



A Probe into Iranian Learners' Performance on IELTS Academic Writing Task 2: Operationalizing Two Models of Dynamic Assessment versus Static Assessment

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Abstract

Dynamic Assessment (DA) has been utilized for language evaluation. This mixed-methods study aimed to examine the potential impact of interactionist and interventionist models as two significant offshoots of dynamic assessment on IELTS candidates' performance in academic writing task 2. The study also compared the efficiency of these dynamic models and static assessment in the overall writing development of potential IELTS test-takers' proficiency in writing task 2 in terms of IELTS writing assessment criteria. To this end, an experimental pretest-treatment-posttest design was employed. A qualitative approach was also conducted using field notes as a cross-validation strategy. Fifty-four (26 males and 28 females) Iranian IELTS candidates aged 19 to 35 were randomly assigned to one control and two experimental groups (n=18). Initially, a pre-test was run to assess all participants' developing writing skills. Afterward, the experimental groups received treatments based on interactionist and interventionist models, whereas the control group received no dynamic treatment in the form of interactionist and interventionist models and was trained according to the conventional static methods of writing instruction. Finally, a post-test was administered to check the treatments' efficacy. The quantitative results demonstrated that the interventionist group's writing performance was significantly better than that of the static group. However, there existed no statistically significant difference between the DA groups' writing performance. The qualitative findings substantiated the quantitative results indicating the outperformance of dynamic assessment over the static assessment model in the development of IELTS writing task 2 skills. The research findings have some pedagogical implications for IELTS teachers.

Keywords: Dynamic Assessment, Interactionist Model, Interventionist Model

Received 26 April 2020

Accepted 24 June 2020

Available online 19 February 2021

DOI: 10.30479/jmrels.2020.13075.1617

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1. Introduction

Writing is such a daunting task for language learners that it may result in feelings of frustration (Jahin & Idrees, 2012). It is also perceived to be one of the critical linguistic skills (e.g., Deane et al., 2008; Nueva, 2016). Undoubtedly, what adds to the complexity of gaining writing skill proficiency is the need to employ specific macro-skills, including generating, drafting, and mapping out ideas as well as translating intended meanings into the target language, besides gaining mastery over the language (Al-Haq & Al-Sobh, 2010).

The prominence of writing is particularly indisputable in the realm of English language learning and teaching for two reasons. First, like speaking skills, it provides individuals with an opportunity to impart their information and pearl of wisdom and paves the way for their academic success which can be endangered by their poor writing skills. Second, it is the most prevailing means of evaluation for instructors and academics to scrutinize and evaluate learners' attitudes, insights, and knowledge (Tan, 2011).

As a high-stakes, task-based language proficiency test, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has lately received wide currency all around the world (Golder et al., 2011). Along the same lines, IELTS candidates' mastery of writing skills is of prime importance in their academic achievement and success. As for the writing task 2 of the academic version of IELTS, the performance of IELTS candidates who are supposed to write an essay in 40 minutes is assessed on four criteria, i.e., Task Achievement (TA), Cohesion and Coherence (CC), Lexical Resource (LR), and Grammar Range and Accuracy (GRA) on a scale of 1 to 9. The IELTS students' overall performance is examined based on these criteria constituting the IELTS band descriptors (see Appendix A) in this study.

Given the complicacy of the nature of writing skills, English language learners are unlikely to gain perfect command of this skill with consummate ease. This underlines the need to employ new techniques and approaches to boost English language learners' writing skills in educational settings. The advent of a new paradigm, i.e., dynamic assessment (henceforth, DA) in general and its interventionist and interactionist models in particular, set the stage both for flexible assessment of individuals' linguistic learnability through hints and feedback and their skills enhancement.

Dynamic assessment rests on the integration of social collaboration and interaction in the assessment process to unearth testees' full range of abilities and enhance their modifiability and learning (Poehner, 2008), while static assessment (henceforth, SA) is a product-oriented method underlining the assessment of a developed state without any intervention or scaffolding on the part of examiners (Lantolf & Poehner 2011).

Dynamic assessment is rooted in the sociocultural theory which accentuates the key role of social interaction and cultural mediation in the development of human cognition (Salkind, 2004), and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development or so-called ZPD (Dysthe & Engelsen, 2011). It raises learners' awareness of their learning styles, weaknesses, and strengths (Crick & Yu, 2008), and concurrently allows for an analytical appraisal of their current linguistic level to boost their learning through offering during-the-assessment mediations (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). From among a host of approaches emerging from dynamic assessment, the interventionist and interactionist approaches are the dominant DA models. Hence, the present study seeks to address the influence of these DA approaches, i.e., the interactionist and interventionist models on the writing skill proficiency of Iranian IELTS learners. Moreover, this study attempts to examine if the static method influences IELTS candidates' overall writing skills development as much as the two models of DA.

Notwithstanding the widespread approval of dynamic assessment as a new evaluation paradigm capable of manifesting learners' present and prospective abilities (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002) limited lines of research have thus far addressed the efficiency of dynamic assessment in general and its significant models namely, the interactionist and interventionist models in the enhancement of linguistic and writing skills of test-takers in high-stakes tests such as IELTS. Thus, this study intends to fill in the missing gaps in the literature on dynamic assessment by extending the current knowledge of the efficaciousness of the interventionist and interactionist DA models for the advancement of IELTS candidates' academic writing task 2 skills. More specifically, this research seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Does the interactionist DA model have a significant influence on Iranian IELTS candidates' overall performance in academic task 2 writing?
2. Does the interventionist DA model significantly affect Iranian IELTS candidates' overall writing performance in academic task 2?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between these two DA models as to their effects on Iranian IELTS candidates' overall academic writing skills of the interactionist and interventionist groups?
4. Is there a significant difference between the two DA models and the static groups' overall writing performance?

