

Instructional Efficacy of Dynamic Assessment on English Vocabulary Learning of Young Iranian EFL Learners: The Case of Near vs. Far Transcendence Tasks

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Abstract

One of the major concerns for English learners is finding an effective method to learn new vocabularies. Dynamic assessment (DA) is an interactive assessment technique which provides assessment and instruction simultaneously to promote learners' development (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). The present study was an attempt to investigate the instructional efficacy of DA on English vocabulary learning of young Iranian EFL learners. In so doing, twenty five female Iranian EFL learners at elementary level from Kowsar language institute in Iran were selected. Megasection method was used for this group to implement the interventionist cake model of DA to promote English vocabulary achievement of the learners. First of all, a thirty item multiple-choice vocabulary test was administered. When the learners encountered difficulties in answering an item, the mediator offered five kinds of pre-fabricated mediatory prompts during the test administration. Secondly, two days after the end of the multiple-choice vocabulary test, a parallel test was administered to assess the number and the kind of mediation they required during this test. Thirdly, the results of both tests were compared to find whether DA promotes vocabulary learning. Finally, far and near transcendence tasks were conducted to evaluate lexical recall of the learners in short-term and long term memory and also to find out whether students can extend the learned vocabulary to new contexts. The results of data analysis indicated that learners' English vocabulary ability was promoted.

Keywords: dynamic assessment, vocabulary learning, near transcendence task, far transcendence task

INTRODUCTION

Schmitt (2000) asserts that vocabulary learning is an important area for mastering a second/foreign language. In addition, Abdollahi and Tahriri (2012) state that vocabulary influences effective communication greatly, thus it is one of the most fundamental components in learning a language. Furthermore, Richards and Renandya (2002) believe that restricted vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary leads to miscommunication, because the learners are discouraged to use language learning opportunities like listening to the radio, watching television, etc. As vocabulary is an important area in language learning, an efficient method should be applied for its successful learning and development. Evidence reveals that DA is a practical method to enhance L2 vocabulary development, because traditional assessment (TA) has some shortcomings. TA is different from DA on three points: (1) perspective: TA considers performance as a static process, but DA considers it as a dynamic process; (2) the goal: in DA, the examiner provides mediation to promote learners' development and to find out their learning potential however, in TA the examiner does not provide any mediation and the examinees receive no form of feedback during the process of assessment. Also, any sort of interaction or assistance during this assessment is considered unacceptable or even cheating; (3) the role of the assessor: the assessor acts as a mediator in DA and there is an interactive relationship between examiner and examinee, but in TA the assessor conducts the assessment and this relationship is completely neutral (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000; Poehner, 2007; Elliot, 2003, cited in Barabadi, 2010).

Moreover, based on Poehner and Lantolf (2003), DA focuses on the process of learning to predict learners' future, but TA focuses on the results of learning to show their current capabilities, thus TA cannot predict their future. These deficiencies show traditional methods are not efficient methods to apply in the L2 contexts. As a result, DA is considered to be more effective than traditional methods for vocabulary development. DA is an effective pedagogical method which is basically grounded in the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky which measures the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and also it does not allow cultural and linguistic bias to influence the performance of the learners (White & Jin, 2011; Peña et al., 2001, cited in Hasson, Camilleri, Jones, Smith, & Dodd, 2012). Vygotsky (1978) defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86). Many researchers have defined DA in various ways, thus there is no widespread agreement on the definition of DA.

Lidz (1987) defines DA in a specific way which emphasizes the interaction. She proposes that DA is "an interaction between an examiner-as-intervener and a learner-as-active participant, which seeks to estimate the degree of modifiability of the learner and the means by which positive changes in cognitive functioning can be induced and maintained" (p.4). Moreover, Hasson and Joffe (2007) believe that "DA includes a range of methods and materials to assess individuals' potential for learning. Its aim is to reveal

