A Qualitative Study on EFL Teachers' Awareness towards the Implementation of Dynamic Assessment

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Abstract

Dynamic Assessment focuses on understanding learner's abilities to acquire the skills after being exposed to mediation. The problem is that a large number of teachers affirm that the results of summative assessment are not satisfactory and they do not represent their students' actual potential. This study endeavors to explore EFL university teachers' awareness of dynamic assessment (DA), investigating their opinion of DA as well as identifying their implementation of DA in their EFL classes. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to obtain the data. The informants were 15 EFL teachers in four universities who were selected by using purposive sampling. The findings of the study indicated that EFL university teachers are unaware of dynamic assessment. It is confirmed that they lack theoretical knowledge of DA. However, the study revealed that teachers' practical use of DA is limited. Furthermore, the results unveiled that EFL teachers have positive attitudes towards DA.

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دراسة نوعية حول وعي معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه تطبيق التقويم الديناميكي

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الملخص : يركز التقييم الدايناميكي على فهم قدرات المتعلم بهدف اكتساب المهارات بعد أن يتعرض لعمل تداخلات على تعلمه. وتكمن المشكلة في أن عددا كبيرا من المعلمين يؤكدون أن نتائج التقييم النهائي ليست مرضية ولا تمثّل الإمكانات الفعلية للطلبة .

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وعي مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعة بالتقييم الديناميكي، من خلال تقصي آرائهم حول التقييم الديناميكي، إضافة إلى تحديد مدى تنفيذهم لهذا النهج داخل الغرفة الصفية. واستخدمت هذه الدراسة النوعية أسلوب المقابلات شبه المنظمة والتي تم تطبيقها على خمسة عشر معلما يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية في أربع جامعات باستخدام أسلوب العينات الهادفة. أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات محط الدراسة ليسوا على دراية بالتقييم الديناميكي، وتم التأكيد على أنهم يفتقرون إلى المعرفة النظرية بهذا النهج. وبالرغم من ذلك، فقد أشارت الدراسة إلى أن الاستخدام العملي للتقييم الديناميكي يعد محدودا أيضاً لدى هؤلاء المدرسين. وفي الوقت نفسه؛ فقد كشفت النتائج عن وجود اتجاهات إيجابية لدى المدرسين نحو التقييم الديناميكي.

الكلمات الدالة: التقييم الديناميكي، معلم جامعات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التوعية .

Introduction

Teachers can use assessment to better understand how to support students' learning and regulate their teaching practices. Assessment, on the other hand, enables students to identify the areas in which they need to put in more effort in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Ndalichako, 2015).

As Gipps (1994) established, assessment is an important aspect of any learning process since it supports teaching and learning, offers information about learners, teachers, and schools. Moreover, Alsaadi (2021), stated that effective assessment methods can lead to significant changes and improvement in the curriculum and instructional methods.

When it comes to constructing examinations and providing reports about students' learning levels, most EFL teachers lack the necessary expertise and skills to implement innovative assessment systems. Static assessment and standardized tests are unable to

improve students' problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities since they do not provide enough information regarding learning processes.

Non-intellectual factors such as intrinsic motivation, anxiety, frustration, tolerance, self-confidence, and accessibility to mediation are not taken into account in static assessment, despite the fact that these factors can have a significant impact on an individual's cognitive performance. Besides, through the use of static assessment, students' learning potential is either undervalued or overlooked.

Assessment process is critical in higher education institutions and academics, as decisions are based on the outcomes of these assessments. It affects the future of higher education students. Therefore, there is an immense demand of creating assessments that are appropriate for the current situations. This is because most of the current assessment practices do not reveal what students are capable of in their future. Forms of assessment in Kurdistan higher education institutions have come under serious criticism.Qadr (2021), claimed that "This system needs to change. It neglects learning, innovation, and all the potential that students have". He lambasted the traditional model for not taking into account the diverse learning needs of students and focusing too much on grade-based assessments, in other words, static assessment is still dominant in most of the universities in the region.

