The Effect of Dynamic Assessment as an Instructional Tool on Iranian EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Learning

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ABSTRACT

No doubt that the scope of vocabulary in teaching/learning English is a primary goal. Dynamic Assessment (DA) serving as both instructional and evaluative device has opened new horizons for vocabulary teaching and assessment. This study, having taken the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), will meticulously dig into mediated-oriented teaching and assessment. Accordingly, this study was conducted in Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch. Students of intermediate level participated in the study and they were randomly chosen as control and experimental groups. Sixty students out of 90 were selected as participants in two groups, after administering the Preliminary English Test (PET) and the proficiency level of the students was homogenized. Through a pre-test, a number of unknown vocabularies for the participants were identified, the unknown vocabularies were then given to the participants in four short passages, and finally Dynamic Assessment was applied to help the experimental group learn those new words, while Control group was exposed to static method of teaching vocabulary. The final Independent t-test between the pre-test and post-test of control and experimental groups indicate that vocabulary learning rate of learners can be enhanced using dynamic assessment. The results of this study can be useful and informative for both teachers and learners in providing them with new horizons of instructing students through a step by step procedure.

KEYWORDS: Dynamic Assessment, Zone of Proximal Development, Vocabulary Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a commonplace assumption that the more words a learner knows, the larger the learner's vocabulary knowledge is.[23] has argued the standard view of dividing language teaching into grammar and vocabulary by asserting that language is comprised of lexical items. He believes that vocabularies belong to four major categories. A relatively small group of lexical items is the words and poly-words (a phrase that acts like a single word). The second category is collocations (the words that go together). In [23]'s approach, the third category is fixed expressions (metaphorical things people usually say), and the fourth one is semi-fixed expressions (which have some parts that never change and other parts that have to be manipulated according to what we want to say).

Vygotsky (1998, cited in [22]) believes that “determining learners’ actual level of development not only does not cover the whole picture of development, but very frequently encompasses only an insignificant part of it”. Hence, bringing in the potentialities of learners into view is something teachers can invest on. According to Valsiner and Van der veer (1993, cited in [22], p. 266), “all development involves the construction of distance between the present and the past, and overcoming the distance from the present and the future”.

Dynamic assessment, as a new approach to assessment is mostly grounded in both Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory (SCT) of mind, on the one hand, and in his concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) on the other hand. Based on SCT, process of learners’ development is a key to analyze their cognitive abilities. Dynamic Assessment (DA) intervention refers to mediation, which helps students develop their abilities to apply appropriate L2 knowledge in an EFL setting. Assessment and instruction through DA are inseparable. Accordingly, this study aims at seeking the effect of presenting new L2 vocabulary through dynamic assessment, which is considered an instructional tool.

DA does not refer to any specific test; rather it is used as a framework or procedure for simultaneous teaching and instructing learners [31]. Taking the commonly accepted assumption that assessments must be incorporated into teaching, we are trying to propose Vygotsky’s DA procedure for measuring unknown vocabulary in which DA was used as an instructional tool rather than assessing a specific skill. That is, testing is also considered as an opportunity for learning not just as a threatening act on part of the instructor.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Assessment has been categorized from different perspectives. According to [6], formative assessment (FA) usually is contrasted with summative assessment in that it evaluates learners within the process of learning a foreign language; moreover, it assists the learners to maintain that process growth. On the other hand, summative
assessment (SA) happens at the end of the course or unit of instruction. According to [5], formative assessment methods and techniques produce significant learning outcomes for educational interventions. Furthermore, a few studies have shown the largest gains for students who had already been classified as low achievers.

Formative assessment, focusing on the importance of actively involving students in their own learning processes, resonates with educational goals for the development of students’ higher-order thinking skills and skills for learning-to-learn. Also, it fits well with teachers’ emphases on the use of assessment and evaluation data to shape improvements in teaching and learning. According to [2] the semester education system is based upon formative, continuous and internal type of assessment that aids to develop the process of teaching and learning. In this regard, formative assessment method can help students to keep an interaction with their teachers in order to check their progress. Formative assessment is now considered as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process, rather than as an isolated activity which takes place after teaching process ([11]; [3]; [30]). Classroom interactions, questioning, structured classroom activities, and feedback are the items helping fill the gaps prevalent in language classrooms. Learners also as active agents are involved in the assessment process through self- and peer-assessment [32]. Information from external tests or from school inspections may also be used formatively to identify learning needs and adjust teaching strategies. When an assessment shapes subsequent learning, it can be called a formative assessment ([15]; [36]).

