

Effects of Interventionist and Interactionist Dynamic Assessments on Pragmatic Comprehension and Writing CAF among Iranian EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigated the effects of interventionist dynamic assessment (DA), interactionist dynamic assessment, and conventional non-dynamic assessment instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic listening comprehension and writing performance in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF).

Methods: A total of 162 intermediate-level Iranian EFL learners (aged 21–32 years) were selected from an initial pool of 370 participants and homogenized using the Oxford Quick Placement Test (Version 2). Participants completed a pragmatic listening comprehension test and a writing task assessing CAF as pretests and posttests. They were randomly assigned to three equal groups: an interventionist DA group, an interactionist DA group, and a control group receiving conventional non-DA instruction. Data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA and Scheffé post hoc tests.

Results: Both interventionist and interactionist dynamic assessment significantly improved learners' pragmatic listening comprehension and writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency compared with conventional instruction. No significant difference was found between the two DA approaches in pragmatic comprehension. However, the interactionist DA group demonstrated significantly greater improvement in writing CAF than the interventionist DA group.

Conclusions: Dynamic assessment is more effective than conventional instruction in enhancing pragmatic comprehension and writing performance among Iranian EFL learners. Although both DA approaches produced comparable gains in pragmatic comprehension, interactionist dynamic assessment yielded superior outcomes in writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency, highlighting the value of dialogic and interactive mediation in second language writing development.

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Introduction

Language assessment is a fundamental component of foreign language teaching and learning because it enables teachers to evaluate learners' proficiency and monitor their progress. Effective assessment should not only measure achievement but also provide information that supports learning and improves instruction. Traditional testing has long been the dominant method of assessment in language education (Kozulin & Garb, 2002); however, it often focuses on decontextualized tasks and offers limited opportunities for feedback and learner development. Consequently, alternative approaches to assessment have gained increasing attention in recent years. Among these approaches, dynamic assessment (DA) has emerged as a valuable framework because it integrates assessment and instruction, emphasizing learners' development through mediation and interactive feedback (Alsaadi, 2021).

Although DA has attracted growing interest in language education, research in this area remains relatively limited. Nazari and Mansouri (2014) argued that dynamic assessment is still developing as a field and requires further investigation across different language skills and instructional contexts. Existing studies have rarely compared different forms of DA or examined their relative effectiveness in promoting language development. Consequently, exploring the effects of different DA models can contribute to a deeper understanding of how assessment can facilitate learning and support language development in EFL contexts.

Lantolf and Poehner (2004) distinguished between two major forms of dynamic assessment: interventionist and interactionist DA. Interventionist DA employs a structured system of mediation based on a predetermined sequence of prompts, hints, and leading questions that gradually move from implicit to explicit assistance (Davin, 2013). This approach follows a standardized test–teach–retest format, allowing researchers to compare learners' performance before and after mediation and to quantify development within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Poehner, 2008). In interventionist DA, mediators follow a fixed hierarchy of support and are not expected to modify their assistance according to individual learner needs.

In contrast, interactionist DA adopts a qualitative perspective on learner development. Drawing directly on Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD, it emphasizes dialogic interaction and flexible mediation that emerges during communication between teachers and learners. Rather than relying on predetermined prompts, interactionist DA allows mediators to adapt their support in response

to learners' immediate needs and developmental readiness (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011). Through ongoing interaction, mediators provide tailored assistance that helps learners progress toward greater independence and self-regulation. Because mediation is negotiated and responsive, interactionist DA is often considered particularly suitable for educational settings where individualized support is essential (Poehner, 2008; Lantolf, 2009).

According to Poehner and Lantolf (2005), dynamic assessment provides richer information about learners than traditional testing because it examines not only what learners can do independently but also what they can achieve with appropriate support. By integrating assessment and instruction, DA offers valuable insights into learner development and highlights the role of mediation in promoting language learning (Liu & Hu, 2023). For this reason, comparing interventionist and interactionist approaches may help identify the most effective ways of supporting EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension and writing development.

DA can promote EFL learners' pragmatic competence. According to Timpe et al. (2015), pragmatic competence is the working engine of communicative competence. It includes the capacity of second or foreign language (L2) learners to produce and understand socio-pragmatic norms and their materializations in the form of pragmalinguistic forms through appropriate form-function-context mappings, as well as their potential to produce the intended meanings in the target L2 after taking the aforementioned aspects into consideration. Stated differently, pragmatic production and pragmatic comprehension are two sub-competencies that make up pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2019). According to Taguchi and Roever (2017), there is a dearth of research in the field of L2 pragmatic comprehension in part because it is difficult to study comprehension processes that do not lend themselves to direct experimentation and, therefore, more reliable measurement and verification. When compared to pragmatic production, less effort has been made to conduct instructional studies in the domain of pragmatic comprehension, and only a small number of prior studies can be cited in this regard due to the bewilderingly difficult task of gaining insights into L2 pragmatic comprehension. There is a lack of research on the application of different Dynamic Assessment (DA) models for pragmatic comprehension, despite the fact that these models have been used in L2 pragmatic instruction and have demonstrated their substantial contributions to pragmatic production (Malmir, 2020). In order to better understand the impact of interactionist and interventionist models of DA on the precision and speed of pragmatic

comprehension the researcher also made an effort to test the effects of interventionist and interactionist DA on pragmatic comprehension.

