The Effect of Dynamic-Assessment on the Development of Passive Vocabulary of Intermediate EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT: Research into language assessment is central to any agenda that seeks to address the problems of language teaching and learning. A great deal of research in language testing has developed the technical aspects measuring language ability for the purpose of making decisions about individuals, as well as evaluating language programs. This research aimed to investigate the effect of Dynamic-Assessment (DA) on the development of passive vocabulary as a component of English as a foreign language (EFL). To this end, Iranian Intermediate language learners attended in this study. The sample of the study consisted of 60 students. For choosing a homogenous group, a sample of PET as proficiency test with 60 items which included reading and listening sections were used to determine the learners' level of proficiency. Then they were randomly assigned into two groups. For the application of the program, an experimental group and a control group were involved in the study. The study was conducted during 10 sessions. The data were gathered from 60 learners, 32 in the experimental group (EG) and 28 in the control group (CG). Dynamic-Assessment process was used in the EG and Non-Dynamic Assessment or Traditional Assessment plan was used in the CG. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the results obtained from EG and CG. In conclusion, this study which was an attempt to passive vocabulary development showed that learners would benefit from the inclusion of DA and it is more effective than the traditional method of vocabulary assessment in order to develop students' passive vocabulary knowledge.
Key words: Dynamic-Assessment, Non-Dynamic Assessment, Passive Vocabulary Development, EFL.

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that teaching vocabulary should not only consist of teaching specific words but also aim at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge (Hulstijn, 1993, cited in Morin & Geoble, 2001). In fact, many EFL learners evaluate their success and achievements in language learning based on their improvement in vocabulary knowledge. So, vocabulary development takes priority over other language components for them and a great deal of attention has always been directed toward vocabulary development in EFL courses. So, the purpose of this study is to develop students' passive vocabulary knowledge and guarantee the better retention of them.

For both language teachers and learners, vocabulary is obviously a top priority (Schmitt, 2008). Sometimes, one unknown word in a sentence or text makes it incomprehensible. So, words are the most important instruments through which the intended meaning is transferred. EFL teachers have made many attempts to find out which ways of instruction may assist the acquisition of passive vocabulary. So, they use different techniques, exercises and tasks in the classrooms to teach new and difficult words in contexts.

Dynamic assessment technique is taken as an alternative that has been received much attention recently for simultaneously assessing and promoting development. Dynamic assessment is an approach to assessment and instruction that derives its principles and procedures from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD, which is a Vygotskian notion constitutes the ground for the formation of DA and can be defined as "the domain of knowledge or skill where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning, but can achieve the desired outcome given relevant scaffolded help" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 196). According to Vygotsky (1978), what the child is able to do independently represent a view of the child's past development, but what the child is able to achieve with mediation, provides insight into the child's future development. In a Vygotskian approach to assessment and instruction, when an EFL learner goes about doing tasks and activities on his/her own and confronts an obstacle, the need for support is perceived to be almost more than ever. In this process, the student is provided with the proper assistance in line with his/her ZPD to the point that s/he is eventually able to respond adequately to the question.

The advocates of DA claim that Static Assessment (SA) can only measure the learners' actual level of performance (what they can perform independently) but cannot assess their potential level of performance (what they can perform with assistance). The problem with non-dynamic approaches to assessment is that the decisions which test givers make about are merely based on how the testees perform on test items (their actual not potential performance). However, one cannot have a complete picture of an individual's capabilities based on his solo performance on a test but a full picture

requires two additional bits of information: "The person's performance with assistance from someone else and the extent to which the person can benefit from this assistance not only in completing the same task or test, but in transferring this mediated performance to difficult tasks or tests" (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005, p. 234).

The most salient feature of DA as compared with Non-Dynamic Assessment (NDA) or traditional assessment is the provision of mediation to the examinee during the assessment which is considered a threat to reliability of the test in traditional approaches. As another problem with conventional tests, instruction and assessment are kept as two different activities. Usually the testers wait for the instruction to be completed, and then they start to measure what learners have gained from instruction. Hence, DA incorporates intervention and interaction (mediation) into the process of assessment in order to observe the learners and examinees' potential level of performance; it is thought that DA has considerable implications in language teaching and testing.

