Dynamic Assessment and EFL Learners' Language Development

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Abstract

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is an assessment perspective in which assessment and teaching are considered as an integrated practice. DA is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and aims to uncover not only what people can do on their own at a given time but also how they react to mediation and what they can do when supported by mediation. The purpose of this systematic review is to explore the theoretical underpinnings, empirical studies, pedagogical implications and implementation issues on DA in EFL education. It is a review that has been conducted in a structured manner, based on PRISMA 2020 reporting principles and has been structured by a search and thematic synthesis methodology. Studies examining reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammatical development, learner autonomy, and the use of computerized or group-based mediation were considered, published in different outlets of research in language education and assessment. The findings reviewed suggest that the effect of DA on measurable development in language and the information it may offer regarding variability of learners' responsiveness to mediation are not fully reflected in static assessment. Recent research also shows the potential for use in writing, speaking, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and technology-mediated assessment. Meanwhile, several important barriers are identified in the literature, such as time requirements, assessor skills, standardization, scalability, validity, teacher workload and the challenge of embedding mediation in exam-focused educational systems. It is this understanding of DA not just as an alternative test format, but rather as a pedagogical approach linking assessment, mediation, instruction and learner development that makes DA most valuable, the review says. Consequences are addressed for EFL teachers, teacher educators, curriculum designers and researchers, especially for the relevance of DA for the university-level English teaching in Iraq and other similar EFL contexts in Arab countries.

Keywords: Dynamic Assessment; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Language Development; Mediation

التقييم الديناميكي وتطور اللغة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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الملخص :

يُعدُّ التقييم الديناميكي (Dynamic Assessment – DA) منظوراً تقييمياً يُنظر فيه إلى التقييم والتدريس باعتبارهما ممارسة متكاملة. يستند هذا النوع من التقييم إلى النظرية الاجتماعية الثقافية لفيغوتسكي ومفهوم "منطقة النمو الوشيك" (Zone of Proximal Development – ZPD)، ويهدف إلى الكشف ليس فقط عما يمكن للأفراد القيام به بمفردهم في وقتٍ معين، بل أيضاً عن كيفية استجابتهم للوساطة (الدعم التوجيهي) وما يمكنهم إنجازه عند تلقي هذا الدعم. تهدف هذه المراجعة المنهجية إلى استكشاف الأسس النظرية، والدراسات التجريبية، والآثار التربوية، وقضايا التنفيذ المتعلقة بالتقييم الديناميكي في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). وقد أُجريت هذه المراجعة وفق نهجٍ منظم، استناداً إلى مبادئ "بريزما ٢٠٢٠" (PRISMA 2020) للتقارير العلمية، واعتمدت على منهجية البحث والتحليل الموضوعي. شملت المراجعة دراسات تناولت مهارات القراءة، والكتابة، والتحدث، والمفردات، والتطور النحوي، واستقلالية المتعلم، بالإضافة إلى استخدام الوساطة عبر الحاسوب أو في إطار مجموعات، وذلك من خلال مصادر بحثية متنوعة في مجالي تعليم اللغات والتقييم. وتشير النتائج التي تم استعراضها إلى أن أثر التقييم الديناميكي على التطور الملموس في اللغة –وما يقدمه من معلومات حول تباين استجابة المتعلمين للوساطة– لا يظهر بوضوح في أساليب التقييم التقليدية (الثابتة). كما تُظهر الأبحاث الحديثة إمكانية توظيف هذا النهج في مجالات الكتابة، والتحدث، والمفردات، وفهم المقروء، والتقييم المدعوم بالتكنولوجيا. وفي المقابل، حددت الأدبيات البحثية عدة عوائق مهمة، منها: المتطلبات الزمنية، ومهارات المُقيِّم، ومعايير التقنين، وقابلية التوسع، والصلاحية (الصدق)، وعبء العمل الملقى على عاتق المعلم، فضلاً عن التحدي المتمثل في دمج الوساطة ضمن أنظمة تعليمية تركز بشكل أساسي على الامتحانات. وتؤكد المراجعة أن القيمة الحقيقية للتقييم الديناميكي تكمن في كونه ليس مجرد صيغة بديلة للاختبار، بل نهجاً تربوياً يربط بين التقييم، والوساطة، والتدريس، وتطور المتعلم. كما تتناول المراجعة التداعيات المترتبة على ذلك بالنسبة لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ومُعدّي المعلمين، ومصممي المناهج، والباحثين؛ مع تسليط الضوء بشكل خاص على أهمية التقييم الديناميكي لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات العراقية، وفي سياقات تعليمية مماثلة في الدول العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييم الديناميكي ، الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) , التطور اللغوي , الوساطة

