

The Impact of the Dynamicity and Non-dynamicity of Assessment on EFL Learners' Productive Skills: Attitude in Focus

Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal^{1&2}, & Hanan Maneh Al-Johani¹

¹ Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj 11942, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

² Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Port Said, Egypt

Correspondence: Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj 11942, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract

The possible effects of dynamic evaluation (DE) and non-dynamic (non-DE) evaluation on the productive skills of Saudi EFL students were examined in this study. This study also looked at how Saudi EFL students felt about utilizing DE in their writing and speaking sessions. To achieve these objectives, sixty-four Saudi intermediate EFL students were split into two groups and selected using the convenience sample approach. Then, a pre-test was given to both groups for two skills: speaking and writing. After that, one group was taught speaking and writing using dynamic evaluation, while the other group was taught using NDE. Following eighteen training sessions, the groups were given posttests in speaking and writing, and the dynamic evaluation group was also given a perception questionnaire. The speaking and writing posttests for the two groups showed a substantial difference that favored the experimental group. The speaking and writing posttests demonstrated that the DE group fared better than the non-DE group. The results also pointed out that the DE group members had favorable opinions of the evaluation process. It was concluded that one of the best ways to help EFL students advance in their English language learning is to use DE in the classroom. Teachers and course designers may be convinced to incorporate dynamic evaluation into their lesson plans and courses by the consequences of this research.

Keywords: speaking skills, dynamic evaluation technique, writing skills, non-dynamic evaluation

1. Introduction

Assessment is an ongoing procedure that looks into how operationally students are meeting the requirements of a specific course of study (Abdulaal et al., 2022). Assessment is a crucial step for teaching and learning. If no assessment is conducted, it is impossible to confirm that the learning objectives and goals have been attained. The results of assessments can influence how instructors and course designers assess the effectiveness of EFL courses (Leung, 2007).

Kozulin and Garb (2002) defined assessment as a group of procedures that includes but is not restricted to testing and measurement. We can draw conclusions about specific people based on the structured data we obtain from testing or other measuring methods. Supporting the teaching and learning process is the main goal of evaluation. Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004) predicted that evaluation will move from a psychological model to an all-encompassing model of academic assessment. The concept of evaluation as it is proposed by dynamic assessment is essentially different from the way that academics and educators have historically interpreted it in the classroom. Knowing students' abilities, instructing, assisting in learners' growth, and using the educational strategy of evaluation are all parts of a dialectically integrated activity known as DE (Razavi, & Tabatabaei, 2014).

According to Ajideh and Nourdad (2012), DE is the interaction between assessors and students that determines the degree to which learners can be modified and the methods by which positive changes and cognitive functioning can be accomplished and maintained. According to Ghahderijani, Namaziandost, Tavakoli, Kumar, and Magizov (2021), in DE the teacher-student exchanges provide approximations regarding the anticipated trajectory of the student's future development.

A particular kind of alternative evaluation known as DE incorporates teaching and evaluation into a cooperative educational approach, offering suitable forms of mediation. To ameliorate the diagnosis of students' learning obstacles and to define their strengths and weaknesses, DE seeks to show a more complete picture of students' cognitive abilities by clearly evaluating how effectively the learners respond to certain interventions (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

DE highlights learners' accomplishments and elicits potential capacities by disclosing the details of students' capacities to construct treatment-based programs (Lee & Coniam, 2013). For example, DE improves individualized instruction and makes it possible to fully characterize students' true and latent abilities.

One major advantage of DE is that it allows for commendations based on developmental potential, something that older non-DE does not

do (Matsuno, 2009). In DE, students receive training on how to carry out certain tasks as well as mediated aid. Then, the extent to which they can become more proficient at performing comparable tasks is ascertained (Saito, 2008). According to Schaefer (2008), DE is a collaboration in which students take an active role as participants, and assessors work as intervenors to determine how modifiable each student is and how to develop and maintain positive changes in cognitive functioning.

One aspect of DE, according to Schaefer (2008), is the shift in focus from a learner's unique performance attributed to the reactive skills to the mediation offered. Supporting students' growth and skill level in accordance with the instructional courses is the basic aim of DE. Improvement-related or improvement-oriented, as a result (Xu, & Liu, 2009). According to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002), rather than the instrument itself, what determines whether a strategy is static, or dynamic is whether mediation is employed in the process, regardless of where it occurs.

