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The Effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment on Listening Comprehension of Grade 12 Learners

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of dynamic assessment on the listening comprehension of Grade 12 learners at Kiwalan National High School in Iligan City, Philippines. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative methods from a quasi-experimental design with qualitative methods from focus group discussions. The data revealed that the use of dynamic assessment significantly enhanced participants' listening comprehension compared with static assessment. The substantial increase in post-test scores suggests a strong positive impact on participants' listening comprehension skills. Furthermore, feedback from the experimental group participants during the focused group discussions reflected positive experiences. They expressed that dynamic assessment enhanced their listening comprehension through interaction and mediation, and they recognized the value of real-time feedback in improving their understanding of audio materials. They noted that dynamic assessment promoted critical thinking and active engagement, fostered understanding through feedback, and encouraged self-reflection and learning from errors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Competing in a rapidly evolving modern world requires effective and efficient communication. The significance of English as a universal language underscores the need for proficiency. This, in turn, calls for a systematic approach to teaching English, particularly as a second language. However, teaching English can be extremely challenging. A language teacher can facilitate this process by incorporating the four language learning skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—and introducing various interactive activities into the classroom.

In particular, this study focused on listening comprehension because it is often overlooked and underattended (Vandergrift, 2007). The lessons tend to focus more on reading and writing problems without considering that listening comprehension may be the main cause. In a classroom setting, the teacher is the source of information and the facilitator of the class discussion. All the students' attention is on the teacher, and whatever the teacher says, the students will receive. However, students might have problems listening and have low listening

comprehension. This hinders the overall objective of learning because students will not be able to learn what is intended to be learned.

Some problems affect students' listening comprehension in the Philippines. Calub et al. (2018) mentioned seven listening comprehension difficulties, such as 1) the listening comprehension process; 2) the texts' linguistic features; 3) concentration; 4) psychological characteristics about their interest, attitude towards the text, and their confidence; 5) the listener; 6) the speaker/reader; 7) content of the text. These problems affect students' overall learning.

One of the aims of the Department of Education's new curriculum is to produce globally competent individuals, for which English is crucial. English proficiency is required for intellectual pursuits, international communication, and economic advancement, especially in the current globalizing world environment. This shows the need to develop individuals' language skills, especially listening skills. However, despite being an important skill, it is the most neglected of the language skills (Osada 2004). Gonzaga et al. (2017) even stated that second language learners have serious problems in understanding spoken English because schools pay more attention to English grammar, reading, and vocabulary. Quijano (2012) stated that the current Philippine education curriculum (K-12) is simultaneously developing both Filipino and English in listening and speaking. As mentioned in the K-12 toolkit of the Department of Education (2012), integrated language arts education at the high school level emphasizes reading comprehension of various texts, writing and composition, and study and thinking strategies, which are all in support of critical and creative thinking development, while listening is not much focused on and often neglected.

For these reasons, the researchers focused on improving listening skills through a dynamic assessment grounded in Vygotsky's theories about the nature of learning. According to Haywood and Lidz (2007), dynamic assessment is an interactive approach that focuses on a learner's potential to benefit from intervention. As Lidz and Elliott (2000) explain, this method involves an interaction between the examiner and the examinee, with the goal not only to record responses but also to facilitate change in the learner. Research has shown that dynamic assessment is more effective for skill development, especially in areas such as listening, as it enables timely interventions that help students improve incrementally (Black & Taib, 2006; Black & Wiliam, 1998).

2. RELATED LITERATURE

2.1.Listening Comprehension Difficulties

Bloomfield (2010) and Walker (2014) argued that listening comprehension is related to word articulation. Hamouda (2013) stressed the role of speakers in the listening process. Furthermore, Vandergrift (2007) and Gilakjani et al. (2011) emphasized the significance of social context, communication functions, and linguistic discourse in listening.

Listeners' difficulty understanding unfamiliar accents is a well-documented challenge in listening comprehension, particularly for second-language (L2) learners. Adank et al. (2009) explored the cognitive load imposed on listeners when faced with unfamiliar accents, showing that learners expend more effort deciphering speech sounds than focusing on meaning-making processes. This effort diverts cognitive resources and hinders overall comprehension. Gass and Varonis (1984) further validated this by demonstrating that even when L2 learners understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, unfamiliarity with accents can significantly reduce their comprehension. These studies suggest that cognitive resources are redirected from semantic understanding to phonological decoding, leading to frustration among L2 listeners (Adank et al., 2009; Gass & Varonis, 1984).

