

Comparative Impacts of Interventionist and Interactionist Dynamic Assessment Models on EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract

In recent years, the importance of willingness to communicate (WTC) in second language acquisition has gained considerable attention, as it is a crucial factor influencing learners' language use and overall communicative competence. Understanding how various instructional methods can enhance WTC is vital for improving EFL education. This study investigated the comparative impacts of interventionist and interactionist dynamic assessment models on the WTC among 75 Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Participants were divided into two experimental groups (EG1 and EG2) and one control group (CG), with a total of 16 treatment sessions delivered over a semester. Both experimental groups received dynamic assessment interventions, with EG1 utilizing the interventionist model and EG2 employing the interactionist model. The results revealed that both EGs significantly outperformed the CG in enhancing WTC; however, no statistically significant differences were found between the two experimental groups. This study contributes to the understanding of how different dynamic assessment approaches can effectively foster learners' WTC in English. The findings suggest that educators can adopt either dynamic assessment model to improve WTC among EFL learners, emphasizing the need for ongoing research into optimal assessment strategies in language education.

Keywords: dynamic assessment, interventionist model, interactionist model, willingness to communicate, Iranian intermediate learners

Theoretical Foundation

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is an evaluative approach grounded in Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory, focusing on the dynamic interaction between the learner and the assessor. Unlike traditional static assessment, which measures a learner's current level of development without considering their potential for future learning, DA emphasizes the learner's capacity for change through guided interaction (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). The core principle of DA is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), introduced by Vygotsky (1978). The ZPD refers to the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with support or guidance. In DA, the assessor is not just an evaluator but also a mediator who intervenes to support the learner's development, aiming to assess both the learner's present abilities and their potential for future learning. By providing scaffolding during the assessment process, DA enables the identification of how learners respond to instruction and the types of mediation they need to succeed. This dynamic process of assistance reveals not only the learner's current knowledge but also their ability to internalize new concepts and strategies, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of their abilities (Poehner, 2008).

DA has been increasingly applied in various educational contexts, particularly in language learning, as it promotes formative, individualized assessment strategies that support learner development. The methodology also offers insights into how learners approach problem-solving and the cognitive processes they employ when faced with challenges, making it a more holistic evaluation tool (Antón, 2009). Two main approaches to DA have been identified in the literature: the interventionist and interactionist models. Both share the same theoretical foundations but differ in how they implement mediation during the assessment process. The interventionist model of DA is characterized by its systematic and pre-determined structure. This approach often employs a standardized form of mediation, with assistance provided in a fixed sequence. Interventionist DA usually follows a test-intervene-test format, where learners first complete a task independently, followed by an intervention or mediation phase, and then a retesting phase to evaluate the effects of the intervention. The mediation is carefully calibrated and minimized over time as learners demonstrate increased independence (Lidz, 1991). In this model, the amount and type of mediation are generally consistent across all learners. The goal is to measure not only what learners can achieve with help but also how much support they require and how quickly they can internalize new information. This approach offers a more quantifiable way to assess learning potential and is

often used in contexts where standardization and comparability of results are important, such as in educational testing or special education programs (Tzuriel, 2001).

One key feature of the interventionist model is its reliance on graduated prompting, where prompts are provided in a hierarchical manner, starting with minimal assistance and gradually increasing if the learner struggles. The focus is on measuring the learner's responsiveness to mediation and their ability to transfer learned strategies to new contexts. For example, if a learner struggles with a math problem, the mediator might first offer a hint, then a more explicit explanation, and finally model the solution if necessary. The learner's progress is tracked throughout this process to determine their capacity for independent problem-solving after receiving support (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014).