the maximum level of performance by providing mediation in the course of assessment session" (p.10). Furthermore, Kozulin (2003) claims "instead of studying the child's individual performance, dynamic assessment focuses on the difference between performance before and that after the learning or assistance phase" (p.17). In addition, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) state that DA is a procedure that "integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity aimed at promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's (or in some cases a group's) current abilities. In essence, DA is a procedure for simultaneously assessing and promoting development that takes account of the individual's (or groups') zone of proximal development" (p.50). Furthermore, Mardani and Tavakoli (2011) stress that DA is a method which reduces the stress by combining teaching and testing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DA has emerged from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind. Vygotsky and his colleagues formulated sociocultural theory in the 1920s and 1930s. DA overcomes the *assessment-instruction dualism* by integrating assessment with instruction to successfully promote learners' abilities. This monistic view of assessment and instruction can be accepted if we follow Vygotsky's thought that cognitive abilities emerged from the interactions in the world and that these cognitive abilities are always mediated (Poehner, 2008). According to Mardani (2013), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind has two characteristics, namely, the role of interaction in development and this thought that the individuals' capacity for cognitive development is determined by ZPD. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) believe this theory discusses that the most important forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction. In other words, these researchers believe that based on this theory, interaction is vital for cognitive development of the learners. By implementing dynamic assessment, an examiner interacts with a child and provides mediation to find out learning potential and to promote development.

Extensive studies have been conducted by DA researchers. For example, Peña et al. (2006) used DA to investigate the narrative ability in first and second grade school children. Two wordless storybooks were used as pre- and post-tests, and two sessions of intervention were carried out in the 'teach' phase. The results indicated all children performed better on the post-test after the two sessions of mediated learning experience. In addition, Poehner (2008) has conducted a study in which he examined the oral proficiency of French university students. The findings revealed mediation helps students to improve their oral abilities. In another study, Ableeva (2008) used DA for six university students studying French to develop listening comprehension skills. In this study, a non-dynamic pre-test, a mediation process stage and a dynamic re-test were developed. At first, the participants were asked to listen to the radio announcement two times and answer the questions. After the administration of non-dynamic pre-test, the mediator gave mediation and hints. Finally, their performance on dynamic re-test revealed that DA has a significant effect on listening comprehension

skills. She concluded that the problem areas of students can be revealed by interaction between mediator and learner.

Antón (2009) also applied DA program with third-year Spanish learners at the university level. First of all, she assessed grammar, vocabulary, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, and speaking of the students. Then, she gave mediation to them which focused on the written and spoken parts of the test. Finally, she compared their performance before the provision of mediation and after it. Like Poehner (2008), she concluded that DA helps learners to understand abilities deeply. Similarly, Lantolf and Poehner (2011) conducted a study in which they dynamically evaluated noun/adjective agreement in Spanish. The participants of this study were a large group of students. The mediator gave mediation to all of them simultaneously and taught them instruction based on group's ZPD. They concluded that DA helps teachers to find out and promote the group's ZPD.

Furthermore, Mardani and Tavakoli (2011) used DA for 30 Iranian male learners to develop their reading comprehension skills. During the mediation phase, the researchers used an interactionist method which was based on cooperative dialog. They concluded that both test performance and learning of learners markedly improved as a result of mediation. In another study, Pishgadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood (2011) examined the effect of applying a computerized dynamic reading comprehension test (CDRT) on Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level of proficiency. The findings showed that providing mediation in the form of hints has a significant effect on the learners' scores and their reading comprehension. Likewise, Hessamy and Ghaderi (2014) investigated the role of DA in the vocabulary learning of EFL learners at the intermediate level of proficiency. The pretest-mediation-posttest design (sandwich model of DA) was used in the study. The participants were divided into two groups: control group and experimental group. The experimental group received mediation after pre-test, but the control group received no mediation. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group and this difference was significant.

In addition, Aghaebrahimian, Rahimirad, Ahmadi, and KhalilpourAlamdari (2014) investigated the effect of incorporating DA in improving teaching writing at advanced level among Iranian EFL learners. In this study, twenty participants took part in advanced writing class. All of the participants received the same treatment; however, experimental group were assessed dynamically and the control group were assessed traditionally. The result of statistical analysis of the T-test showed a significant change in the essays of the participants in the experimental group. Similarly, Shabani (2014) used DA to explore the impact of interactionist group dynamic assessment (G-DA) on listening comprehension ability in transcendence tasks. The participants of this study were 17 Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level of proficiency. The results indicated that non-dynamic assessment (NDA) stops capturing the learners' actual abilities and G-DA could enhance the students' listening comprehension processes. The present study is done in the domain of interventionist DA of learning vocabulary which focuses on the performance of the learners in learning situations and also evaluates

their lexical recall through near and far transcendence tasks. This study intends to respond to the following research questions:

- Does DA promote English vocabulary development of young Iranian EFL learners?
- Does DA improve young Iranian EFL learners' short-term memory recall of lexical items through near transcendence task?
- Does DA improve young Iranian EFL learners' long-term memory recall of lexical items through far transcendence task?