The results of the present study might conduce to the development and enhancement of IELTS writing preparation programs and training courses. Likewise, the findings of the study may assist IELTS trainers in employing procedures to promote test-takers' writing development.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment is conceptualized as a subcategory of interactive assessment encompassing a deliberate and thoroughly planned form of mediational teaching and the evaluation of learners' subsequent performance to gauge the influence of the instruction on their language learnability (Haywood & Tzuriel, 2002).

As a fluid, process-based, diagnostic, and flexible method, dynamic assessment assesses the latent capacity of individuals through guiding them in the process of cognitive skill acquisition utilizing instruction and feedback (Elliot, 2003; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). It also serves as a way to diagnose whether testees' low performance is indicative of their language impairments or language differences (Peña et al., 2001).

As put forth by Poehner (2008), numerous approaches have emerged from dynamic assessment whose disparity only arises from their unique ways of offering mediation and interpreting ZPD. According to Lantolf and Poehner (2008), the interventionist and interactionist models are the major DA approaches.

2.1.1. Feuerstein's Interactionist Model

In this model, assessment and instruction coexist; that is, they are embedded in a way that the existence of one is infeasible without the other one (Poehner, 2008). From Feuerstein and Feuerstein's (2001) viewpoints, social cognitive skills are dynamic and modifiable via interventions and intelligence is not genetically inherited and immutable. Hinging on the qualitative interpretation of ZPD (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005), the interactionist model is viewed as a means of attaining a clear perception of psychological processes that learners might display in their future development and also as a means of determining the kind of instruction, or mediation required for learners to realize these potentials (Minick, 1987). As stated by Poehner (2008), what distinguishes this model from the other models of instruction is its high priority over the betterment and facilitation of the learners' acquisition of more essential skills and information to discover efficient problem-solving methods.

2.1.2. Brown's Interventionist Model

This model draws on the quantitative interpretation of ZPD and stresses the 'difference score', i.e., the quantitatively measured difference between testees' independent performance and their mediated performance taken as an indication of learners' potential to develop in the future. As asserted by Gutierrez (2000), students' learning potentials or the so-called gain scores can be projected by the number of prompts that they require to learn something. According to Poehner (2008) and Poehner and Lantolf (2005), what demarcates Brown's interventionist model from Feuerstein's interactionist model is mediation offered to students from the most implicit to the most explicit one which culminates with an accurate response in Brown's model and expedites learners' transition from other-regulation to self-regulation stages (Lantolf, 2009). A relatively standardized method is used for the administration of tests in this model. If a student fails to accomplish a task, he is provided with required prompts by an instructor to learn how to do the task successfully.

2.2. Empirical Studies on the Interrelationship of DA and Writing Skill

To date, a considerable amount of literature has been published on the nature of dynamic assessment and how it gets operationalized in practice. Besides, many strands of research have been carried out on dynamic assessment and its effects on writing skills in the realm of language learning in different parts of the world and Iran. To name but a few, the impacts interactionist and interventionist models of dynamic assessment on EFL or ESL learners' writing skills have been compared in some studies (e.g., Thouésny, 2010; Khodabakhsh et al., 2018).

A study was conducted by Thouésny (2010) to assess second language learners' written texts utilizing both the interventionist and interactionist models to dynamic assessment. The researcher claimed that despite the use of the interventionist model in computer-based assessment and its adaptability to be utilized in large-scale assessment, the interactionist model is more in line with the concept of the zone of proximal development on account of its qualitative orientation aimed at offering flexible, individualized tutoring based on learners' needs. In a similar vein, Khodabakhsh et al. (2018), employed the interventionist and interactionist DA models to develop EFL learners' language awareness level and metacognitive strategy use in writing instruction. The results of this mixed-methods study demonstrated that the language awareness of both experimental groups which received mediated treatments based on the interactionist and interventionist DA models was higher than that of the control group. However, there was no discrepancy in the level of

metacognitive strategy use of learners assessed dynamically compared to the control group.

Furthermore, some research has been done to uncover the potential effect of dynamic assessment on students' writing development (e.g., Aghaebrahimian et al., 2014; Mauludin & Ardianti, 2017; Xiaoxiao & Yan, 2010). In an attempt, Mauludin and Ardianti (2017) researched the role that dynamic assessment plays in Indonesian students' writing skill improvement. The experimental study results proved the DA significant role in boosting the students' writing skills. Likewise, Xiaoxiao and Yan (2010) did a case study on the dynamic assessment of EFL writing. Scrutinizing the results, they discovered that a dialogic way of teaching could cultivate learners' writing interest and promote their writing competence. Further, another experimental study was carried out by Aghaebrahimian et al. (2014), to discover whether the incorporation of dynamic assessment into writing instruction could positively influence Iranian advanced EFL learners' writing learnability. The results of the research demonstrated that the experimental group which was instructed dynamically outperformed the control group which was taught traditionally. Closely associated with this study, Rashidi and Bahadori Nejad (2018) measured the practical impacts of dynamic assessment on Iranian EFL learners' L2 (IELTS task 2) writing skills. Based on the results of this experimental study, the researchers concluded that dynamic assessment had significant effects on the participants' writing skill developments.

