 8	1.5%	3/188	1.5%	3/200	0.5%	1/188
<i>Average %</i>	1.6%		1.1%		0.6%	
<i>Reformulations</i>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) RF/WP is Reformulations / Words produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) Reformulations are also expressed in terms of percentages (Reformulations/ words produced in 7 minute data period)

As in Table 10, in Table 11, Task3 yields the lowest score for the average use of reformulations with an average percentage of 0.6. It is followed by Task 2 with an average percentage of 1.1., and Task 3 with an average occurrence of 1.6 reformulations per 100 words. So the participants reformulated what they uttered less than they did in Task 1 and Task 2.

The influence of topic related factors could be observed in Task 2. Despite being a problem-solving task, Task 2 gives the second highest degree of fluency; this result can be explained by the fact that the topic had an impact upon learners' performance. So the difference between participants' performance on Task 3 and Task 2 can be explained by the topic chosen for the tasks. The topic chosen for Task 2 was more interesting and relevant for the participants as it was directly related to their own experiences and expectations from the café. However, the planning time that was given to the participants in Task 3 might have made the participants more fluent when it was combined with the topic familiarity which was less interesting for the participants. Also some topics may or may not be of interest to a specific learner, depending on her/his interest and previous knowledge (Ellis, 2003). This may also have some impact upon the performances of the participants. Although the topic was familiar to the participants in Task 2, they were not provided with time to plan prior to the accomplishment of the task. Being non-planners in Task 2, the participants tended to be less fluent compared to their fluency results in Task 3. When the participants have the opportunity to plan their speech prior to execution, attention demands are eased during speech production and therefore speech flows more naturally.

In Task 1, participants yielded the highest score for the use of reformulations with an average use of 1.6 per 100 words, an indication of being less fluent in oral production. Task 1 was a decision making task which required participants to decide about certain characters to nominate for a new civilization and reach some conclusions about these characters. Although the topic was interesting for the students, it was quite a new topic and irrelevant. In Task 1 the participants were

provided neither with a familiar topic nor with a time to strategically plan their actual performances. Participants' lacking familiar topic and lacking time for preparation might have been required to focus more on topic than the flow of speech. As Task 1 was in the mode of a discussion, this feature of the task may have led them to have more false starts and more reformulations than they had in Task 2 and Task 3. Due to the interactive atmosphere in Task 1, the participants had more turn takings and responded more to each other. This interactive feature of Task 1 may have led the participants to focus on conveying meaning, and getting the message across rather than emphasizing the importance of accurate structures and speech's flowing naturally.

Another point about the impact of planning time upon fluency, as Menhert (1998) suggests pre-task planning reduces the quantity of online speech planning, consequently the more planned the speech the more fluent it will be. Menhert (1998) found out that fluency increased when planning time was higher. Similarly Skehan (1998) states that the higher the planning time higher the fluency of the speakers. Participants may have taken advantage of long planning time (10 minutes) given in Task 3 to perform more fluently. If the planning time given to the participants had been between (1-5 minutes), maybe the participants would not have been as fluent as they were with 10 minutes planning time.

#### Number of Repetitions

The third criterion included in the present study to measure fluency is the number of repetitions per 100 words in the oral performances of the participants. Repetitions are the words, phrases or clauses that are repeated without any

modification. The amount of repetitions may be an indication of being less fluent in that they disturb the flow of utterances or clauses. The more repetition a participant makes the more fragmentation will occur in his/her utterances. Therefore, this interferes with the natural flow of language. In this study, the percentages and frequencies of repetitions were measured as a ratio of the number of repetitions to the words produced by each participant in each task. Table 12 presents the number of repetitions found in individual performance in terms of percentages and frequencies.

Table 12

Repetitions per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>R/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>R/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>R/WP</i>
Participant 1	0%	0/122	1.4%	2/139	0%	0/109
Participant 2	0.8%	2/240	0%	0/233	0%	0/327
Participant 3	0.8%	2/240	0%	0/310	1.2%	2/158
Participant 4	0%	0/384	0.5%	2/344	0%	0/345
Participant 5	0.9%	3/327	0.5%	2/400	0.2%	1/472
Participant 6	0%	0/362	0.6%	2/300	0%	0/256
Participant 7	2.7%	8/296	1.5%	4/262	1%	3/282
Participant 8	1.5%	3/188	0%	0/200	0.5%	1/188
<b><i>Average %</i></b>	<b>0.8%</b>		<b>0.5%</b>		<b>0.3%</b>	
<b><i>Repetitions</i></b>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) R/WP is Repetitions/ Words produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) Repetitions are also expressed in terms of percentages (Repetitions / words produced in 7 minute data period)

As indicated in Table 12, Task 3 (as in Table 10 and Table 11) yields the lowest score for the use of fluency interruption with an average use of repetitions being 0.3 per 100 words. The lower the percentage of the use of repetitions is, the higher the fluency degree of the participants will be. Task 2 follows Task 3 with an average use of repetitions 0.5 per 100 words. This is followed by Task 3 with an

average use of repetitions of 0.8 per 100 words. As can be seen from Table 12, the participants had a lower tendency in all these three tasks of repeating what they had uttered. The scores are not only low in frequencies and percentages but they are also very close to each other.

Examining the results obtained from Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12 concerning measures of fluency, it can be concluded that in each table concerned with different measures of fluency, Task 3 yielded the lowest scores for the use of false starts, reformulations and repetitions, and Task 1 yielded the highest scores in each table for the use of these measures.

### Complexity

Complexity of language may be achieved through learners' inclination to take risks and test new and more elaborate language forms. These new forms, though, may not be totally correct (Skehan, 1996). Engaging in trying to produce complex structures may foster opportunities for development of the interlanguage system of learners (Foster & Skehan, 1996).