Since the paradigm shifted from traditional way of assessment to dynamic assessment, this technique has received a large degree of attention as a perfect pedagogical tool for non-native English learners that closely tie assessment, teaching and learning altogether. In the field of passive vocabulary knowledge, there exists a lack of such an evidence to illustrate whether DA would cause a significant and positive effect and change in EFL learners' gain of passive vocabulary knowledge or not. The major significance of the study is substituting the traditional assessment with dynamic assessment which will involve students' attention. Dynamic assessment approaches are needed in monitoring learning processes and assessing learning outcomes.

At present, since instruction and assessment are kept as two separate activities, both teachers and learners would be anxious on testing sessions because teachers believe that they do not have any role on the examination day and it is the learners' duty to show what they have learned. However, if we can support Lidz's (1987) idea that instruction and assessment are two sides of a coin aiming at learners' development such opposing challenge between teachers and learners would be meaningless. In that case, testing sessions may bring new opportunities for learners to learn more.

The current study considers the DA instructional technique as one of the essential elements of the curriculum. In addition, it tries to modify the way assessment process is looked at as an end in itself. Since instruction and assessment are related; it should be seen as a significant and integral part of teaching. This study may provide teachers with useful information in order to improve their instructional plans and practices, because DA techniques may be useful for instructional goals in EFL educational settings. And findings of the study might encourage relevant authorities to think seriously about incorporating DA techniques in addition to formal tests in EFL programs.

Dynamic-Assessment (DA)

Alternative assessments have gained prominence and been welcomed by many educators and teachers recently. They are not intended as a replacement of other test types, but as a complement to them. In DA approach, learners' abilities are easily influenced or changed and can be flexible; that's why it is said that abilities are not fixed (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, cited in Birjandi and Ebadi, 2009).

On the other hand, according to Poehner (2008) DA is different from the other accepted approaches to assessment in a qualitatively different way of assessment and instruction which are integrated together. Poehner (2008) argues that "DA challenges conventional views on teaching and assessment and states that these should not be considered as separate activities but should instead be fully integrated. This integration occurs when intervention is embedded within the assessment procedure to interpret individuals' abilities and lead them to higher levels of functioning" (p. 3). Also, Poehner (2008) claims that in the process of development, it is not sufficient to intervene help individuals overcome difficulties, support their ongoing development, and then merely observe the solo performance. Instead, active collaboration with individuals simultaneously reveals the full range of their abilities and promotes their development. Therefore, assessment, understanding and estimating learners' abilities, and instruction, supporting language learners' development are an integrated activity in educational settings. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) define DA as a procedure that integrates assessment and instruction into a single activity which aims at promoting development through proper mediations which are in congruence with the learners' ability level. This integration of the assistance or scaffolding with the process of assessment makes the instructors able to modify their help in accordance with the learners' zone of proximal development. So, it is inferred that, purpose of dynamic assessment is to determine whether a student has the potential to learn a new skill or not.

According to Haywood and Lidz (2007), DA is not a term that refers to a single assessment method, but encompasses a wide variety of techniques and movements in assessment which are in contrast with the traditional or non-dynamic assessment since they

include mediation and help as their essential element. Poehner (2008) states that DA is neither an assessment instrument nor a method of assessing. He believes that in order to understand learner's abilities, DA is a framework for conceptualizing teaching and assessment as an integrated activity by actively supporting learners' development.

Objectives of DA

According to Lidz (1987), DA can be referred to as an interaction between an examiner who supports learners and learners who participate actively in the interaction, then the examiner as an intervener will understand and estimate how to modify learners during interaction in order to make positive changes in learners' functions. Therefore, the goal of DA as an interactive enterprise is to measure, intervene, and modify behaviors (cited in Birjandi and Ebadi, 2009). According to Poehner and Lantolf (2005), "the express goal of DA is to unify assessment and instruction into a single activity, the goal of which is learner development" (p. 254).