Additionally, according to AlMofti (2020), EFL instructors in Iraq mainly concentrate on one form of assessment, the summative assessment, which is used to assign students' scores and grades. According to Abdullateef and Muhammedzein (2021), most institutions still choose summative assessment to grade students by identifying what they know at a specific point in time.

To sum up, it is an obvious fact that teachers' beliefs, practices regarding assessment are considered as significant factors in understanding and improving educational processes. Evidently, there have been studies (Abbas, 2012; AlMofti, 2020; Ulker and Yildiz, 2021) conducted in exploring EFL teachers' assessment practices in Iraq and Kurdistan including alternative assessment, formative assessment, authentic assessment and so on. However, no study has been conducted about EFL teachers' opinion and practice of DA in Iraq and Kurdistan. On that account, the present research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Literature review

Vygotsky (1978) questioned summative assessment or standardized testing for underestimating learners' capacities and failing to account the possible development of students' mental abilities. As a result, Vygotsky (1978) developed the sociocultural theory and emphasized the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The idea is founded on the assumption that there are three stages of ZPD. According to Beddows (2016), stage one includes tasks that students can complete on their own. Stage two includes tasks that the students can do with one's assistance. This category comprises works that a person cannot complete on their own but can complete with assistance, commonly known as their ZPD. Stage three is concerned with the tasks that the student, even with assistance, is unable to complete. See **figure (1)**
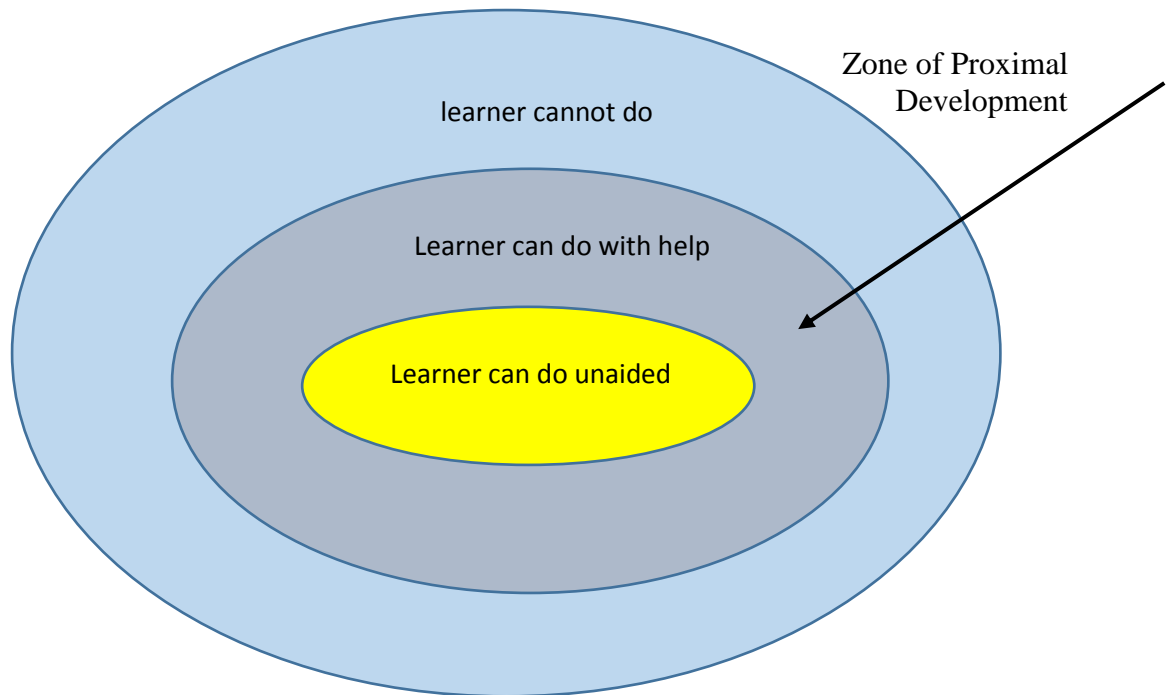
Figure 1. Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive capacities originate through interactions with the world and are constantly mediated. Individuals' abilities do not develop on their own; rather, they are the outcome of their histories of engaging in activities with people and with cultural artifacts. Vygotsky's socio–cultural theory emphasizes the importance of fine-tuning learners' mediation to their changing demands in order to improve their abilities. Furthermore, through mediation or scaffolding, teachers can encourage students to complete complex and difficult tasks by using techniques such as prompting, modeling, or providing clues to provide enough support to achieve proximal goals while gradually reducing the amount of assistance as a student's ability to complete a skill improves.