[31] distinguished FA from DA arguing that DA is not just a special type of FA. It is a pedagogical approach grounded in a specific theory of mind and development. FA, on the other hand, is not framed by a development theory, but is based on teachers’ intuitive classroom practice. They believed that DA carried out both formally and informally, it must, by definition, be systematic. It is worth noting that the chief characteristic of DA is the negotiation of mediation aimed at development. As put by [4], mediation cannot be offered in a haphazard, hit-or-miss trend rather it must be attuned to those abilities that are maturing, and while they mature further as a result of mediation, the mediation itself needs to be continually negotiated.

Based on Dickins and Gardner’s (2000, cited in [22]) interviews with some teachers, it was found that teachers made use of FA in different ways. First, it gives good information and evidence for learners’ learning. The second point is that it is indicative of the extent to which they and the students have acquired what has been taught during the course. Lastly, the teachers can take the advantage of FA since it provides them with the evidence for evaluating their teaching. In a recent commentary, [19] comments that like DA, formative assessment is not interested in just assessing learners’ existent performance abilities but tend directly to regulate the teaching/learning process. He then adds that formative assessment have no place in traditional intelligence testing as a reference point due to being rooted in curriculum-based teaching/learning practice. Formative assessment, however, are done by teachers rather than by psychologists, and the assessment materials are selected based on curricular tasks rather than cognitive tests [19].

[31] distinguished FA from DA arguing that DA is not just a special type of FA. It is a pedagogical approach grounded in a specific theory of mind and development. FA, on the other hand, is not framed by a development theory, but is based on teachers’ intuitive classroom practice. They believed that DA carried out both formally and informally, it must, by definition, be systematic. It is worth noting that the chief characteristic of DA is the negotiation of mediation aimed at development. As put by [4], mediation cannot be offered in a haphazard, hit-or-miss trend rather it must be attuned to those abilities that are maturing, and while they mature further as a result of mediation, the mediation itself needs to be continually negotiated.

[11] noted that in FA, the focus has been on “the ways in which teachers have tried to inform their own practice so that pupil’s needs are more specifically met, and much less attention has been paid to the ways in which pupils participate in this process”

[33] distinguish between DA and other forms of assessment which in turn they call Static Assessment (SA). They assert that in SA, learners are given items, either one at a time or all at once, which they have to respond successively without feedback or intervention of any kind. Non-Dynamic Assessment (NDA) is product-oriented without any feedback from the examiner to test-taker. It is intended to profile and measure learners’ abilities in their current state while DA foregrounds future development [33].

In NDA, examinees and examiners are expected to adopt a neutral and disinterested stance as a means of minimizing measurement error. In DA, the examiner-examinee relationship is markedly different in that the examiner intervenes in the assessment process and the conventional attitude of neutrality is thus replaced by an atmosphere of teaching and helping [33]. [17] also have similar ideas. They have a constructive view about this shift from SA to DA. By static assessment, they refer to those classical and psychometric evaluations (e.g. intelligence tests) which are constructed based on the notion of stability. They state that stability concerns the psychological trait that needs to be stable and not vary during testing.

The first fully operationalized programs for dynamic assessment of general cognitive functions were developed by Budoff in the US and by Feuerstein in Israel [24]. Budoff perceived dynamic assessment as a better tool for classification of students and prediction of their future achievements. Feuerstein claimed that the goal of dynamic assessment is to discover and actualize the students’ propensity toward cognitive change [20]. Currently a wide variety of dynamic cognitive assessment procedures is available. What unites all those
approaches is their reliance on test-teach-test paradigm, what distinguishes between them is the nature of “teaching” that occurs between pre- and post-tests ([9]; [16]; [25]).

Some of the dynamic assessments use a highly standardized sequence of cues during the teaching phase, while others (e.g. [12]) are more flexible and interactive offering different types of mediation depending on specific needs revealed by the student during the assessment. In what concerns the testing materials themselves these usually resemble such standard psychometric tasks as Raven’s matrices, numerical or symbolic progressions, Koh’s cubes, and so on. The tasks for dynamic cognitive assessment are selected in such a way that they tap into more flexible, so-called “fluid” aspects of cognitive functioning.