In the present study, three criteria - the amount of subordination, the frequency of the use of hypothesizing statements and the frequency of the use of conjunctions - were used to find out the extent to which the students produce complex language in each task.



### Amount of Subordination

In this study, subordination was measured as a ratio of subordinate clauses to total words produced in the data sample. Table 13 shows the frequencies and percentages of subordinate clauses found for each participant in each task.

Table 13

#### Subordination per participant per task ( frequencies and %

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>SC/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>SC/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>SC/WP</i>
Participant 1	4.9%	6/122	4.3%	6/139	0%	0/109
Participant 2	5%	12/240	4.7%	11/233	1.5%	5/327
Participant 3	5%	12/240	3.8%	12/310	1.2%	2/158
Participant 4	5.2%	20/384	3.4%	12/344	2.6%	9/345
Participant 5	2.7%	9/327	2.7%	11/400	1.2%	6/472
Participant 6	5.2%	19/362	3%	9/300	1.5%	4/256
Participant 7	4.3%	13/296	3.8%	10/262	3.9%	11/282
Participant 8	4.7%	9/188	3.5%	7/200	3.1%	6/188
<i>Average %</i>						
<i>Subordination</i>	4.6%		3.6%		1.8%	

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study.
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) SC/WP is Subordinate Clauses/ Words actually produced in 7 minute data period.
- (4) Subordination is also expressed in terms of percentages (Subordinate clauses/ words produced in 7 minute data period).

As can be seen in Table 13, participants' production yielded the most complex language in Task 1 (decision-making) with an average complexity of 4.6 subordinate clauses per 100 words, followed by Task 2 (problem-solving) with an average complexity of 3.6 subordinate clauses per 100 words, then followed by Task 3 (role play with planning time) with an average complexity of 1.8 subordinate clauses per 100 words.

Factors that might have contributed for Task 1 to yield the most complex language may have been as a result of its being a decision making task in which the students came to a conclusion by discussing their ideas, rather than just giving their decisions. Task 1 was designed in way that the students would come to a conclusion by choosing six characters out of ten. Although it was a convergent task at the end of which the participants were required to agree on different people cooperatively, the way participants performed Task 1 was more than deciding on six people for the new civilization. Instead of just choosing characters for the new world, the participants achieved the task by discussing and exchanging their ideas. In Task 1 students were expected to nominate certain characters as citizens of a new civilization. However, before deciding on these characters, they shared what they thought about the characters in order to support their ideas. As the made up characters in the task (a homosexual doctor, a female biology teacher, a cook from a five star hotel, a warrior with a spear, a policeman with a gun, a university student, an African woman (pregnant), a doctor, a male lawyer, a man of religion) were quite different than each other, the participants had the opportunity to come up with different ideas for the characters they chose for the new civilization. According to Duff (1986) tasks with divergent goals like debates lead to longer turns and more complex language use than tasks with convergent goals (as cited in Ellis, 2003). However, in Task 1, participants produced complex structures due to the discussion they carried out to come to a conclusion.

In terms of task conditions, Task 1 involved shared information rather than split information. While shared information tasks typically involve decision making as in the participants were expected to achieve in Task 1, split information tasks

typically involve description. As pointed out by Newton and Kennedy (1996) cited in Ellis (2003), shared tasks have been found to be effective in pushing learners to produce and this feature of Task 1 may have led the participants to argue their case and share their ideas about the situation rather than to focus on the accuracy of the form in which they argued their case.

As in the analysis of other features, task topic may partially explain this result. According to Skehan (1998), when speakers deal with familiar topics, situations or events, they tend to use less elaborate language. The present study supports this statement as the results show a low level of complexity production output for Task 2, and Task 3. As previously shown, topic familiarity promoted more accurate language in Task 2. The topic wasn't familiar to the students in Task 1, and this may have led them to come up with divergent ideas instead of convergent ones.

Task 3 it yielded the lowest score, %1.8 on the measure of complexity. This result may be due to the planning time given to the participants in Task 3. Several studies indicate that strategic planning helps to enhance participant fluency and giving learners the opportunity to plan results in greater fluency (Foster, 1996; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Although some studies conducted about the effects of planning time on complexity show that planners produce more complex language than non-planners, in the present study, the planning time has been found to have no impact on complexity in terms of the use of subordinate clauses, conjunctions and hypothesizing statements (compared to Task 1 and Task 2).

### The Frequency of Conjunctions

The second criterion for measure of complexity was included in the present study so as to find out how frequently the participants make use of conjunctions in their oral performances. Using conjunctions may show their tendency to combine ideas and reflect their ability to try different structures in L2 production. It can also be hypothesized that the more a participant employs conjunctions, the more he/ she will produce complex phrases or sentences. The use of conjunctions was measured as a ratio of the number of conjunctions to total words produced by each participant in each task. In table 14, the results of totaling conjunctions are given as percentages and frequencies.

Table 14

#### Conjunctions per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>C/WP</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>C/WP</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>C/WP</i>
Participant 1	4.9%	6/122	4.3%	6/139	2.7%	3/109
Participant 2	7.5%	18/240	4.2%	10/233	3.3%	11/327
Participant 3	5.4%	13/240	4.5%	14/310	3.1%	5/158
Participant 4	6.7%	26/384	5.8%	20/344	5.2%	18/345
Participant 5	6.1%	20/327	5%	20/400	4.8%	23/472
Participant 6	5.2%	19/362	4%	12/300	2.7%	7/256
Participant 7	6%	18/296	5.1%	15/292	3.5%	10/282
Participant 8	9%	17/188	5%	10/200	4.2%	8/188
<b><i>Average %</i></b>	6.3%		4.7%		3.6%	
<b><i>Conjunctions</i></b>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) C/WP is Conjunctions/ Words produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) Conjunctions are also expressed in terms of percentages (Conjunctions / Words produced in 7 minute data period)

Table 14 presents the results for the number of conjunctions as produced in performing each task. As can be seen from the table, Task 1 yields the highest

percentage total for the use of conjunctions in language production of all participants. This result is parallel to the result obtained from Table 13 which focuses on another criterion of complexity, the amount of subordination per 100 words.