As a result, Dynamic Assessment (DA), was proposed as a solution to traditional assessment as well as standardized testing methods. DA serves teachers in several ways including what an individual learner knows; what is the degree of knowledge within that student. What is that student able to do; what are student's abilities.

Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic Assessment is based on the socio-cultural theory and the notion of ZPD by Vygotsky. Dynamic assessment is concerned with a student's performance with the teacher aid and the amount to which the learner can benefit from this support, not just in finishing the task, but also in transferring this mediated performance to new tasks (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

As believed by Poehner and Lantolf (2010), DA is a continuous assessment in which "assessment and instruction are a single activity" in which intervention is supplied to diagnose and improve learner development at the same time. As per Estaji and Ameri

(2020), DA is a form of active teaching that assesses a learner's perception, learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

Daneshfar and Moharami (2018) emphasized the importance of dynamic assessment as a strategy for investigating and highlighting a learner's existing skills and prospective improvement. According to Ebadi and Yari (2018), in DA, the teacher and the learner have a two-way interactive interaction in which both parties can ask questions. According to Rahbardar, Abbasi, and Talaei (2014), DA aims to (a) determine the learner's grasping capacity of the principle underlying an initial problem and solve it; (b) determine the nature and amount of teaching required to teach a learner a given concept; and (c) identify the specific deficient cognitive functions and non-intellectual factors (i.e., need for mastery) that are responsible for low performance.

Furthermore, in DA, when a student struggles during assessment or make a mistake, the teacher intervenes and provides clues and hints, starting from the most implicit and gradually moving towards more explicit ones, and if necessary, ending with the provision of the correct answer and some explanations (see **table1**). The rationale is that through such interaction, the mediator brings to the surface not only the fully developed but also the partially internalised cognitive functions.

Mediational moves	Intervention type
Mediational move 1	Asking for revising
Mediational move 2	nature of error + narrowing the location of error
Mediational move 3	Providing metalinguistic clues
Mediational move 4	Providing metalinguistic clues
Mediational move 5	Providing correct answer with metalinguistic explanation
Mediational move 6	Providing correct answer with an explanation

Table 1, Mediational moves & types of intervention

Types of dynamic assessment

Interventionist

Interventionist DA involves the use of predetermined mediation that is not tailored to individual student needs. Mediation in this approach can take several forms. It can be prompts which are sequenced in a hierarchical order ranging from implicit to explicit. Another variation is the use of an intervention (a session to remedy students' problems) for the whole class. In this form of interventionist DA, learners are given a pre-test, which is used to determine their weaknesses, followed by an intervention that addresses these. Finally, to measure the effectiveness of the intervention and also to give learners an opportunity to expand their ZPD, a post-test that is slightly more challenging than the pre-test is administered. Regardless of the nature of the intervention and mediation, in this approach, hints are standardised and identical for all learners, and this is done to maximise objectivity throughout the assessment procedure (Lantolf, 2009). Since mediation here is not individualised, interventionist DA can be used to assess a group of learners at the same time.

Interactionist

Unlike interventionist DA that focuses on standardisation and objectivity, interactionist DA adheres more to Vygotsky's theory of learning that emphasises development as a result of mediation targeting an individual's ZPD. In this approach, assistance is offered individually, which gives mediators more leeway to tailor the mediation to best match a learner's developmental stage. Mediator–learner collaboration offers valuable insights into a learner's true abilities and weaknesses, and at the same time offers an opportunity to resolve their difficulties.

According to Sternberg & Grigorenko (2002), both interventionist and interactionist approaches can be administered in two formats, referred to as cake or sandwich, with the former referring to the mediation offered during the administration of assessment and the latter referring to mediation provided separate from assessment.

Research aims and Questions

The study aims to explore EFL university instructors' present awareness of the DA. It also attempts to find out instructors' opinions on dynamic assessment in developing EFL learning as well as their implementation of DA in their classes.