DA can enhance EFL learners' writing skill. Though researchers have given rise to nebulous assumptions and perspectives on CAF, multifaceted and multilayered constituents of it which are interrelated in complex ways have transformed them it fascinating research subject (Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Norris & Ortega, 2009; Skehan, 2009). These conclusions stem in part from conceptualizations of their characteristics and relationships. According to Michel (2017), accuracy measures the target-like and error-free use of language, whereas complexity refers to the size, elaborateness, richness, and diversity of the L2 performance. Fluency, on the other hand, is defined as the simple, effortless, and elegant delivery of speech with a minimal number of pauses, hesitations, or reformulations. An increase in accuracy and complexity in cognitive processing, points to the advanced structure of the L2 user's interlanguage. Higher fluency, on the other hand, indicates that a person is proficient in using the language automatically and indicates that learning a second language is easy (Skehan, 2009). The fact that the components do not follow a predictable order is one important finding of the research on CAF development (Larsen-Freeman, 2006). The fact that learners develop at different rates highlights the significance of acknowledging individual differences, which is considered a fundamental tenet of DA. Teachers' mediation tailored to the needs and characteristics of their students is justified by the sociocultural foundation of DA.

Despite the growing body of research on dynamic assessment in second language learning, several important gaps remain. Previous studies have generally examined the effectiveness of DA on isolated language skills, while relatively few have compared the effects of interventionist and interactionist DA within the same instructional context. Moreover, although research has demonstrated the value of DA for language development, limited attention has been paid to its impact on pragmatic comprehension and writing CAF simultaneously. The scarcity of comparative studies investigating the relative effectiveness of interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA instruction on these outcomes is particularly evident in EFL contexts such as Iran. Addressing this gap may contribute to a better understanding of how different forms of mediation influence learners' communicative and writing development. Accordingly, the present study seeks to determine whether there are significant differences among interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA instruction in improving Iranian EFL learners'

pragmatic comprehension and writing CAF. More specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

RQ1: Is there any significant difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL students' Pragmatic Comprehension?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL students' writing CAF?

Considering the above research questions the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' writing CAF.

Material and Methods

In this section, the employed methodology, tools, data collocation process, and data analysis are briefly discussed.

Design of the study

Since the participants of the study were chosen randomly, the design of this dissertation was true-experimental. Pretest-posttest control design was used in this study to examine the impact of interactionist vs. interventionist DA models and traditional non-DA instruction on the writing CAF and pragmatic comprehension among EFL learners. There were one control group and two experimental groups. There were two dependent variables namely, pragmatic comprehension, and writing CAF. Also, there are two independent variables which are interventionist DA and interactionist DA.

Participants:

The participants of this study were 162 participants chosen from 370 primary EFL learners using convenience sampling method. They were at intermediate level. They were male and female and their age ranged from 21 to 32. They had 4 to 8 years of language learning background. They were homogenized through Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) V2. Eventually they were divided to three groups including the interactionist, interventionist, and control groups, each including 54 participants. Regarding ethical considerations, the participants were treated with courtesy, respect, regardless of age, gender, national origin, religion, or other personal characteristics. The participants received a brief explanation prior to study about the purpose(s), and the kind(s) of research instruments be used. The participant's freedom to decline, and freedom to withdraw, was respected. In preparation for conducting the study, an appropriate environment was set for the study.

Instruments

The following tools were utilized in this research:

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT): This test was used to measure the level of English language proficiency of the EFL learners and to find out whether they are honest in claiming to be at upper-intermediate level or not. The test is multiple choice one on reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Based on the instructions of the test, students whose score fall between 0 and 17 are labelled as beginners. Those with 18 and 29 are considered as elementary learners. The learners with 30 to 39 scores are lower intermediate learners. Those regarded as upper intermediate have scores between 40 and 47 and finally the advanced students should score between 48 and 60.

Pragmatic Test: The participants' pragmatic comprehension accuracy in American English was assessed using a pragmatic listening test that Garcia (2004) developed and validated. Garcia argued that since the most crucial knowledge categories for pragmatic comprehension should be covered in any L2 pragmatic test, she included six long, real-world conversations from interactions that happen naturally. In line with the assertion made by the body of research on this topic that speech acts as the fundamental building block of pragmatic comprehension, she created items to assess learners' comprehension accuracy of sociopragmatic norms and pragmalinguistic forms (e.g. g. not only for the implicatures (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008; Ross & Kasper, 2013; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

This twenty-four-item pragmatic comprehension test was created based on American English conversations in the US. These tests assessed students' understanding of the form-function-context mappings for six audio-recorded real-world conversations that were taken from an academic spoken language corpus in the United States.