As far as Scaffolding is concerned, a brief overview is provided of how the scaffolding has been defined in educational contexts. According to [21] the scaffolding construct, a channel for dynamic assessment intersects instruction and assessment in that instructors assess learners to determine what type or level of scaffold is sufficient to help learners reach their potential. Such assessments are dynamic and ongoing and can occur through dialogue and social interactions with or without the use of technology. Accordingly, scaffolds are employed when and where necessary but they are also removed when evidence of learning exists.

[34]refers to scaffolding as a procedure of the dynamic assessment. Hence, it can be concluded that scaffolding is not separable from dynamic assessment, rather at times without scaffolding dynamic assessment will be fulfilled. But, the case in point is that depending on the type of mediation different procedures of dynamic assessment can be at work. In other words, scaffolding being the main procedure in one study may not be applied for the other.

Dynamic Assessment (DA) has penetrated into different skills and sub-skills of language during the last years. Vocabulary assessment, in its turn, has not been an exception for this claim. There are many justifications of why dynamic assessment can prove to be very suitable for vocabulary instruction and assessment. One of the reasons can be due to the fact that standardized vocabulary tests may not be sensitive enough to identify children with specific language impairments [26]. Moreover, standardized vocabulary tests may be culturally biased. Dynamic assessment may be used as an alternative approach to measure abilities to learn words. Factors that can be manipulated in dynamic assessment include phonotactic probability (i.e., frequency of sound sequences) and neighborhood density phonological similarity because past research suggests that they affect word learning [26]. A method incorporating these factors in dynamic assessment is introduced and interpretations of outcome and their clinical implications are discussed.

A range of options exist for measuring word-learning ability, yet much remains unknown about the optimal way to measure word learning. On the contrary, methods of language assessment involving pure reliance on standardized tests have been questioned as culturally and linguistically biased and skewed [13]. [10]argue that standard assessment procedures are best at evaluating the students’ knowledge of skills, but insufficient for estimating the students’ learning potential and provide little help for identifying the conditions under which the progress can be made. It must be noted that the main characteristic of DA, the theory underlying this study, is not the assessment per se, rather instruction as a sort of alternative way of teaching L2 vocabulary. As [31] put, “In DA the examiner functions as a mediator who reacts to learners’ responsiveness and is more concerned with cognitive transformation than with performance efficiency”. These scholars also argue that in DA, the person who examines and the examinee have the same intentions and represent a functional system, a unit where all parts work together. In fact, instead of concentrating on learners’ existing knowledge and skills, DA focuses on learners’ learning potential and their ability to figure out this potential during assessment session [18].

For many students, recognizing and using the traditional ways of learning vocabulary are one of the most frustrating and difficult aspects of their language learning experience since they do not allow them to achieve sufficient understanding of those vocabulary. Hence, the researcher is after finding the optimal ways of acquiring unknown vocabulary using dynamic assessment. In other words, in this study, the focus is on assessing the viability of dynamic assessment used as an instructional adjunct in the development of Iranian EFL learners’ unknown vocabulary.

The present study intended to investigate the impact of dynamic assessment as an instructional tool on Iranian EFL learner’s vocabulary learning. This study at large tried to find the answers for the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of vocabulary learning in the control group?
2. Is there a difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of vocabulary learning in the experimental group?
3. Is there a difference between experimental group (DA group) and control group in learning vocabulary?

The following null hypotheses were raised in order to answer the research questions:

1. There is not a difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of vocabulary learning in the control group.
2. There is not a difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of vocabulary learning in the experimental group.

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3. There is not a difference between experimental group (DA group) and control group in learning vocabulary.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Participants
This study adopted a quasi-experimental design in which a control group, a pre-test and a post-test were used. The total of 90 Iranian EFL learners at Chitsazan English Institute during summer of 2012 participated in this study. This sample included most of the Intermediate learners of this institute. The sample included 35 males and 55 females within the age range of 20 to 35. By the means of English language proficiency test 60 out of the whole population of 90 were selected for the purpose of the study among whom twenty were male and forty were female. The selected participants were put in two classes of thirty.

The size of each class was the same to fulfill the purpose of balanced design in research. According to [14] and [15], balanced designs or orthogonal designs have equal N sizes for all the groups and subgroups to be compared.

2.2 Instrumentation
Two instruments were used to collect the data: A Preliminary English Test (PET) and a vocabulary test (used for pre-test and post-test).