Dynamic Assessment (DA) vs. Non-Dynamic Assessment (NDA)

Based on Vygotsky's (1978) remarks, DA is based on active modification which means that by making active attempts, the teacher tries to modify the child's weak points and solve their existing problems in order to make positive changes in the learners' achievements.

Poehner (2008) argues that what distinguishes DA from all other forms of assessment is refocusing assessment on helping individuals develop through intervention. In 1981, Luria, one of Vygotsky's followers, contrasted 'statistical' with 'dynamic' approaches to assessment. Poehner and Lantolf (2005) summarize Luria's ideas as follows:

Statistical assessment is based on psychometric principles and inappropriately assumes that a person's solo performance on a test represents a complete picture of the individual's capabilities. Dynamic assessment, on the other hand, argues that a full picture requires two additional bits of information; the person's performance with assistance from someone else and the extent to which the person can benefit from this assistance not only in completing the same task or test, but in transferring this mediated performance to different tasks or tests. (p. 234)

Instead of Luria's term 'statistical', Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) use the term 'static' to address the non-dynamic approaches to assessment which is called static assessment. According to them "in SA the examiner presents items and each examinee is asked to respond to these items successively, without any feedback or intervention. After the administration of the test, each examinee receives feedback or a report on their scores" (cited in Poehenr and Lantolf, 2005, p. 234). Poehner and Lantolf (2005) argue that "the fundamental difference between dynamic and static assessment lies in the fact that whether intervention and assistance is allowed for modifying examinees' performance during the administration of assessment or not" (p. 235). In addition, based on the ZPD notion, which is the fundamental basis of DA, if an assessment process could not determine the extent of person's performance modifiability, the assessment would be incomplete.

In conclusion, "DA does not separate instruction from assessment, but sees them as two sides of the same coin. Unlike NDA which sees instruction and assessment as two different coins, DA focuses on modifiability and producing suggestions for interventions in facilitating learners' performance" (Lidz, 1991, cited in Poehenr and Lantolf, 2005, p. 236).

Dynamic and non-dynamic approaches to assessment, as well as being different in their theoretical foundations, also have some methodological differences. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) summarize three differences between DA and NDA from Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002): 1) NDA concentrates on the outcomes of past development whereas DA focuses on the future developments; 2) The relationship between examiner and examinee is different in DA and NDA. In NDA, examiners' roles are neutral and they just want to minimize measurement errors. In DA, the attitude of the examiner is different and is not neutral since the examiner intervenes in the assessment process; 3) In NDA, there is little or no feedback on the learners' performance until the assessment is completed whereas in DA, a specific form of feedback provides mediated assistance.

Passive Vocabulary

During the last years, vocabulary learning becomes one of the crucial parts in researches. Having an extensive vocabulary is believed to help learners "to outperform their competence" that is, a sizable vocabulary having been learned by L2 learners is contended to enable them to partly handle unpredictable communicative situations (Nunan, 1999, p. 103).

Learning a language is not a separate entity from other materials to learn by people. Therefore, principles of DA might be applicable in language learning. Currently, many approaches to DA are being widely used. They can be distinguished on the basis of the type of mediation made valuable to learners during assessment (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). Candlin (1988) asserts that regarding language teaching, learning vocabulary is crucial and should be placed at the heart of language acquisition and it should be

noticed in terms of organizing syllabus, evaluating learners performance and providing learning resources. People can be judged by others based on their size of vocabulary which has been directly linked to reading comprehension. Wallace (1982) and Read (1988) argue that knowing a word refers to the ability to recognize the multiple meanings of a word, use the word appropriately and grammatically within the context, and relate the word with other words which are semantically similar. In addition to this, Read (2000) adds that if L2 learners are able to match words of that second language with an equivalent word in their first language or mother tongue, or with the second language synonyms, this is considered to be adequate to show their understanding of the words.

Read and Chapelle (2001) believe that a vocabulary test should be defined in relation to a particular context typical of the test taker's needs, that it should go beyond the knowledge of decontextualized word lists, and that the test should have positive consequences, such as encouraging learners to expand their vocabulary knowledge and develop effective strategies of communication (cited in Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). "The knowledge of word meaning is, therefore, the central component of word knowledge, and a good vocabulary test should measure the extent to which those who take it can correctly associate word form with the concept the form denotes" (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004, p. 404).