### The Frequency of Hypothesizing Statements

Hypothesizing statements have been analyzed as the idea units in which the speakers stated their claims or counter claims, supports or counter supports. In the transcriptions analyzed in the present study, the phrases starting with “I think ... I believe...I don’t think...I don’t believe...in my opinion” were treated as hypothesizing statements as the participants were strongly putting forward their ideas and opinions. The percentages of hypothesizing statements were measured as a ratio of the number of hypothesizing statements to total number of AS-units produced by each participant in each task.

Table 15 presents the result of the use of hypothesizing statements in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Table 15

Hypothesizing statements per participant per task (frequencies and %)

<i>Participants</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>HP/AS</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>HP/AS</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>HP/AS</i>
Participant 1	71.4%	5/7	23%	3/13	0%	0/17
Participant 2	33.3%	5/15	27.7%	5/18	5.2%	2/38
Participant 3	36.8%	7/19	11.4%	4/35	0%	0/15
Participant 4	39.1%	9/23	8.1%	3/37	5.8%	2/34
Participant 5	10%	4/40	12.8%	5/39	4.7%	2/42
Participant 6	42.3%	11/26	16.1%	5/31	5.4%	2/37
Participant 7	23.8%	5/21	18.7%	3/16	9%	2/22
Participant 8	46.6%	7/15	22.2%	4/18	14.2%	3/21
<b>Average %</b>	37.9%		17.5%		5.5%	
<b>Hypothesizing Statements</b>						

- (1) T1, T2 and T3 stand for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 used in the study
- (2) T1= Decision –making, T2= Problem –solving, T3= Role play
- (3) HP/ AS is Hypothesizing statements/ AS units produced in 7 minute data period
- (4) Hypothesizing statements are also expressed in terms of percentages (Hypothesizing statements/ AS units produced in 7 minute data period)

As indicated in Table 15, Task 1 yields by far the highest score for the use of hypothesizing statements in the oral productions of participants.

Taking into consideration Table 13, Table 14, and Table 15, it can be stated that there is a high correlation between the tables concerned with different measures of complexity. In each table, the highest results for complexity are obtained from Task 1 (decision –making) and the lowest scores from Task 3 (role play with planning time).

To sum up, the tree criteria for measures of complexity were analyzed in detail and the results were shown in Table 13, Table 14, and Table 15.

In order to have a better idea of participants' oral performances in terms of the three dimensions – accuracy, fluency and complexity –, in Table 16 overall results concerning the task implemented in the study are presented.

Table 16

Ranking of accuracy, fluency, complexity in Task 1, Task 2 and Task 3

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Task 1 Decision-making</i>	<i>Task 2 Problem- solving</i>	<i>Task 3 Role play with planning time</i>
Accuracy	0	2	1
Fluency	0	1	2
Complexity	2	1	0

Note. 0= lowest, 1= average, 2= highest

Analyzing the overall results, as concluded from the table 16, whereas the highest score on fluency was achieved in Task 3 (role play with planning); it was in this task that the lowest score on complexity was observed. This result may be taken as an indication that trade-offs are operating between fluency and complexity. In Task 3, the participants demonstrated the greatest fluency, but the lowest structural complexity. Here theory provides support for the results obtained in the present study. The trade –offs between fluency and complexity is in agreement with the view that learners do not have enough attentional capacity to devote equal resources to the three aspect of speech production – accuracy, fluency, and complexity – at the same

time (Skehan, 1996). This at least appears to be so in students' performance of these designed tasks.

Likewise, the highest score on complexity was achieved in Task 1 (decision-making), and it was in this task that the lowest score on fluency was achieved. Based on these results, it can be stated that a learner's capacity to achieve complexity and fluency concurrently is limited and cannot be performed easily.

As shown in table 16, Task 2 (problem – solving) yielded the highest score on accuracy, the second highest score on fluency and the second highest score on complexity. This result may be an indication that, again, a trade –off effect is operating among fluency, accuracy and complexity, in the sense that to display more accurate language in this task, complexity and fluency were penalized. It appears that the three learner's goals are in mutual tension in this study, that is, achieving one may be possible at the expense of the other.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that different tasks with different task designs and implementation factors had on three aspects of language production; accuracy, fluency and complexity. In order to investigate the impact of tasks on oral productions of the L2 learners, a decision making task which was designed to promote convergent outcomes with an unfamiliar topic was implemented first. Secondly, a problem solving task which was designed to promote convergent outcomes and included a familiar topic was implemented; and thirdly a role play was given to the participants in which they were also given ten minutes advanced planning time to strategically plan their performances. Three aspects of



language production – accuracy, fluency and complexity – were submitted to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Different criteria were used to analyze speech samples. For measures of accuracy; evidence of errors, number of self-corrections and target like use of plurals were used. For measures of complexity, amount of subordination, frequency of conjunctions and hypothesizing statements were analyzed. Lastly, for fluency, the number of reformulations, repetitions and false starts were counted. Depending on the results gained from the oral performance of the participants, the decision-making task yielded more complex language, problem-solving task more accurate language and role play with ten minutes planning time yielded more fluent language.

In the conclusion part, these findings will be interpreted and suggestions of some pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and further research possibilities will be offered.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

The objective of the present study was to investigate the effects of task design factors on aspects of student speech production. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether there were any differences in participants' oral performances based on three different task designs - a decision making task, a problem solving task and a role play with ten minutes planning time - and what the differences in participants' oral performances on different tasks consist of in terms of three aspects of language production – accuracy, fluency and complexity.