In contrast, the interactionist model of DA is more fluid and dialogic, with a focus on collaborative problem-solving between the learner and the mediator. Rather than following a rigid sequence of prompts, this approach encourages open-ended interaction, where the mediator adjusts their level of assistance based on the learner's immediate needs. The mediator actively engages with the learner throughout the task, offering hints, asking questions, and encouraging reflection, with the goal of co-constructing knowledge rather than simply measuring performance (Poehner, 2009). The interactionist model aligns more closely with the principles of scaffolding in that it allows the mediator to respond flexibly to the learner's ZPD. The interaction is highly individualized, with mediation tailored to the learner's specific challenges at each moment in the assessment process. This approach emphasizes the importance of dialogue and negotiation between the learner and the mediator, making it particularly suitable for contexts like language learning, where communication skills are central (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In language assessment, for example, the mediator might help a learner improve their understanding of grammar or vocabulary by engaging them in conversation and gradually refining their responses. This process not only assesses the learner's current language abilities but also promotes deeper linguistic understanding through active participation (Poehner, 2005). The interactionist model thus highlights the importance of ongoing, formative assessment, where learning is seen as a continuous process of development rather than a fixed outcome.

Both the interventionist and interactionist models of Dynamic Assessment offer valuable insights into learners' developmental trajectories, albeit in different ways. The interventionist model provides a more structured, standardized approach that quantifies learners' responsiveness to mediation, making it useful for large-scale testing scenarios. In contrast, the interactionist model emphasizes the dialogic nature of learning, allowing for more personalized, flexible forms of mediation that adapt to the learner's immediate needs. Overall, DA serves as a powerful tool for understanding not only what learners know but also how they learn, offering a more comprehensive picture of their abilities than traditional assessments. By integrating teaching and assessment, DA promotes the development of learners' cognitive and problem-solving skills, while providing educators with rich, diagnostic information to inform instruction.

Experimental Foundation

Numerous studies have explored the influence of dynamic assessment (DA) approaches on EFL learners' speaking subskills. In the realm of pronunciation, Yang and Qian (2017) conducted a mixed-method experimental study to assess the effects of DA on the pronunciation proficiency of Chinese English learners. The research involved 36 college students majoring in English who faced challenges in improving their pronunciation. Furthermore, the study employed two questionnaires to evaluate participants' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety within the pronunciation class. Yang utilized an interventionist DA model, providing oral mediation to the experimental group through hints, suggestions, explanations, or demonstrations. The results indicated that the implementation of DA significantly enhanced the pronunciation proficiency of the experimental group, contributing to a more positive attitude, increased motivation, and reduced anxiety among learners. Similarly, Shafiee et al. (2018) examined the impact of interactionist DA on teaching English rhythm to 30 Iranian EFL learners, employing a mixed-experimental design. Their findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test, largely attributed to the more positive attitude fostered by DA implementation, with the results of the researchers' questionnaires providing quantifiable validation of this claim.

Turning to fluency, Kao (2020) presented her findings on the influence of interactionist DA on the oral fluency of Chinese EFL learners across two proficiency levels: elementary and advanced. Conducting her research at a Taiwanese university with 119 first-year students, Kao concluded that interactionist DA did not enhance the pronunciation of learners at the lower proficiency level, as the teacher's constant interventions hindered the learners' content development. In contrast, Safdari and Fathi (2020) explored the effect of DA on the speaking fluency of Iranian EFL learners in an experimental study, finding that the implementation of DA did not lead to significant improvements in participants' fluency.

Moreover, various researchers have examined the effectiveness of both interactionist and interventionist DA in enhancing EFL learners' grammatical knowledge. Jafary et al. (2012) discovered that interactionist DA improved the grammatical knowledge of Iranian male pre-university students. In another study, Estaji and Ameri (2020) focused on pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate EFL learners, finding that interventionist DA was significantly more effective in developing the participants' skills, with lower-level participants achieving higher post-test scores than their high-intermediate counterparts. Participants in the experimental groups exhibited a more positive attitude toward grammar learning and preferred DA techniques over traditional methods. These findings align with similar studies by Alavi et al. (2012), Farangi and Kheradmand Saadi (2017), and Shabani (2012), which suggest that the success of DA can be linked to teachers' precise diagnostic feedback, learners' engagement in DA interactions, and the opportunity to discuss grammar topics with instructors.