Preliminary English Test (2010) which provided a practical way of assessing the students' level of English language proficiency in areas of listening, speaking, reading comprehension, structure, vocabulary, and writing. This test included 70 items (see Appendix A).

Another instrument employed in this study was a 60-item vocabulary test based on [27], (used as pre-test and post-test). (see Appendix B).

[27] propose five levels or stages in the acquisition of individual words in their vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS). The VKS scale rating ranges from total unfamiliarity through the recognition of the word and some idea of its meaning to the ability to use the word with grammatical and semantic accuracy in a sentence [28].

These five levels include:
I. I do not remember having seen this word before.
II. I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
III. I have seen this word before, and I think it means ______. (Synonym or antonym)
IV. I know this word. It means ______. (Synonym or antonym)
V. I can use this word in a sentence: _______________________.

VKS scoring categories range between one and five with specific implications. The score of one is allocated if the word is not familiar at all. The score of two is given if the meaning is not known or the participants write incorrect meaning of the word. The score of three indicates that an appropriate meaning or synonym has been written. The score of four shows that the examinee is sure, what the meaning or synonym of the word is and finally the score of five indicates that the word is used in a sentence accurately and appropriately [28].

The items in the test were chosen from Advanced Vocabulary and Idioms by [35]. The purpose of the pre-test was first to find the vocabularies which were unknown to the participants. And second to keep them to compare with the post-test in each group. This test was given to two classes including 30 participants.

The same vocabulary pre-test which was administered at the outset of the study was compiled and administered as the post-test to assess the progress of the participants at the end of the study (see Appendix B). The result of this posttest would show which way of treating vocabulary in experimental and control groups had been more successful.

2.3 Procedures
After being sure of the homogeneity of participants through administering the proficiency test of PET, both control and experimental groups took a pre-test. Then the two groups took part in a vocabulary learning course. The researcher himself was the instructor in two groups. Classes met twice a week every Saturday-Wednesday and Sunday-Tuesday. Each session was 50 minutes long. The research data were collected by the researcher during 4 sessions.

Twenty eight vocabularies, based on the results of the pre-test, were to be taught in experimental and control groups. These twenty eight vocabularies were those words which the students rated 1 or 2, meaning, “I do not remember having seen this word before” and “I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means”, respectively. Four sessions had been specified for learning these Twenty eight vocabularies to each class.

Then all these vocabularies were taught to both groups using four short passages. In the control group the unknown vocabularies were taught by providing them with definitions and in the experimental group through Dynamic Assessment in the following method: All of the 28 unknown vocabularies were put in 4 short
passages. The passages were distributed among participants. After allocating 10 minutes for the participants’ silent reading of the passage in which those unknown vocabularies were highlighted, dynamic assessment was applied by the instructor to help the participants learn and get the right meaning through 5 various stages:

1. Asking the participants to guess the meaning of the word from the passage.
2. Emphasizing the use of prefixes or suffixes (if there were any) to guide the participants.
3. Eliciting and Introducing synonyms or antonyms.
4. Using the unknown vocabularies in different sentences and providing more examples.
5. Providing the dictionary meaning of the words if the 4 previous stages could not lead the learners to the correct meaning.

In order to benefit from the learners’ personal involvement in fulfilling the process, synonyms and antonyms were provided through multiple choice questions for the third step. In addition, to facilitate the fourth step, more examples were written on pieces of paper and were distributed among the learners to give them the chance of comparing the sentences to reach the correct meaning of the word.

In view of the fact that dynamic assessment has been shaped based on "step by step" learning and "ZPD", the course had been devised in a way that it could fulfill this purpose. The instructor first started with the first step and moved thoroughly to the other stages by the time the participants had been able to learn the words. Having finished the 4 sessions, the post-test was given to both control and experimental groups to test their performance.

In order to clarify the point a typical treatment is shown here which includes all the 5 stages of Dynamic Assessment procedure:

Read the text bellow:
Censorship is necessary, especially to protect children from the corrupting influence of scenes of sex and violence in films, often masquerading as art, in our cinemas. There should also be censorship of pornographic magazines produced by unscrupulous people willing to cater to the immoral tastes of small minority.