The participants in the present study were students in an upper-intermediate English level class at Celal Bayar University. The teacher of the class contributed significantly to the study as well. Eight students out of 26 class students were chosen as participants in pairs with each other. Participants' oral performances were assessed in three different tasks - a decision making task, a problem solving task and a role play with ten minutes planning time. These different tasks were implemented by the teacher of the class in three speaking and listening class sessions. In order to gather data, tape-recorders and external microphones were used during task performance recording.

So as to address the research question focusing on how different types of speaking tasks bring about different types of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity , the data obtained from task performances was submitted to

two different analyses, a qualitative analysis and a quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis evaluated the speech samples of the participants from transcriptions in terms of the variables of accuracy, fluency and complexity. This analysis was used as the basis for quantitative analysis which was determined in respect to the study variables. Quantitative data were presented in tables and their interpretations in relation to the three task types - decision making task, problem solving task and role play task with planning time - were made in a comparative manner.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the main findings of the present study which concentrated on the impact that task involving decision making, problem solving and role play with ten planning time had upon L2 oral performance.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one summarizes the findings and discussion of these findings. Section two outlines the pedagogical implications of these finding. Section three indicates the limitations of the study and section four gives some suggestions for further research on task design and L2 speech production.

### Findings and Discussion

L2 learners' oral performance is prone to being affected by a number of factors. From these, task design may be considered one of the main factors that can be manipulated by the teacher and the task designer (Ellis, 2003). As mentioned above, the present study attempts to demonstrate how task design influences L2 speech production in terms of the variables of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The results of the present study corroborate the findings of other related studies

showing that accuracy, fluency, and complexity vary depending on the type of task, task design and task implementation factors.

The main findings obtained from the results of the present study in terms of the research question posed will be stated and discussed subsequently. The research question proposed in the present study asked in what way and to what extent task features and task implementation factors bring about different types of speech production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. The research question refers to three aspects of language production and addresses them separately.

In the following, the influence of task design on the speech production of individuals will be discussed. In the present study, it was found that L2 learners' oral performances were influenced by the design factors in respect to decision making tasks, problem solving tasks and role play tasks with planning time. This finding can be taken as evidence that type and design of tasks have an impact upon learners' oral performances. As researchers such as Robinson (2001) and Skehan (2001) state, learners' outcomes ,while performing a task may differ. During the performance of a task, the focus may sometimes be on accuracy, sometimes on complexity and sometimes on fluency. However, in the present study, the task designs may have been adapted to their own learning styles and needs by the participants. As Murphy (2003) states, learning outcomes result from the participants' contribution to the task, the task design and the environment in which the task is carried out. Any well-designed task can also be manipulated by the participants during their performance. This individual adaptation of tasks by the participants is an important issue; although it was not a part of the present study.

The first task implemented in the present study was a decision making task which was designed to promote complexity in participants' oral performances. The information in the task was shared and the topic was not familiar to the students. The topic of the task was the starting a new civilization in the coast of Australia. It was the first time students had dealt with such a topic in their speaking and listening course. They were expected to nominate six characters (out of ten characters) so as to start together a new life on an island. The characters in the task were interesting and different from each other. The argumentative nature of the task may have encouraged the students to diverge in their ideas, despite the fact that it was a convergent task in which the students were required to come to a conclusion. Participants constructed more complex structures in this task, compared to their performances in problem solving and role-play with planning time. The results obtained were the same as those from the study conducted by Bygate (1999b), in which the argumentative nature of the task promoted more complex structures compared to narrative tasks implemented in the study. This finding can be taken as partial evidence that being given unfamiliar topics, participants' language construction tends to be more complex than when they are given familiar topics.

The second task implemented in the present study was a problem-solving task which was designed to promote accuracy in participants' oral performances. The students were familiar with the topic, and the solution that they were requested to find for the problem was specific. The topic regarded problems in a new café near the Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University. Students' own experiences about the problems in this new café were an important influence on their language production, since they had strong ideas about what was wrong with the café.

Analyzing their speech samples, they had more accurate constructions when compared to their performances in the decision-making and role-play tasks. The results of this task are parallel to those from the study conducted by Murphy (2003), who used a task with a familiar topic to see if such a task promotes accuracy. This finding can be taken as evidence that topic familiarity may lead the participants to be more accurate in speech production.

The third task implemented in the present study was in the form of a role-play, with ten minutes planning time, which was designed to promote fluency in participants' oral performances. In this task, the students were required to prepare a conversation taking place between a tourist and tourist guide. It was already known that the participants were all familiar with Istanbul in terms of its historical and natural attractions. The students were not only familiar to the topic, they were also provided with ten minutes planning time to strategically plan their performances. As Skehan and Foster (1996, 1997) pointed out in their studies about the positive impact of planning time on promoting fluency, in the present study, participants' oral production was found to be more fluent compared to their performances in the decision making and problem solving tasks. This finding can be taken as evidence that familiarity with topic plus planning time affects greater fluency in oral performance.

As for the "trade-off" effects, the mutual relation between dimension of speech production, in L2 speech production, the first trade –off can be observed between accuracy and complexity. In the present study, L2 learners' tended to produce more accurate speech on the problem solving task at the expense of

producing less complex language, whereas on the decision making task, participants produced more complex language at the expense of less accurate speech.

The second trade-off can be observed between fluency and complexity. In the present study, L2 speech learners produced more fluent language at the expense of less complex language. These findings reflect Skehan's (1996) proposal that gains in one aspect of language production are obtained at the expense of losses in another aspect.