Writing CAF: The researcher asked the participants to write a 400-word essay to estimate their argumentative writing ability before the treatment. The pre- and post-tests covered the same topics in order to give the researchers a better idea of how the participants have improved their writing abilities generally and CAF specifically

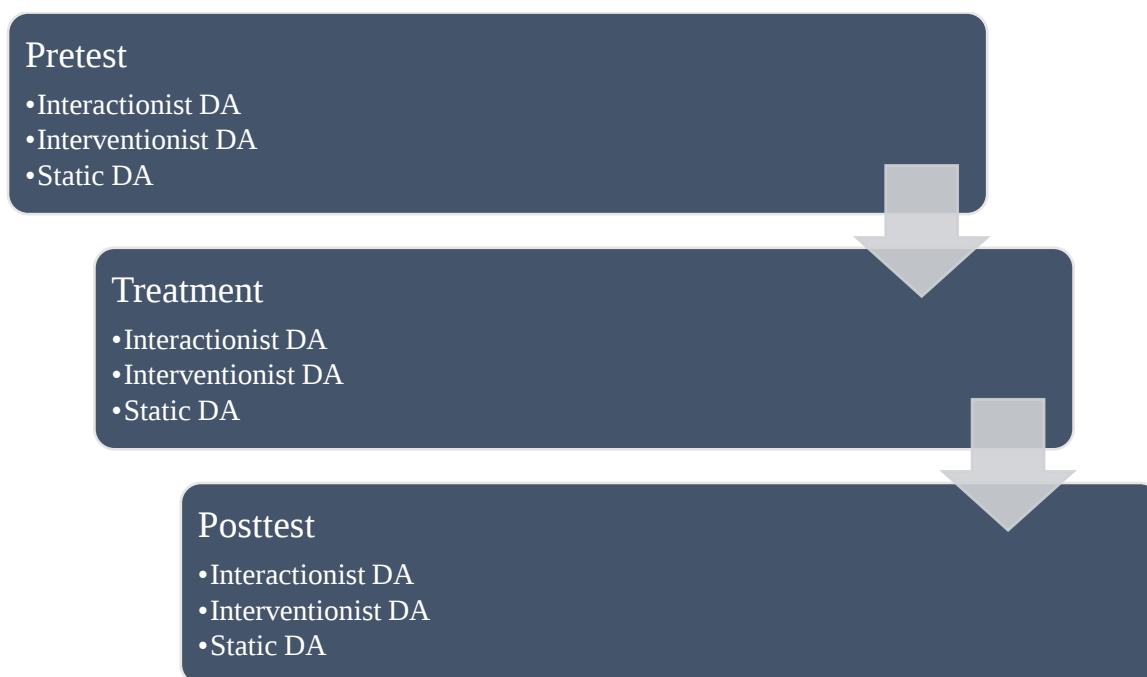
As suggested by Norris and Ortega (2009), who maintained that measures of syntactic complexity should include at least three constructs, complexity was measured using three indices. Thus, clauses per T-unit (C/T) was chosen to target subordination, mean length of sentence (MLS) was chosen as a measure of general complexity, and T-units per sentence (T/S) was used to target the use of coordination by low proficiency learners. T-units, also known as "terminal units," are made up of any clauses that are appended to an independent clause. Lu (2010) developed the free online L2 Syntactical Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) to analyze the writing samples' complexity measures. The error-free clause ratio (EFCR) was used to measure accuracy recommendations. Since the clause is thought to be more accurate and suitable for beginning and low-intermediate learners, it was chosen as the unit of. In order to increase accuracy and produce more exact conclusions, average rating scores were computed from the assessments completed by both researchers. Lastly, the total words written in the designated 15 minutes were used to calculate fluency (W/15M).

Table 1. Measures of CAF (Adopted from Marlowe & Asaba, 2021)

Category	Measures	Calculation
Complexity	Mean Length of Sentence (MLS)	Total number of words divided by number of sentences
	Clauses per T-units (C/T)	Total number of clauses divided by number of T-units
	T-units per sentence (T/S)	Total number of T-units divided by number of sentences
Accuracy	Error-free clause ratio (EFCR)	Total number of error free clauses divided by number of clauses
Fluency	Words per 15 minutes (W/15M)	Average number of words written in 15 minutes

Data Collection Procedure

The present study began by finding participants in Bushehr Province. The researcher estimated that the number of intermediate EFL learners in the province were around 370. Therefore, with 85% confidence the researcher needed 162 participants. After finding the learners she conducted a placement test in order to make sure that all participants were at the same level. Thus, OQPT was conducted and the participants whose scores were more similar were chosen for the study. In order to be able to divide the participants into three identical groups the researcher aimed at finding 162 participants, so as to have 54 learners in each group (interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction).