1. Introduction

Assessment plays a crucial role in English language learning (ELL) as it affects what teachers teach, what learners do, and how learning progress is measured, which is why it is considered an integral part of English language teaching. Traditional evaluation usually tries to determine, as a general rule, a learner's independent ability by testing them in relatively standard environments. These procedures can be helpful for language grading, selection, certification, and reporting, but may offer a limited view of language development. A learner could not do a task well due to a lack of the language skills necessary to perform the task, lack of familiarity with a task, anxiety or lack of strategic support. A static score does not, therefore, necessarily indicate the level of support required, the impact of support, or the ease with which learners' performances can be mediated.

The concept of Dynamic Assessment is different. DA is not about measuring a constant capacity, rather it is about assessing in the context of useful support to allow the assessor to look at what is currently being done and what potential is being realised. According to Poehner and Lantolf (2005), DA in the language classroom is a method that is inspired by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and assessment and instruction are merged. The focus question is then shifted from "What can the learner do independently now?" to a more general question: “What can the learner do independently, what can the learner do with mediation, and what does the learner's response to mediation tell me about development?”

This is very significant in EFL learning. Students whose primary language is not English may have few opportunities for extended conversations outside the classroom in their second language. Quality and promptness of classroom mediation can thus have significant effects on their performance. A teacher who identifies a learner’s difficulty and provides graduated assistance can potentially transform the assessment event into an opportunity for learning. DA thus ties in assessment and the making of pedagogical decisions and provides teachers with information they can use to plan the next steps in instruction.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is very close to the theoretical underpinning of DA. In this view, psychological functions higher than the basic ones emerge in the context of socially mediated activity and are then internalized by the person. The Zone of Proximal Development is important because it represents the area that lies between what one can do on their own and what they can do with help. In L2 teaching, mediation can manifest itself in the form of prompts, questions, examples, reformulations, strategic guidance, metalinguistic explanations, and other forms of assistance. The quality and quantity of mediation can provide important assessment information.

There is a contemporary literature that indicates that DA has evolved from being a purely theoretical proposal. Empirical studies have been conducted on its impact on reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, speaking, writing, pronunciation, grammatical knowledge, and other academic outcomes. For instance, Ali and Abdulrazzaq (2024) conducted a study on Iraqi EFL learners to assess the efficacy of dynamic and static assessment and found that the DA condition improved the learners' academic achievement and multiple variables related to the learners. Other studies on group dynamic assessment, computerized DA, writing development, and various types of mediation models have been conducted in recent years (Mohammadzadeh, 2024; Lee, 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

However, there are challenges with all the research. The size of the samples, educational context, level of language proficiency, length of study, mediation procedures, and outcome measures vary across studies. Some of the studies are more highly controlled interventions, while classroom implementation requires the teacher to work with larger groups, and have a limited amount of instructional time. Ongoing debates surrounding DA include the need for standardisation, reliability, validity and feasibility of DA. A systematic synthesis is valuable due to these issues.