1) Try to guess the meaning of the bolded word in the text.
2) The prefix (un) means not/against/opposite
3) Which bolded word could be a synonym for unscrupulous? Circle the correct choice:
   NAME:  
   a) When she arrived in the city, she was just an unsophisticated country girl.
   b) The public’s dislike of unprincipled press behavior in revealing the facts is obvious.
   c) We have seen that a contract made in an unsolicited time is cancellable.

Or
Which bolded word could be an antonym for unscrupulous? Circle the correct choice:
   NAME:  
   a) It would not be ethical for me, as a doctor, to talk to you about my patients.
   b) His opponents have tried to characterize him as indifferent to the concerns of the working class.
   c) Emotionally unstable patients should be treated with caution.

4) More examples:
   A) In his desire for power, he has become completely unscrupulous.
   B) It’s time we did something to protect the children from unscrupulous business people.

5) This word means (Behaving in an unfair or dishonest way).

3. RESULTS

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher collected the data from the Pre- and post-tests of vocabulary and the PET exam as a proficiency test to determine the homogeneity of the groups. In the end the findings were discussed and interpreted comprehensively.

This exam contained three parts: reading and writing part contained 40 questions; listening part contained 20 questions and finally speaking part which consisted of 4 parts. The total score of this exam was 100. The purpose of administering this exam was to be sure of the homogeneity of the participants. Since there were two groups in this study independent sample t-test procedure would show whether there are significant differences among the proficiency levels of groups or not.

Table1. descriptive statistics for the students’ pet scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59.8333</td>
<td>1.76329</td>
<td>.32193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60.4333</td>
<td>1.38174</td>
<td>.25227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 1 the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the experimental group are (M=59.83, SD=1.76) and of the control group are (M=60.43, SD=1.38). In order to see whether this difference reaches statistical significance, more details are provided in Table 2.

### Table 2: t-test comparing the results of proficiency test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
<td>54.86</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 indicates, the p-value observed (0.14) is bigger than the level of significance (alpha=0.05) which has been selected for this study. Thus the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two groups prior to the implementation of the treatment is not rejected. Therefore, two groups were almost homogeneous prior to starting the study. This is a prerequisite to be able to compare the results of posttests and the possible effects of treatment.

The purpose of administering the pre-test was twofold:
1) To determine the words which were unfamiliar for all participants; the unknown vocabularies shaped the basis of vocabulary learning courses in experimental and control groups. The test was based on VKS test. Those vocabularies for which I and II alternatives were checked by test takers in VKS test were chosen as being unfamiliar. Consequently, 28 words were recognized to be completely new for participants. It is worth noting that the scores based on all five alternatives (I, II, III, IV, V) were used as the pre-test scores.
2) To use the pre-test scores to determine the homogeneity of the groups in terms of vocabulary knowledge and to compare vocabulary learning from pre-test to post-test in each group.

### Table 3: descriptive pretest VKS group statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest VKS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>169.0345</td>
<td>.90565</td>
<td>.16817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>168.9677</td>
<td>.79515</td>
<td>.14281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4 the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the experimental group are (M=169.03, SD=.90) and of the control group are (M=168.96, SD=.79). In order to see whether this difference reaches statistical significance, more details are provided in Table 4.4.

### Table 4: independent sample t-test of pre-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.762</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is represented in Table 4 the p-value observed (0.76) is bigger than the assumed level of significance (alpha=0.05) and therefore, there was no significant difference between experimental and control groups and both groups were homogenous in terms of vocabulary knowledge.Consequently, the first null hypothesis is rejected, that is to say that there was a difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores of vocabulary learning in the control group.

To investigate the possible differences between the pre-test and post-test of experimental group’s vocabulary knowledge and the possible progress of each group in comparison to their scores before the treatment, the paired sample t-test was employed by researcher. Table 5 illustrates the results of paired sample t-test for experimental group.

### Table 5: descriptive experimental paired samples statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test experimental</td>
<td>277.4333</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.61967</td>
<td>2.48660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test experimental</td>
<td>169.0000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.90972</td>
<td>.16609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5, the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the experimental group (M=277.43, SD=13.61) respectively and of the control group are (M=169, SD=.90) respectively. In order to see whether this difference reaches statistical significance, more details are provided in Table 6.
Table 6. Paired sample t-test of experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1: pre-test post-test</td>
<td>108.43</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>103.43</td>
<td>113.43</td>
<td>44.36</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is represented in Table 6, the p-value observed (0.00) is smaller than the level of significance (alpha=0.05) which has been selected for this study. Thus, there was a statistically significant difference between the amounts of pre-test and post-test scores of Experimental group’s vocabulary knowledge. In other words, the treatment had been successful for the experimental group and DA procedure had advanced their vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference between the pretest and post test results of experimental group.