Some studies have been conducted to investigate the impacts of the employment of either the DA interactionist or interventionist model on university students' academic writing development (e.g., Khoshshima et al., 2016; Shrestha & Coffin, 2012). In 2012, Shrestha and Coffin conducted qualitative research on the impact of tutor mediation on academic writing development of undergraduate students in open and distance learning contexts via dynamic assessment. They came to the conclusion that the students' writing hardships could be spotted and obviated using dynamic assessment and that undergraduate students' academic writing could be upgraded in the light of DA treatment. Besides, Khoshshima et al. (2016), quantitatively studied the potential effects of the interactionist form of dynamic assessment on Iranian intermediate learners' explanation writing skills. They found that the interactionist model led to the significant promotion of learners' performance in their genre writing ability.

Moreover, some researchers such as Wray and Pegg (2009) and KIRMIZI and Aydın (2019) have sought to unearth EFL learners' writing problems. Wray and Pegg (2009) posited that IELTS test-takers are likely to utilize some writing clichés and templates to extend their sentences, double their writing beauty, make a good impression on examiners and obtain higher marks. Along the same lines, KIRMIZI and Aydın (2019) qualitatively

investigated the EFL learners' problems in academic writing. They found that EFL learners experience some problems associated with critical thinking, i.e., self-reflection processes to acquire and retain information via some cognitive and mental skills due to writing anxiety.

As evident in the studies reported above, although some lines of research have been carried out on the impacts of dynamic assessment on ESL and EFL writing development, it seems that no empirical studies have specifically compared the potential impacts and benefits of the interactionist and interventionist models of dynamic assessment, as two major DA models, on academic writing task 2 performance of candidates in IELTS exam, which has been administered and gained wide currency all over the world for admission to prominent, elite universities or for immigration purposes so far. This study takes a new look at the valuable functions that these two DA models could perform in the facilitation of the IELTS academic writing task 2 instruction.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants included 54 (26 males and 28 females) Iranian IELTS candidates within the age range of 19 to 35 who had taken the IELTS mock exam as the placement test at Bahar language institute in Shiraz, Iran, to participate in the IELTS academic writing preparatory course. They were selected through the convenience sampling method since they were accessible to the main researcher. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling in which members of the target population are selected for the study if they fulfill certain criteria, including geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or the willingness to take part in the study (Dörnyei, 2007). It is worth mentioning that the participants had merely taken IELTS writing preparatory course and intended to improve their other language skills in the following terms. To ensure homogeneity, the participants with the band scores of 4-5 in the task 2 writing skills in the IELTS mock exam were randomly assigned to three groups of 18 members with a nearly equal number of male and female learners. What differentiated the study groups was that the first two groups received DA treatments based on either interactionist or interventionist models whereas the control group was instructed based on the conventional method of writing instruction. In other words, the control group was merely taught IELTS task 2 writing techniques without the co-existence of instruction and assessment and was assessed based on a static model (without receiving any feedback or hints throughout assessment) rather than the DA-based method. Following the preparatory writing course, they took the complete MOCK IELTS test held at the end of the IELTS preparatory courses in the institute. They took the mock exam

before the actual IELTS test. However, taking the low-cost MOCK IELTS test enabled them to be prepared for the real IELTS test.

3.2. Design

The main objective of the present study was to examine the impact of the interactionist and interventionist DA models and the conventional method of writing instruction, followed by a static assessment, on the Iranian IELTS candidates' overall academic writing skills. The study featured a mixed-methods approach consisting of an experimental design as well as qualitative research performed concurrently. While the former was operationalized with a pretest, treatment, and posttest to investigate the possible effects of the employment of the DA models and the SA on the participants' overall writing skill proficiency, the latter was conducted in the form of field notes to authenticate the quantitative results of the study. The participants were under close observation of the main researcher, who kept detailed field notes of their writing performance and developmental process for 20 sessions while they were receiving treatments for later data analysis and examination.

3.3. Materials and Instruments

The instrument employed was the IELTS academic writing task 2 tests (see Appendix B) chosen from a complete MOCK IELTS test adapted from Cambridge IELTS 12 and 14 books written by IELTS examiners. The time allotted to candidates to undertake the IELTS task 2 (a minimum of 250 words per task) was 40 minutes as it is in the IELTS actual test.

There was a dual philosophy behind the adoption of previous IELTS tests prepared by IELTS examiners, which was the guaranteed reliability and validity of the tests. In simpler terms, the utilization of these tests provided the IELTS candidates with an opportunity to get acquainted with reliable sample tests maximizing the likelihood of obtaining the same score without practice effect. Further, owing to the previous administration of these employed tests in actual IELTS tests, they were deemed to be of high validity as well. To ensure the reliability of the results, the main researcher checked that the participants had not practiced the Mock IELTS writing questions and relevant samples before the test administration.

Moreover, the materials used in this study were field notes taken by the main researcher based on her class observations to have some contextualized data required for doing rigorous qualitative analysis and triangulate the quantitative data obtained.