Griffiths (1990) emphasized that speech rate significantly impacts L2 learners' listening comprehension. Faster speech reduces the time available for L2 learners to decode words and

structures, thereby limiting their ability to process and make sense of the input. L2 learners require more time to decode linguistic input, and rapid speech disrupts this process, leading to incomplete comprehension. When faced with unfamiliar topics or rapid speech, listeners cannot rely on existing schemas, which increases cognitive load (Anderson & Lynch, 1988).

2.2.Listening Comprehension Strategies

Dynamic assessment is a recent approach to assessing the progress of language learners. Dynamic Assessment is a method of conducting language assessment to determine an individual's abilities and learning potential. It is increasingly used by educational psychologists worldwide and is widely regarded as a valuable tool. It is often referred to as an active measuring technique for learners' perception, thinking, understanding, and problem-solving abilities (Hasson, 2017). This approach focused primarily on the learning process while considering the amount and type of examiner investment. Moreover, it has also been noted to be highly interactive and process-oriented. Indeed, it is highly beneficial for assessing learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To explain, dynamic assessment was observed to affect learners by modifying their cognitive functioning and bridging the gap between traditional testing and cultural-linguistic evaluation. Poehner and Lantolf (2005) clarified that the goal of dynamic assessment is not only to assist learners in completing a specific task but also to help them succeed in future tasks through the negotiation presented by teachers.

Haywood and Lidz (2007) provided a summary of the essential concepts and assumptions that underpin nearly all dynamic assessment methodologies. Normative and standardized intelligence assessments did not evaluate certain abilities crucial for learning. Observing new learning was more beneficial than cataloging the presumed outcomes of prior learning. History is essential, yet insufficient. Instruction integrated with assessment offers a valuable way to evaluate potential rather than performance. Numerous factors unrelated to intellectual capability can obstruct the expression of an individual's intelligence.

According to Lidz and Elliott (2000), the interaction between the examiner and the examinee (i.e., the learner) was the most important aspect of dynamic assessment. Within the dynamic assessment framework, the examiner worked not only to record responses and observations but also to facilitate change in the learner. Through the dynamic assessment process, an intervention was informed by the degree and nature of change or "the modifiability or responsiveness of the learner to the intervention.

Black and Wiliam's (1998) research on formative feedback further supports the benefits of dynamic assessment. They found that learners who received timely and constructive feedback during the learning process were more likely to retain information and apply it effectively in future tasks. In listening comprehension tasks, continuous feedback helps learners address gaps in their understanding and refine their comprehension strategies. The interactive feedback provided in the DA helped learners navigate listening tasks that involved continuous processing and interpretation, leading to a deeper understanding and learning growth (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Shepard, 2000).

Pretests, as formative assessment tools, play a crucial role in identifying learners' initial competencies before introducing instructional interventions. According to Kelly (2017), pre-tests are administered before lessons or units to assess students' prior knowledge and preparedness. These assessments provide baseline data that help educators tailor instruction to meet students' specific needs. Webster's Dictionary (2007), as cited by Solaiman (2023), defined pretests as instruments used to evaluate students' readiness for further studies.

Ni (2013) pointed out that pretests are widely utilized to measure student performance outcomes, particularly in assessing success in academic tasks. Ellis (2005) found that learners within the same group often exhibit similar variability in language skills before instruction, underscoring the importance of pre-tests for gauging initial competencies. In the context of DA, pretests serve as a reference point for measuring the effectiveness of instructional

interventions, such as guided feedback and mediation, leading to more consistent learning outcomes across student groups.

Several studies, like that of Lantolf and Thorne (2006), emphasized the impact of DA on language learning, particularly in developing listening comprehension. Their research showed that learners who underwent DA made significant gains in their ability to process auditory inputs. This improvement was largely attributed to the support they received, which helped them focus on key elements of spoken language, such as vocabulary, grammar, and contextual cues. In addition, Ableeva (2010) further explored the efficacy of DA in improving listening comprehension in second language (L2) classrooms. She found that students who received mediated feedback during listening tasks were better able to process auditory input, resulting in significant improvements in comprehension. This aligns with Poehner's (2008) findings, which demonstrated that DA enhances listening skills by providing learners with timely feedback that promotes self-regulation and the internalization of effective listening strategies. Nassaji and Swain (2000) also highlighted how dynamic feedback during assessment improved learner performance by focusing attention on areas of difficulty. This aligns with Lantolf and Poehner's (2011) argument that DA fosters self-regulation by encouraging learners to reflect on their strategies and make immediate corrections. In listening comprehension, this feedback allows learners to adjust their processing of spoken language in real time, leading to deeper comprehension.