Speaking is one form of productive skill that EFL learners can improve through the use of DE in language learning and teaching. EFL students have always been quite interested in English since most of them want to speak it well (Astawa, Artini, & Nitiasih, 2017). To help EFL students make utterances when interacting with others, speaking is an advantageous skill that teachers want to foster in their learners.

Speaking competency is recognized as a contextualized, participatory communication-based event as well. It can help people express their identity, communicate their feelings, and establish and sustain social connections. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) asserted that the ability to converse in the target language is the key to successfully learning a foreign language. Speaking is one of the most difficult skills for students to learn since it involves all of the necessary components for effective and seamless communication. The five components of speaking—fluency, understanding, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar—must all be mastered (Miralpeix & Muñoz, 2018).

Writing proficiency is claimed to be the other productive talent that DE affects. Writing skills enable people to convey their feelings and opinions in writing, which makes them an essential part of communication. The concept of "writing" has attracted the curiosity of numerous scientists. Sharma (2015) asserted that writing is a cerebral and a physical activity. Writing is just the physical act of putting words or notions on paper. Writing is the mental activity of formulating ideas, figuring out how to express them, and organizing them into clear-cut words and paragraphs for the reader.

Webb (2009) offered an additional definition of writing as the steps a writer takes to generate anything in its perfect form. This process consists of four basic steps: planning, drafting, editing, and creating the final document. Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986) claimed that the writing process is thought of as the final result of complex planning, assessing, and rewriting processes supported in this sense. Researchers have recently broadened their perspectives on writing to integrate the social dimension. Being proficient in writing involves both complex social interaction and mental work. It serves as an example of the author's domain expertise and communication skills. It's challenging to learn and get better at writing, particularly when it's a second language like English (Sasaki, 2000).

When it comes to the acquisition and expansion of any foreign language, writing typically comes last in terms of the other three language skills. Writing, on the other hand, is said to be the skill that novices find most difficult. Even when writing in their native tongue, students often struggle. These difficulties seem a lot more serious when written in English. This is an issue that linguists and researchers who study foreign languages have been discussing for a long time (Susser, 1994).

Attitude is the other important element in this research. Enginarlar (1993) asserted that while negative attitudes can impede learning, positive attitudes regarding foreign and second languages can help it. Students who have a good attitude are therefore more effective in achieving their learning goals, whereas students who have a negative attitude consider learning a language to be a challenging endeavor. According to Saito and Fujita (2004), changing one's attitudes, actions, and information about speakers of the target language is necessary for the acquisition of a second language (L2). For students to learn the target language, their views about native speakers must positively shift. Students' attitudes might be influenced by their prior experiences learning a language. They might be prone to success if they were successful.

The current study aimed to use DE and non-DE in EFL lessons by taking into account the issues that students face with productive skills. The goal was to help the learners resolve some of their learning issues and therefore improve their productive abilities. This study can be important because it focuses on speaking and writing, the two primary skills that EFL learners struggle with the most. This research study is important because it may catalyze further investigations into the effects of DE and other assessment methods on receptive abilities.

2. Review of Literature

Theoretical framework

Assessment is a methodical process that gathers data about students' advancement toward learning objectives (Albirini, 2006). Khonbi and Sadeghi (2012) stated that a range of techniques, including conventional paper and pencil assessments, longer responses (essays), finishing actual assignments, instructor observations, and student self-reports, can be utilized to evaluate the student's performance.

In a similar vein, Khonbi and Sadeghi (2012) and Albirini (2006) described assessment as an essential part of teaching and learning that involves a methodical process of gathering data on students' development. Students' perceptions of evaluation are greatly influenced by their teachers, and this affects how they learn. Since teaching involves forming interpersonal relationships, how instructors engage and react to their learners may have a significant impact on the types of learning environments that they design (Storch & Aldosari, 2010).

The sociocultural theory put forth by Vygotsky (1978) is the source of the development of DE as an assessment method. Its foundation is

the mediation and interaction-based integration of evaluation and instruction (Duff, 2007). Through interaction with the environment, learners employ language to generate knowledge that intervenes in both their own and other people's surroundings. But DE doesn't only focus on the amount of environmental and personal advancements; it also views humans and the environment as one organism that cannot be understood in isolation (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Kiomrs, Abdolmehdi, & Naser, 2011).