3.4. Procedure

To collect the data, the following procedures were established. First, 54 IELTS candidates who had taken the IELTS placement test at Bahar language institute were chosen through convenience sampling. Noteworthy to

mention is that the participants signed the informed consent form declaring that they were fully aware of the research goals and methodology and that their participation was voluntary. Moreover, the assent of the head of the institute where the data were collected was obtained to carry out the study before the initiation of the data collection procedure. Further, it is noteworthy that the researcher made sure that the participants were not engaged in any other writing instructional programs and did not have any writing learning experience except via their own treatments to ensure that the results are attributable to the treatments offered to the three experimental groups.

As the second step, a pre-test was administered to all the groups to evaluate their initial writing proficiency. Subsequently, the two experimental groups received treatments for 20 two-hour sessions in 10 weeks (twice a week) based on either the interactionist or interventionist dynamic assessment model and underwent their respective forms of dynamic assessment. In contrast, the control group did not have any DA-based instruction but merely received traditional treatment, i.e., static and regular writing training within the same period. Finally, the post-test was administered to all the groups. The participants' essays in the pre-test and post-test stages were corrected and scored by the main researcher (an IELTS teacher at Bahar language institute) as well as another IELTS trainer and examiner both with 10 years of experience in teaching preparatory IELTS courses and sufficient information about IELTS writing assessment criteria. It is noteworthy that the main researcher divided each dynamic group into two groups so that she could manage to teach and evaluate the participants dynamically. Simply put, each of the divided groups attended the class at a different time for 2 hours twice a week so that they could receive the required prompts or interactive feedback from the teacher who walked all around the class to monitor students' performance and writing development.

The first experimental group who continuously interacted with the instructor received scaffolded aid and feedback according to the procedures of the interactionist DA model and was simultaneously assessed via the student-instructor interaction throughout the course. The researcher was concerned with the development of the students' writing rather than helping them reach a predetermined learning endpoint or taking into account the amount of effort or the number of hints or prompts needed in the development process. Following the instruction of the IELTS essay format, some key writing words and phrases, and the procedure how to write an IELTS academic writing task 2, the instructor (the main researcher) asked all the participants to simplify a task 2 writing topic written on the board by writing its keywords and embark on brainstorming and mind mapping to help them develop their initial ideas. Afterward, the students were encouraged to get involved in interactive discussions on the topic ranging from merits and

demerits, cause and effects, agreement or disagreement, etc., based on the writing topic. Then, the writing stage started, during which the assessment and instruction were embedded. In other words, the learners' essays were simultaneously evaluated and corrected whilst they were provided with hints and feedback through collaboration with their teacher if they encountered problems recalling a word, its spelling, preposition or grammatical point, as well as its synonym, or wholly expressing and developing their ideas in English, etc. Finally, the teacher corrected and scored each student's essay on a one-on-one basis according to the band descriptor of the IELTS task 2 writing via offering direct individualized feedback through collaboration with each participant. After that, some of the essays were shared with others by writing them on the board fully or partially. In the meantime, the teacher first asked for peer feedback to attract the attention of the whole group and then offered the whole class some corrective feedback and suggested hints to enhance their writing skills. On the whole, the instruction-assessment process was done via communication and collaboration of teachers and students as writers, thinkers, and learners.

Having learned how to write an academic IELTS essay and a number of useful writing phrases and structures at the beginning of the writing preparatory course, each member of the second experimental group, i.e., interventionist group, received similar standardized DA-based assistance from the instructor based on the procedures of the interventionist model for both the evaluation and improvement of the learners' writing ability. The standardized forms of interventionist aid and feedback were utilized so that the researcher could analyze the students' performance before and after mediation quantitatively and realize the number of prompts needed to reach the desired outcome as well as the learners' learning pace clearly as claimed by Fulcher (2010). The researcher used two interventionist procedures introduced by Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002). The first procedure used was Sternberg's sandwich procedure, in which the mediated interventions were offered in between assessment processes i.e., in the pre-test, mediation, and post-test design as in the static assessment, and sometimes made use of Grigorenko's cake or layer format, in which the researcher intervened throughout the instruction-assessment process continuously and provided each student with some hints up until he could do the task successfully. It is good to mention that graduated prompts or mediated aid were offered to the participants according to Lantolf and Poehner's (2011) scale of mediation provision. Consistent with this scale, if a participant did not face any writing problem and wrote well and correctly, he received no intervention. However, when he encountered any writing problem ranging from idea generation and development, accuracy, use of words, revision, etc., the main researcher (instructor) provided him with a series of mediated aid ranging from the most implicit to the most specific forms and assessed his writing dynamically. To

illuminate, the instructor utilized one of the eight appropriate forms of offering intervention presented in Lantolf and Poehner's (2011) scale which are as follows:

- (1) Teacher's pause
- (2) Teacher's repetition of the whole phrase in a questioning manner
- (3) Merely teacher's repetition of the sentencing error
- (4) Teacher's direct question about the sentencing error from the learner
- (5) Teacher's statement of the incorrect word
- (6) Teacher's indirect correction asking the learner 'either...or...' questions
- (7) Teacher's pinpointing the correct answer
- (8) Teacher's explanation of the reason

The third group i.e., the control group, was taught the format of IELTS task 2 writing and the way how to simplify an IELTS academic task 2 via highlighting or writing its keywords, analyzing and brainstorming, as well as how to do a well-organized and well-written essay by taking into account the principles of paragraph development, punctuation, cohesion and coherence, etc. In addition, the teacher gave them instruction in useful words and phrases to convey their intended ideas and concepts. They were also instructed on how to write IELTS essays taking into account the general writing rules, the structure of IELTS essays, and steps of essay writing besides some do's and don'ts in writing IELTS essays at the beginning of the course. Subsequently, the control group participants were assigned to do IELTS academic writing tasks two without any DA intervention or assessment during the whole writing process throughout the course. Having written their essays, the students delivered them to the instructor to get corrected and evaluated based on the band descriptor of the IELTS task 2 writing.