Furthermore, in his study titled "Dynamic Assessment for Second Language (L2) Listening Comprehension," Poehner (2008) examined the potential of using DA. He proved that through the implementation of DA, students received feedback and support during listening activities. From this perspective, this interactive approach enhanced the focus on listening strategies and supported the development of complex cognitive skills, as the guidance was adjusted to the learners' ZPD. The study also found that future learning ability due to DA had a positive effect on students' comprehension of spoken language. According to the study, this kind of interaction and feedback was one of the benefits of using DA in facilitating the acquisition of listening comprehension, because it enabled learners to expand what they could do on their own and with some assistance.

Moreover, Miller and Gildea (1995) showed that active listeners who had previously possessed relevant schemas for the content of a listening passage were able to comprehend and recall information more effectively, especially when the topic was within their areas of focus. On the other hand, listeners with little or no exposure to the topic had the most difficulty comprehending the spoken message. This study postulated the practical importance of schemas as a source of support in the process of listening and making inferences in the construction of meaning; therefore, their activation is one of many critical issues in listening performance.

Vandergrift (2004) investigated the role of schema activation in enhancing listening comprehension among second language learners. He stressed that effective listening requires activating relevant background knowledge, that is, schemas, and using listening strategies, for example, content or perspective inference. Significant improvements in listening comprehension were achieved through dynamic assessment based on schema activation during a pre-listening activity. This study validated the use of dynamic assessment alongside schema theory to enhance comprehension and retention of speech material.

According to Stæhr (2009), vocabulary knowledge is a critical component of listening comprehension. When listeners encounter unfamiliar words, they expend more cognitive resources decoding them, leaving less capacity to process the overall meaning of the audio input. DA helped alleviate cognitive load by providing guided feedback during listening tasks, enabling learners to recognize key linguistic structures and contextual clues more efficiently.

A study on The Effect of Dynamic Assessment on the Listening Skills of Lower-intermediate EFL Learners in Chinese Technical College: A Pilot Study was carried out by Wang (2017). The main objective of this study was to explore whether dynamic assessment could promote the integration of listening comprehension assessment and instruction while

simultaneously enhancing students' listening comprehension. It made use of a quasi-experimental research design in which the researcher applied a pre-test and a post-test. Five second-year English majors from a technical college in an underdeveloped area of a coastal province in China participated in the study. Participants first listened to a segment of audio material and were asked to answer comprehension questions and verbalize their comprehension process. The researcher intervened to mediate the tasks. Afterwards, the participants listened to the audio material again and were asked to retell. This process continued until the listener gained a sufficient understanding of the audio material. An analysis of the researcher's notes, students' notes, students' verbal reports, and reflective reports revealed that dynamic assessment can provide both the researcher and participants with a better understanding of the problems in listening. The conclusion is that dynamic assessment can integrate listening comprehension assessment and instruction and promote students' listening development at both macro- and micro-levels.

A Study on Sociocultural Theory and Listening Comprehension: Does the Scaffolding of EFL Learners Improve Their Listening Comprehension? was conducted by Narjes and Khanmohammad (2014). This study aimed to investigate the possible effects of providing related background, such as telling stories and sharing experiences similar to those in the listening materials, on the listening comprehension skills of 60 intermediate-level students through an experimental method at an English language institute in Kerman. Participants were selected using the matched-cases method, and 30 were assigned to each of the control and experimental groups. The instruments used in this study were two listening comprehension tests. One of these tests was used before the investigation to determine each student's listening level. The other test, which differed from the first in content, was given to both groups after the treatment to determine whether the treatment facilitated participants' processing of the listening materials. The results of the t-test for independent samples showed that the experimental group, which received related questions, experiences, stories, and discussion before listening to the test materials, obtained higher test scores than the control group, which received no background.