To achieve these aims, the study is supposed to answer the following questions:
1. What is the level of EFL university teachers' awareness of dynamic assessment?
2. What are the teachers' opinions of dynamic assessment in developing EFL learning?
3. How do EFL university teachers implement dynamic assessment in developing EFL learning?

The researcher reviewed relevant studies to investigate EFL teachers' level of awareness of dynamic assessment and their opinions about DA. In this regard, a few studies have been carried out to identify teachers' perceptions of DA and their practice of DA, including Karimi and Shafiee, (2014). The researchers gathered data by conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers to learn about their perspectives on dynamic assessment. Their data revealed four primary themes including: teachers' understanding of dynamic assessment as a classroom practice, their perception of their own agency in applying dynamic assessment, the role of learners in this activity, and their awareness of contextual restrictions affecting the application of dynamic assessment.

Gholamalian, Fumani, and Nemati (2015), carried out another study with an aim to find out what EFL teachers thought of the use of dynamic assessment. 100 EFL teachers and university instructors from Shiraz's seven English language institutes and two universities participated in the study. The findings revealed that EFL teachers from Shiraz English language institutes were enthusiastic about the use of dynamic evaluation. Teachers from various levels of education shared similar and positive perspectives on the utility of dynamic assessment.

Mohammadi, S., and Babaii, E. (2020) conducted a study which looked into how EFL teachers felt about Dynamic Assessment. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the data on EFL teachers' perceptions of DA. According to the findings of this study, EFL teachers found training sessions in workshops to be both instructive and useful. They identified panel discussion groups as a helpful way to talk to their colleagues about practice-related issues, as well as creating reflective journals as a way to raise awareness and enhance their DA practices.

An interpretive qualitative study was undertaken by Nazari, A. (2017) in the UK. Despite conflicting feelings and worries about the problems of adopting dynamic assessment, the findings of the study reveal that there are obviously teachers who are philosophically oriented and receptive to the possibility of DA for enabling more individualized learning.

Finally, Kaya (2018), examined the alternative assessment methods employed by preschool instructors, as well as their thoughts, knowledge, and skills about these methods. The participants included ten Turkish kindergarten instructors. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the data collected using the semi-structured interview.

Preschool teachers benefited from play-based evaluation to gain concrete knowledge in recognizing and evaluating children through play according to the findings

Methodology

This exploratory study adopted a qualitative research design to investigate the issue of dynamic assessment and the areas related to this topic that are still unknown. This methodological framework was chosen to collect the information needed to answer the research questions since qualitative design provides an in-depth analysis of an issue. This approach is relevant for this type of research as it explores the issue under investigation from the perspectives of the participants and not the perception of the researcher (Hancock and Algozzine,2006, p. 8).

Semi-structured interviews

The researcher used Semi structured interview to collect the required data. Semi structured interview assists researchers to collect a richer source of information from a small number of people. It also seeks to explore sensitive areas such as participants' thoughts, opinions, attributes, behavior, feelings and beliefs attitudes, values as well as their knowledge about a particular topic (DeJonckheere and Vaughn, 2019; Teijlingen, 2014; Research Guides: Research Methods Guide: Interview Research, 2022). Newton (2007) cited in Szombatová (2016) & Gomm (2004), believe that semi-structured interview enables the researchers achieve goals, generate rich and original data as well.

McLeod (2014) states that validity can be increased as the interviewer can ask for clarification. He declared that flexibility of semi-structured interview allows researchers to ask impromptu questions during the interview.

The researcher carried several steps in order to prepare comprehensive set of interview questions and develop an appropriate interview guide. The open-ended interview questions were determined by reviewing a large number of sources and scientific journals, and insights from the literature reviewed concerning dynamic assessment and EFL teachers' assessment literacy.

The interview questions were constructed and guided according to the overall aims of the study and the research questions. The draft questions were shared with the fellow-researcher and refined based on his feedback. They were also emailed to a number of experts to be reviewed. A pilot interview was conducted with a teacher in one of the universities (it was recorded but not used in this study). After reviewing the pilot interview, the interview questions were again adjusted and an interview guide was put together. Additional follow-up questions and probes were used in the interviews to explore participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information around the topic.

