Massachusetts: New bury House.

MacIntyre, P.D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language
Learning?: A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language*
Journal, *79(1)*, 90-99.

Robinson, P. (2001). Task complexity, task difficulty, and task production: Exploring interactions in a componential framework. *Applied Linguistics, 22(1)*, 27-57.

Spielberger, C.D. (1983). *Manual for state trait anxiety inventory.*
California: Consulting Psych-Press.

Willis, J. (1998). *Task-based learning: What kind of adventure?* Retrieved September 2003, from
http:/langue.hyper.Chubu.ac.jp/Jaly/pub/willis.

The findings in this study are important, for both teaching and testing fields. They help the teacher to make more comfortable language learning environments for their students trying to use different tasks with appropriate levels of complexity for the students with different language proficiency levels.

   They are also important for test/task developers to pay more attention to the complexity levels of tests/tasks needed for language learners at different levels of language proficiency to help the teachers to measure their students' true competence through task performance.

REFERENCES

Bachman, L.F.,& Palmer, A.S.(2000). *Language testing in practice* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Best, J.W. (1977). *Research in education* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Brown, H.D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Elder, C., Iwashta, N.,& McNamara, T. (2002). Estimating the difficulty of oral proficiency tasks: What does the test-taker have to offer? *Language Testing, 19(4)*, 345-368.

Eysenck, M.W. (1992). *Anxiety : The cognitive perspective.* Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbawn Associates Ltd.

Hatch, E.,& Farhady, H. (1981). *Research design and statistics: For applied linguistics*. Tehran: Rahnama Publication.

Hill,L.A. (1978). *Picture composition book.* London: Longman. Jacobs.

H.L., Zinkgraf, S.A., Wormouth, D.R., Hartfile, V.F., & Hughey. J.B. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach.*
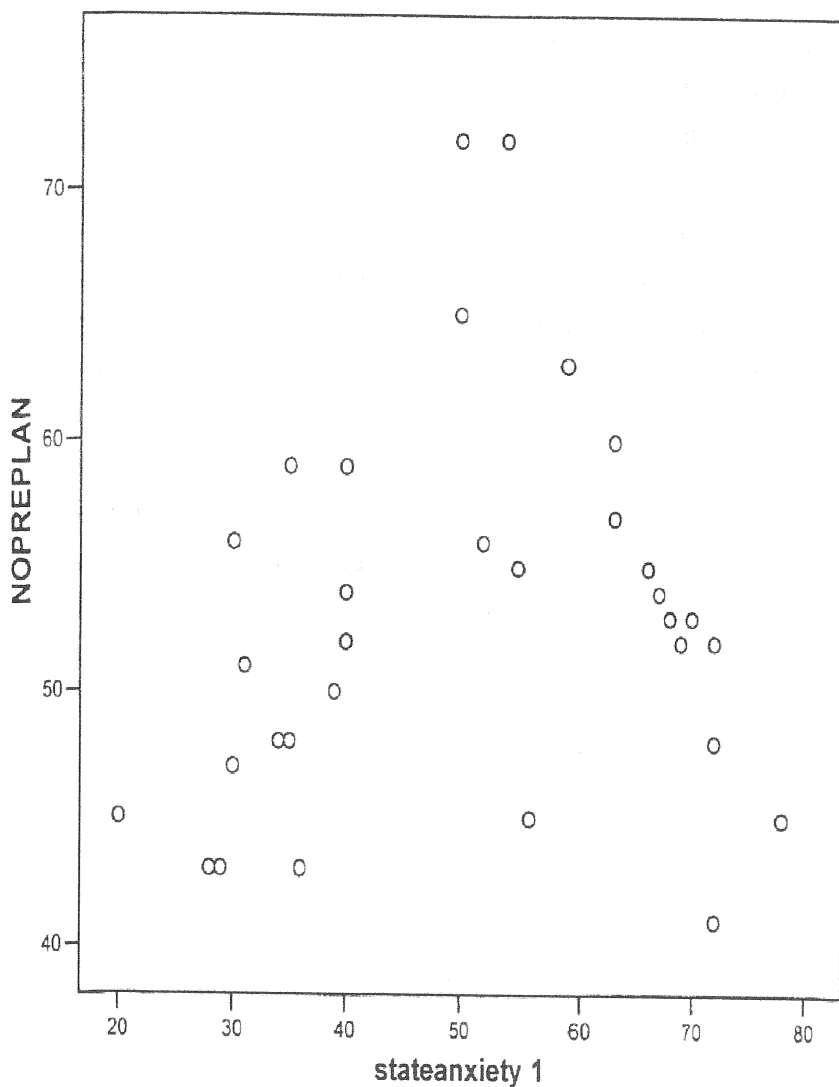
Figure 4,