Calub, Garcia, and Tagama (2018) conducted a study titled "Listening Comprehension Difficulties of College Students: Basis for Remediation Strategies in the Classroom." This descriptive research study aimed to determine the listening comprehension difficulties college students experience when listening to aurally presented texts. Difficulties were categorized by the factors that caused them. The findings were used as a basis for proposing classroom remediation strategies. The main tool used to gather essential data was a survey questionnaire with a rating scale. Results revealed that the students often experienced difficulties with listening due to a noisy physical setting and problems with the volume and quality of the listening aids/materials/equipment. They sometimes had problems with the: 1) listening comprehension process; 2) text linguistic features; 3) concentration; 4) psychological characteristics about their interest, attitude towards the text, and confidence; 5) listening; 6) speaker/reader; and 7) content of the text. Thus, appropriate strategies were proposed to remediate the difficulties experienced by students.

Another study on the IELTS Listening Test, titled "Listening Comprehension Difficulties of Grade 11 Students," was conducted by Umpa (2023). This study investigated the English listening comprehension difficulties of Senior High School students on the IELTS listening test. This study aimed to determine students' difficulties in listening comprehension when listening to native English speakers. The study found that five listening comprehension difficulties significantly affected participants' ability to acquire, retain, and interpret information when listening to English texts. These difficulties include listener factors, linguistics, lack of concentration, word recognition, and speaker factors. The IELTS listening test is relevant for evaluating K-12 students' listening skills and enhancing their comprehension by identifying their listening comprehension difficulties.

Hamouda (2013) conducted a study titled An Investigation of Listening Comprehension Problems Encountered by Saudi Students in the EL Listening Classroom. This study investigated the listening problems encountered by a group of first-year English major students

at Qassim University. Sixty (60) students took the listening course in 2012-2013. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The study found that accent, pronunciation, speech speed, insufficient vocabulary, different speaker accents, lack of concentration, anxiety, and poor recording quality were the major listening comprehension problems encountered by Saudi learners.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1.Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design. Using this design, the experimental group was given a pre-test and post-test and was exposed to the experimental or independent variable dynamic assessment approach intervention. On the other hand, the control group received the same pre-test and post-test as the experimental group but was not exposed to the dynamic assessment intervention. This design further strengthened the investigation into the significant differences between the pre- and post-test mean scores of the respondents in the experimental and control groups. Moreover, this design reinforced participants' experiences. Their experiences were collected and documented from participants' responses during the focus group discussion.

3.2.Participants of the Study

The study's participants were the Grade 12 students enrolled at Kiwalan National High School, Iligan City, during the first semester of the academic Year 2024-2025. Specifically, the study involved a total of ninety (90) students. The decision to focus on Grade 12 students was based on the critical importance of advanced listening comprehension skills at this educational level, which are crucial for academic success and preparedness for higher education or the workforce.

3.3.Research Instruments

The researcher utilized the following instruments to obtain valid and reliable data:

3.3.1 Adopted Listening Comprehension Test. The researcher adopted a listening comprehension test from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is a standardized test that measures the English-language ability of non-native speakers seeking to enroll in American universities (ETS, 2024). It is a multiple-choice listening comprehension test with a total of twenty (20) items. The test questions were based on the audio material that they listened to. Each item comprised one stem and 4 answer options. Furthermore, the answer key for this 20-item listening comprehension test was already provided by the English Testing Service. Thus, the adopted listening comprehension test was utilized for both the pre-test and post-test. However, in the post-test, the researcher rearranged the items and options to ensure respondents were not familiar with the questions.

3.3.2 Listening Materials. The listening materials used in the pre-test, intervention, and post-test were also adopted from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). These audio materials were "Population Growth," "Lecture about Poet Sylvia Plath," and "A Conversation between Professor and Ms. Carla." Each audio material typically lasted for 4 min.

3.3.3 Guide questions for Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The researcher conducted a focus group discussion to illustrate participants' experiences during the intervention. Participants in this FGD were twelve (12) (four top scorers, four average scores, and four lower scores) from the experimental group.

3.3.4 Lesson Plan. The researcher used three (3) lesson plans to administer the Dynamic Assessment. Each lesson plan followed the 4A's (Activity, Analysis, Abstraction, and Application) format.

3.4.Statistical Tools

To examine the collected data in accordance with the research questions, the following statistical tools were used.

3.4.1. T-Test Independent Samples –T-test was used to test the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.Pretest mean scores of the experimental and the control group

To assess the participants' listening comprehension skills before implementing the dynamic assessment, a pretest was administered. This initial data collection aimed to establish a baseline understanding of each participant's listening abilities. By analyzing the results, the researcher accurately gauged the participants' pre-existing skills and knowledge, setting a foundation for comparison after the intervention.