Participants

This exploratory study was conducted with fifteen EFL instructors. They were purposely selected. They were six females and nine males. The informants had different backgrounds. Three participants had MA and were PhD students. Seven of these EFL instructors had MA and five of them had PhD degrees. Nine of the participated teachers had less than ten years of experience. And five of them had more than ten years of experience. Finally, one of them had more than twenty years of experience. Detailed information is shown in **Table 2** below.

The EFL teachers who participated in this s study were formally requested to attend the interview session. The interviews were conducted at the English department's teachers' offices during their office hours.

Participant/ type of university	Gender	Title	Degree	Years of experiences
P1/public university	Male	Lecturer	MA, PhD candidate	7
P2/private university	Female	Lecturer	MA	3
P3/ public university	Female	Professor	PhD	23
P4/private university	Female	Assistant lecturer	MA	5
P5/private university	Male	Lecturer	MA	7
P6/private university	Male	Assistant lecturer	MA	4
P7/ public university	Male	Lecturer	PhD	15
P8/ public university	Male	Lecturer	PhD	12
P9/ public university	Female	Assistant lecturer	MA, PhD candidate	9
P10/ public university	Male	Lecturer	MA	15
p/11 public university	female	Lecturer	PhD	11
p/12 public university	Male	Assistant lecturer	MA	8
P13/ public university	Male	Lecturer	PhD	11
P14/ public university	Female	Lecturer	Ma, PhD candidate	7
P15/ private university	male	Lecturer	MA	6

Table 2, Demographic Information.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as a popular and widely used method, was used to analyse the collected qualitative data. Both deductive and inductive coding techniques were used to analyse the collected information. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that to identify, analyse and report the collected data, the researcher needs to implement several steps including, re-reading the data several times, generating a list of initial codes, combining initial codes to generate themes (based on the study's research questions), reviewing and revising developed themes, and finally organise and interpret the achieved results.

Findings and Discussion

This section, presents the analysis of the data collected from the interviewees. It provides the emerged themes from the participants' responses to the questions of the interviews without considering the variables. The analysis of the data is divided into topics following the research questions of the study and presented into sections as follows:

1. Limited Knowledge of Dynamic Assessment

The participants' knowledge about Dynamic Assessment seemed to be inadequate. The EFL participants' answers to the questions about their knowledge of DA have revealed that they are unfamiliar with the term of DA. Fourteen of the teachers reported that it is the first time they heard about this type of assessment.

However, only one teacher out of fifteen interviewees stated that she had heard about the term DA in her pedagogy course. She also revealed that she only rememberd the name due to insufficient content about DA in her pedagogy course. The researcher asked a few follow up questions to find out more details regarding her level of knowledge about dynamic assessment. Below is a part of the interview with teacher 3:

Researcher: Have you ever heard the term dynamic assessment before?

Teacher 2: "Dynamic assessment? Yes, we studied this term in pedagogy. We had a module about innovative pedagogy and assessment, like summative assessment and formative assessment. So, we went through the process and how to apply them".

Overall, it is worth mentioning that despite of being unaware of DA, the participated teachers revealed that dynamic assessment is new for them and they were keen to learn more about it. Similarly, the response from participant 15supports the above-stated theme of the data when he reported his comment as follows: "I think that is new nowadays, and it seems an interesting topic".

2. Limited implementation of dynamic assessment

In spite of the fact that EFL university teachers are restricted regarding their assessment practices. The focus is on summative assessment within the context of higher education in Kurdistan region.
However, this has not prevented some EFL teachers and their students to collaborate with each other in assessment process. One of the findings of the study revealed that there is limited practice of dynamic assessment here in EFL classes. They are in the form of scaffolding, guidance, feedback and support from the teachers to the students while they are being assessed in the classroom.
In this regard, Teacher7 said:

I always try and be available for the students when they need my help. I believe that helping and guiding students is needed. But, at the same time you have to let them depend on themselves from time to time. You have to participate to be just like a mediator, for example, helping them when they ask certain questions, when they do not know how to act, how to do something, for example, in certain assignments. Yes. You have to intervene to participate a little bit, but not a participation that, for example, spoil the process. Right. So, you have to know how to do that.