Scatter diagram of the relationship between the scores on the task
and state anxiety in pre-planning time situation
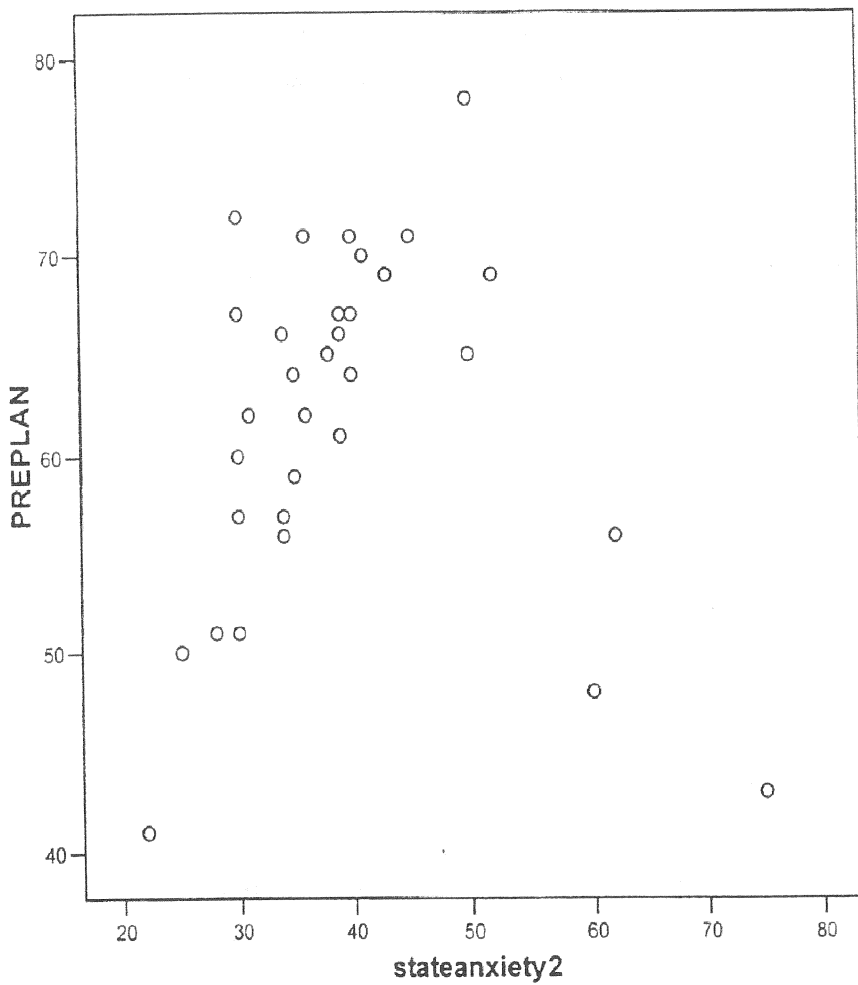
Graph

Figure 3, Scatter diagram of the relationship between the scores on the task and state anxiety in no pre-planning time situation

Graph

This means that there is a significant difference between the task performances of the students in the two situations of pre-planning and without pre-planning.

Based on the results gained contrary, contrary to what is stated by Robinson (2001) and Elder et al (2002), in this study, in writing task, there is a positive relationship between complexity and difficulty of the task. The task was made more complex by the imposed demands of the limited amount of time and it was considered more difficult by the students as the results of their levels of state anxiety (according to Robinson "affective factor") indicated.

In this study the students are the same on the basis of their levels of trait anxiety and language proficiency. When the demand of the task structure changed and the task was made more complex, the reason that the students did not perfume the same was because of the affective factor of state anxiety, as the questionnaire filled out by the students indicated.