They selected participants received pragmatic comprehension and writing CAF questionnaires as a pre-test prior to instruction. They had sixty minutes to respond to the questions. After the pretest sessions, the treatments began. During 9 sessions lasting approximately 75 minutes each, the treatments were presented. An interventionist DA was used to evaluate the first group. By utilizing a test-intervene-retest format and concentrating on the quantitative outcomes of the intervention, the teacher attempted to consider learners' future abilities in addition to their present and past while concurrently integrating teaching and assessment with mediation. To determine the learners' level of independent performance, the teacher first gave them a pre-test.

The control group received no DA treatment given to the non-DA group during the course. In this group, each session the teacher first asked participants to listen to the short animation episodes and negotiate their understanding in their own subgroups, and then individually respond to the quiz items. However, in this group, the researcher did not join the subgroups to interact or mediate their performance in quiz items. This means that the teacher did not apply GDA procedures. Instead, she collected the learners' quiz paper and announced their scores in the following session. Thus, in the control group, the teacher used the formative assessment. The learners in this group were assigned to complete a writing task individually without implementing DA mediations. Each session, the teacher underlined their errors. The teacher's attention was specially focused on using the verbs in simple past in each sentence. Then, the teacher wrote the correct answers under them without giving any explanation or any other form of feedback, scored their sheets, and finally, gave their sheets back to them in the following session.

Interactionist DA was used to treat the second group. The learners were given a few tasks to complete with graduated prompts, such as identifying mistakes, leading questions, and examples, which became more complex, and the instructor engaged with each learner to determine the extent of mediation required. The instructor made an effort to react to the behavior in a way that was appropriate and timely. In this group, assistance and intervention were presented through the interaction between the student and the assessor. The improvement in this approach is greatly sensitive to the ZPD of the students.

In interventionist DA group, after finishing the writing task in each session, the teacher began to mediate the learners within 60 minutes. In this experimental group, the teacher used the model of graduated prompt of the interventionist approach. Mediation in this group was in accordance with Brown's Graduated Prompt Model (2005). While mediating the target problems for the learners, the mediator gradually moved from the most implicit mediational moves to the most explicit ones in order (helping move narration along, request for reading, identifying the specific site of error, specifying error, translation, providing example or illustration, offering a choice, providing correct response, providing explanation, asking for explanation). The mediator was not free to skip any moves, and the learners were not allowed to ask any questions in the course of mediation. Moreover, the mediator offered the same mediational moves for the learners, and the mediational moves were also administered in the same order for the learners.

Similar to the interactionist group, the learners, in their tasks, received interventions from the instructor to both assess and improve the learners' ability. If the student's answer was correct, no mediation was provided. But if the student's answer was not correct, the instructor selected one of the 8 forms offered by Lantolf and Poehner's (2011) scale namely: (1) Teacher pauses; (2) Teacher repeats the whole phrase questioningly; (3) Teacher repeats just the error part of the sentence; (4) Teacher asks a question, for example: what is wrong with this sentence; (5) Teacher points out the incorrect word; (6) Teacher asks either...or... questions; (7) Teacher identifies the correct answer; (8) Teacher explains why. It can be observed that the list moves from most implicit to most explicit form in offering the mediation for the participants in the DA group. This approach is similar to specific types of static assessment, that is, the types of help offered are standardized which focus on the psychometric features of assessment procedures. Finally, the posttests for each variable under study were administered.

Data Analysis Procedure

Once the raw data were collected the researcher transferred them into Excel and codes them. After coding the data, they were exported into SPSS for analysis. The IBM SPSS software, version 26, was employed to analyze the data. The proposed research questions were addressed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Scheffe post-hoc test was used for each research question because in each research question three groups of the study were compared and analyzed for one variable.

Results

Addressing the Second Research Question

The first research question examined the difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension. To this end, first, the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest were calculated and reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Pragmatic Comprehension Pretest and Posttest

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Interv-pre	10.94	54	1.510	.205
Interv-post	13.02	54	1.631	.222
Interac-pre	10.09	54	1.640	.223
Interac-post	12.37	54	1.825	.248
Cont-pre	10.33	54	1.213	.165
Cont-post	11.43	54	1.573	.214

Then, ANOVA was run to find out the differences among three groups of the study in the pretest and posttest. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3. Results of ANOVA in the Pretest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1170.900	2	130.100	1.186	.985
Within Groups	3495.500	160	699.100		
Total	4666.400	162			

According to Table 3, there is no significant difference among three groups' pragmatic comprehension in the pretest since $p > 0.05$ and $F(3, 160) = 1.186$. Finally, their performance was calculated and compared after the treatments in the posttest. Table 4 presents the posttest results.