Lastly, Asl et al. (2024) examined the effects of interactionist versus interventionist dynamic assessment models on Iranian EFL learners' speaking sub-skills. For this purpose, 30 undergraduate students from the Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, were recruited through convenience sampling and participated in both phases of the study. The quantitative data were gathered from participants' pre-and post-test scores in the IELTS speaking module, while qualitative data comprised the transcribed recordings of the intervention sessions. By integrating the quantitative and qualitative results, the study revealed that although both models positively influenced EFL learners' speaking proficiency, they differed in terms of the extent and mechanisms of their impacts. Specifically, interactionist DA effectively enhanced grammatical

range and accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary depth, whereas interventionist DA proved more efficient in improving fluency and vocabulary breadth.

While numerous studies have explored the effects of DA models on various language skills such as pronunciation, grammar, and fluency, there is a noticeable gap in research addressing how interventionist and interactionist DA models influence EFL learners' WTC. Most prior research has focused on linguistic proficiency, with limited attention given to the psychological and emotional factors that contribute to learners' communication behaviors, particularly WTC. Additionally, the comparative impact of these two distinct DA models—interventionist and interactionist—on learners' WTC remains largely underexplored, especially in contexts where learners' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety intersect with their willingness to engage in communicative activities. As WTC plays a critical role in language acquisition, examining how these DA models affect it could offer new insights into optimizing instructional strategies to enhance learners' communicative confidence and engagement in real-world situations. Consequently, the following question were posed:

1. Is there a significant difference between the interventionist and interactionist DA models regarding their impacts on Iranian EFL learners' WTC?

Methodology

Participants

This study investigated the comparative impacts of interventionist and interactionist dynamic assessment models on the WTC among 75 Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from two English language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. They consisted exclusively of male students, aged between 16 and 23 years. This age range was chosen to ensure that the participants were in a similar developmental stage, which is pertinent to language learning and communication skills.

The sample was divided into two experimental groups (EG1 and EG2) and one control group (CG). EG1 comprised 25 learners who engaged in the interventionist dynamic assessment model, while EG2 consisted of another 25 learners who participated in the interactionist dynamic

assessment model. The control group included 25 learners who did not receive any dynamic assessment intervention. All participants were enrolled in an English language program at a local institution, where they received a total of 16 treatment sessions delivered over a semester. This design aimed to compare the effectiveness of the two dynamic assessment models in enhancing learners' WTC in English.

Instruments

We used the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) as a tool for selecting intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners for this study. The OQPT is a widely recognized assessment designed to evaluate learners' English language proficiency levels efficiently and accurately. It consists of various sections that assess key language skills, including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and listening. By employing this test, we aimed to ensure that the participants included in the study had a uniform proficiency level, specifically at the intermediate stage, which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the research findings. The OQPT allowed for a reliable categorization of learners, helping to distinguish those who possessed the necessary foundational skills to benefit from the dynamic assessment models being investigated. Furthermore, the use of a standardized test like the OQPT enhances the validity of the participant selection process, as it minimizes subjectivity and provides a clear framework for assessing language proficiency. Ultimately, utilizing the OQPT not only facilitated the selection of appropriate participants but also contributed to the overall rigor and credibility of the research methodology.

The WTC questionnaire, which was based on Cao and Philp's (2006) observational method, served as the second tool for the study. The researcher regarded the aforementioned questionnaire as a valid instrument for this research because it had been frequently utilized in earlier investigations. It consisted of 12 items and employed a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating the least eager and 6 indicating the most willing. A team of English professionals validated the questionnaire, confirming its content validity. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess its reliability, yielding a satisfactory level of internal consistency. It should be emphasized that this scale was employed as both the pre-test and post-test, being administered before and after the treatment to evaluate changes in the WTC among the participants.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The study began with participant selection, where 75 learners were recruited and randomly assigned to three groups: Experimental Group 1 (EG1), consisting of 25 learners who received the interventionist dynamic assessment model; Experimental Group 2 (EG2), comprising 25 learners who engaged in the interactionist dynamic assessment model; and the Control Group (CG), which included 25 learners who did not receive any dynamic assessment intervention. A pre-test was conducted before the intervention to assess learners' initial WTC, using questionnaire of Cao and Philp's (2006).