It is also interesting to notice that, referring to scatter diagrams in figures 3 and 4, the highest scores are related to those whose levels of anxiety is around 50 which is, according to Spilberger (1983), an optimal point of anxiety in this scale. This is what Brown (2000) mentions as facilitative anxiety.

Table 11, Descriptive statistics of no pre-planned task

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Variance
PREPLAN	32	61.75	77.806
Valid N (listwise)	32		

Table 12, Descriptive statistics of pre-planned task

df = 62

T critical = 2.000 (p < .05)

$$\text{T observed} = 2.46 \quad (p < .05)$$

2.000 < 2.46

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Variance
NOPREPLAN	32	53.06	60.190
Valid N (listwise)	32		

Since T value of 4.18 exceeded the T critical value of 2.000 for a two tailed test at .05 level at 62 degrees of freedom the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

Table 10, Descriptive statistics for the levels of anxiety in pre-planning time situation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
stateanxiety2	32	39.63	11.030	121.661
Valid N (listwise)	32			

df = 62

T critical = 2.000   (p < .05)

T observed = 2.46   (p < .05)

2.000 < 2.46

Since T value of 2.46 exceeded the T critical value of 2.000 for a two tailed test at the .05 level at 62 degrees of freedom, the first null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the levels of anxiety related to different situations for task performance. In other words, there is a relationship between the preplanning time for task performance and the level of anxiety of the students.

To test the second null hypothesis, the results of the descriptive statistics, presented in tables 11 and 12 were put in the independent T-test formula.

They were scored by the same scale (Jacobs, 1981) and in both cases the students

   should be able to analyze and think about the topic,

   should be able to organize the information,

   should be able to use appropriate vocabularies,

   should be able to use correct structure,

   should be able to recognize the correct punctuations and mechanics of writing.

These can be considered as another evidence for this task to be constructly valid.

In order to test the first null hypothesis the descriptive data presented in tables 9 and 10 for the levels of state anxiety in the two different situations were plugged in the independent T-test formula.

Table 9, Descriptive statistics for the levels of anxiety in no pre-planning time situation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
stateanxiety1	32	49.91	16.577	274.797
Valid N (listwise)	32			

According to Best (1977) reliability is a necessary condition for validity and a test must be reliable to be valid. Hatch and Farhady (1981) state that validity refers to the result of a test and it is a matter of degree not an all-or-nothing trait.

Bachman (1995) states that "judging the extent to which an interpretation or use of a given test score is valid thus requires the collection of evidence supporting the relationship between the test score and an interpretation or use".

As a piece of evidence for validity, the result of the correlation between the writing task and the writing section of standard Michigan Test indicates that the task has validity and the obtained correlation is valid at either .01 or .05 level. Table 8 represents the result of this correlation.

Table 8, An evidence for internal construct validity of writing task

Correlations

		WRITING64	TASK64
WRITING64	Pearson Correlation	1	.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	64	64
TASK64	Pearson Correlation	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	64	64

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Considering their nature, the researcher found that both of them are essay writing and both need the same abilities to be accomplished.

drafts were taken from the performers because during the first 35 minutes the subjects were supposed to preplan for task performance. If not, during the performance time, they were just copying and they were not using their preplanned cognitions.

The writing performances of the two groups, considering objectivity of the scoring, were rated by the same two raters with the same writing scale mentioned previously. Table 6 and 7 indicate that the task had a very much high inter rater reliability in the two situations of task performance and they both were significant either at .01 or .05 level.

Correlations

		nopreplan1	nopreplan2
nopreplan1	Pearson Correlation	1	.907**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	32	32
nopreplan2	Pearson Correlation	.907**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	32	32

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6, Inter rater reliability for the first group
Table 7, Inter rater reliability for the second group

Correlations

		preplan1	preplan2
preplan1	Pearson Correlation	1	.929**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	32	32
preplan2	Pearson Correlation	.929**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	32	32

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

same language institute. Making sure that they are at the same language proficiency level, the same standard Michigan Test was conducted. As it is presented in Table 5, the mean and the standard deviation of the scores gained in pilot test were M=106.72 and SD=15.370 which were very much close to the mean and standard deviation of the sample subjects (M=107.73, SD=15.459).Therefore, they were considered to be at the same language proficiency level.