Table 4. Results of ANOVA in the Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	639.467	2	91.352	3.093	.000
Within Groups	3308.400	160	29.539		
Total	3947.867	162			

As illustrated in Table 4, a significant difference was found among the three groups due to the fact that $p < 0.05$ and $F(3, 160) = 3.093$. Accordingly, the first null hypothesis is rejected. In order to determine the location of difference among groups and due to the fact that the first null hypothesis was rejected Scheffe post-hoc analysis was conducted. Table 5 reports the results of Scheffe analysis.

Table 5. Scheffe Analysis of the Three Groups' Pragmatic Comprehension

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EG1	EG2	.0000	1.1547	1.000	-3.698	3.698
	CG	-5.0000*	1.1547	.011	-8.698	-1.302
EG2	EG1	.0000	1.1547	1.000	-3.698	3.698
	CG	-5.0000*	1.1547	.011	-8.698	-1.302
CG	EG1	.0000	1.1547	1.000	-3.698	3.698
	EG2	-3.0000	1.1547	.117	-6.698	.698

EG1= First Experimental Group (Interventionist), EG2= Second Experimental Group (Interactionist), CG= Control Group

As it is presented in Table 5, Scheffe post hoc test indicated that the two experimental groups ($p < 0.05$) outperformed significantly than the control group, and there were no significant differences among experimental groups due to the mode of DA instructions on students' pragmatic comprehension.

Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question investigated the difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' writing CAF. The descriptive statistics of the three groups' pretest are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for the Pretest Groups

		Interventionist- DA	Interactionist-DA	Control
Measure		Mean	Mean	Mean
Complexity	MLS	2.48	2.54	2.32
	C/T	0.9	0.7	0.11
	T/S	0.11	0.8	0.9
Accuracy	EFCR	0.13	0.11	0.12
Fluency	W/15M	27.16	22.30	24.80

In addition, the results obtained from the three groups' posttests are calculated and reported (Table 7).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for the Posttest groups

		Interventionist- DA	Interactionist-DA	Control
Measure		Mean	Mean	Mean
Complexity	MLS	2.59	2.75	2.41
	C/T	0.13	0.17	0.15
	T/S	0.14	0.10	0.13
Accuracy	EFCR	0.16	0.14	0.15
Fluency	W/15M	28.16	27.30	27.80

After conducting the descriptive statistics, ANOVA was administered to compare the three groups in the pretest and posttest. Table 8 shows the results of writing CAF pretest.

Table 8. ANOVA Results of Writing CAF Pretest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	106.133	2	132.067	8.402	.603
Within Groups	520.850	160	90.962		
Total	606.983	162			

According to Table 8, since $F(2, 160) = 8.402$, and $p > .05$ (Gass & Mackay, 2008) there is no significant difference among three groups' writing CAF in the pretest with respect to the implementation of the treatments. Then, the three groups were compared via another ANOVA in the posttest.

Table 9. ANOVA Results of Writing CAF

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	102.148	2	118.083	5.721	.000
Within Groups	531.822	160	89.557		
Total	619.001	162			

Regarding Table 9, because $F(2, 160) = 5.721$, and $p < .05$ (Gass & Mackay, 2008) there is a significant difference among three groups' writing CAF in the posttest. However, to find out the location or the source of variance Scheffe post-hoc analysis was administered. Table 10 illustrates the results.

Table 10. Scheffe Analysis of the Three Groups' Writing CAF

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
EG1	EG2	-2.900*	.947	.009	-5.18	-.62
	CG	-3.000*	.947	.007	-5.28	-.72
EG2	EG1	2.900*	.947	.009	.62	5.18
	CG	-.100	.947	.994	-2.38	2.18
CG	EG1	3.000*	.947	.007	.72	5.28
	EG2	.100	.947	.994	-2.18	2.38

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

EG1= First Experimental Group (Interventionist)

EG2= Second Experimental Group (Interactionist)

CG= Control Group

As Table 10 shows, the difference was found between CG with EG1 since $p = .009$. Moreover, the results indicate the difference between group EG1 with the EG2 due to the fact that $p = .007$. Therefore, it is argued that, compared to CG, both EG1 and EG2 had a better performance.

However, EG2 outperformed their counterparts in EG1 (Mean Difference=-2.900*, Std. Error=.947, Sig=.000). That is, interactionist DA was more effective than interventionist treatment on EFL learners' writing CAF.