The present study, therefore, investigates DA as a pedagogical and assessment tool in EFL context. It addresses four general questions: (1) What are the theoretical foundations for DA in language education? (2) What is the evidence that supports its contribution to EFL learners' language development? To date, the following questions have been posed as potential sources of inspiration for discussion: (3) What forms of mediation and implementation seem to be most promising? and (4) What challenges need to be overcome for DA to become sustainable in university and classroom contexts?

2. Methodology (Systematic Review Framework)

This study has a structured systematic-review design that is guided by the PRISMA 2020 reporting guidelines. Transparent reporting of identification, screening, selection and synthesis of studies in systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021) is a key theme of PRISMA 2020. The present review involves a qualitative thematic synthesis instead of a statistical meta-analysis as there are significant differences between the available literature in terms of the research design, the language skills of the study participants, the intervention procedures and the outcome measures.

2.1 Search Strategy

The review was directed towards the literature related to Dynamic Assessment in Second and Foreign Language Education. Conceptualizations of dynamic assessment were integrated in every search strategy and were combined with the following terms: dynamic assessment EFL, L2 dynamic assessment, dynamic assessment language learning, group dynamic assessment, computerized dynamic assessment, mediation, zone of proximal development, EFL language development, dynamic assessment writing, dynamic assessment speaking, dynamic assessment vocabulary, and dynamic assessment reading. Based on the applied linguistics and language assessment, major academic databases and publisher platforms were taken into account, such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, Springer Nature, ScienceDirect and major journal platforms.

Peer-reviewed research and authoritative theoretical publications were emphasised. Special effort was made to include recent evidence that appeared since 2020 and when needed, works that contributed to the theoretical development of DA were preserved. This is a theory-driven discipline and the early conceptual work is still pertinent to the interpretation of current empirical studies of DA.

2.2 Inclusion Criteria

The studies were deemed relevant if they focused on one or more of the following: (1) examined Dynamic Assessment or an explicitly DA-informed procedure of instruction or

assessment; (2) addressed second/foreign language learning, specifically English as a second/foreign language; (3) reported empirical findings, theoretical analysis, or systematic evidence directly related to DA; (4) published in an academic journal, scholarly book, or recognized academic outlet; and (5) addressed language development, assessment, mediation, learner performance, or pedagogical implementation.

2.3 Exclusion Criteria

The following studies were excluded: Studies that did not support the use of Dynamic Assessment or explicitly use the term “dynamic”, but do not actually use it, were not included; Studies that had no relevance to language learning, were excluded; Publications that did not specify the relevance of the assessment procedure to language learning, were excluded; Duplicate records and sources that could not be reliably identified and verified, were excluded.

2.4 Data Analysis

The literature that was chosen was compiled into five broad themes: (1) the theoretical background of Dynamic Assessment; (2) evidence on its impact on EFL language development; (3) models and forms of mediation; (4) applications supported by technology and group-based applications; and (5) challenges and implications for implementation.

The synthesis was based on the studies' language skill, the population of learners, the model of assessment, the type of mediation, the research design, and the main results. The review distinguished between different positive findings, taking into account differences in sample size, method's length, and methodological range. This is because if they were to make a general effectiveness claim, they would need to be able to provide evidence in a range of contexts and designs.

3. Theoretical Foundations of Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic Assessment is best viewed as an overall assessment philosophy that is based on a developmental perspective of human learning. The first simple idea is that one's actual performance, either as an individual or in a group, may not be an accurate indicator of what he/she is capable of doing in the future. Assessment can then be more informative if it looks at the changes in performance when using carefully designed mediation.

Vygotsky's ideas form the basis of sociocultural theory.

DA is based on the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky. Learning is seen as socially mediated, with cognitive changes as a result of relationships with others who know more, and using cultural and symbolic tools. The Zone of Proximal Development (Z.P.D.) is the zone between what a child can do independently and what they can do with assistance.