*Table 5, Descriptive statistics of pilot group scores*

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Michiganpilot	50	106.72	15.370	236.247
Valid N (listwise)	50			

Administering the writing task, the researcher asked the performers to call for another paper whenever they were ready to perform. In this case, the length of the preplanning time and the writing task for each performer were recorded. The means of the recorded time for both preplanning and writing task was 35 minutes.

The two groups of 32 subjects performed the task in the two different situations. The first group was given 8 pictures which were numbered one after the other and was asked to write the story that these pictures conveyed, in 35 minutes (of course, before the performance, the students were to fill out the state anxiety scale). The second group had the same instruction, adding that they could plan whatever they were going to write, prior to task performance. The

Based on the descriptive statistics gained in table 2, the scores were scattered on a normal distribution. This normal curve is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2, Normal distribution of the scores on Michigan Test
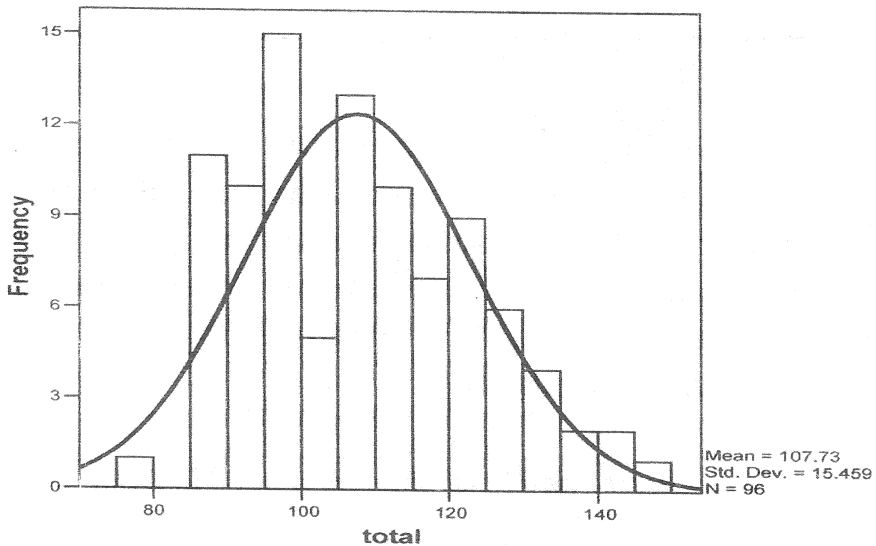
Based on this figure and the mean and standard deviation gained, 65 subjects who were in the limit of one standard deviation above and bellow the mean were selected (among whom just one was absent at the time of task performance and she did not fill out the state anxiety scale).

In order for the subjects to be as homogeneous as possible, they were given numbers from 1 to 64 and then were divided into two groups of 32 odd and even numbers.

In order to know how much time is needed for the writing task performance, a pilot test was conducted on 50 other students in the

Table 3, Range of the scores on Michigan Test

Descriptive Statistics

|	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum
total	96	68	78	146
Valid N (listwise)	96			

In essay writing part of the test, in order for the scoring to be objective, two scorers including the researcher, rated the writing papers with the help of a writing scale proposed by Jacobs (1981). The inter rater reliability of this writing test, estimated by Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient to be as 831 which is reported to be significant at both .01 and .05 levels (Table 4).

Table 4, Inter rater reliability of the scores on Michigan essay writing

Correlations

		writing1	writing2
writing1	Pearson Correlation	1	.831**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	96	96
writing2	Pearson Correlation	.831**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	96	96