Following the pre-assessment, all groups participated in the same 16 speaking lessons over a predetermined period of 8 weeks, with two lessons per week. To isolate the effect of the assessment model, the content and delivery method of the lessons remained identical for all groups. The intervention was implemented differently for each group: EG1 received immediate feedback through dynamic assessments, which included guided practice, prompts, and structured peer feedback sessions. In contrast, EG2 adopted a more collaborative approach, emphasizing peer interaction and collaborative feedback, allowing learners to assess each other's performances and engage in discussions reflecting on their learning. The CG received traditional instruction without any dynamic assessment features, focusing solely on lesson delivery without additional feedback or assessment strategies. Throughout the intervention, ongoing formative assessments were conducted for EG1 and EG2 after every four lessons to track progress and adjust teaching strategies as necessary. Learners were evaluated using rubrics based on the same criteria as the pre-assessment, while the control group received regular classwork assessments without dynamic assessment features. At the end of the intervention, a post-test identical to the pre-test was conducted to measure any changes in WTC across all groups, ensuring the same rubric was used for consistency in evaluation. Finally, data analysis compared pre- and post-test scores using statistical methods, such as ANOVA or t-tests, to determine the effectiveness of the dynamic assessment interventions on WTC.

Results

The results of this study provide compelling insights into the effects of dynamic assessment (DA) models on Iranian EFL learners' WTC. Prior to analysis, the data were assessed for normality, confirming that the distribution of scores met the assumptions required for parametric testing. To evaluate the differences among the three groups—control group (CG), interventionist group (EG1), and interactionist group (EG2)—we employed a one-way ANOVA. This statistical approach allowed for a robust comparison of WTC scores before and after the interventions, illuminating the impact of the different dynamic assessment models on learners' communicative confidence and engagement. The subsequent findings underscore the effectiveness of both DA models in fostering increased WTC among EFL learners, providing valuable implications for language instruction methodologies.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Pretest of WTC

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
CG	25	27.2000	4.61880	.92376
EG1	25	26.6800	3.59073	.71815
EG2	25	28.4400	4.65546	.93109
Total	75	27.4400	4.32229	.49909

The descriptive statistics for the pretest of WTC reveal that the average scores of the three groups (CG, EG1, and EG2) were relatively close, with the control group (CG) having a mean score of 27.20, the interventionist group (EG1) scoring a mean of 26.68, and the interactionist group (EG2) achieving the highest mean of 28.44. These results indicate that, prior to any intervention, the participants exhibited a moderate WTC in English, with EG2 showing slightly higher initial confidence. The standard deviations suggest some variability in scores within each group, with EG1 exhibiting the least variability, indicating a more homogenous response among its members. Overall, these pretest results set a baseline for assessing the impact of dynamic assessment models on WTC after the interventions.

Table 2: ANOVA Results for Pretest of WTC

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.880	2	20.440	1.097	.339
Within Groups	1341.600	72	18.633		
Total	1382.480	74			

The ANOVA results for the pretest of WTC show no statistically significant differences among the groups, as indicated by a p-value of 0.339. This suggests that prior to the implementation of dynamic assessment interventions, the WTC scores among the three groups did not vary significantly. The F-value of 1.097 also supports the notion that the initial levels of WTC were comparable, thereby validating the baseline for subsequent comparisons post-intervention. This lack of significant difference reinforces the assumption that any changes in WTC observed in the posttest could be attributed to the dynamic assessment models employed rather than pre-existing differences in the groups.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Posttest of WTC

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
CG	25	34.4000	7.14143	1.42829
EG1	25	45.8800	10.64707	2.12941
EG2	25	44.8400	9.90656	1.98131
Total	75	41.7067	10.60058	1.22405

In the posttest results, the interventionist dynamic assessment group (EG1) showed a significant increase in WTC with a mean score of 45.88, while the interactionist group (EG2) also exhibited a high mean score of 44.84. In contrast, the control group (CG) scored lower with a mean of 34.40. The substantial increase in WTC for both EG1 and EG2 highlights the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in fostering learners' confidence and willingness to engage in communication. The higher standard deviations in EG1 and EG2 indicate a broader range of responses among

participants, suggesting varying levels of improvement resulting from the interventions. These findings underscore the positive impact of tailored mediation and active engagement in enhancing WTC among EFL learners.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for Posttest of WTC