Table 1

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pretest	Experimental	45	6.31	2.55
	Control	45	5.78	2.19

Table 1 displays the number of participants in each group. A total of 45 participants were assigned to the experimental group and 45 to the control group for the pretest. The distribution of pretest scores in the experimental and control groups is also presented. In the experimental group, the mean score was 6.31, with a standard deviation of 2.55. Similarly, in the control group, the distribution of scores almost mirrored that of the experimental group, with a mean score of 5.78 and a slightly higher standard deviation of 2.19. The total number of participants in both groups was 90.

Moreover, the table above shows that both the experimental and control groups began with comparable levels of listening comprehension, as evidenced by their pretest scores. This suggests that both groups started with comparable levels of listening comprehension, ensuring a fair comparison for evaluating the impact of dynamic assessment on listening comprehension. Moreover, the slight difference in standard deviation (2.55 vs. 2.19) suggests a similar spread of scores within each group, indicating consistent variability in listening comprehension among participants before the dynamic assessment. Therefore, any observed difference in post-test scores can be more confidently attributed to the effects of dynamic assessment rather than pre-existing differences in listening comprehension or variability within groups.

The pretest is merely a component of formative assessment, which is used to determine the type of information students must possess. According to Kelly (2017), a pretest is given to students before a lesson or unit to assess what they know or do. In addition, pretests are used to evaluate students' preparedness for further studies (Webster's Dictionary, 2007), as cited by Solaiman (2023). Conversely, Ni (2013) claimed that evaluating student performance outcomes is widely utilized to measure a student's success. Ellis's (2005) studies on language learning variance reveal that students within the same group tend to show similar degrees of variability in their language skills before the implementation of any teaching method. This further emphasizes the importance of understanding students' initial competencies through tools such as pre-tests.

Similarly, Najres and Khanmohammad (2014) revealed that both experimental and control groups starting with similar abilities (as evidenced by pre-test scores) validated the effects when comparing post-test results. The consistent spread of scores further supports the fairness of these comparisons.

The pretest findings revealed that most participants in both the control and experimental groups failed the listening comprehension test, which aligns with the challenges identified by Calub, Garcia, and Tagama (2018). Their study revealed that listening comprehension difficulties often stem from factors such as poor listening environments, issues with materials,

linguistic features, and psychological barriers such as low confidence and lack of interest. These factors likely contributed to the poor performance in this study, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in the future. Dynamic assessment, as utilized in this research, addresses these challenges by providing interactive feedback and adaptive support, offering a promising strategy for improving listening comprehension and overcoming the barriers highlighted in previous studies.

Similarly, Umpa's (2023) study on IELTS listening comprehension difficulties identified key factors, including listener-related challenges, linguistic barriers, lack of concentration, word recognition issues, and speaker-related factors, as significant obstacles to comprehension. Similarly, the poor performance in the pretest suggests that these difficulties likely impacted the participants' ability to process and interpret auditory information effectively. These results emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges through targeted interventions. By incorporating dynamic assessment, this study provides a responsive approach to identifying and overcoming specific listening comprehension difficulties, potentially improving students' ability to acquire and retain information in listening tasks.

The findings of this study are also congruent with the challenges identified by Hamouda (2013). The study revealed that factors such as unfamiliar words, length of spoken text, speech rate, varied accents, lack of concentration, and pronunciation issues significantly affect listening comprehension. Similarly, the participants in this study likely faced comparable barriers, as evidenced by their poor pre-test performance. These shared challenges underscore the need for strategies to address these difficulties.

4.2. Post-test mean scores of the experimental and the control group

To evaluate the intervention's effect on participants' listening skills, a post-test was administered immediately after the intervention sessions. This assessment aimed to determine whether any improvements occurred compared with the pretest results. Both the control and experimental groups participated in the intervention, which lasted 6 sessions, with each group attending 3. The control group received instructions through static assessments, whereas the experimental group received them through dynamic assessments. By comparing post-test scores between these groups, the researcher examined the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in enhancing participants' listening comprehension skills.

Table 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Posttest	Experimental	45	14.09	1.68
	Control	45	7.56	2.06

The means and standard deviations of the post-test scores for the two groups are also presented in Table 3. The group that underwent dynamic assessment, which consisted of 45 participants, had an average score of 14.09 (SD = 1.68), while the control group, the same number of participants who were placed on static assessment instruction, had a mean score of 7.56 (SD = 2.06)

In addition, as illustrated in the table above, the mean score of the experimental group significantly improved from 6.31 in the pre-test to 14.09 in the post-test, indicating an improvement in listening comprehension. The decrease in standard deviation from 2.56 to 1.68 indicates that the participants became more consistent performers, reflecting the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in improving their listening comprehension skills. On the other hand, the control group registered a slight change in the mean score, from 5.78 to 7.56. The increase in the standard deviation from 2.19 to 2.06 indicates a wider range of score increases, suggesting less consistent improvement in listening comprehension among the participants.