Swain (2013) proposed three components of directed activity theory (DE) based on Vygotsky's SCT: creating functions, contrasting intervening and autonomous performance to achieve the intended instructional outcomes, and initiating interaction. The process-based approach known as dynamic assessment considers evaluation and learning to be closely related rather than separate (Swain & Deters, 2007). With the assistance of more experienced MKOs, DE makes use of both quantitative and qualitative diagnostic data to improve each student's learning. Swain (2013) claimed that DA uses a variety of assessment techniques that place more emphasis on the learning procedures than the final product. Compared to traditional teaching methods, DE is perceived as process-based and future-oriented (Walqui, 2006).

According to Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi (2011), DE improves the information obtained regarding students' understanding and proficiency, which leads to better mark interpretation and application. By providing information on learners' ideas, abilities, and the reasons for their subpar performance, DE also cares about the development of instructors and students. According to Cousins (2020), the main features of DE include interactions, guidance, support, and feedback—all of which help students learn more deeply. The use of DE models in the study and instruction of foreign or second languages differs from general education because of various elements including unique cognitive complexity, intrinsic learner traits, external influences, and school community characteristics.

Therefore, without first thoroughly examining and scrutinizing the already proven claims concerning the efficacy of dynamic assessment, it is not advised to apply them directly to language instruction. In the framework of the sociocultural theory, ZPD, mediation, and scaffolding are the three primary notions that support DE. Vygotsky believed that the ZPD is the gap between the levels of real improvement as defined by autonomous problem-solving and the levels of prospective improvement as indicated by problem-solving under adult supervision or in collaboration with more experienced peers (Lee & Coniam, 2013; Matsuno, 2009; Saito, 2008; Schaefer, 2008; Xu & Liu, 2009).

According to Zoghi and Malmeer (2013), learning happens when a student is in the appropriate area of proximal growth. If we critically examine the material that is now accessible in the area of proximal growth, it may be argued that it may occasionally be challenging to characterize. As a result, determining the size of the zone of proximal growth is more subjective than objective, which calls into question many of the previous claims made about its applicability and usefulness in promoting language and general learning.

The assistance provided to students in carrying out a range of tasks that they are unable to accomplish on their own is referred to as "scaffolding." This help is provided until the pupils can complete the task without it (Bhooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014). Scaffolding lowers task difficulty and increases attention to work to enhance learners until they can finish the activities successfully. In line with Matsuno's (2009) claim that assessment and instruction are intricately entwined rather than distinct, the assessor assists the student in resolving problems to advance the student's learning.

The idea of scaffolding is hard to understand and implement at the academic level, particularly for inexperienced instructors and learners who don't know how to use the scaffolded support provided by their teachers. In DE and SCT, mediation is a key concept.

Nguyen (2013) outlined three prerequisites for mediation. First and foremost, it's critical to support children progressively, which entails offering implicit help first and then explicit help as required. Secondly, in cases where implicit support proved effective, explicit support ought to be furnished. Not to mention, assistance ought to take the shape of conversations that give students and teachers a deeper understanding of each other. Throughout the conversation, mediation can take many different forms, including hints, queries, suggestions, and justifications. The DE model's proponents have listed numerous significant advantages; however, putting this three-step mediation process into practice is difficult due to irregularities, misconceptions among teachers and students, and the difficulties that arise when teaching and learning a second or foreign language.

3. Empirical Background

Several scientific studies have examined the value of DE in English language acquisition. In a study on the impacts of DE on improving L2 French students' listening abilities at the intermediate level, Abdulaal et al. (2023) detailed how learners' comprehension increased with mediator support. It proved that the pupils' talents were higher than what was expected in the absence of mediation.

With fourth-year university language majors, Kamal (2015) used DE. After clearing an assessment of reading, listening comprehension, writing skills, and non-DE admittance, learners took part in a mediated-oriented setting focused on the oral and written elements of the test. Based on the students' responses to the mediation in the dynamic speaking exam, Kamal was able to get a clearer picture of the learners' true and emerging skills.

Riazi and Rezaei (2011) examined the use of DE in Spanish classes that included students in both the fourth and fifth grades. Standardized mediation cues were employed by the study's classroom teacher to assess noun/adjective agreement in Spanish on the spot. By integrating DE into regular lessons without changing the curriculum's objectives or educational goals, they were able to successfully develop the group's ZPD. They also trained inside the learners' zone proximal development to promote the advancement of their understanding of grammar.