Likewise, another participant explained her use of scaffolding strategy as follows:
Scaffolding students depends on the students' level and personality. For example, some students I know are very confident, but they get nervous speaking in public. So, they just need a small push and then they are off. Whereas there are kinds of students, they are very, very nervous. They really do not want to do it. They do not have confidence. So, they need a lot more support. They need you to be a lot gentler with them. So, it definitely depends on the students and their personalities. As I said, they need a lot of support. Even just having someone stood next to them while they present, that will help them feel better. (Teacher11)

Similarly, teacher5 added his scaffolding strategy this way: "I do offer my students these different types and levels of support, such as working with my students in the planning and drafting their assignments. Because I believe this helps them to learn about the task requirements".

Additionally, one more participant stated that:

> I often provide my students with continuous feedback to support their redrafting and improve their work before they submit it. I can say this the process is more important than the final product. We as teachers want our students to learn the skills for their future and build confidence in them to work independently. (Teacher1)

Along with that, the following quote by Teacher3 illustrates that:

> I always inform my students to set their own aims for their learning and about their success. Personally, I would say the use of dynamic assessment suits my philosophy in teaching my classes. Because, I prefer to be a consultant, facilitator and guide them to achieve their goals.
> For example, I tell my students in the process of learning, I have responsibilities and you also have your part of responsibility. I explore and explain everything for them. And I teach them that if you study for the certificate, you will forget everything. But if you study so as to learn, this is something else. So, try to study for learning, for keeping the information in your mind for the rest of your life.

The results revealed a significant fact which is that the assistance procedures and strategies that teachers implement indicates that they have a tendency towards the intervention type of dynamic assessment rather than interaction type of dynamic assessment.

Meanwhile, one teacher's response demonstrated that he uses a mix of both models of dynamic assessment. He uses both interventionist and interactionist types without having theoretical knowledge about dynamic assessment. This was revealed when he answered:

> In my EFL classes I do regular assessment and quiz them. I review their answers to find out what they are struggling with. After that, in the next lesson I teach them and explain not the whole thing but the difficult parts for them to learn. (Teacher6)

The quote from Teacher6 reveals that he used test-teach-test format of dynamic assessment which is the interactionist model of DA.

Moreover, his use of interventionist model of DA was disclosed when he mentioned:

> I intervene when students struggle and they just need help like guiding them, also giving them feedback. For example, I explain how to do the task. Where to start or how to solve similar assignments and tasks. And honestly, students can perform well when we walk around and help them.

The above-mentioned findings manifest that EFL teachers' scaffolding intervention, as a part of the principles of dynamic assessment, are supported and implemented by the majority of the interviewees.

The first two explained themes clarify that lack of theoretical assessment knowledge on the part of teachers can result limited practice of dynamic assessment and other innovative assessment types in EFL classes.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that teachers who are proficient in assessment play an essential part in the success of their students. They are able to make ongoing adjustments to the instructions, the method of teaching, and even their instructional decisions in order to improve the conditions for teaching and learning. According to Hidayat (2020), classroom practices of instructors who are literate in assessment as

opposed to instructors who are not literate in assessment are very different from one another. Teachers that are knowledgeable in assessment generally construct the activities in their classrooms around three core ideas: creating goals according to the interests of the students, dynamic assessment through classroom assignments, and providing feedback to the students.

3. Positive responsiveness to dynamic assessment

Almost all the EFL participated teachers welcomed the idea of dynamic assessment when the researcher discussed about dynamic assessment and explained the principles and approaches to dynamic assessment for them. For instance, Teacher7 declared as follows:

> I do appreciate this interview. The sensitivity of this topic is important for teachers. You let me know about something that I did it from the beginning of my university life, my academic life, without knowing that I am involved in a very unique process. So, yes, I strongly support its use.

In addition, Teacher 4 disclosed as follows:

> "I think that is new nowadays, I believe that dynamic assessment should be used in our EFL classes".