Poehner and Lantolf (2005) took this principle to language assessment by suggesting that assessment should not only be based on independent performance, but should also be based on mediation. This perspective enables the learner's response to helping to be diagnostically meaningful. A learner that is successful with a short prompt may be a different style of learning from a learner who receives a lot of explicit support. Therefore, the amount and quality of mediation may be a source of information regarding the competence development.

3.3 The Role of Mediation in DA

The main distinction is that mediation is used in DA as opposed to more traditional static assessment. Mediation may take the form of a reminder, hint, explanation that shows a relationship among the linguistic elements of the learner's answer. Mediation isn't about giving the correct answer. It is designed to help the learner complete the cognitive or linguistic activity that is required to solve the problem.

In L2 classes, the mediation may be in the form of questions for clarification, leading questions, reformulations, metalinguistic clues, examples, contrastive information or prompts to direct learners to a relevant grammatical, lexical or discourse feature. The mediation process can be progressive from teacher/assessor to learner as long as it is well structured.

3.4 Mediation Models

In DA there are two general attitudes. The interventionist model is a more regularized series of prompts that allows researchers and practitioners to make comparisons among learners in terms of the amount of support they require. The interactionist model of mediation is a dialogic and responsive process to the needs of the learner in the stages of their development. Some of the interactionist procedures may provide more information about the thinking and feelings of the test taker during the test, but may be more difficult to standardize.

The recent research comparing the two types of models (interactionist and interventionist) has shown that both models can be used to develop speaking in EFL, the difference lies in the mechanisms and extent of effects (mixed-method evidence in modern EFL research). Therefore, the rationale of the assessment, the context of the classroom, and the balance between comparability and developmental sensitivity in selecting models is important to consider.

3.5 Group Dynamic Assessment

Individual DA can be challenging in regular classrooms since teachers do not always have enough time to be able to work intensively with each learner. To address this problem, a new form of mediation, Group Dynamic Assessment (GDA), was developed, which is an expanded version of mediation for classroom groups. Poehner (2009) suggested that group DA may allow teachers to engage with the ZPD as a group while still being able to see the differences in individual responses.

This is particularly important for university EFL classrooms in which size of classes might render individual intervention impractical. Task design, however, should be well thought out for group DA so that it will be accessible to the learners who need it without also depriving learners of opportunities for independent thought.

3.6 DA and Formative Assessment

Like formative assessment, feedback, diagnosis, and responsiveness to instruction are characteristics of DA. The two should not however be considered synonymous. In general the information obtained from the assessment is used to make changes in the subsequent

teaching, but in DA the mediation is integrated into the assessment process. In DA, the learner's response to mediation is a component of the evidence that is used to understand developmental potential.

3.7 Development Rather than Fixed Ability

One of the basic principles of DA is that language competence cannot be seen solely as being fixed in quantity. A static score can be used to describe what the learner can do at one time; DA is looking to see what the learner can do at another. This developmental approach is particularly appropriate for language learning because the process of acquiring the language is complex and it is built up over time through interaction, practice, feedback and control of the language resources.

4. Empirical Evidence of Dynamic Assessment in EFL Education

There is empirical evidence that DA can be a tool for development in a variety of language areas. The evidence, however, should be considered in the light of the particular skill, the particular group of learners, the mediation model, and the research design of each study.

4.1 Reading Comprehension

One of the first domains where DA was studied in L2 settings is reading. DA can be used to determine if a learner can locate a main idea, make inferences, identify supporting information, and interpret words in context, as well as how a learner reacts when prompted to the appropriate reasoning process. Previous studies conducted with EFL university students illustrated that a pretest–mediation–posttest design resulted in significant improvements (Naeini & Duvall, 2012).

Dynamic mediation has been the focus of more recent group-based research on specific micro skills of reading and positive results have been obtained. Research in EFL university settings has shown that group dynamic assessment can be used to enhance development of skills such as identifying the main ideas and making inferences, but results are not necessarily the same for every single skill and for every type of group mediation.