Rajabi and Ketabi (2012) looked into the efficiency of instructor mediation in the academic writing scaffolding environment for students in business courses. The researchers concluded that DE could pinpoint the areas in which students most need assistance. Ebrahimzadeh (2017) examined how DE contributes to the vocabulary acquisition of EFL students. To achieve this goal, a sample of forty EFL learners with upper-mediate ability levels was selected for the study. The subjects were split into two groups. One group acting as the EG was given mediation after the pretest. As a CG, the other group received no mediation services. The obtained results showed that the EG and CG performances differed significantly. That is, learners' test scores and vocabulary acquisition both benefited from the addition of DE as an extra evaluation tool.

Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, and Balasubramanian (2002) looked into whether DE may enhance the way that listening comprehension assessments and instruction are combined while also enhancing students' listening studies. The investigator mediated the tasks by stepping in. The participants were then exposed to the audio content once more and asked to recount. This process continued until the listeners had a sufficient understanding of the audio content. The findings demonstrated that DE could provide a deeper comprehension of the challenge of listening to both the participants and the researchers. The results pointed out that the participants' mediated learning experience was made easier for them by the researcher's mediation and intervention in their problems (Abdulaal, Ramadan, Heji, & Robso, 2022)

Kiomrs, Abdolmehdi, and Naser (2011) looked at the impact of DE on the acquisition of L2 grammar by EFL learners. According to their research, pupils who took part in DE mediations did noticeably better than those who took part in CG. They concurred that the learners had improved their L2 grammatical understanding and achieved better results as a result of internalizing the feedback they received during the DE mediation process. The study demonstrated the benefits of employing DE while instructing L2 grammar learners (Abdulaal & Abuslema, 2020).

Littlewood (2007) investigated how DE affects EFL students' reading perception. Fifteen intermediate EFL students participated in this study. This research study examined how much DE mediation facilitates learning and examined whether it enhances pupils' comprehension skills in reading. To gather the necessary data, three steps were taken: (1) a reading pretest, (2) the mediation process, and (3) a reading posttest. Two important findings came out of the study. First, the post-test results for all five students revealed an overall improvement. The statistical tool results showed that DE had a considerable impact on the pupils' reading comprehension. Additionally, the findings demonstrated the variety of positive effects mediation had on students' learning.

Shobeiry (2021), using the paradigm of Poehner (2009), examined the impacts of DE on improving reading perception and metacognitive awareness for reading techniques of IELTS learners. Participating in a quasi-experimental pretest-treatment-posttest design were 73 males and females who were EFL students. For ten weeks or forty hours total, the experimental group got DE interventions, whereas the control group received standard instruction and static assessment. As the pretest and posttest, two academic IELTS reading equivalent examinations were used. Furthermore, two administrations of a metacognitive awareness for reading strategy questionnaire were conducted (one at the beginning and one after the study). The experimental group did better in reading comprehension growth than the control group, according to the findings of an ANCOVA study. Furthermore, the repeated measure AVONA test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's and the control group's metacognitive awareness of reading comprehension.

Antón (2009) examined the effects of DE integration into a voice recognition learning system to support students in improving their speaking skills, and linguistic anxiety (LA). To facilitate students' English speaking, a DE-focused speech recognition educational system was developed for this study. Moreover, the effects of the aforementioned methodology on the speaking development of participants were measured using a quasi-experimental method by providing the DE-SR and the feedback-oriented speech recognition techniques for the EG and CGs. The trial's outcomes showed that the learners' English-speaking LA could be effectively raised, and their English-speaking abilities improved by the CF-SR and DE-SR. This study also demonstrates that the DE-SR technique effectively decreased students' anxiety about their performance in English class and unnecessary CL when compared to the CF-SR strategy.

Abdulaal, Sadek, Ageli, Al-Hawamdeh, and Hal (2022) attempted to assess the impact of DE and non-DE on EFL students' listening and reading skills. As a result, 96 intermediate students from high school participated in this study. Subsequently, the pupils were divided into three comparable clusters: one CG and two EG2. After a pretest, the control group received traditional training, whereas the experimental group took part in DE to improve their reading and listening comprehension. There was a posttest following the intervention. The EG students' receptive skills were significantly impacted by DE, according to one-way ANCOVA data.

After a review of relevant literature, it was discovered that speaking English as a foreign language presents numerous challenges for many Saudi EFL learners. They are unable to communicate effectively and appropriately in English. They also struggle greatly with writing abilities. Despite having a good vocabulary, their speaking and writing abilities are lacking. Additionally, research suggests that DE is superior to non-DE in terms of effectiveness when it comes to teaching English. Few studies have examined the efficacy of dynamic and non-dynamic assessments on two or three skills at the same time since the majority of similar studies have focused on a single skill. Therefore, to improve the writing and speaking skills of Saudi EFL students, the current study examined the effects of DE and non-DE. Depending on the research objectives illustrated above, the following research questions are put forth:

- What are the impacts of DE and non-DE on Saudi EFL learners' writing skills?
- What are the influences of DE and non-DE on Saudi EFL learners' speaking abilities?