Following the DA treatments of the two experimental groups and non-DA treatments of the control group, the whole participants were asked to undertake another IELTS academic task 2 writing, which served as a post-test to examine the potential effectiveness of treatments. It is worth mentioning that the dynamic assessment is a process-based rather than a product-based method and it is not used for summative purposes. Hence, the participants were assigned to do a non-dynamic writing task at the end of the training course so that the researcher could measure their overall end-product accurately and could ascertain whether the groups' treatments culminated in overall achievement in the final summative result. As mentioned before, the participants' essays were scored by two scorers, i.e., the main researcher

(IELTS instructor) and an IELTS examiner employing the IELTS writing scale.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis initiated with the assessment of intra-rater and inter-rater reliability to control the accountability and consistency of assessments carried out by the main researcher and the second-rater. To check the intra-rater reliability, both pre-test and post-test essays were marked by the main researcher (an IELTS instructor at Bahar language institute) twice within a week interval. The average marks allotted to the students' essays in the pre-test and post-test were then used as the pre-scores and post-scores in the process of data analysis. The intra-rater analysis was followed by the calculation of inter-rater reliability to ensure the accuracy of assessments and the reliability of the obtained results. To this end, another IELTS teacher and examiner marked the whole participants' pre-test and post-test essays once more based on IELTS band scores on a scale of 1 to 9. The sets of scores awarded to pre-test and post-test essays by the teacher, as well as the second-rater, were subsequently compared using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Furthermore, a set of paired-sample *t*-tests and ANOVAs were run to compare the performance of each group in the pre-test and post-test separately and to discover any potentially significant difference in their performance before and after the treatment offered. It is noteworthy that the one-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the mean scores of the three independent groups of the study. The data were analyzed employing IBM SPSS Statistics 24. The four criteria taken into account for the evaluation of the participants' writing skills were as follows:

1. Task Achievements: addressing all parts of the question and presenting main ideas with pertinent supporting ideas
2. Cohesion and Coherence: the organization of ideas into well-structured and comprehensible paragraphs using linking words such as hence, although, therefore
3. Lexical Resource: the use of a wide range of vocabulary to convey intended meanings without error
4. Grammatical Range and Accuracy: the employment of a vast array of appropriate grammatical structures in imparting information

Further, it is worth mentioning that for the analysis of field notes, the study researchers analyzed the field notes based on class observations, students' errors and classified their common problems, improvements, etc.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

What follows is the study's quantitative and qualitative results.

4.1.1. Intra-rater Reliability

As mentioned before, the participants' pre-test and post-test essays were first scored by the teacher using the IELTS writing task 2 band descriptor. The essays were remarked by the same rater within a week to calculate the intra-reliability rate using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the results of which are portrayed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Intra-rater Reliability (Pre-test)

		Pre-test (Second rating)
Pre-test (First rating)	Pearson	.924*
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	54

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Intra-rater Reliability (Post-test)

		Post-test (Second rating)
Post-test (First rating)	Pearson	.955*
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	54

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As displayed in Tables 1 and 2, there was a highly significant consistency in the first rater's two rating attempts both in pre-tests ($r=.92$, sig. $=.00$) and post-tests ($r=.95$, sig. $=.00$). In simpler terms, the two sets of scores awarded to the participants by the teacher in the dual assessments of the pre-test and post-test essays following a one-week gap showed a highly positive correlation between the scales of 0.50 up to 1 indicating high intra-reliability as put forth by Cohen (1988).

4.1.2. Inter-rater Reliability

Another measure taken to raise the accountability of the study results was the assessment of the pre-test and post-test essays by the second-rater. The inter-reliability rate of the two sets of pre-test scores and that of post-test

scores were measured using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

Concerning the inter-rater reliability, the results demonstrated that the correlation coefficients for the pre and post-test scores given by the two raters were .81 and .88 (sig.=.00), respectively. Therefore, there was a high consistency between the two scorers' ratings of the pre-test and post-test essays.

4.1.3. Normality Test

Prior to further statistical analyses, the normality of the data was examined by calculating the ratios of skewness and kurtosis indices over their standard errors to check if there was a requirement to do parametric or non-parametric statistical analyses. To meet the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis ratios over their relevant standard errors must be within the ranges of $+ / - 1.96$ (Kim, 2013).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Tests of Normality

	Skewness		Kurtosis			
	Statistic	Std.Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Pre.static	.498	.536	0.93	.137	1.038	0.131
Pre.interactionist	.773	.536	1.44	-1.594	1.038	-1.53
Pre.interventionist	.773	.536	1.44	-1.594	1.038	-1.53
Post. Static	-.230	.536	0.43-	-.411	1.038	-0.39
Post.interactionist	.547	.536	1.02	-.584	1.038	0.56-
Post.interventionist	-.195	.536	-0.36	-1.118	1.038	-1.07
Valid N (listwise)						

As shown in Table 3 displaying the skewness and kurtosis statistics over the standard errors, the absolute values of the ratios of the skewness and kurtosis were lower than $+ / - 1.96$. Accordingly, it could be claimed that the present data, i.e., the pre-test and post-test scores of all groups' participants, enjoyed normality.