Discussion

The current study examined the difference in the role of the interventionist DA, interactionist DA, and conventional non-DA models of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension and writing CAF. The findings revealed that both interventionist and interactionist DA instructions had a positive significant effect on pragmatic comprehension and writing CAF. However, no significant difference was found between interventionist and interactionist DA instructions with respect to pragmatic comprehension. Moreover, the results indicated that interactionist DA instruction was more effective than interventionist DA in terms of writing CAF. The findings support the claim that DA can function not merely as an assessment approach but as an instructional and developmental framework capable of fostering both language-related and affective growth. More specifically, both forms of DA led to significant improvement across the target variables, while the conventional non-DA approach was comparatively less effective. At the same time, important differences emerged between the two DA formats: although interventionist and interactionist DA did not differ significantly in pragmatic comprehension, interactionist DA produced stronger gains in writing CAF. These results are theoretically meaningful because they suggest that the kind of mediation provided during instruction matters, and that the dialogic, contingent, and individualized nature of interactionist mediation may be especially beneficial for outcomes that depend on sustained noticing, self-regulation, and affective support.

These findings can be interpreted through the lens of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, which views learning as a socially mediated process occurring through interaction, scaffolding, and the internalization of higher mental functions (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, assessment and instruction are not separate activities. Rather, assessment can be embedded within instruction so that the teacher actively mediates learners' performance in real time, helping them operate within their ZPD. DA is grounded precisely in this principle, as it seeks to reveal not only what learners can do independently but also what they can accomplish with mediation (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, 2014). The current study's results align closely with this

view because learners in both DA conditions improved more than those receiving non-DA instruction, implying that mediation facilitated development beyond what ordinary instruction alone could produce.

The superiority of DA over non-DA instruction is consistent with a growing body of research showing that mediated learning can promote language development more effectively than traditional one-shot testing or teacher-centered explanation. In language classrooms, learners often benefit when feedback is not merely corrective but adaptive, contingent, and developmentally oriented (Poehner, 2008; Poehner & Lantolf, 2013). Rather than treating errors as evidence of deficiency, DA treats them as opportunities for mediation and growth. Such an approach is likely to be particularly effective in foreign language settings where learners may have limited exposure to meaningful input and fewer opportunities for authentic interaction outside the classroom. In these contexts, mediation can help learners reorganize their emerging linguistic and strategic resources, thereby improving both performance and long-term development (Ableeva, 2010; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002).

One of the main findings of the study was that both interventionist and interactionist DA significantly improved pragmatic comprehension, with no significant difference between them. This suggests that for pragmatic understanding, the crucial factor may be the presence of mediation itself rather than the specific format in which it is delivered. Pragmatic comprehension requires learners to interpret speech acts, infer speaker intentions, recognize contextual cues, and connect linguistic form with sociocultural meaning.

These are cognitively and socially demanding tasks, and learners often struggle to perceive the relationship between literal utterances and intended pragmatic force (Taguchi, 2011; Rose & Kasper, 2013). DA appears well suited to this domain because it can make learners' implicit misunderstandings visible and then guide them toward more appropriate interpretation through scaffolded support.

The comparable success of interventionist and interactionist DA in pragmatic comprehension may indicate that both forms provide sufficient mediation for learners to notice pragmatic cues and revise their interpretations. Interventionist DA, which typically relies on predefined prompts arranged in a graduated hierarchy, can efficiently direct attention to relevant features of pragmatic meaning. Interactionist DA, by contrast, allows the mediator to respond flexibly to the learner's

immediate needs and to co-construct understanding through dialogue. The absence of a significant difference between the two formats in this domain may reflect the fact that pragmatic comprehension tasks are often text- or scenario-based, making them amenable to both structured prompting and contingent conversational support. In other words, when the instructional goal is to help learners recognize the intended meaning of pragmatic situations, both standardized and individualized mediation may be adequate if they target the appropriate level of difficulty.

This result is in line with prior scholarship suggesting that pragmatic competence is developable through focused instruction and mediation. Research on second language pragmatics has repeatedly shown that explicit teaching, feedback, and guided reflection improve learners' ability to interpret and produce appropriate pragmatic behavior (Taguchi, 2013). DA extends this line of work by adding a developmental dimension: it not only teaches pragmatic features but also probes how learners respond to mediation and whether they can internalize the targeted pragmatic concepts. The present findings therefore reinforce the claim that pragmatic comprehension is not a fixed trait but a teachable and assessable ability that can be enhanced through guided sociocultural intervention.