Teacher 4 continued and said:

> Actually, this interview was very useful for me, because I am doing something that I did not know that it is a theory or it is something like, for example, a branch or a field or something like that. So, thank you for reminding us how important mediation and right intervention is.

The below comments from the participants reveal EFL teachers' receptivity to dynamic assessment and they intend to learn more about it:

> Teacher10: "I think this method has great potentials in ELT classes; thus, we need to gain more information about it and apply it more in the courses we teach".

> Teacher8: "I do appreciate this interview. I am eager to learn more about this sensitive topic. It is beneficial for my classes".

> Teacher11: "This strategy is very interesting. I think I have to read about it. Maybe watching some videos, read some articles, you know, maybe some, some of the activities might be very interesting, very effective for my teaching. So, I am going to use it in the future".

> Teacher13: "I think this is a very interesting topic. Absolutely. You know, anything any kind of strategy that will help students and engage them in their learning is definitely, definitely worth my time to learn about it and I want to use it".

4. Potentials of implementing dynamic assessment

One significant theme that emerged from the results is the potentials of dynamic assessment. The participants' responses demonstrated that applying dynamic assessment is beneficial to the process of teaching English. The findings revealed that both teachers and students are in favor of dynamic assessment. It is significant in reducing students' stress, anxiety as well as increasing students' opportunities in learning process. They mentioned that dynamic assessment can provide stress free environment and they feel confident. Teacher2 reported: "I feel dynamic assessment

would be beneficial for my students. Sometimes when I wait for my students to think and when I provide hints, it reveals their abilities in learning".

Moreover, Teacher8 mentioned the benefits of dynamic assessment when he said: "As I see dynamic assessment important and serves my teaching process. I believe in process rather than product. So, I think dynamic assessment can allow teachers provide scaffolding for their students' learning".

Similarly, Teacher6 said: "I believe that there is more learning benefit and less pressure in dynamic assessment where students improve through the process rather than just being evaluated".

Overall, they said dynamic assessment would provide students with multiple learning chances. Consequently, it demonstrates a true picture of their abilities. They concluded that dynamic assessment would be less stressful for students as interventions are there to support students to improve their work.

Within the process of teaching and learning, nothing can be done without collaboration. In this regard, some of the participants reported that dynamic assessment can increase the interaction and collaboration between teacher and students. They revealed that it also promotes engagement and involvement in the classroom. The below quotations are responses of some of the informants:

Teacher5: "Dynamic assessment could be effective because it promotes collaboration which is an essential skill for 21 century students".

Teacher9 mentioned that classroom interaction can be maximized through, using dynamic assessment, the below is her comment:

I can say that dynamic assessment fosters more interaction between the students and teachers because the process is ongoing that lasts for an extended period of time during which students can get feedback and work actively towards improving their achievement

Teacher7:" Actually, direct feedback and corrections can be somehow problematic and lead to demotivating class participation. Meanwhile, indirect corrections or hints could work well".

Teacher12: "Implementing dynamic assessment will help students to deeply dive into their ideas and share even muted thoughts back there and that gives them confidence".

Correspondingly, the previously mentioned concepts are also reported by Teacher 8 and Teacher 12, they commented as follows:

Teacher8:

I think dynamic assessment is highly effective in our EFL classrooms, because, almost every single individual's learning progress is taken into consideration with the help of frequent tests and strong students who work as peers. It also helps understanding students' needs.

Teacher12:

The first thing usually the students are worried about is exams and assessment as any new course starts. Continuous assessment and alternative assessment make the evaluation process more engaging and productive. Learning can take place more effectively when there is dynamic assessment. With dynamic assessment students do not wait until the course nearly ends for the assessment to be carried out. Dynamic

assessment instead starts sometimes at early stages of the course so the students can see whether the objectives of the course or the items studied achieved or not soon.

Likewise, Estaji and Ameri (2020) indicated that dynamic assessment is an implicit type of assessment that most teachers and students engage in during class time.

The final notion which came out from the analysis of the data in relation to potentials of dynamic assessment was 'source of motivation'. Several teachers mentioned that dynamic assessment can increase students' motivation to their learning. For example, Teacher7 and Teacher10 commented as follows:

Teacher 7: "Well, I strongly agree via suitable mediation, students become motivated and learn to solve issues in a logical and methodical manner, utilizing previously acquired knowledge".