- What are the perceptions of Saudi EFL students towards DE and non-DE?

5. Research Methods

Design of Research

This study used a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, intervention, and post-test, as well as nonrandom accessibility sampling to choose its respondents. There were 32 students in the control group (CG) and 32 students in the experimental group (EG) in this study. The dependent variables were speaking and writing abilities as well as attitude, whereas the independent variables were dynamic and non-dynamic assessments.

Research Participants

Out of the ninety-two participants in this study, sixty-four intermediate EFL learners were chosen depending on their (OQPT) scores. The researchers did not have access to a large enough population; thus, they were only able to select 64 people from one Saudi Arabian language school. The convenience sampling approach was used to choose the participants. They were all males, with ages ranging from 18 to 27. Two groups of target respondents were randomly assigned: one was experimental ($n = 32$), and the other was control ($n = 32$).

Research Methods

The Oxford Quick Placement Test was the initial tool employed in this investigation to ensure topic homogeneity. Knowing the subjects' proficiency level effectively helped the researchers. The study's target subjects were intermediate learners, and this exam was utilized to identify them.

IELTS speaking exams served as both the pretest and posttest in this study. During IELTS speaking examinations, the learners participate in interesting discussions that try to replicate actual life as much as possible. The test comprised three components, each lasting 11–14 minutes. Less than five minutes were allotted for short answer questions regarding the subjects' interests, jobs, and families in the first part. The participants were handed task cards in the other segment that instructed them to outline potential talking points and give a speech on a certain topic. Before speaking for one or two minutes, they get one minute to prepare. The third section was a lengthy discussion with four to eight questions that lasted for almost five minutes.

Students' performance was evaluated using four grading criteria: lexical resources, grammatical accuracy and range, coherence and fluency, and pronunciation. The validity of the speaking pretest and post-test was checked by three university-taught English professors. Furthermore, according to Cronbach's alpha formula, the pretest and posttest had reliability values of 0.86 and 0.88, respectively.

A writing pretest that the researcher created based on the participants' coursebooks was the second tool used to gather information to address the study problem. It had two topics, and the students were supposed to write randomly on only one. In 30 minutes, the participants were expected to write a 160-word paragraph on a certain subject. The purpose of the pretest was to ensure that the students completed it independently, without using the Internet or seeking assistance from others. Subsequently, the investigator collected all of the compositions and gave them two grades. The students' understandable sentences, grammatical accuracy, coherence, cohesiveness, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation, and composition length were all taken into consideration by the raters when assigning grades to the essays. Each student's errors were totaled and then graded. Three experts in English verified the pretest, and the Pearson formula was employed to determine the inter-rater reliability, which came out to be ($r = 0.85$).

A writing posttest that the researchers themselves devised served as the fifth instrument in the current study. The posttest contained the concepts taught to both groups. Like the pretest, the posttest contained two randomly chosen themes from the textbook material, and participants had to write at least 150 words on one of them in the twenty-five minutes that were given. Two raters evaluated the written works of the students. Students were given a posttest to gauge how much they had improved as writers following the teaching. It is important to note that the posttest's validity was confirmed by two English experts, and their inter-rater reliability ($r = 0.86$) was ascertained by the application of Pearson correlation analysis. A panel of experienced English teachers verified the writing pretest and posttest.

The researchers employed the measures developed by Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) to examine writing proficiency. They used the ratio of dependent and independent clauses to T units and the fraction of subordinate clauses of total clauses to define the ambiguity and complexity, but the researcher included words per clause.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was employed to investigate the general sentiments of the DE group toward utilizing DE. This survey consisted of 25 questions that probed participants' opinions about utilizing DE. A Likert scale, with the alternatives being strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and highly agree, was used in the aforementioned questionnaire to rate levels of agreement and disagreement from one to five. Numbers were assigned to the participants' responses to every question on the questionnaire. Consequently, a student received a score of 5 if he checked the option for strongly agreeing.

There were four different numerical values: four for agree, three for neutral, two for disagree, and one for strongly disagree. Cronbach's alpha was used to gauge the scale's dependability ($r = 0.87$). The aforementioned survey was deemed a valid tool as it was reviewed by some English instructors before being distributed to the intended audience.