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the present study were the researcher as the mediator and twenty five young Iranian EFL learners at elementary level from Kowsar Language Institute in Isfahan, Iran. They were females whose age ranged between nine and eleven. In order to make the students homogeneous; the proficiency level of students was checked by asking some questions orally from the previous courses they had passed. If they performed well, they would register for the next term, but if they performed weak, they would register for the previous term again. In this study, the megasection method, which is an effective method for teaching in large classes presented by Bolton (1988), was implemented for this group. As the number of this group was large for implementing cake format of DA, megasection method was used to give mediation to each learner individually and to assess the number and kind of mediation offered. Thus, 25 students were divided into two groups, 12 students assigned into one group and 13 of them in the other.

Instruments

To collect the quantitative data for the present study, four instruments were utilized: (1) multiple-choice vocabulary test; (2) parallel version of multiple-choice vocabulary test; (3) near transcendence task (NTT); and (4) far transcendence task (FTT). The researcher designed all of the tests based on the test builder CD of *Family and Friends 1* book. All the instruments will be explained in greater details in the following.

Multiple-Choice Vocabulary Test

This test included 30 multiple-choice items and had a good coverage of the content of *Family and Friends 1* book. The researcher used unknown words to make room for mediation. In order to ensure that the words were unknown to the students, 30 words were selected from the next-term text book. The multiple-choice vocabulary test was used to measure the impact of DA on vocabulary development of the learners. The mediator told the students that they would receive mediation and support whenever they needed.

Parallel Test

The mediator gave a parallel version of the multiple-choice vocabulary to the learners, two days after the end of the multiple-choice vocabulary test. This test was designed in parallel with the multiple-choice vocabulary test in terms of content, length and level of difficulty. This test was administered to measure the development of the group as a result of DA procedure. The mediator provided mediation whenever they encounter any problem.

Near transcendence tasks

The teacher gave NTT to the learners five days after the end of the parallel test. The purpose of NTT was to evaluate lexical recall of the students in short-term memory and to find out whether students can extend the vocabulary learned to a new context (Davin, 2011). The content of NTT consisted of five close tests. On NTT, the students were asked to read five close tests one by one and fill in the blanks with the correct words presented at the top of each close test.

Far transcendence tasks

The teacher gave FTT to the learners five days after the end of NTT to assess whether their learning would transcend to a new modality, speaking. Mardani (2013) states the aim of the time lapse between two transcendence tasks was to make sure students have gained the ability to transcend learned skills to a new context. This test consisted of 30 questions designed based on *Family and Friends 1* book and also they were asked orally in order to change the modality. The questions were asked by showing the pictures of the book to the students for some questions. The purpose of FTT is to evaluate lexical retention of the students in long-term memory and also to reveal whether students can extend the vocabulary learned to further contexts and to a new modality (Davin, 2011).

Procedures

The interventionist cake model of DA was used to promote English vocabulary achievement of the learners. First of all, a multiple-choice vocabulary test included 30 items was administered. During this test, the mediator gave mediation to the learners whenever they were confronted with problems. They received mediation in form of hints, explanations, suggestions, and prompts during the test administration (Davin, 2011). In other words, when they encountered difficulties in answering an item, the mediator offered five kinds of pre-fabricated mediatory prompts. The mediation was provided until the students answered the question correctly. In order to record the behavior of the students, the mediator carried an observation chart during the mediation. When the students got engaged answering the questions, she recorded the numbers of mediation that the students needed to reach to the correct response. In order to make DA more systematic, the researcher designed five mediatory prompts which arranged from the most implicit to the most explicit. The first and most implicit prompt (Prompt 1) was a pause in which the mediator pointed to the incorrect answer in order to signal that the answer is incorrect. This signal helped the student to go back

to the item and try it again. If the student couldn't correct the error, the mediator would give the second prompt (Prompt 2) in which the mediator asked the students to say the meaning of the question in Farsi to be sure they found out the nature of the question.