4.1.4. Results of the First and Second Research Questions

The main objective of the study was to examine if the Iranian IELTS candidates' academic writing task 2 could be improved in the light of the interactionist and interventionist DA procedures. Before dealing with inferential statistics, descriptive analyses viewed in Table 4 were done. Further, to achieve the main research target discussed above, paired-sample *t*-tests were run, the results of which are depicted in Tables 5 and 6.

According to the descriptive analyses shown above, the mean scores of all three groups improved in terms of IELTS writing score criteria, i.e., TA, CC, LR, and GRA from pre-test to post-test. It is worth mentioning that

based on the results of the descriptive statistics, the average of the four component scores, namely TA, CC, LR and GRA for pre and post-tests, was calculated and rounded down to the nearest whole band score according to the IELTS writing scoring criteria. The rounded scores were used for further computation.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics*

			Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Static Group	Pretest	Task Achievement	18	3.00	5.00	4.7222	.57451
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	3.00	5.00	4.4444	.61570
		Lexical Resource	18	3.00	5.00	4.5000	.61835
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	3.00	5.00	4.4444	.61570
	Post-test	Task Achievement	18	4.00	7.00	5.3333	.76696
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	4.00	6.00	5.4444	.70479
		Lexical Resource	18	4.00	6.00	5.2222	.64676
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	4.00	6.00	5.2778	.66911
Interactionist Group	Pretest	Task Achievement	18	3.00	5.00	4.3889	.60768
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	3.00	5.00	4.4444	.61570
		Lexical Resource	18	3.00	5.00	4.3889	.60768
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	3.00	6.00	4.5000	.78591
	Post-test	Task Achievement	18	4.00	7.00	5.6667	.76696
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	5.00	7.00	5.8889	.83235
		Lexical Resource	18	5.00	7.00	5.7778	.64676
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	5.00	7.00	5.8889	.83235
Interventionist Group	Pretest	Task Achievement	18	3.00	5.00	4.3333	.59409
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	3.00	5.00	4.3889	.60768
		Lexical Resource	18	3.00	6.00	4.5556	.85559
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	3.00	5.00	4.4444	.61570
	Post-test	Task Achievement	18	5.00	7.00	6.0556	.80237
		Coherence and Cohesion	18	5.00	7.00	6.3889	.60768
		Lexical Resource	18	4.00	7.00	6.1667	.92355
		Grammar Range and Accuracy	18	5.00	7.00	6.1111	.75840

The descriptive statistics of the obtained scores are demonstrated in Table 5. Further, *t*-test analyses were performed to examine whether there was statistical evidence that the performances of the three groups' participants in IELTS academic writing task 2 were significantly different from the pre-test to the post-test in terms of the overall score obtained based on the IELTS writing assessment criteria.

The main objective of the study was to examine if the Iranian IELTS candidates' academic writing task 2 could be improved in the light of the interactionist and interventionist DA procedures. Before dealing with inferential statistics, descriptive analyses viewed in Table 4 were done. Further, to achieve the main research target discussed above, paired-sample *t*-tests were run, the results of which are depicted in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5*Paired-sample t-tests' Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre. Static	4.39	18	.502	.118
	post. Static	5.22	18	.647	.152
Pair 2	pre.interactionist	4.33	18	.485	.114
	post.interactionist	5.67	18	.686	.162
Pair 3	pre.interventionist	4.33	18	.485	.114
	post.interventionist	6.11	18	.758	.179

Table 6*Paired-sample t-test*

		Paired Differences		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre. static-post. Static	-.833	707	167	-1.185	-.482	-5.00	17	.000
Pair 2	pre. interactionist-post. Interactionist	-1.333	594	140	-1.629	-1.038	-9.52	17	.000
Pair 3	pre. interventionist-post. interventionist	-1.778	548	129	-2.050	-1.505	-13.75	17	.000

The inspection of the mean values in Table 5 revealed an increase in writing scores from the pre-test to the post-test for all groups. Moreover, according to Table 6, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-test scores for all groups, namely, the control, interactionist, and interventionist groups. In simpler terms, the difference between the pre and post-test scores of the control group was significant (sig. =.000, $p < .05$). The results also demonstrated a significant difference between the pre and

post-test scores of the interventionist (sig. =.000, $p < .05$) and interactionist experimental groups (sig. =.000, $p < .05$). It is noteworthy that the effect sizes of the treatments of all three groups were calculated using eta squared formula, i.e., dividing the sum of squares by the total sum of squares (Pallant, 2010). The eta squared statistics turned out to be $t(17) = -5.00$, $p < .05$, eta squared = .58) for the control group, $t(17) = -9.52$, $p < .05$, eta squared = .84) for the interactionist group and $t(17) = -13.75$, $p < .05$, eta squared = .91) for the interventionist group reflecting the larger effect size of both DA models' treatment than that of the control group, as well as the superior strength of the interventionist treatment according to Cohen's (1988) criteria.

