

## **A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF PLANNING TIME ON THE ORAL PERFORMANCE OF ESL CANDIDATES IN TEXT- BASED CONTEXTS**

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The oral presentation task has become a standard format of high-stakes oral examinations since the language testers use it in language proficiency tests on a regular basis. However, most of the ESL candidates find it challenging and inaccessible to achieve high marks due to the implicit nature of the task. Planning time has been acknowledged as one of the key factors in oral performance of candidates, but its impact and the optimal amount of planning time required for maximum performance remain unclear in text-based contexts. In order to address this gap in the literature, the current study aimed to investigate the impact of different planning times on the oral performance of candidates in text-based context. 48 students who were following an IELTS preparation course at Westgate College, Matara and ICBT Southern Campus, Matara were taken as the sample of the study. They were divided into three groups and were given three different planning times as 30 seconds, 1 minute and 2 minutes respectively. The study adopted a quantitative approach where data collection was carried out through a speaking test similar to part 2 of IELTS. Data was analyzed using SPSS. The ANOVA test was used to compare the performance of three groups under different planning times. Even though it was believed, the allocation of more time for planning would enhance the oral performance of candidates, the findings of the study revealed that providing a shorter amount of planning time is effective in enhancing the oral performance of the candidates. Therefore, it is recommended for language teachers and instructors to provide shorter planning times for similar oral presentation tasks.

**Keywords:** Oral performance, Planning time, Language proficiency, Part 2 of IELTS speaking test, ESL candidates

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