Since there was a statistically significant difference between the amounts of pre-test and post-test scores of the paired sample t-test of control group and paired sample t-test of the experimental group, to compare the results of post test scores of control group and experimental group, the researcher applied Independent sample t-test. Table 7 shows the output of this procedure.

Table 7. Descriptive independent sample t-test statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test VKS</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>277.43</td>
<td>13.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>182.06</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 7 the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the experimental group are (M=277.43, SD=13.61) and of the control group are (M=189.06, SD=7.08). In order to see whether this difference reaches statistical significance, more details are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Independent sample t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>34.02</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>95.36</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>34.02</td>
<td>43.62</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>95.36</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 8 shows, the p-value observed (0.00) is smaller than the assumed level of significance (alpha=0.05) which has been selected for this study. Therefore, the third null hypothesis was rejected which shows that the participants in the DA group have outperformed in the posttest and needless to say that providing the learners with step by step hints as a dynamic assessment methodology has been proved to contribute more to the increase of the learners’ score.

4. DISCUSSION

Taking the results of this study into consideration, based on the statistical results of the paired sample t-test there was a significant difference between the results of pre-test and post-test of vocabulary learning in the control group. Also with regard to the results of paired sample t-test of experimental group, there was a significant difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test of vocabulary learning, which showed that DA had been proved to be successful. In the end, based on the results of Independent sample t-test the experimental and control groups differ significantly in a way that experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test. It must be noted that the main characteristic of DA, the theory underlying this study, is not the assessment per se, rather instruction.

As it was mentioned in previous sections, literature review with regard to the role of dynamic Assessment on vocabularies is scarce. A couple of works which have been conducted so far are related to the effect of dynamic assessment on the vocabulary of impaired learners [8]. In that research, a DA procedure was piloted with a group of 14 children for whom there were no concerns about speech and language development and 40 children who had been referred to speech and language therapists. Twelve of the referred children had English as an additional language (EAL) and 28 were monolingual English. The static assessment from which the DA was developed was the British Picture Vocabulary Scales. The DA incorporated measures of children’s ability to match a word to a referent and to retain the words for expressive and receptive purposes. Results indicated that monolingual children and those with EAL had comparable DA scores even though their static vocabulary scores were significantly different.
Children with normally developing language and children referred to speech and language therapy performed significantly differently on these dynamic measures. In addition, there was greater variability in performance on the dynamic measures within the delayed language group than in the language normal group. Like the work of [7], in this study the role of dynamic assessment and its positive role in enhancing the vocabulary knowledge is highlighted. Needless to mention that here DA was used as an instructional tool.

In a study conducted by [29] the differential performance of two groups of students of high-risk and low-risk on standardized static vocabulary measures and on a dynamic measure was examined. Since this study examined the performance of preschool children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, both typically developing and with low language ability, on a word-learning task. The results from this study may adequately have measured a particular vocabulary learning strategy, but it may not have provided a measure of word-learning ability for all populations. In contrast, in our study, the results of our research manifest the effect of dynamic assessment on a wide range of participants’ vocabulary learning.

In our control group also the routine and static trend of teaching vocabulary was proved to have been resulted in the improvement of their vocabulary knowledge. However, finally, the results of the comparison of the post-tests in control and experimental groups proved that DA had been more effective and helpful. In this study, DA made the subjects aware of their learning potentialities and facilitated the process of vocabulary learning for them. This can give other researchers the inclination towards other aspects of vocabulary learning and teaching to be discovered.

In sum, the results of this study, confirms the results of other vocabulary related studies. The fact of the matter in all similar studies is that dynamic assessment proves to be very helpful for vocabulary learning. Learners who received DA related treatment ended up having good scores in our evaluation.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study gave credit to the usefulness of DA procedures in vocabulary learning. It could be inferred that the success of DA might be due to two remarkable reasons at hand: firstly, its effectiveness in learning processes of language and secondly, its creating a different and innovative context of language learning in comparison with traditional ones, both for the learners and teachers. This in turn can bring about lots of benefits for ELT contexts. The results of this research can make other researchers motivated to go through other dimensions of vocabulary learning via DA.

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REFERENCES