Teacher13: "Hints and prompts provide very helpful input to the learners. This is really helpful. Dynamic assessment can motivate students to participate in the classroom".

The aforementioned comments about dynamic assessment as a source of motivation for students indicate that utilizing dynamic assessment has a direct effect on increasing students' motivation. Furthermore, according to Kazemi, Bagheri, and Rassaei, (2020), dynamic assessment has a positive impact on learners' motivation in learning English as a foreign language.

4. Challenges of implementing dynamic assessment

Due to the current situations of assessment practices in EFL classes, it was not surprising when a few teachers reported that the implementation of dynamic assessment can be difficult for several reasons. The participants mentioned that big classes with a large number of students, limited time of classes as well as the policy of universities and their regulations can restrict teachers to apply dynamic assessment. One of the participants who considered class size and number of students in a classroom as one of the constraints that teachers encounter when they attempt to apply dynamic assessment in their classes, expressed his comment as follows:

I think dynamic assessment is effective and beneficial, but I think it depends on things like class sizes and things like that. If you had a large class of 40, 50 students, it is not going to be a very effective approach. You are not going to provide the attention for each student that they need you. I mean, in a smaller class, it can be more effective and successful. (Teacher5).

The second barrier that is mentioned related to the application of dynamic assessment is time constraints especially for classes which are only 45 minutes. With this regard, Teacher3expressed her comment and said: "I think dynamic assessment is a bit time consuming for large size classes for teachers. To be honest, we do not have enough time in a 45-minute lesson!"

The last problem that teachers face while they endeavor is the universities' instructions and the policy of higher education. Teachers mentioned that they are pressured to assess students mostly through the use of summative assessment, which often leads to the underestimation of students' potentials. In this regard, the following quotation from Teacher 1 is noteworthy:

Unfortunately, the policies of ministry of higher education restrict us from using such types of assessment. You know, more than half of marks of students are for term exams and final exam. You know these tests are summative and they do not allow teachers to be with the students.so, we cannot provide any help or interventions during these exams.

Similar opinion was expressed by Teacher 15 when he said:

> The policies, instructions from departments and from higher education create conditions in which prevents teachers from implementing developed methods of assessment as we know, they serve the process of teaching better. We are obliged to assess students mostly through exams.

Conclusions

This study sought to examine EFL university teachers' awareness towards the implementation of DA. According to the results of the study, it is concluded that EFL university teachers are unaware of the concept of dynamic assessment. Although, the findings revealed that some of the teachers implement a few strategies of dynamic assessment without having sufficient theoretical knowledge about DA.

The majority of participants of the study expressed an undoubted agreement with the use of DA in teaching EFL classes. Despite the fact that generalizations for all EFL university teachers in the Kurdistan region and Iraq are impossible, the findings have the potential at least to help the educators to better understand DA and encourage them to implement it in their classes.

Regardless, it is reasonable to conclude that EFL university teachers now have a rationale to use dynamic assessment in their classes because they acknowledged its importance and demonstrated their willingness to make use of it in their future teaching.

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Appendix

A sample of the Interview Guide

1. Have you ever heard of the term "Dynamic Assessment" in general?
2. What is your general understanding of dynamic assessment within the process of teaching English language?
3. How effective do you think dynamic assessment is to maximize students' engagement and willingness to learn?
4. How much do you believe in providing mediation (i.e., hints, prompts, correction) to your students to lead them develop their English language skills?
5. How effective do you think the nature of dynamic assessment in increasing students' social interaction and improving the process of teaching English language?
6. How much time do you allocate for implementing dynamic assessment?
7. How often do you assign more capable peers to assist their classmates?
8. How do you attempt to act the role of a partner and facilitator of knowledge to your students to develop their learning of English language?
9. How do you explore your students' response to your interventions in the process of teaching English language?
10. How do you provide mediation for your students to investigate their potentials to develop their English language learning?
11. What else you would like to add that has not been posed here concerning dynamic assessment to develop your process of teaching English language?