Researchers have classified vocabulary under two categories: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Productive vocabulary is also known as active vocabulary; it refers to the ability to retrieve the needed vocabulary from memory by using them at appropriate time and in appropriate situations (Fan, 2000 & Nation, 2001). This process occurs when one is engaged in writing or speaking. Fan (2000) and Nation (2001) propose that the words that are receptive or passive are those words which the learners are exposed to through receptive skills that is, listening and reading. The passive words are accordingly comprehended and learned by the learners, and it implies that learners are able to comprehend and keep them in the memories. This means that learners are able to perceive the form of the word and retrieve its meaning.

Research questions and related hypotheses

In the view of the importance of passive vocabulary development as part of language learning by EFL learners and the role of dynamic assessment in language learning, the present study aims at answering the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in the progression of the EFL learners' passive vocabulary knowledge in dynamic-assessment courses vs. non-dynamic assessment courses?

2. Does employing DA have any significant effect on the development of vocabulary knowledge at passive level of the Iranian EFL learners?

The following null hypotheses were proposed on the basis of the aforementioned research questions: 1. There is no significant difference in the progression of the EFL learners' passive vocabulary knowledge in dynamic-assessment courses vs. non-dynamic assessment courses; 2. Employing DA has no significant effect on the development of vocabulary knowledge at passive level of the Iranian EFL learners.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Ninety students took The Preliminary English Test (PET). The test was administered in order to determine the level of proficiency of the learners. For the purpose of selecting a homogeneous group, sixty students whose scores fell one standard deviation below and above the mean score were selected and randomly assigned into two groups. So, the participants were sixty institute students studying English as a foreign language at intermediate level, according to the institute level, determined by the institute placement test. The experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) consisted of thirty-two and twenty-eight learners respectively. The participants were studying in one of the language institutes in the city of Varamin, Iran. Their age was between fifteen and thirty-two. Each group included three classes their course books were Touch Stone and Oxford Word Skills. The students attended the classes three sessions a week, while each session lasted one and a half hours; the acquisition of passive vocabulary took around twenty minutes each session. In the experimental group, dynamic assessment was practiced while in the control group non-dynamic assessment or traditional assessment techniques were practiced. All of the research data were gathered in the spring semester of 2014 during three months. It should be noted that in the present study, the researchers had no chance of choosing students randomly so they were chosen via convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which we get help from the available subjects. As mentioned before, there were six classes used in the study and the selection of classes as control or experimental groups was random.

Research Instruments

Instruments used in this study were the Preliminary English Test (PET), yes/no vocabulary test, and pretest/posttest.

The Preliminary English Test (PET)

PET which is designed for people who study English at intermediate level was used for homo-genizing the participants of the study. The test is divided into 4 sections: Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking. But, Reading and Listening sections were just administered in this study. The allocated time for this test was around 40 minutes for Reading Skill including 35 items and 30 minutes for Listening Skill including 25 items.

Yes/No Vocabulary Test

This test was used in the first session of the research and before the pretest for all of the sixty participants who were students in the experimental and control groups. This test was conducted to ensure the novelty of the words to be learned by the subjects during the treatment period. So, they were supposed to complete a Yes/ No passive vocabulary test (researcher-made test) based on their background knowledge which included 200 words before starting the main study in order to understand whether the students knew these words or not. The procedure of answering this test was first started with checking the known words and writing a short definition or synonym or at least an example for that word in order to understand that the learner did not confuse this word with another. Then according to the majority of students' responses, 96 unknown passive words were chosen.

Pretest

A 50 multiple-choice item test (researcher-made test) was administered as a pretest to both groups (Control and Experimental) to capture the initial differences between them. The validity of this test was checked by two professional teachers who were qualified EFL teachers and had some years of experience in teaching general English courses to Iranian students. The researchers had to administer a pilot study in order to check the reliability of the instrument. So, the test was piloted by administering it to a sample of students, and the reliability was estimated through Cronbach's Alpha formula. The Alpha index appeared to be 0.744 which was acceptable for a reliable test. So, the researchers could administer the test to the research subjects.