Pedagogically, the findings of this study are significant because the problems of understanding texts are rarely seen as evidence of the underlying reasoning process. DA gives teacher opportunities to explore process by which answer arrived, ensure targeted mediation.

4.2 Writing Development

Writing is a writing and learning process that is very suitable for DA because it can be reviewed, discussed, revised, and evaluated. Recently, research has focused on the DA-informed writing programs where students draft an independent text, interact with a teacher or assessor in a mediated way, and then revise the text. Results of an instructional enrichment study suggest that L2 writing development can benefit from L2 writing support based on DA compared to L2 writing instruction (2023, Journal of Second Language Writing).

Another study of Korean EFL learners in 2024 focused on DA in English writing through a gradual progression of external and increasing internal regulation on a regulatory scale.

Similar efforts illustrate an important point about DA: the aim is not simply to enhance the text itself, but to help the learner to internalize ways of acting independently in the future.

4.3 Speaking Development

Speaking is an interactive and dynamic mode of production which lends itself well to DA as feedback and prompts can elicit a change in performance that is immediate. The study has compared the interactionist and interventionist DA models with Iranian EFL learners in terms of grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation. The results showed that both models had a positive impact on students' speaking ability but in different ways and different degrees.

In DA, the gap between assessment and instruction in speaking classes can also be narrowed. Rather than giving the oral presentation a score and taking the learner to the next, the teacher can use the assessment moment to determine what the learner is struggling with, mediate the learner, and discuss whether the learner can utilize the mediation immediately.

4.4 Vocabulary Development

Another area where mediation effects can be studied easily involves vocabulary. Recently, some quasi-experimental studies were conducted on Iranian EFL learners to investigate the retention of interventionist DA (IDA) compared to traditional vocabulary instruction (TDI), and delayed testing was used to test the retention in quasi-experimental studies. Delayed measurement is crucial because learning that occurs immediately after the intervention is not always considered to be permanent.

The use of DA can help to draw learners' attention to semantic relationships, contextual clues, word formation, collocation, and strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words. Mediation may also be tailored to provide learners with just the additional support they require to find the information.

4.5 Grammar and Linguistic Knowledge

DA has also been used in the context of grammatical development. More recent research on computerized DA uses has focused on explicit and implicit learning of DA features and found that learners who were exposed to dynamic procedures performed better on the posttest than compared learners. These types of discovery could indicate that technology could be a scalable medium for delivering graduated mediation consistently.

The concept of implicit and explicit knowledge is a theoretical one. A learner can say a grammatical rule but cannot apply that rule in a fluent manner, another learner can fluently apply a structure without being able to state the structure. DA can offer opportunities to investigate learner's responses when the focus is on the linguistic form in context of meaningful problem solving.

4.6 Broader Learner Outcomes

The impact of DA can be greater than language scores. Recently, Ali and Abdulrazzaq (2024) conducted a study on dynamic and static assessment with Iraqi EFL learners reporting the benefits of dynamic assessment in terms of academic achievement, resilience, positive orientation, and reduction of burnout. The results of this study do not necessarily represent all

EFL learners but suggest that assessment measures can influence the emotional and motivational experiences of learners.

Developmental assessment approach can reduce the judgmental nature of assessment since the learner is aided and given an opportunity to show learning improvement throughout the process. This can help create a more positive classroom assessment culture, but this would need more specific study.

5. Contemporary Applications of Dynamic Assessment

The evolution of DA has created a number of new, contemporary uses of DA in addition to one-to-one assessment.

5.1 Computerized Dynamic Assessment

One area of computerized DA that holds great promise is that computer systems can present the prompts in a uniform way, capture the learner responses, and offer a graduated amount of support. Computerized DA has been recently applied to the study of grammatical knowledge, thus showing the potential of technology to assist in the experimental control and to maintain a developmental assessment logic.

But, computerised mediation needs to be well-designed. Don't just answer for them with automated prompts. The usefulness of DA is contingent upon the extent to which the mediation process leads learners to notice, reason, retrieve, compare and self-correct. If the automation is not well designed, it is possible for DA to become just an answer-provision instead of developmental mediation.