Thus, on the whole, the results obtained in the present study are compatible with previous research on tasks and L2 speech production. The present study attempted to show that task design and implementation factors have an impact upon participants' oral performance in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. There is evidence in this study that distinct types of task yield distinct measures of accuracy, fluency and complexity. In addition, the main results of the present study are in line with previous research showing that trade-off effects operate in the production of speech (Skehan, 1996, 1998, Ellis, 2003).

#### Pedagogical Implications

As mentioned above, this study was carried out in order to investigate how task design and task implementation factors influence L2 learners' oral production. According to Ellis (2003), several factors influence L2 learners' oral performance. Among these factors individual characteristics, disturbances during task implementation, and temporary changes in L2 learners' physical conditions can be mentioned. However, the only factor which is amenable to manipulation is the task design (Ellis, 2003). Therefore, understanding how task design can influence speech

production is an important tool when designing and organizing oral tasks in the classroom.

Teachers may evaluate L2' learners' oral production more efficiently provided that they are aware of how task design can affect performance in terms of accuracy, complexity and fluency. Teachers can thus attempt to stimulate their learners' oral production by using the appropriate task type with an appropriate task design and implementation. In sum, teachers might direct their learners' oral performance by designing tasks concerned with different valued aspects of language production.

Regarding the results of the present study, three different tasks – decision-making, problem solving and role-play – have been presented as having direct impact upon the variables of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. These results may shed some light on the design of oral tasks so that teachers will be able to apply these keeping in mind the output these tasks will influence. In this sense, research on tasks should enable teachers to design oral language tasks focusing on a specific aspect of the language development, that is, accuracy, fluency or complexity. This should also enable teachers to evaluate learners' oral production more successfully in respect to these variables.

In addition to these benefits, this study may contribute to course and syllabus design in schools and institutions. Material developers may make use of the findings of the study when designing materials for speaking and listening courses. In order to develop learners' as more accurate speakers of foreign language, then materials developers and task designers may take topic familiarity into consideration while designing problem solving tasks. If the learners are intended to use the language with



more complex constructions, then they may be given decision-making tasks in the form of discussion with an unfamiliar topic so as to lead them to use more complex structures. Similarly, in order to stimulate students to be more fluent speakers, materials developers and task designers may give extra time for planning before the actual task performance begins.

Besides these contributions of the findings of the study, implementation of task – based instruction (TBI) as an alternative teaching approach can be regarded as a part of most contemporary teacher training programs. TBI may familiarize inexperienced teachers with a new kind of instructional alternative and to see tasks as tools for this kind of instruction. Teachers can be trained about procedures for designing and implementing tasks in their courses and evaluating the performances of their students as suggested above.

Apart from teachers, students should also be informed about task-based instruction, as well as learning tasks and their aims. If students’ oral production is to be assessed by means of different kinds of tasks in the class, then they should be informed and provided with practice as to what they are expected to do during assessment by tasks.

Having discussed the findings and pedagogical implications of the present study so far, some limitations of the present study will be presented in the subsequent section.

#### Limitations of the study

As stated in the introduction, this study which was conducted in order to investigate the impact of three distinct task types with different designs and

implementation factors – decision- making task, problem-solving task and a role-play with planning time – have upon L2 learners’ oral performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. As indicated previously, the study had certain limitations resulting from the duration of the study, the number of the participants and their personal traits, the lack of a pilot study, and the limitation in the number of criteria chosen for examining three aspects of language production.

The length of the study was short, which is an important limitation of the study. The time given for the implementation of the tasks was limited to three weeks. In a longer period of time, the researcher could have had the opportunity to implement the same task type more than once. This might have given more reliable results related to the impact of presentation variables on different aspects of language production.

The number of the participants was another important limitation for the present study. The decision was made to track a small number of study subjects (8 in this study) rather closely. Results cannot, therefore, be generalized from the small sample investigated in the study.

The lack of attention to the participants’ personal traits was another limitation of the present study. The participants were formed as pairs so as to increase the amount of interaction and language production. However, the pairs were formed regardless of the participants’ personal traits, and this may have led one participant to produce more language, and the other to produce less. Despite the interactive nature of tasks, some participants obviously talked more than others. Transcriptions of the participants over 7 minutes reflect the production imbalance between the partners, which might have been influential on the findings.

In addition, the researcher was not able to conduct a pilot study due to time constraints. This is an important aspect of the study as piloting before the main study might have led the researcher to design tasks and organize the instruction alternatively in the main study.

The limitation in the number of criteria chosen for the analysis of accuracy, fluency, and complexity was another limitation of the present study. Despite the fact that there were a number of criteria stated for accuracy, fluency, and complexity in the literature, only three criteria were chosen for each in the present study. With more criteria measured for each factor, the study might have had more valid findings.

Lastly, having discussed the limitations of the present study, some suggestions for further research will be given in the following section.

#### Further Research

Considering the findings and the limitations of the present study, several suggestions for further research can be made.

Further research should investigate the impact of distinct tasks with different task designs upon the oral performance of a larger number of participants and include more expert raters to evaluate the speech samples in order to state findings more strongly. The participants in further research studies could be chosen from different levels - beginner, advanced and pre-intermediate levels - and the impact of distinct tasks can be investigated on L2 learners at these levels. Besides the variety in learners' level, in a longer period, the impact of some other task types with different task designs and implementation factors that they will have upon L2 learners' oral production can be investigated, as well.

Relying on limited criteria during the analysis of the accuracy, fluency, and complexity can be changed into the analysis of more than three criteria in further research such as using percentage of error free clauses, target-like use of vocabulary, or target-like use of verb tenses as measures of accuracy; number of pauses, length of pauses, speech rate as measures of fluency; and lexical richness, frequency of the use of prepositional utterances as measures of complexity. The increase in the number of the criteria for measure of each aspect may render the study to be more interpretable in terms of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Besides seeing the impact of different tasks upon L2 learners' oral production in terms of individual performance, in further research, the impact of tasks on pair interaction variables may be investigated. From a pedagogical perspective, this would guide teachers who are in need of developing their learners' interactive and communicative skills based on different tasks. Another suggestion for further research may be to focus on the personal traits of L2 learners and the contribution of their personal traits to task outcomes. So, oral production of learners in task performances can be investigated in terms of extraversion and introversion personality distinction, which could bring a different perspective to the issue of task design and language production. This may help the researcher or the teacher to see if the outcomes result from the characteristics of the task or they result from learners' personal characteristics.