The third prompt (Prompt 3) was provided, if the student couldn't correct the error. In this mediation prompt, the mediator narrowed down the correct choices and asked the learners to select the other two choices. If necessary, the mediator gave a more explicit prompt (Prompt 4) in which the mediator gave a synonym for the correct choice. In the last and most explicit prompt (Prompt 5); the teacher said the meaning of other distracters in Persian. Secondly, two days after the end of the multiple-choice vocabulary test, a parallel test was administered to assess the number and kind of mediation they require during this test. When a learner required mediation during this test, the mediator provided help and wrote the number of mediation offered for each question in a checklist observation. During this test, the learners' demand for explicit mediations reduced and they could find correct response independently. Poehner (2008) believes it is not expected that the learners answer all items correctly without assistance in the second administration of the test; rather, the learners require fewer and less explicit mediation. Davin (2011) states that there is a decline in the number of prompts needed by students during this test. Thirdly, the mediator gave NTT to the learners, five days after the end of the parallel test to assess their lexical recall in short-term memory and then the mediator gave FTT to the learners five days after the end of NTT to assess lexical retention of the students in long-term memory. The mediator did not provide the learners with the mediation during these two tasks in order to assess their lexical recall in short-term memory and long-term memory. In order to capture students' independent progress and to answer research questions two and three, mediation was not provided during these two tasks.

RESULTS

In order to answer the first question stating that DA promotes English vocabulary development of young Iranian EFL learners, students participated in the multiple-choice vocabulary test and the parallel test. A paired sample t-test was run to compare the students' mean scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test with those of parallel test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Parallel Test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Multiple-choice vocabulary test	25	14.64	5.633
Parallel test	25	24.28	1.768

Table 1 represents results of the descriptive statistics showing how the participants (N=25) performed on the multiple-choice vocabulary test and its parallel version. As table 1 shows, the mean scores of the students at the parallel test (M=24.28, SD=1.76) is higher than that of at the multiple-choice vocabulary test (M=14.64, SD=5.63). The comparison of mean scores indicates an improvement in the performance of the group. The result shows that there was a significant difference between the scores of these two tests.

Table 2. Paired Samples T-test for the Parallel Test

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
-9.640	4.931	.986	- 11.675	-7.604	-9.7	24	.000

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to measure the impact of DA on vocabulary development of the learners. According to Table 2, the probability value is .000, thus there was a significant difference between the scores of these two tests. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant increase in students' scores from the multiple-choice vocabulary test (M=14.64, SD=5.63) to the parallel test (M=24.28, SD=1.76, $t(24) = -9.77$, $p < .000$ (two-tailed)). The mean increase in tests' scores was 4.07 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -11.67 to -7.60. The eta squared statistic (.79) indicates a large effect size. We can conclude that there was a large effect, with a substantial difference in the parallel test scores.

In conclusion, the difference between the scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and the parallel test was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This large variation in scores indicated that DA procedure has been effective in the vocabulary development of young Iranian EFL learners. Thus, the first question stating that DA promotes English vocabulary development of young Iranian EFL learners was answered in a positive way. Regarding the second research question, a paired sample t-test was performed to determine statistical significance of the difference between the scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and NTT obtained from the group.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of NTT

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Multiple-choice vocabulary test	25	14.64	5.633
NTT	25	22.36	4.742

Table3 is also related to descriptive statistics. According to this table, the comparison of the multiple-choice vocabulary test to NTT reveals that the scores of students increased. The mean score of the students at NTT (M=22.36, SD=4.74) is higher than that of at the multiple-choice vocabulary test (M=14.64, SD=5.63). Thus, there was a significant difference between the students' mean scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and NTT.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-test for NTT

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
-7.72	6.509	1.301	- 10.407	-5.032	-5.93	24	.000

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate lexical recall of the students in short-term memory and to find out whether students can extend the vocabulary learned to a new context. As Table 4 shows, the Sig. value is .000 which is below 0.05, so there was a

significant difference between the scores of these two tests. In addition, there was a statistically significant increase in students' scores from the multiple-choice vocabulary test ($M=14.64$, $SD=5.63$) to NTT ($M=22.36$, $SD=4.74$), $t(24) = -5.93$, $p < .000$ (two-tailed). The mean increase in tests' scores was 5.37 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -10.40 to -5.93. The eta squared statistic (.59) indicated a large effect size. It means there was a large effect, with a large difference in NTT scores. In conclusion, the significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and NTT implies that students were able to transcend their knowledge to the new context. Thus, the second hypothesis stating that DA improves young Iranian EFL learners' short-term memory recall of lexical items through NTT is supported.