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
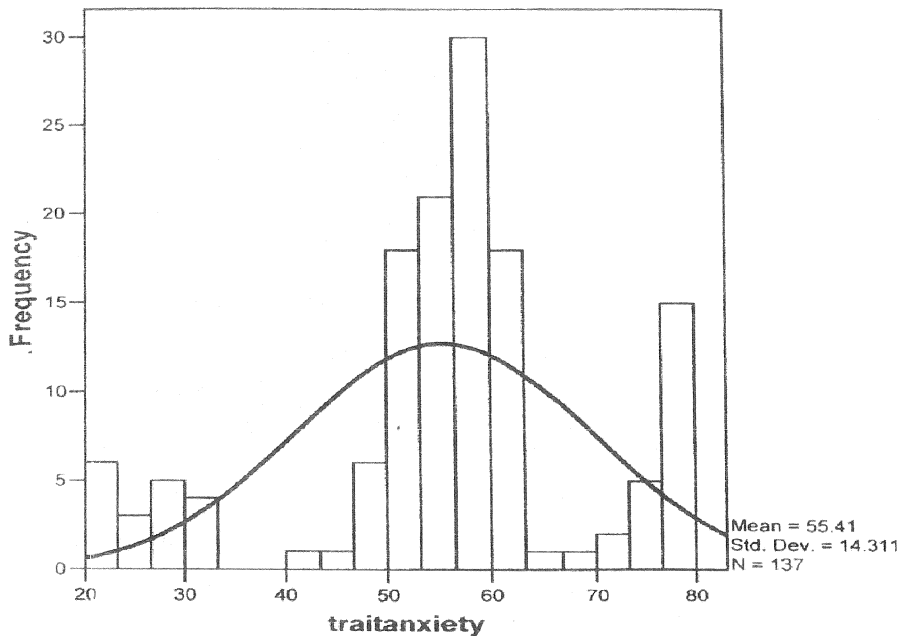
Figure 1, Normal Curve of scores on trait anxiety scale

All the 96 subjects got a version of standard Michigan Test, which is repeatedly reported as a highly reliable and valid test in many different situations. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the descriptive statistics of the scores on this test.

Table 2, Descriptive statistics of the scores on Michigan Test

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
total	96	107.73	15.459	238.979
Valid N (listwise)	96			

Considering at least 5 words in each sentence, the writing task should not be less than 160 words.

2.3.4. Writing Scale:

In order to be objective in rating the writing tasks, a writing scale, ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs 1981), was used. According to this scale, the writing tasks should be scored on the basis of five factors, each focusing on an important aspect of writing; contents, 30 points; organization, 20 points; vocabulary, 20 points; language use, 25 points and mechanics of writing, 5 points. In each part the levels of scores are given on the basis of the four criteria; excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor and very poor.

2.4. Procedure:
A total number of 137 upper intermediate of Mashhad Jahad Daneshgahi Language Institute were selected and the trait anxiety scale of State Trait Anxiety Inventory prepared by Spilberger (1983) was administered. Filling out this questionnaire did not take more than 6 minutes. Among these students, 96 of them who were similar in their levels of trait anxiety were selected and went through the rest of the process of homogeneity. Table and figure 1 represent the first part of the homogeneity process

Table 1, Descriptive statistics of trait anxiety

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
traitanxiety	137	55.41	14.311	204.802
Valid N (listwise)	137			

2.3.2. Anxiety Questionnaire:

In order to estimate the level of the anxiety in the subjects taking part in the study, an anxiety questionnaire prepared by Spilberger (1983) was administered. Currently, the most widely used scale for the measurement of both trait and state anxiety is this questionnaire which is called STAI and it stands for State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spilberger 1983). The inventory is used extensively in a variety of contexts with meaningful results. The psychometric properties of the scale are also quite good with alpha reliability coefficients consistently above 0.90 and validity coefficients that approach the scale's reliabilities (*Ibid*). The anxiety questionnaire consists of two scales; trait and state anxiety scales, each with 20 statements. Each scale contains 10 items which are keyed positively and 10 others which are keyed negatively for anxiety. Both scales use self-report statements with a 4 point Likert scale which indicates subjects' degrees of feeling.

2.3.3. Writing Task:

The considered task was a writing one on the basis of a set of pictures given to all the subjects. The pictures which described a story were selected from a picture story book by L.A. Hill (1960). According to him this book contains picture stories which can be used for the students who had done three or four years of English along efficient lines; the same as the upper intermediate students selected as subjects in this study.

The task contains 8 pictures which are numbered one after another and describe a specific story. The subjects were to write at least 4 sentences for each picture, describing the details in each one.

Q.2. Is there any difference on the subjects' performances under different pre-planning time for task performance?

In order to investigate the above-mentioned research questions empirically the following null hypotheses are stated;

Ho.1. There is no relationship between pre-planning time for task performance and the level of anxiety of Iranian EFL learners.

Ho.2. There is no difference on the subjects' performances under different

pre-planning time for task performance.