Future research is also necessary to investigate the ways in which appropriate tasks might be designed according to the level of learners and the intended outcome that the learners are expected to achieve.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of different tasks with different task designs and implementation factors on L2 learners' oral production in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity. As shown by the results, L2 speech production is a puzzling and complex process being influenced by a number of factors. Among these factors, task design may be regarded as the only one that is prone to ready manipulation. Considering the findings in the present study, the certain task designs had certain effects upon the oral performances of the learners. The tasks which were designed to promote certain aspects of language production were successful in that aspect in the present study. Teachers, thus, should be capable of designing and choosing tasks in order to assist learners focus on more accurate, fluent, or complex speech production.

The present study attempted to shed some light on the most appropriate tasks to promote the intended outcome in learners' oral performance and provide some valuable insights for teachers. Therefore, it is hoped that the present study will contribute to achieving a better and more useful understanding of tasks, task designs and their probable impact upon L2 learners' oral production.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### **TASK 1**

**Course:** Speaking/Listening

**Level:** Upper-intermediate

**Time:** 25 min.

**Task:** Decision making task

**Objectives:** Students will be able to understand the situation given them. They will be able to interact in pairs.

**Step 1.** Teacher asks about the idea of starting a new civilization.

- Do you want to change this world? Why, or why not?
- If you had the chance to create a new world, what sort of characters would you involve in this world?

**Step 2.** The situation prepared for the students is introduced by the teacher and the students are asked to work in pairs.

**Step 3.** Students are given 5 minutes to read the situation in pairs one more.

**Step 4.** The teacher explains the unknown/ unclear part of the task

**Step 5.** Without any preparation for the task performance, students start to exchange their ideas and argue about the characters in the task. At the same time, they try to decide on six characters for the new civilization.

## STARTING A NEW CIVILISATION

A nuclear war has just taken place in the world. Soon, most of the world will be destroyed by radiation. However, an island which is 300 miles off the coast of Australia will not be completely destroyed. Scientists think that the plants on the island will be damaged, but the soil will not be ruined.

And you are one of the delegates of United Nations. You want to start a new civilization on that island with a group of people. It will be the beginning of a new life in the world. But it is not easy to take everybody to the island. There is only one small plane at Australian airport and also 10 people waiting to go to the island. As a delegate of United Nations, except for the pilot, you have to decide 6 people who will get on the plane and live on that island. The other four will die in the world.

### **The characters:**

- A man of religion
- Homosexual doctor (aged 42)
- An African woman (pregnant)
- A female singer (aged 30)
- A warrior with a spear
- A male lawyer (aged 41)
- A policeman with a gun
- Female biology teacher (aged 25)
- A cook from a 5 star hotel
- A university student (aged 20)

**Instructions for Task 1**

1. You will have 2 minutes to read the situation one more.
2. Work in pairs and share your ideas with your partner to decide on 6 people.
3. While starting this new civilization, give reasons why you choose that particular person? Or why not?

## APPENDIX B

### TASK 2

**Course:** Speaking/Listening

**Level:** Upper-intermediate

**Time:** 25 min.

**Task:** Problem solving task

**Objectives:** Students will be able to interact in pairs and they will be able to find solutions to the problem.

**Step 1.** Teacher asks questions about the café near the Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University.

- What do you think about the cafe near Prep. School of C.B.U?
- Do you find the cafe adequate meeting students' requirements?
- What are the pros and cons of the cafe for students?

**Step 2.** The teacher introduces specific problems about the cafe and asks students to find specific solutions to the problems.

**Step 3.** The students are asked to work in pairs and order their solutions.

### Café Gayfe

You and your wife are the owner of a new and simple cafe next to the Preparatory School of Celal Bayar University. Your café just serves food and doesn't offer anything specific to the students. So there is nothing interesting about your café. However, as it is very close to the Prep school, you thought that your café would be full of students and you would earn lots of money. Moreover, the number of the

students coming to the café is decreasing day by day. This is a big problem for you. In a short period, you understood that you weren't successful enough to attract the students' interest and you want to be a popular café as soon as possible and attract students' interest.

**The problems:**

There are some signs in the café such as **No smoking**  
**No jokes ...etc.**

There aren't suitable food and drinks for students.

The meals are expensive.

The service isn't fast enough.

Students can't find anything to enjoy themselves in the café.

**Instructions:**

- Read the problems of the café one more.
- Discuss the problems with your partner and offer reasonable solutions to solve the problem.
- While offering solutions, try to think about a café that you would like to go.

## APPENDIX C

### TASK 3

**Course:** Speaking/Listening

**Level:** Upper-intermediate

**Time:** 25 min.

**Task:** Role- play (with 10 minutes planning time)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to prepare a conversation after 10 minutes planning time and act it out.

**Step 1.** Teacher asks the students some questions about Istanbul?

- Have you ever been Istanbul?
- If yes, how did you find Istanbul?
- If you were a tourist guide, where would you take your group?

**Step 2.** The teacher introduces the situation to the students and asks them to work in pairs for 10 minutes to prepare their conversations.

**Step 3.** After 10 minutes time is over, students start their actual task performances.

### ISTANBUL

You are a tourist in Istanbul and don't know where to visit. You want to see the interesting places in Istanbul. You have just found a travel agency and decided to get some tips about the attractions in and around the city. As you have limited time in Istanbul, you want to spend your days in the best way.