In order to answer the third research question a paired sample t-test was performed to determine statistical significance of the difference between the scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and FTT obtained from the group.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of FTT

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Multiple-choice vocabulary test	25	14.64	5.633
NTT	25	25.88	3.004

Table 5 reveals the comparison made between mean scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and FTT. This comparison was made to find out whether the participants made changes in their performance after providing mediation in the first two tests. As it is shown in Table 5, there was a meaningful difference between the means of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and FTT. The mean score of the students at FTT ($M=25.88$, $SD=3.00$) is higher than that of at the multiple-choice vocabulary test ($M=14.64$, $SD=5.63$). The comparison of the multiple-choice vocabulary test mean scores with those of FTT provides clear evidence for the significant effect of DA on learners' long-term memory recall of lexical items.

Table 6. Paired Samples T-test for FTT

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig.
			Lower	Upper			
-11.240	5.262	1.052	-13.412	-9.067	-10.6	24	.000

A paired samples t-test was run to evaluate lexical retention of the students in long-term memory and also to reveal whether students can extend the vocabulary learned to further contexts and to a new modality. As it is shown in the Table 6, the significant value is .000. Since .000 is smaller than 0.05, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the group. Also, there was a statistically significant increase in students' scores from the multiple-choice vocabulary test ($M=14.64$, $SD=1.12$) to FTT ($M=25.88$, $SD=3.00$), $t(24) = -10.68$, $p < .0005$ (two-tailed). The mean increase in tests' scores was 4.35 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -13.41 to -9.06. The eta squared statistic (.82) indicated a large effect size. We can conclude that there was a large effect, with a huge difference in FTT scores. In conclusion, the analysis of the

paired sample t-test revealed that, to the complete surprise of the researcher, learners' long-term memory recall of lexical items extremely improved. Thus, the third null hypothesis stating that DA improves young Iranian EFL learners' long-term memory recall of lexical items through FTT is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The main focus of this study was to test the feasibility of DA in the context of L2 vocabulary learning. The mediator provided mediation during the multiple-choice vocabulary test and the parallel test whenever students encounter any problem. They require fewer and less explicit mediation in the second administration of the test as the result of providing mediation. The results showed that incorporating mediatory prompts can enhance the students' vocabulary learning. Mardani (2013) asserts the number of mediation prompts required by the learners decreased. In other words, there is a decline in the number of prompts needed by students during parallel test. The learners' remarkable performance on the parallel test is the outcome of incorporating DA method which offers helpful feedbacks. Shabani (2014) asserts the excellent performance during parallel test manifested the significant effect of DA interactions on the learners' vocabulary learning processes.

According to Davin (2011), this decrease in mediation indicates that vocabulary development was moving from the group's ZPD to their Actual Development Level (ADL) where they could perform without mediation. It means that while at the first test they required more and more support, this level of support diminished at the parallel test and they required less and less support and they could reach to correct response relying on themselves. The analysis of data indicates that the difference between students' mean scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and transcendence tasks was statistically significant. Shabani (2014) asserts in the TR tasks the learners were engaged in more difficult tasks in innovative contexts and different modality and their performance was improved in the TR tasks. During multiple-choice vocabulary test, the learners required explicit mediation and during the parallel test they tend towards the implicit types of feedback. This tendency revealed the learners' independent performance enhanced both in familiar (parallel test) and innovative (TR) tasks.

The results revealed that the learners can transfer their ability to identify an unrecognized word of the multiple-choice vocabulary test beyond the parallel test to the TR tasks. This improvement indicates they can progress toward higher levels of ZPD. Shabani (2014) claims "DA is a development-oriented procedure to assess the learners' abilities. Unlike, the static assessment, this procedure predicts no endpoint for the learners' development because it considers the learners' abilities as dynamic and changeable" (p.1736). This finding can strengthen the findings of previous studies done by Poehner (2008), Shabani (2014), Hessamy and Ghaderi (2014) and other researchers who have found positive effects of DA on learning a foreign or second language. Shabani (2014) believes DA is a procedure which assesses the fully matured abilities and develops them by unifying testing and teaching as a single activity. Therefore, combining assessment and instruction can be helpful for EFL learners in

vocabulary learning. In addition, the researchers agree that non-dynamic tests are unable to show a complete picture of learners' abilities. They believe that adopting DA in EFL classes has some considerable advantages such as increasing learners' motivation, reducing the anxiety of taking test, assessing the learners' understanding, and identifying the areas that learners need more help.