After the intervention, a posttest was conducted for both groups to assess participants' listening comprehension skills and compare pretest results. The significant difference in mean scores and reduced variability in the experimental group indicate that dynamic assessment had a strong positive impact on participants' listening comprehension skills. In contrast, the control group showed increased variability with minimal improvement, suggesting that static assessments are less effective at enhancing participants' listening comprehension skills.

The findings of this study revealed that dynamic assessment is highly effective in improving participants' listening skills compared to static assessment. The substantial improvement in scores and reduced performance variability indicate the positive impact of dynamic assessment on participants' listening comprehension skills. These findings have implications for educators seeking innovative approaches to enhance students' listening skills.

These results align with similar studies, such as Ableeva (2010), on the role of DA in listening comprehension. The findings show that DA significantly boosts listening comprehension in second-language learners by providing real-time, adaptive scaffolding and immediate feedback. This matches the findings of this study, in which participants in the experimental group not only improved their listening comprehension but also showed greater consistency, as evidenced by a reduction in standard deviation.

Furthermore, the findings also support schema theory, in which Vandergrift (2004) stressed that effective listening requires the activation of relevant background knowledge. Significant improvements in listening comprehension were achieved through the use of dynamic assessment based on schema activation through a pre-listening activity. This study validates the fact that dynamic assessment can be used along with schema theory to increase comprehension and retention of the material. In the experimental group, students were assisted through guided instruction in identifying key structures, patterns, and contextual clues in the spoken language, which helped them understand better. However, the control group lacking such assisted mediation would have and would be expected to perform worse in classifying and integrating new information about their prior knowledge, thereby not making much advancement in comprehension. Miller and Gildea (1995) further supported this, showing that active listeners who had previously possessed relevant schemas for the content of a listening passage could comprehend and recall information more effectively.

The results of this study are also congruent with those of Wang (2017) regarding the effect of dynamic assessment on the listening skills of lower intermediate EFL learners. He concluded that dynamic assessment can realize the integration of listening comprehension assessment and instruction and promote the development of students' listening study at both macro- and micro-levels.

Similarly, Narjes and Khanmohammad (2014) study titled "Sociocultural Theory and Listening Comprehension: Does the Scaffolding of EFL Learners Improve Their Listening Comprehension?" also supports the findings of this study, as the results showed that scaffolding activities can help teachers act within the learners' zone of proximal development and provide them with comprehensible input. The learning strategies that students become familiar with as they engage in these activities are the best ladders that make the learning process much more facilitated and easier, particularly if they are introduced, explained, and emphasized by the teacher. These findings provide evidence that support the idea that dynamic assessment with guided mediation improves learners' listening comprehension skills.

4.3.Significant difference between the mean scores in the pre-test of the control group and the experimental groups

To understand the impact of dynamic assessment on the listening comprehension of the participants, it is crucial to compare the differences in mean scores between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test. This comparison highlights the initial capabilities of the participants in each group and sets the stage for assessing the effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed during the intervention.

Table 3

The Mean Scores Difference of the Control group and the Experimental Group during the Pretest

Pretest Mean Score	Levene's Test		*t*-test independent samples		Remarks
	F-value	*p*-value	*t*-value	*p*-value	
Control Experimental	0.680	00.412@	1.064	0.290	Not significant

Note. @=not significant

Table 3 presents the significant difference between the pretest results for listening comprehension for the control and experimental groups. Levene's Test was employed to assess the comparability of the two groups, with the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that the variances of the two groups are equal. The test yielded an F-test statistic of 0.680 and a p-value of 0.412, which exceeds the 0.05 level of significance; thus, H_0 is not rejected, indicating that both groups exhibit similar variances. Furthermore, when comparing the means of the two groups, the t-value was determined to be 1.064 with a corresponding p-value of 0.290, also surpassing the 0.05 significance threshold. Consequently, H_0—asserting that there is no significant difference between the pretest mean scores of the control and experimental groups regarding students' listening comprehension skills—is likewise not rejected. These findings suggest that before the intervention, the two groups had comparable baseline levels of listening comprehension skills.