**Instructions:**

- Work in pairs for 10 minutes and take the roles and make a conversation with your partner.
- You can take some notes so as to prepare your dialog.
- After 10 minutes time is over, try to speak without checking you notes.



APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

TASK 1 (DECISION MAKING TASK)

1. Border for *subordinate clause* ::
2. Border for *AS-Unit* //
3. Conjunctions *because, and, so...*
4. Hypothesizing statements **I think, I don't think ...**

TASK 2 (PROBLEM SOLVING TASK)

1. Self-correction “.....” “**hag...hang**”
2. Errors – Syntactic (.....) (**for to stay**)  
Morphological  
Lexical
3. Target like use of plurals .....S studentS  
workerS
4. Obligatory use of plurals .....? Mirror?

TASK 3 (ROLE PLAY with ten minutes planning time)

1. Reformulation =.....= = **I came İstanbul...I came to İstanbul**=
2. Repetition [.....] [**small picnic...small picnic**]
3. False start <.....> <**how can I....**>

## TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' SPEECH SAMPLES

### APPENDIX E

#### Task 1 (Decision-making task)

##### Osman – Sercan

- 10 **I think** we must choose a man of religion:: **because** there were we *must...*  
2 we had to discuss something ::, maybe we have a problem about  
3 religion //, we can solve our problems with the help of a man of religion //  
4 **So I think** a man of religion is important:: **So** we must take him// What do  
5 you think about it?  
6S I agree with you//, we need a man of religion // **but** we have to think about  
7 something, too//. There *is ... are* some different...Hmm  
8O Religion  
9S Yes religion **and** we can't get ... get the same point at each other//.  
10O Ok. We should choose another five / merson /, person //. We must choose...  
11 for example, we can take an African woman //.  
12S yes.  
13O **Because** she is pregnant **and after** she had a baby:: **maybe** there were a lot  
14 of kinds of people//  
15S **And** also we need different races//.  
16O Yes, different races is important //. Himm we can **also** choose ...  
17 What do you think about homosexual doctor? //  
18S Himm .It isn't important being homosexual::**Because** we need a doctor :: **and**  
19 he can be a good partner with biology teacher **I think**//.  
20O Okay hmmm I don't think so **because** biology teacher is enough for  
21 our **healed** :: A biology teacher knows a lot of thing like doctor//. **So** we  
22 must take a biology doctor, female biology doctor :: **I don't think**  
23 homosexual doctor is important::  
24S **If** we work together ::, it will be better for our future//.  
25O Okay. **But if** I choose homosexual doctor ::, maybe we *can...can't*  
26 choose another one, another useful person //.  
27S **I think** a biology teacher needs a doctor :: **and** we can hmmm

28 “gelişmek”??

29O develop.develop.

30S we can develop something in an easy way//.

31O Yes, I think so. **Because** there were a island, there were a lot of trees and

32 animals::**So** we can’t know anything about nature// **and** biology teacher help

33 us for their for their benefit // **or** for example we don’t know which

34 animal is...can be eat :: **or** which tree be poisoned ::

35S yes I agree with you at that point//

36O ok

37S But I say...

38O yes.

39S We need a doctor, too//. It isn’t not important being homosexual::**If** they

40 work together::**they** can develop something in **a** easy way//. Now we can

41 choose the others//.

42O We agree with ...I agree with you a man of religion, an African woman

43 and female biology teacher//.

44S yes

45O what do you think about the fourth one?//

46S female singer.

47O female singer is important you think? ::

48S It isn’t very important **I think**:: We need more important persons in this

49 new civilization//

50O yes yes...**because** all of the people can sing a song **I think**:: **So** we don’t

51 need a female singer :: **I think** we must choose a lawyer :: **because** in

52 civilization, **or** in communicate, maybe we can have a problem with

53 each other// **so** a lawyer can solve it for our::

54S Yes, in a social environment we need some rules // **and** we need a lawyer//

55 **but** it isn’t very very important // we can put rules different rules **by each**

56 **other...by ourselves**//

57O **So** what do you think about a policeman with gun and a warrior with spear//

58S **I think** it is the least important person we can need::

59O ohh...I don’t think so// May be a lawyer may solve problems// **but if** he

60 *didn't ...can't* solve::, we must need a guardian *or* a warrior with a spear  
61 *or* policeman// *But* a warrior with a spear is a prehistoric thing// We must  
62 choose a policeman with a gun// *because* he is modern::  
63S *Also* a few years or hundred years later, at the coast of Australia  
64 *when* these persons start living:: they will use spears *or* another things//  
65 At least we will use them// *I think* at the first one we don't need::  
66O yes yes I think so//

## APPENDIX F

### Task 2 (problem-solving task)

#### Okan- Arzu

- 1A I think we can do something to effect studentS What can we do?
- 2O There are some problemS in the cafe. I think there is no smoking, no  
3 jokeS, they are very boring.
- 4A And studentS (**decreasing**) day by day and it is a big problem and I  
5 must earn lotS of money.
- 6O Okay. Firstly, smoking must be (**freely**) because studentS usually smoke  
7A yes
- 8O we must bring the gameS in the cafe for example, baggamen and chess or  
9 tabu.
- 10A yes, we can bring it and the service isn't fast enough and we can bring some  
11 workerS to work in this café. So, I think that student can come in the café to  
12 work? What do you think?
- 13O yes, I think, hmmm we are joining to student worker because the person  
14 got a lot of friendS.they are coming...they can come in the cafe so  
15 we have got a lot of customerS
- 16A you think that (**truely**) think. We start ...we must start it today and we have  
17 an advertisement, we will have an advertisement and then we  
18 "**hag...hang**" on the window and some studentS willcome to work with us I  
19 think so the service will be fast.
- 20O I wish we (**have**) got a musicbox.
- 21A It is possible I think. It will be good for studentS. Because there is no music  
22 in this cafe and studentS don't come for it so it is necessary.  
23O music box or "**liv..live**"music?
- 24A Music box. Because the studentS can play music which they want.  
25 so we can buy a music box.
- 26O I agree with you so what do you think about the decoration?
- 27A Decoration must be hmmm modern I think. But there must be some  
28 sofa? and chairS and it will be more modern than now.