On implication side, DA with its monistic view toward teaching and testing not only assesses the learners' abilities but also provides them with opportunities for learning and development. EFL teachers, learners, and students can benefit from the results of this study. The findings may encourage teachers to incorporate appropriate techniques for instruction of vocabulary in their classroom instead of applying traditional method. In addition, this work helps the teachers to avoid overestimating and underestimating their students' abilities. Moreover, the results of this study are beneficial for our later decision-making processes like placement and selection because they provided information about learners' abilities.

As any study has its own shortcomings, the present study suffers from a number of limitations. There are three main limitations for this work as follow: The first limitation was regard to the nature of the first two tests which assess vocabulary development in a multiple-choice format. Multiple-choice nature of the items can bring about guessing opportunity for the learners. Therefore, the students could answer the questions correctly by chance without requiring mediation. The second limitation of this study is following an interventionist approach to DA, thus the learners have access to a fixed set of hints that may not include specific problems that each individual student may face at the time taking the exam. Moreover, because of the restrictions at the institute and to eliminate the gender factor, only female students at elementary level were chosen in this study.

CONCLUSION

This study included four assessments to empirically investigate the effects of DA on vocabulary development of the participants in Kowsar Institute. The results showed that providing mediatory prompts can improve the students' L2 vocabulary development. The investigation of the results of this study revealed that DA has a positive effect on the students' vocabulary learning. The first research question investigated whether DA is effective on English vocabulary development of young Iranian EFL learners. The results, as reported in Table 2, demonstrated that DA, as a novel method, is quite successful in enhancing vocabulary development of elementary students. Outstanding performance of the group in the parallel test indicates their development. This development was due to their extensive exposure to mediational prompts during this test. Their improvement manifested itself in the form of reduced demand for explicit mediations. The analysis of obtained data reveals that the difference between the students' mean scores of the multiple-choice vocabulary test and the parallel test was statistically significant as the result of receiving mediation in the form of hints, explanations, suggestions, and prompts. The finding of this research question

assures us that interaction improves learners' development as well as shows their progress to themselves clearly and completely.

To address the second research question- i.e. whether or not DA can improve young Iranian EFL learners' short-term memory recall of lexical items - the participants underwent NTT. In order to capture students' independent progress and to answer this research question, mediation was not provided during this assessment. The results of paired sample t-test demonstrated that the participants could store and retain lexical items in their short-term memory by showing that the performance of the group increased from the multiple-choice vocabulary test to NTT. The results revealed exposing learners to mediation can improve their short-term memory recall of lexical items. In addition, according to Feuerstein (1987), cited in Davin (2011), unassisted performance on the transcendence tasks reveals internalization has occurred and what was within the child's ZPD is now his or her AD. This finding indicates that DA procedure significantly improved their L2 lexical knowledge in the short run and they achieved favorable results in NTT. The researcher proposed the third research question to address the effectiveness of DA as an influential method in recalling vocabulary in long run. In order to assess lexical retention of the students in long-term memory; the mediator did not provide any mediation during this test. A paired t-test was utilized to analyze data acquired from FTT in which learners were tested on more difficult tasks in innovative contexts. The mean scores of the group, as displayed in Table 6, increased from the multiple-choice vocabulary test to FTT. That is, the performance of the group was higher in FTT. This indicates that the effect of DA method was retained over time. The results of the paired sample t-test showed significant development from the multiple-choice vocabulary test to FTT.

All in all, the learners' remarkable performance on FTT proved that students could apply learned lexical items in a new context and also in a new modality, even after two-week interval. The results revealed exposing learners to mediatory prompts can improve their long-term memory recall of lexical items. The reduced demand for explicit mediations is the result of this improvement. This is good news because it shows that internalization has occurred and students can do tasks which were beyond their ZPD. The improved performance of the group in TR tasks revealed a progression of group ZPD. The results obtained from the three research questions addressed in this study point out that interaction has long been recognized as a fundamental element in learners' language development. Kinginger (2002) asserts that by implementing DA, interaction between teachers and learners constructs their ZPD where the learner's learning potential emerges. In other words, assessing a learner's learning potential means creating his or her ZPD through the interaction with the teacher/assessor.

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