A particularly interesting pattern in the current study is that interactionist DA was more effective than interventionist DA in improving writing CAF. This outcome is theoretically plausible because writing is a complex, recursive, and deeply individualized process. Unlike pragmatic comprehension tasks, which often involve selecting or interpreting meaning in relatively bounded situations, writing requires learners to generate ideas, organize discourse, manage lexical and grammatical resources, monitor accuracy, and sustain fluency over extended production. Such a multifaceted process may benefit more from the flexible, dialogic, and contingent support that interactionist DA offers. In interactionist mediation, the teacher can respond to the learner's specific breakdowns as they emerge, provide tailored prompts, and help the learner regulate the composing process in real time (Poehner, 2008; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). The improvement in writing CAF under interactionist DA suggests that learners may have been better able to notice and repair weaknesses in content development, sentence structure, grammatical accuracy, and lexical choice when mediation was responsive to their immediate composing needs. Writing development often depends on learners' ability to reflect on their output, revise meaningfully, and coordinate multiple linguistic subskills simultaneously. Because interactionist DA allows for

negotiated assistance, it may create a more powerful environment for such self-regulatory growth than interventionist DA, which is necessarily more standardized and less able to track the dynamic unfolding of each learner's text. This interpretation is compatible with research emphasizing that writing improvement is fostered by collaborative dialogue, feedback negotiation, and scaffolding. In addition, writing CAF gains may be linked to the fact that interactionist mediation can reduce cognitive overload. By supplying support at the exact moment, a learner experiences difficulty, the instructor helps the learner preserve working memory resources for higher-level planning and revision. This can lead to richer content, more accurate language, and more fluent production. Sociocultural researchers have long argued that mediated performance should be examined not only in terms of immediate correctness but also in terms of how support helps learners' appropriate linguistic resources for future independent use (Lantolf, 2005). The present findings suggest that interactionist DA may be especially effective in this regard for writing, because its contingent nature supports both micro-level form control and macro-level discourse organization.

The overall pattern of findings suggests that interactionist DA has a broader developmental reach than interventionist DA, particularly for writing CAF. This may be because interactionist DA more fully realizes the sociocultural principle of mediation as joint activity. Unlike interventionist DA, which typically uses a standardized sequence of prompts, interactionist DA allows the teacher to diagnose the learner's immediate needs and tailor support accordingly. This flexibility is likely to be beneficial when the target outcome is complex, multifaceted, and influenced by both cognition and emotion. Writing performance, for example, unfolds dynamically and requires simultaneous management of planning, formulation, and revision.

The current study's finding of no significant difference between the two DA modes for pragmatic comprehension may therefore indicate that pragmatic interpretation is sufficiently amenable to structured support. However, when development involves writing output and psychological variables, the richer contingency of interactionist DA may provide an advantage. This aligns with the broader literature suggesting that the appropriateness of a DA format depends on the nature of the target construct and the instructional context (Lidz, 1991; Poehner, 2011).

The DA perspective stands in stark contrast to traditional testing methods that prioritized assessment in a conventional and standardized way and separated instruction from assessment (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). Some experts, such as Douglas (2010), view DA as an alternative assessment method; however, they differ in that the fundamental idea of DA is the construction of the unknown from the known through the mediation of a more knowledgeable individual. As such, a few published DA studies (e.g. g. Poehner & Lantolf, 2010; Rahimi et al. 2015) have taken into consideration private mediation sessions where a teacher and learner collaborate dialogically to resolve a difficult language issue that the learner cannot resolve on their own.

The misconception that DA is inappropriate for entire classes has arisen from this. "DA procedures are ideally administered individually, which makes this type of assessment time-consuming," according to Anton (2009, p. 579). Consequently, DA was seen by many educators as an unrealistic idea (Guk & Kellog, 2007). Poehner (2009) developed G-DA to address this issue. In this method, the mediator views each individual ZPD as a component of the group ZPD and uses interaction to move them all forward. Activities in the classroom therefore center on group ZPD rather than individual ZPD. Vygotsky himself notes that the "best time for teaching both the group and individual ZPD" is the group ZPD (1998, p. 204). Therefore, GDA seeks to engage learners in and address the group's ZPD.

The obtained findings are in also line with the results of studies by Hassaskhah and Javan Haghparast (2012), Nassaji and Swain (2000), Rahimi et al. (2015), and Shrestha and Coffin (2012), and many others who came to realize that dynamic assessment can contribute substantially to development in learners' writing ability. All in all, in accordance with the robust literature on the implementation of modalities of dynamic assessment, the present study found that establishing authoritative and facilitative intervention with learners in the form of interactionist dynamic assessment can yield fruitful results in the area of L2 writing. Significant growth was seen in the participants' pragmatic comprehension and the amount of mediation given to the students substantially decreased across the sessions throughout the DA intervention. More specifically, the study highlighted that mediating learner on how to revise their essays assisted them recognize and overcome their errors more efficiently and enhance their overall level of performance. The dynamic procedure employed in this study assisted the learners develop the ability to internalize the learned concepts and structures and reach the point of self-regulation needing less help from

the mediator/instructor and finally it resulted in the transcendence of learning from the DA sessions to more novel and complex settings. Moreover, the study indicated that DA can be conducted through other delivery modes if time and space limitations of educational contexts do not allow for its realization in the classroom; other modes and media can be equally fruitful. This is particularly promising for writing instructors who often argue against dynamic feedback criticizing its feasibility in educational contexts.