Posttest

After the treatment at the end of the course, the participants were tested again with the test used at the time of pretest to evaluate their reception of passive vocabulary knowledge in terms of appropriateness. For the control group, the same criterion and teaching material, except DA were provided for the participants. The posttest was administered to measure the amount of vocabulary learning by the participants in the experimental and control groups, since the time interval between the pretest and posttest was long enough (about 5 weeks), the posttest was used as an achievement test to measure the students' performance on the vocabulary test.

Treatment Material

Touch Stone and Oxford Word Skill course books were utilized at the intermediate level of this language center, but in both groups ten intermediate articles were chosen from Linguapress.com site with a list of new words in each of them which were the focus of this study. Treatment was rendered in the form of teacher's explanations and feedback to the experimental group when they were supposed to complete a kind of assessment which included 10 items in the form of a cloze test or multiple-choice items in each session immediately after teaching the new words from the articles. Students' papers were rated by the instructor and the next session before starting to teach the new materials were delivered to the students with more elaborations and comments.

Procedure
Experimental Group (Dynamic-Assessment): In this group, in each session, the process of instruction began with an article adopted from Lingupress.com site. First, the teacher explained situations and characters in the article as a warm-up and then they were asked to listen to that for comprehension without doing anything else. The process of reading was done by the teacher.

The second time, the teacher called the attention of the students to those specific words implied in each situation to express the meaning. So, this time they listened with particularly looking for vocabulary the writer utilized to perform that function. During this activity the teacher asked them to underline the sentence(s) or phrase(s) which contained the specific word. Students might ask some questions about the meaning of the words or want to look them up in their dictionaries; so, they discussed the meaning of the new words until they fully understood them.

Then, they were asked to sit for a test which was a cloze test or a multiple-choice test including 10 items based on those words that they have been taught by the instructor. So, the teacher distributed the papers among them. Students responded to these ten items in 10 minutes. So, here the teacher started the

dynamic assessment meditation and led the students to an appropriate answer for each item. Teacher tried to use the steps – from the most implicit hints to the most explicit ones –offered by Poehner (2009) to guide learners to find the right answer to each one of the items.

Control Group (Non-Dynamic or Traditional Assessment)

This group took the same pretest given to the experimental group. Both CG and EG were acquired the same words in each session, but they were different in the dynamic assessment provided in the course of instruction at the end of the teaching. In this group, the vocabulary instruction was not accompanied by any vocabulary assessment. The same article was presented to this group in exactly the same way as the experimental group. The only difference between the two groups was in treatment sessions and doing assessment which would be rated for the next session and handed them the results with appropriate feedback in the experimental group. There would be no further comments and discussions just as the traditional classroom tests and the assessment in the control group (Non-dynamic

assessment) was confined to the pretest and posttest. Regarding the instruction part in both groups, it was tried to practice the same instructional activities in the six classes. Students in the dynamic assessment group went through the special assessment process which was considered to result in a higher level of ability in performing on the passive vocabulary tests under study. In the non-dynamic assessment or traditional assessment group, there was no form of assessment and no special feedback.

RESULTS

In order to find the effects of treatment on the learners, the quantitative and statistical analysis of the participants' performance on the proficiency test, pretest and posttest were presented and discussed with reference to the questions addressed for the purpose of this study.

Analysis of the Pretest

A vocabulary test with 50 multiple-choice items was administered as the pretest. The descriptive statistics of the data obtained from the two groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of experimental group & control group in the pretest

		Experimental Group	Control Group
N	**Valid**	32	28
	Missing	0	0
Mean		35.25	35.89
Median		35	36
Mode		36	36[a]
Std. Deviation		2	1.42
Variance		4	2.02
Minimum		31	33
Maximum		39	39

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

After studying the descriptive statistics for the two groups, the researchers compared the data obtained from the administration of the pretest. Based on the results, it was concluded that there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the pretest. In parametric statistic ways, the result of an independent sample t test runs to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the pretest. The independent-sample t test procedure compares the means for two groups of participants. Ideally, for this test, the subjects should be randomly assigned into two groups, so that any difference in response is due

to the treatment (or lack of treatment) and not to other factors. The results of an independent sample t test were checked prior to the administration of the Leven's Test of the experimental and control groups on the pretest. The assumption of this test stated that the two groups should be homogeneous in terms of their variances scores. This table also reports t test results. This assumption shows that there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and control group. According to the significance amount which is 0.162 > 0.05; this assumption is met; although it was expected because there was not any treatment in this step.