29O it must be (**relaxed**) and it must be enjoyable.

30A light**S** will be marvellous I think.

31O I think so. Another problem?

32A “**If we are...if we work**”with student**S**, the student**S**’ friends can come to

33 this cafe and we have more customer?

34O ok.

35A the student**S** can’t find anything to enjoy themselves**S** so what can we do

36 for it?

37O I think there are suitable food , and we must have interesting meal**S**

38 and interesting food and cook interesting meal**S** and food

39A for example we can prepare china food. Do you know china food?

40O yes.

41A It is very interesting. You can prepare it.For example, hot meal**S** because

42 student**S** can’t find any hot meal**S** (**for to stay**) in manisa away from their

43 familie**S** so we can prepare hot meal**S**. Ok! And then what can we do?

44O I prepare different drink**S**. For example Frappe, hot chocolate or milk

45 shake.

46A ok you can mix it. Some mirror? for decoration we can put on the wall**S**

47 so the cafe will seem more relaxed and “**more big...bigger**” than now.

48O ohh...it is great I think.

49A and some advertisement**S** we will stick on the wall**S** in manisa so we can...

50 we must (**let**) from government. What can we do that?

51O I am going to government right now I think if we do this we

52 have got a lot of customer**S**.

## APPENDIX G

### Task 3 (role-play)

#### Riyad- Nebi

- 1N Wellcome. **<How can I.... >, =how can I help you? =**
- 2R I want to join a trip. I wonder İstanbul and I want to go to İstanbul. Have  
3 you got any trip to İstanbul ?
- 4N yes we have got a lot of trips. What do you want about enjoy, about fun?
- 5R But I have a [**limited time...limited time** ].I have just three days.
- 6N you have just three days it is a very short time for İstanbul. Because Istanbul  
7 has got a lot of places for visit.
- 8R I know that but I must turn back to my work
- 9N ok. is there any problem about paying? Because we have a lot of kind  
10 of trip....trips.
- 11R it shouldn't be very expensive.
- 12N ok. I want to summarise my best, favourite trip. it goes on for three days  
13 and it starts with Anatolian part of Istanbul. And you have got a lot of time  
14 for everything, for historical places, for visit enjoyable places, for bazaars  
15 maybe. First day you started with Çamlıca.
- 16R ohhh.... I heard about Çamlıca from a song I think. It was sezen aksu's  
17 song.
- 18N you will have a [**small picnic ...small picnic**] and small breakfast in çamlıca,  
19 very nice place, a natural place.
- 20 can I see all of İstanbul from Çamlıca.?
- 21R yes. Also you have never seen before.
- 22N very good. First I will see from the top and the second =***I wander...I will***  
23 ***wander =***
- 24R yes you will wander and at last you will be really happy. You can go on  
25 with national....natural places like Belgrade forest. You heard it?
- 26N yes. I heard it from television, films. And here is very good I think.
- 27R I think it is enough for first day because you will be tired. We choose  
28 =***you...for you***=a very nice hotel. Not luxury and not bad.
- 29N that is all for the first day?

30R yes.

31N why?

32R you will get here nearly in the afternoon. And with Belgrade forest and

33 Çamlıca Mountain it will get a lot of time.

34N it is far away from the Europe.

35R yes. They are in Anatolian part and you have to go nearly two hours or one

36 and a half hour from your hotel.

37N ok. What about the second day?

38R On second day, we give...have a breakfast in Sarıyer, a very nice place

39 with real natural butter.

40N is it near the sea, Sarıyer?

41R yes, along the sea. If you have a time you can go and see there. After the

42 breakfast, you can get a lot of places.

43N can I look at the list?

44R yes you can look at it. After the breakfast we can go Taksim Street for

45 buying something, shopping.

46N shopping? I want to buy some clothes from İstanbul.

47R you can buy it from little survivors . Maybe for your family, for your friends.

48N but I have lots of friends what will I do?

49R no they aren't too expensive for you. And we can go in the afternoon for a

50 lunch. We can go Galatia Bridge for lunch. You can eat really fresh which

51 you have never eat...eaten before. Fresh fish.

52N fish. I like fishes.

53R you can see the fishermen.

54N and I wonder about Turkish raki.

55R you can drink it with fish. It is really delicious. But you must drink small.

56N why...=*it is very strong...Is it very strong?*=

57R yes strong. If you drink a little. It isn't dangerous. Do you want to visit

58 historical places?

59N of course. Especially =*I came İstanbul, I came to İstanbul*= for historical

60R places you know İstanbul is a city which is the capital city of Ottoman

61 Empire



62N yes.

63R there is a lot of historical places. We choose for you very important places

64 like Dolmabahçe palace.

65N I want to know about Istanbul's culture, Turkey's culture and its historical

66 places, what they tell us from the past.

67R we have got guides for telling the story of historical places. And after the

68 lunch you can go dolmabahçe palace. And it takes you it takes a lot of

69 time, nearly two hours and it is very historical and you will be really excited

70 there. You will really see interesting things from Ottomon Empire.

71N I will learn lots of things about Ottoman Empire you said. Not just Ottoman

72 Empire, about Turkey also. About Muslims. As I know there are lots of

73 remains from Muhammed

74R have you ever came before?

75N No I haven't came...come before but I heard very very much. I read about

76 here.