5.2 Group-Based Dynamic Assessment

Group DA offers a feasible solution for large EFL classes. The teachers can choose any task that is common and can think of what possible problems might occur, creating a mediation sequence that the class can meditate. Follow-up tasks or individual checks can then be used with individual learners to demonstrate their responses to mediation.

The effectiveness of group DA is dependent on the quality of interaction. Whole class mediation and individual attention have to be balanced in relation to the teacher. Therefore, it is not enough to simply apply the principles of individual DA to group DA and it needs a pedagogical design framework of its own.

5.3 Writing Portfolios and Developmental Assessment

Writing portfolios may be used in conjunction with DA to document through multiple drafts. Rather than the final product, teachers can consider the initial draft, mediation episode, revision and final independent performance. This method will allow for development to be reflected and provides a more robust evidence base for making development decisions.

5.4 DA: Learner Autonomy

One of the long-term goals of DA is to move towards more self-regulated learning. The best mediation, therefore, is the temporary type, and it should be gradually decreased as learners become more and more under control. Teachers can elicit the learner's responses regarding observations made, the strategy used and how a similar situation might be

identified in future assignments. This reflection can relate DA to learner autonomy and metacognitive development.

5.5 Technology and Data Informed Mediation

Digital learning environments afford the chance to capture patterns of errors and mediation. These records may help teachers to find patterns over time that they can then plan more targeted support for instruction. However, the data collection process should not be an end in itself but follow the educational objectives. The idea that more data equals better assessment isn't necessarily true; what really matters is whether the information enhances understanding of learning and aids in making decisions about teaching and learning.

6. Challenges of Implementing Dynamic Assessment

Although it has theoretical and practical potential, DA cannot be adopted in the field of EFL without solving a number of practical and methodological problems.

6.1 Class Time and Teachers' Workload

DA is more interactive than the traditional assessment because the teacher or assessor needs to diagnose the learner's performance, mediate, and observe the learner's response. Can be a lot of work in large classes. Certain demands can be reduced with the provision of Group DA and procedure with technology support, but cannot be eliminated by the use of professional judgment.

6.2 Teacher Expertise

Teachers must be equipped with a knowledge of language pedagogy and mediation in order to be able to implement effective DA. If the teacher provides the right answer, he or she might unwittingly limit the learner's opportunity to learn how to control themselves. Therefore, key elements of professional development should be principles of graduated assistance, diagnostic interaction, task analysis and reflective assessment.

6.3 Standardization and Comparability

One of the advantages of static tests is that they bring in some relatively uniform conditions. Introduce deliberate interactions, which may be different for each learner, as is the intent in DA. This generates a methodological dilemma of "individual responsivity versus comparability. The interventionist models can help to standardize, and the interactionist models can help to get more developmental information. The ratio of the researchers and institutions must be made appropriately in accordance with the purpose of the evaluation.

6.4 Validity

DA raises a larger issue on what might be considered appropriate proof of language competence. Static performance is important if the goal is to determine current independent proficiency. Responsiveness to mediation is needed if the intent is to assess learning potential or inform instruction. Validity is thus dependent on the consistency of the assessment process with its intended interpretation and use.

6.5 Large Classes and Institutional Constraints

Many EFL institutions run an examinations-based curriculum, predetermined timetable, and have a large student body. These circumstances can lead to a challenge with intensive DA. This is not likely to be the wholesale replacement of traditional assessment measures. More realistic is to use DA in selected contexts of formative assessment, skill courses, writing development programs, reading programs, and selected diagnostic activities.

6.6 Learner Expectations

Mediated assessment can be an atypical way of testing for students who are used to marks and answer based testing. It is important that teachers communicate that the aim of this is not to just point out mistakes but to show and encourage growth. The use of clear criteria and a number of opportunities to practice mediation will ensure learners have a clear understanding of the approach.