Table 2. Group statistics (Comparing means of the groups in the pretest)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. E Mean
Scores	EG	32	35.25	2	.35
	CG	28	35.89	1.42	.26

Table 3. Independent sample t test of pretest

Item		Levene's Test for Equality of		*t* test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	3.975	.051	-1.41	58	.16	-.64	.45	-1.55203	.26632
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.44	55.8	.15	-.64	.44	-1.53279	.24708

Analysis of the Posttest

The first null hypothesis of this study predicted that "there is no significant difference in the progression of the EFL learners' passive vocabulary knowledge in dynamic-assessment courses vs. non-dynamic assessment courses". Regarding rejecting or not rejecting this hypothesis; the experimental group and control group performance on the posttest was considered to see whether there was any difference on their performance or not. After comparing the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the posttest, according to the level of confidence amount which is lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. It means that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest which was the result of the treatment. Figure 1 compares the obtained scores in the experimental and control groups. In this graph, we can observe that the frequency of the higher scores in the EG is greater than CG.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of experimental group & control group in the posttest

		EX Group	C Group
N	Valid	32	28
	Missing	28	32
Mean		38.46	36.7857
Median		39	37.0000
Mode		41	37.00
Std. Deviation		2.77	1.68561
Variance		7.67	2.841
Minimum		32	33.00
Maximum		43	40.00

Table 5. Group statistics (Comparing means of the groups in the posttest)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scores	Experimental group in post test	32	38.4688	2.77063	.48978
	Control group in post test	28	36.6071	1.87260	.35389

Table 6. Independent samples t test of posttest

Item		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	4.627	.036	3.004	58	.004	1.86161	.61973	.62109	3.10212
	Equal variances not assumed			3.081	54.700	.003	1.86161	.60425	.65050	3.07271

The second null hypothesis of this study predicted that "employing DA has no significant effect on the development of vocabulary knowledge at passive level of the Iranian EFL learners. This hypothesis should be considered in the experimental group's performance in the pretest and posttest to see whether it would be rejected or not. Based on this fact that the scores in the experimental group are dependent to each other in the pretest and posttests; for doing the comparison, the paired sample *t* test should be used which is a procedure to compare the means of two variables for a single group. The

following table shows the significant difference between the mean scores which is 3.21. Based on the results, the significance probability amount of the test is sig=0.000<0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8. Paired sample t test for the experimental group in the pretest and posttest