4.1.5. Results of the Third and Fourth Research Question

The third research question aimed to discover whether the two models of the dynamic assessment, i.e., the interactionist and interventionist approaches, significantly impacted Iranian IELTS (academic) candidates' writing task 2 skills. Further, the last research question aimed at realizing if the two forms of DA treatments and static treatment significantly led to the overall writing development of the study groups. In response to these questions, One-way ANOVA tests were run, the results of which are summarized in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre. Control	18	4	5	4.39	.502
Pre.interactionist	18	4	5	4.33	.485
Pre.interventionist	18	4	5	4.33	.485
Post. Control	18	4	6	5.22	.647
Post.interactionist	18	5	7	5.67	.686
Post.interventionist	18	5	7	6.11	.758
Valid N (listwise)	18				

Table 8

One-way ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-test	Between Groups	.037	2	.019	.077	.926
	Within Groups	12.278	51	.241		
	Total	12.315	53			
Post-test	Between Groups	7.111	2	3.556	7.286	.002
	Within Groups	24.889	51	.488		
	Total	32.000	53			

The results revealed that there was not any significant difference between the groups in terms of their writing pre-test scores ($F(2, 51) = .07, p = .92$). On that account, it can be inferred that all three groups were homogenous before the treatment. Nevertheless, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the two experimental groups and the control one, i.e., the static group $F(2, 51) = 7.28, p = .00, \eta^2 = .02$ representing a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). To investigate where the differences occurred between groups, the Post hoc test was run.

Table 9*Multiple Comparisons Scheffe*

Dependent Variable	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Post-test	Control	Interactionist	-.444	.233	.172	-1.03	.14
		Interventionist	-.889*	.233	.002	-1.48	-.30
	Interactionist	Control	.444	.233	.172	-.14	1.03
		Interventionist	-.444	.233	.172	-1.03	.14
	Interventionist	Control	.889*	.233	.002	.30	1.48
		Interactionist	.444	.233	.172	-.14	1.03

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

As it pertains to the last research question, the results of the Post hoc test in Table 9 depicted a significant difference between the interventionist and the control groups ($\text{sig.} = .00, p < .05$) in terms of writing post-test scores. In other words, based on the results of the descriptive statistics, the interventionist group (Mean=6.11) significantly outperformed the control group (Mean=5.22) in the writing post-test. However, the results revealed no significant difference between the other groups.

4.1.6. Results of the Teacher's In-class Observations and Field Notes

To gain a qualitative insight into the usefulness of the DA treatment and to cross-validate the data obtained in the quantitative phase, the teacher recorded a careful account of learners' writing performance observed within 20 sessions as a triangulation technique. The detailed observations, including common errors committed by the whole participants, the barriers they faced, their feedback and writing developmental process were recorded in the form of field notes defined as notes encompassing "detailed impressions of the researchers' intuitions, impressions, and even questions as they emerge" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 175).

Following the observation phase, the notes were thoroughly analyzed for later reflection and further in-depth analysis of the students' writing

challenges, and the careful examination of what happened throughout the participants' essay writing process.

On the whole, at the beginning of the course, the main researcher (the teacher) detected that all the participants, more or less, suffered from similar writing barriers. The qualitative analysis of the teacher's observations throughout the study is displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Common Writing Errors of all Groups at the Beginning of the Course

Idea generation and development
Task achievement
The standard format of the essays
Irrelevance of the supporting sentences
Spelling and punctuation errors
Inaccuracy of sentences
Poor and limited range of vocabulary
Wrong word choice or word formation
Insufficient lexical and grammatical resources
Writing under the word count
Use of informal words, phrases or a simple-structured sentence

A close scrutiny of the teacher's observations of the participants' essay writing throughout the course revealed that despite the overall development of all groups' task 2 writing skills following their treatments in terms of IELTS writing criteria, there were some qualitative differences among them. Simply put, based on the teacher's observations, the writing preparatory course was beneficial to all participants' learning of the general writing steps of the IELTS essay. Nonetheless, the DA experimental groups' internalization of the writing rudiments was far better and faster than the control group displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

DA Groups' Writing Improvement Compared to the Control Group throughout the Course

More profound mastery over idea generation via taught techniques such as brainstorming, clustering, and branching within a shorter time
A better vision of the way how to organize ideas and paragraphs by practical and accurate use of cohesive devices, punctuation marks, collocation, and referencing in relevant supporting sentences
Greater task achievement
The supreme command of lexical resources and less common lexical items, spelling, and word formation
More accurate complex structures, owing to the interactive and dynamic nature of training and learnability from their own or their peers' writing mistakes or challenges discussed throughout the course
A considerably lower number of fragmented sentences in between the treatment
More attention to the details, higher self-confidence in essay writing, more in-depth learning without stifling their creativity

More specifically, according to the teacher's observations, the instruction of IELTS writing task 2 through the interventionist model was effectual in the light of the mediational DA procedure providing the IELTS candidates with the chance to ponder their lexical and grammatical errors and rectify them rather than getting the right answer in the first occurrence. It was observed that such a gradual format of offering hints and feedback from implicit to explicit led to the learners' logical thinking, practical learning how to address the task, and more rapid betterment of essay writing skills compared to other groups. Based on the researcher's observation, the number of prompts required to be offered to correct the students' sentences or improve their writing dramatically lowered on average from 15 to 4 or 5 prompts throughout the course compared to the beginning of the instructional program. The decline in the number of prompts was indicative of the interventionist group's writing learning potential or so-called gain score, which could predict their writing progress in other writing tasks as stated by Gutierrez (2000).