2.1. METHOD

2.2. Subjects

137 upper intermediate students (66 males and 71 females ranging from 20 to 25 years of age) of Mashhad Jahad Daneshgahi Language Institute took a trait anxiety questionnaire prepared by Spilberger (1983). Among them, 96subjects (44 males and 52 females) who were similar in their levels of trait anxiety, got a version of standard Michigan Test and 64 of them who were similar in their levels of language proficiency took part in the study.

2.3. Instrumentation

2.3.1. Standard Michigan Test:

This test included four parts. The first part consisted of 40 items of structure, the second had 40 items of vocabulary, the third part included four passages of reading comprehension with the total of 20 items. The fourth was the writing part. This test was used in order to make the subjects homogeneous and has been repeatedly reported as a highly reliable and valid standard test in many different situations. The fourth part's inter rater reliability was estimated as 0.831.

One of the most important aspects in foreign or second language teaching is to provide the students with a learner-centered, low anxiety classroom environment.

Robinson (2001) talked about the complexity and difficulty of the tasks. He states that there is no relationship between task complexity (the amount of the task demands on the performer) and task difficulty (the performer's beliefs about the task based on his ability and affective factors (eg: anxiety)). Also, another experiment on a spoken task by Elder et al (2002) proved this hypothesis again. What is stated by these scholars is completely opposite to MacIntyre's (1995) and Eysenck's (1992) belief.

The properties of different language learning tasks and the influence of these properties on learner performance are now being widely researched, with some scholars focusing on strengthening the links between test tasks and their real world counterparts. And others on the effect on candidate production of manipulating different task characteristics in different situations.

One of the situations that is considered to have some effects on the complexity of a task is the preplanning time or pre task planning time (Elder et al 2002). There have been different researches that have been done by different scholars, of course, on oral tasks, in different conditions (Robinson 2001, Elder, Iwashita & McNamara 2002). But little attention have been paid to written tasks. Here, the conditions were made with different degrees of complexity (preplanning and without preplanning time) to investigate their relationship with the difficulty levels of the written task (anxiety level of the students). The two research questions are,

Q.1. Is there any relationship between pre-planning time for task performance and the anxiety level of Iranian EFL learners?

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, in most language teaching situations, the focus of attention is mostly on encouraging learners to investigate language for themselves and to form and test their own hypotheses about how language works. In task-based instruction, the language data comes from texts or samples of language the learners have read or heard in earlier lessons. Having already processed these texts and recording for meaning, students will get far more out of their study of language form (Willis 1998).

Task-based instruction does not simply utilize the real-world task as a means for eliciting particular components of the language system, which are then measured or evaluated; instead, the construct of interest is performance of the task itself.

Anxiety, also, is a feeling characterized by varying degrees of fear. Research on anxiety and its relationship to learning (and more specifically to task performance) dates back more than a few decades but has been sporadic and unsystematic through much of this time. However, recent years have seen a marked upsurge in research on the nature of anxiety, its relationship to performance, and techniques that can be used to reduce it.

Anxiety is categorized into three categories, according to the psychologists;

1. Trait anxiety, according to MacIntyre (1995) is when people are generally
anxious about many things.

2. State anxiety, is the tendency to react in an anxious manner.

3. Situation specific anxiety, is consistent in a specific type of situation.

The Relationship Between Preplanning Time For Task Performance And The Anxiety Level Of Iranian Efl Learners

Mansoor Fahim*
Behnaz Bateni

Abstract

Research on task-based instructions attempted to identify types of task that enhance learning and also those variables related to both learners and teachers for successful achievement of objectives; one of these variables related to learners is anxiety.

The present study attempts to find out whether there is any relationship between task complexity (the two situations of preplanning time for writing task performance) and task difficulty (the level of anxiety of the performers). 64 learners who were similar in their levels of trait anxiety and language proficiency from among the total number of 137 upper intermediate learners were divided into two groups of 32 to perform a writing task in the two different situations of task complexity. The result of the study indicates that there is a positive correlation between task complexity and task difficulty. In addition, there is a significant difference between the performances of the performers in the two different conditions.

Keywords: Anxiety, Situation specific anxiety, State anxiety, Performance, Preplanning time, Task, Task complexity, Task difficulty, Trait anxiety.

● Allameh Tabataba'i University.