Item		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	**Experimental group in posttest & retest**	3.21	1.40	.24	2.71	3.72	12.93	31	.000
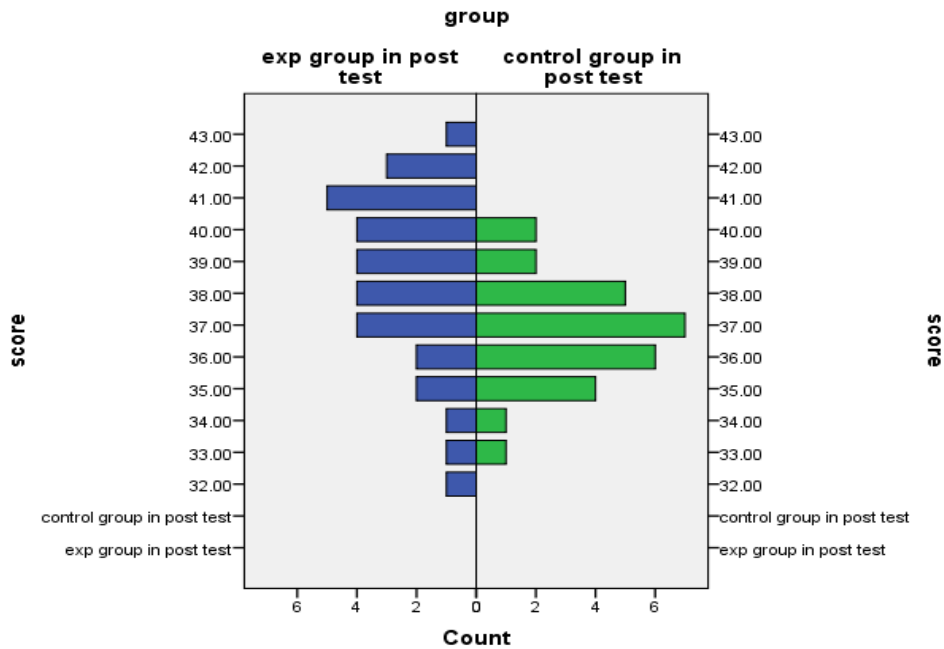
Figure 1. Experimental Group and Control Group in the Posttest
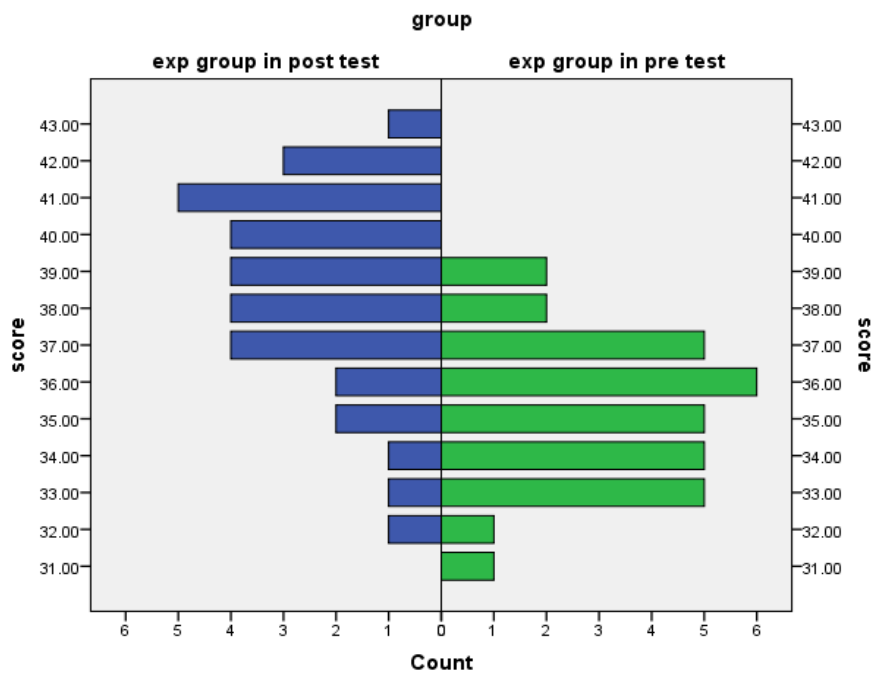
Figure 2. Experimental Group in the Pretest and Posttest

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The comparison drawn between the pretest and posttest revealed that the DA group performed significantly better in the posttest. The performance of students in the NDA was not significantly different in the pretest and posttest. This can indicate the effectiveness of the DA as a means for instruction of the passive vocabulary knowledge in Iranian Intermediate EFL classes. The findings of the present study stand in conformity with several research investigations supporting the idea that DA can significantly improve the EFL learners in language learning and it is a helpful technique for enhancing the learning and retention of passive words.

The findings of the present study showed that the participants in the experimental group receiving a particular treatment including DA as an instructional technique made progress in terms of learning passive words and they were more successful than the control group which received no treatment. This study indicated that DA is more effective than traditional method of assessment in improving EFL learners' passive vocabulary knowledge and it showed that DA has impact on Iranian intermediate learners' passive vocabulary knowledge. It also revealed that new methods of teaching and assessing could revise the traditional ways of teaching and assessing. It seems that it is the time for our teachers to review and revise their teaching and assessing methods.