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2015.547	2	1007.773	11.517	.000
Within Groups	6300.000	72	87.500		
Total	8315.547	74			

The ANOVA results for the posttest of WTC indicate a statistically significant difference among the groups, with a p-value of 0.000 and an F-value of 11.517. This significant result suggests that the dynamic assessment models had a meaningful effect on enhancing the WTC in English among the participants. The considerable differences in mean scores observed in the previous table further substantiate these findings. Specifically, the interventionist and interactionist groups outperformed the control group significantly, indicating that both dynamic assessment models were effective in promoting WTC. The results advocate for the integration of DA approaches in EFL instruction to foster learners' communication skills.

Table 5: Multiple Comparisons for Posttest of WTC

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
CG	EG1	-11.48000*	2.64575	.000
	EG2	-10.44000*	2.64575	.001
EG1	CG	11.48000*	2.64575	.000
	EG2	1.04000	2.64575	.926
EG2	CG	10.44000*	2.64575	.001

EG1	-1.04000	2.64575	.926
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The results of the multiple comparisons for the posttest of WTC further elucidate the significant differences among the groups. Both the interventionist group (EG1) and the interactionist group (EG2) demonstrated substantial improvements over the control group (CG), with mean differences of -11.48 and -10.44, respectively, both of which were statistically significant ($p < .001$). The comparison between EG1 and EG2 yielded no significant difference ($p = .926$), indicating that both dynamic assessment models were comparably effective in enhancing WTC. These findings provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in improving communication skills among EFL learners, highlighting the necessity for educators to consider integrating such approaches into their teaching methodologies to foster learners' willingness to engage in communication.

Discussion of the Results

The analysis of the data demonstrated that both dynamic assessment (DA) models—interventionist and interactionist—significantly enhanced Iranian EFL learners' WTC compared to traditional non-DA instruction. These findings align with previous research that has consistently highlighted the positive impact of DA on various aspects of language learning. The integration of tailored mediation in DA seems to foster not only learners' communicative confidence but also their overall engagement with the language, resulting in a more positive attitude toward communication in the target language. This section will explore how the results of this study compare with similar research on the effects of DA, focusing on specific language learning skills such as pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical knowledge.

In line with the current study's findings, Yang and Qian (2017) reported that the interventionist DA model significantly improved the pronunciation proficiency of Chinese English learners. The oral mediation in the form of hints and explanations led to a more positive attitude and higher motivation among learners, reducing their anxiety. Similarly, the current study's findings suggest that both DA models helped learners feel more confident and less anxious about communicating in English. This is consistent with the broader claim that DA, particularly the

interventionist model, can foster motivation and lower anxiety, thereby creating an environment conducive to improved WTC.

Shafiee et al. (2018) also found that the interactionist DA model significantly enhanced Iranian EFL learners' ability to learn English rhythm. Their experimental group outperformed the control group due to the positive attitudes facilitated by DA implementation. This aligns with the present study's observation that interactionist DA contributed to learners' WTC by providing a more flexible and responsive form of mediation. The interactionist model, which involves continuous negotiation and adjustment between the learner and the mediator, likely encouraged the learners to feel more engaged and capable in their communication, mirroring the positive outcomes in Shafiee et al.'s study.

However, when comparing results related to fluency, the findings of the present study diverge somewhat from those of Kao (2020), who reported that interactionist DA did not benefit the oral fluency of lower-level Chinese EFL learners. Kao suggested that the teacher's constant intervention might have hindered the development of content fluency for these learners. In contrast, the current study showed that both DA models—interactionist and interventionist—enhanced Iranian EFL learners' WTC, which can be linked to increased communicative fluency. This discrepancy may be due to differences in learner proficiency levels or the specific mediation strategies employed in each study. Unlike Kao's study, which indicated potential drawbacks for lower-level learners, the present study demonstrates that, for Iranian EFL learners, both DA models provided the right balance of support to foster more confident and fluent communication, suggesting that the mediation was appropriately adapted to their proficiency level.