6.7 Evidence Limitations

Although the empirical literature is relatively small so far and interventions are context-specific. Some studies are of a very short duration, others examine any one language feature or skill. There is a need for further long-term and multi-site study to ascertain the role of DA in the various proficiency levels, educational systems, and teachers.

7. Evidence-Based Recommendations

On the basis of the literature reviewed, the following recommendations are suggested for EFL education:

1. Move towards using DA as part of formative assessment rather than replacing all forms of traditional assessment. Static measures may be continued to be relevant for certification and reporting purposes, and DA may be employed to offer developmental information.

2. Develop teacher development programmes in mediation, diagnostic interaction, graduated assistance and understanding of learner responsiveness.

3. Employ a mix of DA, individual and group. Individual procedures can be for diagnosis purposes, and group procedures can be used for routine classroom learning.

4. Create sequences of mediation that begin with implicit and advance to more explicit mediation. The goal is to foster a learners' independence rather than a learner's reliance on teaching.

5. Use delayed posttests or later, independent tasks, if possible. When things get better right after mediation, that doesn't mean they are going to stay better.

6. Record development over time using writing portfolios, repeated reading, and/or vocabulary measures.

7. Review thoroughly developed computer-based DA for language features which can be structured in a prompt. Technology should be used to assist in mediation, not just to repeat corrections.

8. Relate assessment to pedagogy. Independent tasks should be used in assessment if they are an integral part of the task being assessed and if an institution desires to assess independent proficiency. The institution could also request information on learning potential if they wish to have these included in DA procedures.

9. Support learners in reflecting on mediation. Short reflection exercise to help learners recognise strategies and gradually build up their self-regulation.

10. Conduct pilot DA implementation within certain courses before extensive implementation in Iraqi and Arab EFL contexts. This requires flexibility in the implementation as the class sizes, curriculum, examination systems, and technology used varies between institutions.

11. Larger samples, longer intervention periods, delayed measures and mixed-method designs, as well as transparent reporting of mediation procedures, should be used in future studies.

12. Researchers need to be able to make a clear distinction between evidence for immediate performance change and evidence for developmental change. This is at the core of the theoretical arguments of DA.

Conclusion

Dynamic Assessment provides a distinctive approach to EFL assessment because it treats assessment and instruction as mutually connected activities. Rather than viewing language ability exclusively as a fixed level that can be captured through a single independent performance, DA examines how learners respond to mediation and how that responsiveness can be used to support further development.

The reviewed literature indicates that DA has been applied across reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and broader academic outcomes. Recent studies in different EFL contexts provide encouraging evidence, including research involving Iraqi learners, university students, group dynamic assessment, writing development, vocabulary retention, and computerized procedures. At the same time, the evidence does not justify treating DA as a universal replacement for static assessment. Its value depends on the purpose of assessment, the quality of mediation, teacher expertise, research design, and the conditions under which it is implemented.

The central pedagogical contribution of DA lies in its developmental orientation. A learner's response to carefully calibrated assistance can reveal information that a single static score cannot provide. For EFL teachers, this creates an opportunity to transform assessment from a final judgment into a structured learning event. For teacher educators, DA offers a framework for connecting assessment literacy with instructional decision-making. For researchers, it provides a way to investigate not only what learners know but also how their performance changes through interaction and mediation.

In Iraqi university EFL settings, DA may be particularly useful when implemented selectively and realistically. It can complement existing assessment systems through diagnostic reading activities, mediated writing conferences, speaking tasks, vocabulary development, and technology-supported formative assessment. Future research should move toward larger and more longitudinal studies, clearer reporting of mediation procedures, and stronger comparisons across proficiency levels and educational contexts.

Overall, Dynamic Assessment should be understood not simply as a new testing technique but as a developmental pedagogy in which assessment becomes a means of discovering and promoting learners' emerging language abilities.

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