It is worth mentioning that according to Poehner (2008), dynamic assessment challenges conventional views of assessment and instruction by arguing that these should not be dualistically opposed to one another and further, that are not even distinct activities. "Assessment and instruction can only be completed when they are fully integrated with mediated interactions simultaneously revealing and promoting learners' abilities" (Poehner, 2008, p. 21).

Poehner (2008) also indicates that DA is much more than a methodological innovation; it is a new philosophy of teaching and assessment in which learner development takes a central stage. The theoretical motivation behind a monistic conceptual-ization of assessment and instruction emerges from the theory of mediated mind. This study has tried to follow DA theoretical framework, and ZPD. The existence of ZPD in DA differentiates it from other forms of assessments which is defined 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" (Vygotsky, 1978; cited in Poehner, 2008, p. 42).

Since DA is an innovation and currently being conducted in the realm of EFL and ESL learning and teaching, few studies can be found which are in line with the literature.

In a study, Ozgur and Kantar (2012) studied traditional understanding of listening assessment in foreign language contexts and applied dynamic assessment (DA) to the development of learners' listening ability. They found that DA permits to establish not only the actual level of learners' listening ability but also to diagnose/assess the potential level of their listening development.

Another study which was aimed at investigating the effect of dynamic assessment on EFL learners' reading comprehension in different proficiency levels was done by Ajideh & Nourdad (2012). The results of ANOVA test revealed that while dynamic assessment had immediate and delayed effect on reading comprehension of learners in all proficiency levels, the proficiency groups did not differ significantly in their taking advantage of this kind of assessment.

In another study done by Beak and Jim Kim (2003) in Korea, the purpose was to demonstrate that dynamic assessment increases children's learning. In this study, dynamic assessment was defined as "a measurement method of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as well as the qualitative and quantitative diagnostic information for children; in addition, dynamic assessment based instruction is defined as a teaching method using the diagnostic information types in order to increase children's learning" (p. 189).The results of this study showed that dynamic assessment based instruction has a significant effect on children's learning. Therefore, dynamic assessment based instruction should be used widely for children's cognitive learning.

Dynamic assessment is an alternative approach to traditional language assessments. In dynamic assessment, the examiner who is an intervener attempts to assess the child's potentials for language change or modifiability. In an article published by Gutierrez- Clellen (2000), the development of DA from its early psychological applications to current models of it as they apply to the assessment of child language was discussed. According to Gutierrez- Clellen, when children are being assessed, cultural differences may influence their performance, but using DA would be fruitful in this situation. In this study, the approach involved a test-teach-retest paradigm that included mediated learning experiences, measures of test score gains, ratings of modifiability and language learning strategies, as well as analyses of qualitative changes in children's responses.

As Vygotsky (1978) argues, instruction should not wait for developmental readiness but, rather,

development occurs through participation in activities that are beyond learners' current level of ability. The total integration of assessment and instruction can only be achieved when learner development becomes the goal of educational activities, and this is the major contribution of dynamic assessment.

Also as Poehner (2008) indicates that the goal of DA is to help all individuals realize their potentials. So, the purpose of this study was to give feedback to the students and enable them to know about their progresses and difficulties with learning which are different from one pupil to another. This process will lead EFL learners to learn better and eventually to support high-quality learning.

Conclusively, the term dynamic assessment (DA) refers to an assessment which is integrated with an active teaching process including learner's perception, thinking, and problem solving. In this process, the examiner who is an intervener who supports learners during assessment tries to modify individual's functioning and aims at observing positive changes in learning and problem solving. According to the findings of the study, by conducting assessment process in an appropriate manner, EFL learners can learn language more and more and it will increase the outcome of the learning process which is the expansion and development of passive vocabulary. Assessment can have a very important role in this regard.

Eventually, according to the findings of the study, it is inferred that the mediation tried to modify the students' actual developmental level and improve their potential developmental level. This was done to clarify the effect of DA on EFL learners' development of passive vocabulary knowledge. The experimental group differed statistically from the control group on their passive vocabulary knowledge by using DA in their treatment. The major finding of this study was that DA can significantly improve the EFL learners' passive vocabulary knowledge.

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