The results also provided evidence in support of the previous studies such as Feuerstein et al. (1979) and Poehner and Infante (2015) in which they confirmed that giving mediation during testing procedure can result in development through the assessment process itself. The results supported the argument made by Vygotsky (1986) that the goal of instruction should be to bring to light the invisible and maturing abilities.

Additionally, such findings support when one considers the quality of instruction and type of mediations and feedbacks offered during interactionist assessment. Our claim in this respect are in line with that of Ahmadi Safa et al. (2015), who confirmed the positive effect of DA on second language learning, with interactionist approaches to DA being more effective than interventionist approaches to DA. Another explanation for the findings seems to be related to the fact that the interactionist assessment is more sensitive to individual's ZPD (Fulcher, 2010) and, as a result, might be more efficient means to account for psychological processes involved in learning and more powerful means for diagnosing suitable kinds of mediation and instruction (Poehner, 2008). Interactionist assessment may assist teachers to offer students appropriate kinds of feedback, and help learners to find sources of their linguistic problems through negotiation of meaning and mediation. Additionally, getting the whole class involved as secondary interactants and do a series of one-to-one interactions, interactionist dynamic assessment might give learners the opportunity to receive graduated and emergent instruction finely tuned to their particular needs.

Conclusion and Implication

This study investigated the effects of interventionist dynamic assessment (DA), interactionist DA, and conventional non-dynamic instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic comprehension and writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). The findings demonstrated that both forms of DA significantly improved learners' performance compared with traditional instruction. While interventionist and interactionist DA were equally effective in enhancing pragmatic

comprehension, interactionist DA produced stronger gains in writing CAF. These findings indicate that integrating assessment with instruction through mediation and scaffolding is more effective than approaches that separate assessment from learning.

The results support sociocultural theory, which views language learning as a socially mediated developmental process. The success of both DA approaches suggests that learners benefit from guided support that helps them interpret meaning, understand context, and develop communicative competence. The stronger impact of interactionist DA on writing performance highlights the value of flexible, dialogic, and individualized mediation. Because writing requires the coordination of multiple linguistic and cognitive processes, learners appear to benefit from immediate and responsive support tailored to their specific needs during task completion.

The findings also reinforce the theoretical claim that assessment and instruction should be treated as interconnected components of a single developmental process. Rather than simply measuring existing knowledge, assessment can be used to reveal learner potential and promote further development. The study demonstrates that when mediation is embedded within instruction, learners can achieve higher levels of performance and gradually develop greater independence in language use.

Several pedagogical implications emerge from these findings. Dynamic assessment should be viewed not only as an assessment technique but also as an instructional framework that can enhance language development. Teachers can use mediation to identify learners' needs more accurately and provide targeted support during learning. The results further suggest that different instructional goals may require different forms of mediation. While either interventionist or interactionist DA can effectively support pragmatic comprehension, interactionist DA appears to be particularly beneficial for improving writing performance because of its responsiveness and personalized nature. More broadly, the findings encourage a shift from product-oriented evaluation toward development-oriented assessment, where learner errors are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than merely indicators of failure.

In Iranian EFL contexts, where English instruction is often examination-oriented and opportunities for authentic language use may be limited, dynamic assessment offers a valuable alternative. By integrating assessment and instruction, teachers can create more supportive and collaborative learning environments that encourage active engagement and continuous development. The

teacher's role shifts from evaluator to mediator, fostering greater interaction and learner participation. The study also highlights the importance of teacher education programs and professional development initiatives that equip instructors with the knowledge and skills needed to implement DA effectively.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the participants were drawn from a specific population of Iranian EFL learners, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, age groups, or proficiency levels. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, making it difficult to determine the long-term effects of dynamic assessment. Third, the study focused primarily on learning outcomes and did not closely examine the interactional processes through which mediation contributed to development.

Future research should investigate the application of dynamic assessment in a wider range of educational settings, including schools and universities, and with learners of different proficiency levels. Studies with larger sample sizes would further strengthen the evidence base. Researchers may also explore teachers' perspectives on computerized and group forms of dynamic assessment, as well as the use of DA for other language skills and subskills. In addition, mixed-methods and action research designs could provide a deeper understanding of how mediation operates in classroom contexts. Future studies should also examine the influence of individual learner characteristics, such as motivation, critical thinking, self-efficacy, and personality traits, on the effectiveness of dynamic assessment.

Overall, the study demonstrates that dynamic assessment is a powerful instructional approach that can enhance language learning outcomes, particularly in pragmatic comprehension and writing development. While both interventionist and interactionist forms of DA support learner growth, interactionist DA appears especially effective in promoting writing performance through its flexible and individualized mediation. The findings emphasize the importance of integrating assessment and instruction in ways that support learner development and create more meaningful and effective language learning experiences.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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