When examining the influence of DA on grammatical knowledge, the results of the current study resonate with the findings of Jafary et al. (2012) and Estaji and Ameri (2020), who reported that both interactionist and interventionist DA models effectively enhanced grammatical knowledge among Iranian EFL learners. In particular, Estaji and Ameri (2020) found that the interventionist DA model was more effective for lower-level learners, as it provided structured and targeted feedback, which helped them improve their grammatical accuracy. The findings of the current study similarly suggest that the interventionist DA model contributed to enhancing learners' WTC by giving them the grammatical confidence needed to communicate effectively. By

receiving structured mediation, learners were able to internalize language rules and apply them in real-time communication, thus boosting their WTC. This is further supported by studies such as those by Alavi et al. (2012), Farangi and Kheradmand Saadi (2017), and Shabani (2012), which highlighted the importance of accurate diagnostic feedback and learners' involvement in DA interactions for successful grammatical development.

Moreover, the study by Asl et al. (2024) provides valuable insights into how the two DA models impact different aspects of speaking proficiency. Asl et al. found that while both interactionist and interventionist DA models positively affected EFL learners' speaking skills, they did so in distinct ways. The interactionist DA model was more effective in improving grammatical range, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary depth, whereas the interventionist model was better at enhancing fluency and vocabulary breadth. These results are in line with the current study's findings that both models significantly enhanced WTC, albeit through different mechanisms. The interactionist model, with its focus on co-constructed knowledge and real-time dialogue, may have helped learners become more accurate and thoughtful in their communication, while the interventionist model's structured mediation likely promoted a more fluent and confident communicative style.

The fact that both interventionist and interactionist DA models significantly developed Iranian EFL learners' WTC compared to traditional instruction may be supported by a number of theoretical frameworks. These theories explain how DA, with its focus on mediation, scaffolding, and interaction, nurtures both the communicative competence of learners and their engagement in communication.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) The work of Vygotsky underpins DA through his sociocultural theory, which posits the role of social interaction and mediation in cognitive development. This is central to the Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, that describes how a learner might achieve higher levels of competence by means of interaction with a more knowledgeable other, such as a teacher or peer. Secondly, the interventionist and interactionist DA models support this in their provision for the learners to get tailored mediation, which enhances the communicative skills of the learners. The progressive scaffolding WTC receives in DA setting

points at Vygotsky's initial suggestion that development is a process of dynamic and responsive social interaction, which fosters both linguistic competencies and the confidence to communicate.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach These findings also relate to the principles of communicative language teaching, which support real communication as a prime goal of language learning. CLT stresses interaction, authentic use of language, and the development of learners' communicative competence. The DA focus on tailored mediation through meaningful interaction supports the aims of CLT in that both models aim to improve learners' ability and will to communicate in authentic situations. DA makes its beneficial contribution to WTC development by providing due attention to the needs of a particular learner through direct feedback and stimulating active involvement in communication and overcoming the barriers to communication.

WTC Model by MacIntyre et al. (1998) This model of WTC, suggested by MacIntyre et al., explains that learners' WTC in a foreign language is preeminently determined by situational and individual factors, with perceived competence and anxiety being some of the most basic determining factors. DA, by responding to an individual learner's needs and by giving feedback constantly, helps them lower their anxiety and enhance perceived communicative competence. This is most probably because of the scaffolding and support embedded in the DA models, which will increase the learners' self-efficacy and reduce the fear of making mistakes that are important to increasing WTC; fourthly, there is the use of social interactions, reflected in the interactionist DA approach where the learner participates in dynamic processes of co-constructed learning.

Dynamic Assessment as an Instructional Procedure: Lantolf and Poehner's (2004) Concept Along the same lines, the use of Vygotsky's theory in language learning as dynamic assessment by Lantolf and Poehner also subscribes to the following facts. As they say, DA unifies teaching and assessment into one process that assists learners in the movement toward their potential development, thus parsing teaching and assessment together. In DA, learning does not occur as an entity separate from assessment; rather, both are simultaneous incidents in a mediated learning context. This mediation helps learners to internalize linguistic notions, build confidence, and impacts their WTC directly since it raises awareness of how language works.