The results revealed that both the experimental and control groups in this study exhibited equivalent variances and mean scores on the pretest, underscoring the validity of the comparison between them. The results of Levene's test and the t-test indicated that the pretest listening comprehension skills were consistent across the control and experimental groups, thereby establishing a sound basis for evaluating the effects of the subsequent intervention. This initial equivalence is crucial for ensuring that any differences observed in the post-test can be attributed to the instructional strategies employed, rather than pre-existing disparities in the participants' abilities.

Poehner and Lantolf (2005) emphasized the importance of establishing baseline equivalence between groups before implementing dynamic assessment interventions. Their research highlighted that ensuring comparable initial performance in listening comprehension allows for a more accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of dynamic assessment. The findings in Table 4 indicate no significant difference in pretest scores between the control and experimental groups, supporting the validity of the study's design, as recommended by Poehner and Lantolf.

4.4. Significant difference between the mean scores in the post-test of the control group and the experimental groups

To understand the impact of dynamic assessment on the participants' listening comprehension, it is crucial to compare the differences in mean scores between the experimental and control groups. This comparison highlights the extent of improvement in each group, providing evidence of the effectiveness of dynamic assessment on the participants' listening comprehension skills.

Table 5

The Mean Scores Difference Between the Control group and the Experimental Group during the Post-test

Posttest Mean Score	Levene's Test		*t*-test independent samples		Remarks
	F-value	*p*-value	*t*-value	*p*-value	
Control Experimental	1.087	.300@	16.491	.000	Significant

Note. @=not significant

Table 5 shows the significant difference between the control and experimental groups' post-tests in listening comprehension. Levene's Test was conducted to establish the comparability of the experimental and control groups, with the null hypothesis (H_0) asserting that the variances of the two groups are equal. The results indicate that H_0 is not rejected, as evidenced by an F-value of 1.087 and a p-value of 0.300, both of which exceed the 0.05 level of significance, confirming that the variances of the two groups are indeed comparable. Furthermore, an analysis of the means revealed a t-value of 16.491 and a p-value of 0.000, which is significantly lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which suggested that there was no significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the control and experimental groups in terms of students' listening comprehension skills, was rejected. These findings indicate a statistically significant difference, demonstrating that the intervention applied to the experimental group effectively enhanced their listening comprehension skills.

The results indicate a remarkable improvement in the listening comprehension skills of the experimental group following the implementation of dynamic assessment. The significant t-value and low p-value provide strong statistical evidence that the intervention was effective in enhancing students' listening skills. The rejection of the null hypothesis underscores the potential of dynamic assessment methods to produce measurable improvements in student learning outcomes, particularly in listening comprehension, thereby validating the efficacy of the instructional strategies employed in this study.

In line with these findings, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) emphasized the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in language learning, particularly in developing listening comprehension skills. Their research demonstrated that dynamic assessment, by adapting to individual learners' needs, leads to significant gains in listening comprehension (LC). The results in Table 5, showing a t-value of 16.491 and a p-value of 0.000, support the idea that the experimental group benefitted significantly from dynamic assessment interventions, as the individualized feedback likely contributed to the improvement.

Moreover, DA's interactivity enables learners to develop their metacognitive strategies for their listening skills. Engaging with tasks that allow for real-time feedback gives learners opportunities to self-regulate their listening approaches and reflect on their listening strategies (Lantolf and Poehner, 2011). Such interactions benefit not only the short term but also acquire particular skills over time. Similarly, Nassaji and Swain (2000) assessed their learners and demonstrated that providing them with dynamic feedback during performance assessment helps them concentrate on what needs to be developed. This is in agreement with and explains the findings of this study, where DA resulted in deeper improvements in listening comprehension.