Procedures for Data Collection

There were two groups of sixty-four participants: the DE group and the non-DE group. The two groups completed the speaking and

writing pre-tests. Following that, the intervention phase started; in the non-DE group, writing and speaking were instructed via the non-DE approach, and the researchers did not employ mediation following the pretest. In the DE group, following speaking and writing the pre-test, a dynamic approach was used in the classroom. DE in this group included the examiner and examinee mediating through clarifications, suggestions, and important questions posed by the assessor. The study followed the pre-test-mediation-post-test approach. Speaking and writing assessments were administered as the pre-test in the first phase. The DE group received the mediation in the second phase. After that, 35 minutes of class time were dedicated to discussing and mediating the exam results. This process was repeated sixteen times, for sixty minutes each. Ultimately, the groups received their posttests on speaking and writing, and the DE group received a perception survey. The raters used Hughes's speaking checklist to assist them in assigning a speaking competence score to the participants.

The SPSS software was employed to analyze the collected data. First, the quality of the data distribution's normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. The descriptive data were then supplied and shown. The impact of the teaching on the learners' speaking and writing abilities was then evaluated using inferential statistics, such as paired sample t-tests. The results of the questionnaire were thoroughly investigated using a one-sample t-test.

6. Results and Discussion

The K-S test illustrated that the data collected were normally distributed as all p-values were above 0.05. The descriptive information for the two groups is demonstrated in Table 1 below. The mean of the non-DE group is 12.26, whereas that of the DE group is 14.24. It suggests that the two groups' speaking abilities were similar before the start of the intervention.

Table 2 below was subjected to an independent samples t-test to illustrate the differences in speaking pretest scores between the non-DE and DE groups. The results showed that the differences between the two groups are not significant because the Sig. value (0.75) is greater than 0.05. They performed identically on the pretest.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM
Non-DE	32	12.26	2.29	0.42
DE	32	14.24	1.67	0.37

Table 2. Inferential statistics

Levene's test for equality of variances						
t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	T	Sig (2-tailed)	MD	SED
Equal variances assumed	.07	0.75	63	0.85	-0.12	0.57
Equal variances not assumed			62.77	0.85	-0.12	0.57

The non-DE group's speaking posttest mean was 14.73, whereas the mean score of the DE group was 17.75, (See Table 3 below). It shows that the DE participants outperformed the non-DE group on the speaking posttest. Table 4 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference between the DE and non-DE groups. The DE group exceeded the non-DE group in the speaking posttest. Given that the Sig. value (.00) is less than 0.05, it can be inferred that the EG or DE group outperformed the non-DE group on the speaking posttests.

Table 3. Speaking posttest's descriptive statistics

Groups	N	Means	SD	SEM
Non-DE	32	14.73	1.98	0.36
DE	32	17.75	2.65	0.45

Table 4. Speaking posttest's inferential statistics

Levene's test							
t-test for equality of means							
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	MD	SED
Equal variances assumed	.04	0.83	5.57	52	0.00	-2.97	0.54
Equal variances not assumed			5.44	51.26	0.00	-2.97	0.54

Table 5 compares each group's pre-and post-test results using a paired samples t-test. Because Sig. (0.01) is less than 0.05, and there is a significant difference in the non-DE group's performances before and after the intervention; likewise, the variances between the DE pretest and posttest are notable as the p-value (.00) is less than 0.05.

Table 6 displays the mean score for the non-DE group as 14.48 and the mean for the DE group as 14.69. The writing pre-test seems to have gone comparably well for both groups. The independent samples t-test was used in Table (6) to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups' writing post-test results.

Table 7 shows that there were no significant differences in the writing pre-test scores between the DE and non-DE groups, with a Sig. value of 0.88, greater than 0.05. Before the treatment, they had performed the same way.

Table 5. Paired samples test

	M	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Non-DE pre-/Non-DE pt	-.67	1.44	0.28	3.71	31	.01

DE Pre- & DE Post	-4.53	2.55	0.49	8.43	31	.00
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Table 6. Descriptive data for writing pretest in the non-DE and DE groups

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM
Non-DA	32	14.48	2.44	0.55
DA	32	14.69	1.99	0.76

Table 7. Inferential data for writing pretest in the non-DE and DE groups

t-test	Levene's test						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Std. error
Equal variances assumed	0.93	0.35	-.08	53	0.88	-.09	0.55
Equal variances not assumed			-.08	48.37	0.88	-.09	0.55

Table 8 shows the descriptive results for the two groups on the writing posttest. The means for the DE and non-DE groups are 18.42 and 15.62, respectively. The DE group seemed to outperform the other group on the writing posttest.