Affective Filter Hypothesis Krashen (1982) The affective filter hypothesis postulates that the emotional states of learners, including motivation, confidence, and anxiety, impact a learner's capability to learn the language. Krashen states that low anxiety and high motivation are what will lead to language learning success. Through responsive mediation and support, DA thus places the learner in a low-anxiety environment that should be more conducive to learning. This would confirm the increases found in WTC. The low affective filter gives way to DA models that help learners feel comfortable while communicating, hence increasing their willingness to converse in the target language.

The results indicating that both dynamic assessment (DA) models—interventionist and interactionist—significantly enhanced Iranian EFL learners' WTC compared to traditional instruction can be justified through several theoretical and practical perspectives.

Tailored Mediation and Scaffolding: DA, particularly its tailored mediation, provides individualized support that addresses each learner's specific communicative challenges. This scaffolding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, where interaction with a more knowledgeable other (e.g., a teacher) enables learners to progress within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By focusing on immediate, responsive mediation, learners are supported at their level of need, which helps boost their communicative competence and confidence. This support reduces anxiety and creates a sense of achievement, directly enhancing WTC.

Reduction of Anxiety and Increased Confidence: As Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests, a learner's emotional state plays a significant role in language acquisition. DA, by being interactive and supportive, lowers learners' affective filters by reducing their anxiety. When learners feel less fearful of making mistakes, they are more likely to participate in communication. The constant feedback in DA also enhances learners' self-efficacy, making them feel more competent in using the language, which in turn promotes their WTC.

Active Involvement and Engagement: DA encourages learners to be actively involved in the learning process. The interactionist model, in particular, focuses on co-constructed learning where both teacher and learner engage dynamically. This continuous engagement leads to deeper processing of language skills, such as pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical knowledge. As

learners experience improvement in these areas, their WTC naturally increases because they feel more prepared and capable of engaging in real communication.

Immediate Feedback and Learning Progress: DA integrates assessment with instruction, making feedback immediate and continuous. The interventionist model often provides clear benchmarks and goals for learners, helping them understand their progress. This transparent learning trajectory not only boosts learners' motivation but also builds their willingness to take part in communication activities since they see tangible improvements in their abilities.

Alignment with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Principles: The principles of DA align with the goals of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes real-life communication, meaningful interaction, and the development of communicative competence. The interaction-focused nature of DA complements CLT by placing learners in authentic communicative situations where they practice using language purposefully, which promotes greater WTC.

Support for Previous Research: The findings align with research by Lantolf and Poehner (2004), who emphasize that DA enhances learners' language development through integrated feedback and interaction. Similarly, studies by MacIntyre et al. (1998) have shown that learners' perceived competence and reduced anxiety are critical factors in increasing WTC, both of which are strongly impacted by the dynamic, responsive nature of DA.

Improvement in Specific Language Skills: The gains in WTC observed in this study may also be attributed to DA's role in improving specific language skills, such as pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical accuracy. By focusing on these areas through mediated learning, DA ensures that learners not only communicate more effectively but also feel more competent in doing so, which bolsters their WTC.

In sum, these complementary theories converge to provide strong support for the notion that dynamic, responsive, and socially mediated learning processes, as represented in DA models, significantly contribute to enhancing learners' WTC. Tailored mediation integrated into DA frameworks and an overall focus on individual needs of the learner provide the ideal venue for communicative confidence and engagement, eventually leading to enhanced WTC.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the current study support and extend previous research on the positive effects of DA in language learning. Both DA models significantly enhanced Iranian EFL learners' WTC by fostering communicative confidence and engagement. The interventionist model's structured mediation was particularly effective in promoting fluency and reducing anxiety, while the interactionist model's flexible, dialogic approach helped learners improve their grammatical accuracy and communication strategies. These findings highlight the transformative potential of DA in language education and underscore its ability to cater to diverse learner needs, making it a powerful tool for enhancing communicative competence across different linguistic contexts. The results of this study provide compelling evidence that both interventionist and interactionist dynamic assessment (DA) models significantly enhance Iranian EFL learners' WTC compared to traditional non-DA instruction. This finding corroborates existing literature that underscores the positive impact of DA on various aspects of language learning. The effective integration of tailored mediation within DA frameworks not only fosters communicative confidence among learners but also enhances their overall engagement with the language. Consequently, learners exhibit a more favorable attitude toward communication in the target language, thereby contributing to their language proficiency.