4.5.Experiences encountered by the respondents during the intervention

To have an exhaustive understanding on the effect of dynamic assessment of the listening comprehension skills of the participants, after identifying the experimental group score in post-test, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to a selected group of twelve (12) participants, including four top scorers, four average scorers, and four lower scorers. Audio recordings captured detailed responses, allowing participants to speak in their preferred language for greater comfort and clarity. The recorded experiences were then organized in a thematic form and the researcher developed key themes: challenges in listening comprehension, mediating the role of dynamic assessment and learning effectiveness and retention, which are shown in the table below:

Table 6. ***Emergent Themes from Participant's Experiences***

Themes	Key Insights	Illustrative Quote

Challenges in listening comprehension	Vocabulary barriers, accent and pronunciation difficulties, fast speech rate hindered understanding	"I struggle with some of the vocabulary because it was unfamiliar to me." (P1)
Mediating the role of dynamic assessment	Teacher mediation, interaction and real time feedback supported understanding	"When I made mistakes, the teacher gave hints that helped me rethink." (P3) "With the help of our teacher, I was able to answer the questions." (P9)
Learning effectiveness and retention	Immediate feedback prompted reflection, confidence, and information retention	"I was able to retain the information because of the immediate feedback." (P11)

4.6.Challenges in Listening Comprehension

Through Focus Group Discussions conducted with participants in the experimental group, they reported significant difficulties in understanding the audio materials. These difficulties stemmed from three primary factors: unfamiliar vocabulary, accent and pronunciation barriers, and the speakers' fast speech rate. These factors are compounded by the participants' lack of background knowledge on the topics presented. As one participant noted, "I struggle with some of the vocabulary because it was unfamiliar to me" (P1). It is evident that learners' comprehension of listening materials was affected by learners' knowledge of vocabulary, which aligns with research that suggested that learners' knowledge of vocabulary was a significant predictor of comprehension (Stæhr, 2009; Bloomfield, 2010).

Variations in accent further reduced understanding, as they required extra effort to decode rather than focusing on semantic representations. In addition, speaking too fast further reduced L2 listeners' ability to process utterances in real time, Supporting Griffiths' (1990) assertion that rapid delivery disproportionately affects L2 listeners.

4.7.Mediating the Role of Dynamic Assessment

Participants frequently emphasized the mediating role of dynamic assessment, especially guided support and teacher-student interaction. Students highlighted how scaffolding and prompts helped them overcome listening challenges and construct meaning more successfully. As an example of mediation within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), one participant said, "With the help of our teacher, I was able to answer the questions" (P9).

One distinguishing characteristic of dynamic assessment was found to be real-time feedback. Immediate prompts helped learners recognize and correct misunderstanding during the listening process, as reflected in the statement, "When I made mistakes, the teacher gave hints that helped me rethink" (P3). This result supports Poehner's (2008) claim that dynamic assessment incorporates instruction and assessment by modifying mediation to meet the changing needs of students.

4.8.Learning Effectiveness and Retention

Participants reported that dynamic assessment enhanced confidence, reflection, and information retention in addition to comprehension gains. The chance to interact with feedback promoted self-control and metacognitive awareness. As one participant explained, "I was able

to retain the information because of the immediate feedback," (P11). This supports previous studies showing that interactive, feedback-rich assessment environments foster long-term retention and deeper learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Ableeva, 2010).

The data obtained from the focus group discussion participants reveal the positive influence that dynamic assessment has on the learning process in particular in listening skill development. Dynamic assessment creates the potential conditions of interaction, feedback, and guidance which facilitate the active learning processes where students can correct misconceptions, reflect on their understanding, and retain information more effectively.

Dynamic assessment, with its emphasis on interaction, feedback, and guided learning, creates a more active learning environment where students can correct misconceptions, reflect on their understanding, and retain information more effectively. In contrast, static assessment, with its lack of interaction and feedback, leaves students uncertain about their understanding and limits opportunities for improvement.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the collected data, the participants in the experimental group showed improvement in listening comprehension skills using dynamic assessment from their performance in the pre-test to the post-test, compared to the control group, which only used static assessment. This result suggests that dynamic assessment helps students improve their listening comprehension. In the process of listening, it is normal for a student to experience difficulties comprehending a text; however, with the aid of the teacher, students will overcome those difficulties by applying dynamic assessment in listening to comprehend a text successfully. This means that both the reader and the teacher are two important instruments in listening to understand the meaning of a particular text or a passage.

Further, the data gathered indicate that dynamic assessment can enhance students' interest and ability to be more critical in listening activities. This indicated that the use of dynamic assessment played a significant role in students' academic learning, as it strengthened their listening comprehension skills through exposure to various listening materials. Therefore, the findings of this study strongly encourage English language teachers to introduce, inform, and teach students using dynamic assessment when listening to English academic texts, as this helps improve students' listening comprehension skills.

Finally, future researchers are also encouraged to conduct similar studies focusing on how dynamic assessment impacts other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing, across proficiency levels, with the aim of improving classroom assessment design, informing evidence-based interventions, and aiding professional development and policy.

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