Table 8. Writing posttest of the two groups

Gs	N	M	SD	Std. error
Non-DE	32	15.62	2.41	0.47
DE	32	18.42	1.56	0.31

Since the P-value in Table 9 is 0.00, which is less than 0.05, the differences between the DE and non-DE groups are statistically significant. The DE group outperformed the non-DE group in the writing posttest.

In Table 10, the results of pre-and post-tests for each group are compared using a paired samples t-test. Because Sig. (0.4) is less than 0.05, and there are significant differences between the pretest and posttest for the non-DE group; similarly, the Sig. (.00) is less than 0.05 indicating that the variances between the pretest and posttest of the DE group are significant.

It may be stated that the groups improved on their posttests for speaking and writing; however, on both posttests, the DE group outperformed the non-DE group. It is implied that for EFL students, DE is better than non-DE.

Table 11 illustrates that the Sig. is less than 0.01. It can be inferred that Saudi EFL students had positive opinions about the efficiency of DE in EFL learning.

Two paired and independent samples t-tests were used to answer the research questions. Their final results demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups' productive post-test scores. The speaking and writing posttests were more completed by the DE group, as shown by the findings from the previous section. The results also showed that Saudi EFL learners in English-speaking and writing classes had positive opinions toward DE.

Table 9. Inferential Data of the writing posttest in the non-DE and DE groups

	Levene's test						
	t-test						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Std. error
Equal variances assumed	7.93	0.00	-3.79	52	0.00	-2.09	0.56
Equal variances not assumed			-3.90	47.33	0.00	-2.09	0.55

Table 10. Paired samples T-test

	M	SD	Std. error	T	Df	Sig.
Non-DE pre- / Non-DE post	-1.35	2.07	0.57	3.13	31	.03
DEPre- / DE post	-3.00	1.35	0.45	7.61	31	.00

The results previously presented are corroborated by some earlier studies, such as Abdulaal and Abuslema (2020) and Ajideh and Nourdad (2012); these studies showed the advantages of DE in second and foreign language acquisition and learning. Furthermore, the results are supported by Abdulaal, Ramadan, Heji, and Robso (2022), who found that DE had a favorable influence on the lexical growth of EFL learners. Furthermore, Antón (2009) found that DE positively impacted EFL students' grammatical acquisition. Furthermore, the outcomes align with Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi's (2011) identification of DE as a significant technique that significantly developed EFL students' performance on a variety of reading tasks.

Additionally, the findings corroborate the findings of Ghahderijani, Namaziandost, Tavakoli, Kumar, and Magizov (2021), who found that DE had a fundamental influence on the writing skills of EFL learners. The current research findings are further supported by Kozulin and Garb's (2002) confirmation of the impacts of DE on language learning. Zoghi and Malmeer (2013), who examined the effect of DE on EFL learners' reading abilities, concurs with our findings, stating that using DE could help students become more proficient readers. The results are also supported by the findings of Xu and Liu (2009), who confirmed the benefits of adopting DE to support EFL students' CL and LA. Furthermore, the results align with the findings of Lee and Coniam (2013), who found that DE was more effective than non-DE in improving receptive skills in intermediate EFL students.

The findings are consistent with those of Matsuno (2009) and Abdulaal (2022), who looked at how DE affected academic IELTS students' growth of writing proficiency. Their findings showed that the participants' writing skills had significantly improved. Furthermore, Cheng and Rogers (2004), who examined the influence of DE on primary EFL students' grammar learning, provided support for our study. They found that DE significantly affected the basic EFL learners' acquisition of time and place prepositions. Additionally, the results of this investigation align with those of Albirini (2006), who looked at how online DE affected test takers' reading and listening comprehension skills. The findings verified that the implementation of online DE significantly improved the listening and reading comprehension skills of EFL students.

Furthermore, Riazi and Rezaii (2011), who verified the beneficial impacts of DE on fostering Iranian EFL learners' reading perception and their meta-consciousness, supported our findings. Additionally, the obtained results are consistent with Ebrahimzadeh's (2017) verification of the usefulness of DA in advancing grammar acquisition among intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Furthermore, Kamali, Abbasi, and Sadighi's (2018) findings, which showed that DE improved EFL reading comprehension at various proficiency levels, supported the results.