Implications

1. **For EFL Learners:** The findings suggest that EFL learners can significantly benefit from DA models, as these approaches cultivate their willingness to communicate. By engaging with tailored mediation strategies, learners are encouraged to practice language skills in a supportive environment that minimizes anxiety and enhances self-efficacy. Consequently,

incorporating DA in language learning could lead to increased opportunities for authentic communication, which is crucial for language acquisition.

2. **For Teachers:** EFL teachers are encouraged to adopt DA models in their instructional practices. By integrating both interventionist and interactionist approaches, teachers can provide personalized feedback and support to learners, addressing their specific needs and challenges. This shift in teaching methodology not only improves learners' communicative competence but also fosters a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment. Professional development opportunities focused on DA techniques could further equip teachers with the skills necessary to implement these approaches effectively.
3. **For Material Designers:** The implications of this study extend to material designers as well. Educational materials should be developed with DA principles in mind, emphasizing activities that promote interaction, personalized feedback, and scaffolding. Materials that facilitate meaningful communication and authentic language use can enhance learners' engagement and willingness to participate. By incorporating DA strategies into curriculum design, material developers can contribute to a more effective language learning experience that prioritizes learner autonomy and communicative competence.

Limitations

1. **Sampling Method:** The use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings. Since participants were selected from two English language institutes in Mashhad, Iran, the results may not be representative of EFL learners in different regions or contexts. The exclusive focus on male students also restricts the applicability of the findings to female learners and mixed-gender groups.
2. **Sample Size:** While the study included 75 participants, a larger sample size could enhance the statistical power of the results and provide more robust conclusions. A small sample may not adequately represent the diversity of learner experiences and responses to the dynamic assessment models.
3. **Age Range:** The age range of 16 to 23 years, while chosen to ensure participants were at a similar developmental stage, may limit insights into how dynamic assessment impacts different age groups. Younger or older learners might exhibit different responses to the interventions.

4. **Duration of Treatment:** The study's 16 treatment sessions over a semester may not be sufficient to observe long-term effects on WTC. Longer-term studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how dynamic assessment influences learners' WTC over time.
5. **Cultural Context:** The cultural background of participants may influence their WTC in English. The findings may not be applicable to learners from different cultural contexts, as sociocultural factors can play a significant role in language learning and communication.
6. **Self-Reported Measures:** The reliance on self-reported measures for WTC may introduce bias. Learners might overestimate or underestimate their WTC based on personal perceptions, which could affect the validity of the results.

Suggestions

1. **Broader Sampling:** Future studies should aim for a more diverse participant pool, including female learners and students from various educational backgrounds and geographical locations. This can help enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a more holistic understanding of the effects of DA.
2. **Larger Sample Size:** Increasing the sample size in future research could improve the statistical power of the study and yield more reliable conclusions. This could involve multi-institutional studies to capture a wider range of learner experiences.
3. **Longer Duration:** Implementing a longitudinal study design with a longer treatment duration could provide insights into the sustained effects of dynamic assessment on WTC. Tracking learners over multiple semesters would offer a clearer picture of how DA influences communication skills over time.
4. **Diverse Age Groups:** Future research should explore the impacts of DA on different age groups to understand how developmental factors influence learners' willingness to communicate. This could include younger learners in primary or secondary education as well as adult learners.
5. **Cultural Considerations:** Investigating the role of cultural factors in WTC could provide valuable insights into how learners from different backgrounds respond to dynamic assessment. This could involve qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore learners' experiences in more depth.

6. **Multiple Assessment Methods:** To enhance the validity of the findings, future studies should consider using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures for assessing WTC. Observational methods, peer assessments, and teacher evaluations could complement self-reported measures, providing a more comprehensive view of learners' communication behaviors.

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