The advantages of DE can be connected to gained outcomes. These advantages include assisting in the development of effective teaching strategies and creating a profile of difficulties and strengths. Additionally, as students have full access to scheduled meditation procedures for managing their learning more successfully, the results found can be attributed to the fact that the incorporation of DE tactics in EFL lessons includes students in the learning process. Another plausible explanation for our results could be that the students' exposure to DE made them feel more confident about the teacher's focus on their performance, which in turn may have reduced their learning stress and anxiety.

The test-mediation-retest intervention, which was used in this study to examine the efficacy of DE, is responsible for the findings. The success of the participants might have been influenced by the frequent use of DE in the classroom. Because different forms of mediation may be beneficial for different learners, the standard of mediation in DE is essential. Overall, by gathering organized and useful data, students can utilize DEs to assess and oversee their language development. In summary, the results of the study demonstrate that EFL students' productive capacities can be successfully increased through the use of the DE approach. The findings suggest that EFL students view learning with the DE approach favorably. The mediation services offered by the DE program proved beneficial to every student.

The positive benefits of DE, such as the strong emphasis on interpersonal connections, are another likely explanation for why the students in the EG outperformed the CG on their post-test results. The DE is more realistic. Students' test anxiety may be reduced with DE. In contrast to non-DE, DE might assign inspectors a highly important position because they have to establish positive relationships with the students in addition to having a neutral role (Razavi & Tabatabaei, 2014).

Between the pretest and posttest, the students' experiment showed a considerable improvement. While DE can be used to supplement classroom instruction and be integrated into the educational process, it can also provide important information about individual students. We can conclude that DE can facilitate EFL students' acquisition of English more successfully. In particular, it can be deduced that the use of DE in EFL sessions can help Saudi EFL students improve their writing and speaking abilities. Since DE was more beneficial than non-DE, it can be concluded that DE is a superior substitute for non-DE in language assessment since it offers a wealth of data and reveals a great deal more about the students' present areas of strength and weakness.

The findings of the study enhanced the researchers' hypothesis that including DE in EFL sessions motivates students to engage actively in the learning process. It can reduce test-taking anxiety and increase pupils' motivation. Nonetheless, teachers can evaluate students' awareness and comprehension using DE, as well as pinpoint any areas in which they need more assistance. By participating in DE, instructors may be able to push their students to reach new functional levels.

Rather than merely describing a learner's performance, DE needs to be used to suggest learning techniques (Kamal, 2015). DE is a powerful instrument that instructors can utilize to help them decide how to differentiate their education for different types of learners. As stated by Rajabi and Ketabi (2012), DE provides us with a model of how formative assessment can be integrated into the process of instruction and learning.

7. Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of DE and non-DE on the speaking and writing abilities of Saudi EFL students. It was shown that students felt positively about using DE, and that DE had a significant impact on both productive skills. The findings of this study could be very helpful to EFL students, instructors, content creators, and testers. Just as in DE, when useful techniques were used to develop the subjects' speaking and writing talents, students who are diligent enough can learn these tactics and apply them to help them grow. Additionally, employing DE can help pupils become more self-reliant and autonomous. DE also promotes collaborative learning, in which teachers and students cooperate to address learning challenges.

By studying DE and applying what they learn, teachers can create lesson plans that include the useful tactics kids need to become independent. By using DE, teachers can identify the areas in which pupils struggle and, as a result, provide remedies. DE can also help teachers ascertain the current competency level of their students. Teachers can use this information to identify the talents or subskills that need more practice and focus.

Like many studies, this one had its limitations and was unable to address every facet of the topic. They are listed in the following order. (1)

There was a very tight time limit for the instruction. (2) This study's subjects were limited to whole classes. Therefore, when extrapolating the data beyond their appropriate bounds, caution must be used. (3) Classroom conditions and social factors may have an impact on the study's findings. The current study has not considered these issues. (4) This study excluded the influence of characteristics including age, motivation, and anxiety.

The tests allowed the researchers to obtain the data they needed for this investigation. The impact of DE on other language skills, such as reading and listening, may be investigated in a later study. Data may be gathered using a range of methodologies, including classroom observation, voice recordings, and interviews. The present study was conducted with Saudi students for whom English was a foreign language, yet comparable research about English as a second language (ESL) might be undertaken with students from other countries.

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Authors' contributions

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work. The interviews and the analysis were conducted by the first author. All authors participated in the interpretation of data. All authors drafted the work and revised it critically for important intellectual content. All authors gave final approval of the version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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