Furthermore, the writing instruction based on the interactionist model broadened the learners' horizons and provided them with more opportunities to discuss crucial writing points such as mind mapping, idea generation and development, paragraph writing, and organization through communication with the teacher and their peers which in turn sped up their writing skill development. Additionally, it was observed that the communicative form of assessment in this model, which was less stress-inducing than the static form of writing training paved the way for the students' lexical and grammatical development, and assisted the language learners in producing more cohesive and coherent texts.

As for the control group, it was observed that despite the overall development of the participants' writing performance in terms of TA, CC, LR, and GRA, in many cases the learners used informal words, phrases or a simple-structured sentence and failed to express their opinions utilizing exact academic words or complex grammatical structures since they were incognizant of their practical usage which led to a degree of ambiguity in their essays. Moreover, it was observed that it took these students longer than their counterparts in the DA experimental groups to choose correct and efficient cohesive devices and connectors and impart their meanings in coherently written sentences. Overall, based on the in-class observations, the researchers concluded that dynamic assessment could serve a more practical function in the instruction of the academic version of the IELTS essay and bring about faster and greater enrichment of learners' overall essays in terms of TA, CC, LR, and GRA.

4.2. Discussion

The results of the present study displayed that both the dynamic assessment and the static approach to writing instruction could help IELTS learners boost their task 2 academic writing skills. However, the results provided evidence that the DA model is of greater benefits to the formation and development of the language learners' writing skills competence. Likewise, according to the qualitative results, dynamic assessment and particularly its interventionist model could enhance IELTS candidates' task 2 academic writing skills much more than the conventional method of writing instruction.

Concerning the results of the first and second research questions, the writing performance of the two experimental groups undergoing the two dominant versions of dynamic assessment was by far much better than that of the Non-DA group that received static treatment or instruction. This is indicative of the marked effects of these two DA models on the IELTS learners' task 2 writing development compared to the static form of writing instruction.

A significant issue revealed by the findings was that all participants' initial writing tasks, more or less, suffered from Task Achievement (TA), Cohesion and Coherence (CC), Lexical Resource (LR), and Grammar Range and Accuracy (GRA) in the pre-test. This was most probably owing to their unfamiliarity with the format of IELTS writing task 2, their lack of confidence in writing as a challenging, productive task, as well as their low level of lexical resources, grammatical range and cohesive devices, etc. However, in the post-test, DA participants, especially students undergoing interventionist writing training, could outperform their counterparts in the control group in task achievement, and utilize a more extensive range of lexical and grammatical resources as well as cohesive devices in their coherent essays thanks to the dynamic form of writing learning and appraisal in their class contexts, which boosted both their writing skills and self-confidence.

In addition, despite the development of all groups' task 2 writing performance from pre-test to post-test stage, the level of the improvement in all IELTS task 2 assessment criteria was the least in the control group taught via conventional form of writing training compared to the DA groups, which could be indicative of the lower efficiency of conventional form of instruction compared to dynamic assessment for teaching the IELTS task 2 writing.

The overall (cumulative) results of the current study are in accord with Rashidi and Bahadori Nejad's (2018) study in that dynamic assessment could have practical impacts on Iranian EFL learners' overall writing skills.

They proved the efficiency of dynamic assessment in the instruction of all points relevant to the IELTS task 2 writing ranging from the selection of topics to the development of ideas and macro-revision. Besides, our findings corroborate those of Shrestha and Coffin (2012), Khoshshima et al. (2016), and Aghaebrahimian et al. (2014), in which they concluded that learners received a higher boost in writing skills following DA-based instruction compared to the static writing instruction.

Furthermore, our results share several similarities with those of the case study done by Xiaoxiao and Yan (2010) on the usability of dynamic assessment in EFL process writing. The significant commonality is that as firmly maintained by the researchers of this study, the process-oriented instruction, which is not unilateral but a dynamic mutual endeavor demanding the instructor-learner interaction and the instructor's assistance and intervention, could develop students' writing competence and form their writing confidence. The findings of these studies strongly endorse the significant improvement that our IELTS candidates achieved in their overall writing performance due to the impact of DA treatment they received.

Moreover, consistent with the researcher's observations in field notes, the results of the third and fourth research questions indicated that the employment of the interventionist DA model in the instruction of IELTS academic task 2 writing could make this task a less demanding assignment and substantially improve language learners' writing skills. This substantiates the fruitful impacts of the interventionist model to promote micro-genetic development in IELTS candidates to internalize the mediated feedback and gradual hints presented throughout the process of essay writing.

Further, according to the results of the third and fourth research questions, there was merely a significant difference between the interventionist group's post-test scores and those of the control group, while no significant discrepancy was observed between the other groups' performance in post-test essays. One line of explanation is that the interventionist DA model which focuses on the quantitative interpretation of the ZPD, i.e., the type and amount of gradual intervention offered to the learners in a hierarchical order from implicit to explicit to realize their potential capabilities, utilizes standardized procedures (Poehner, 2008), directs EFL learners' attention to their writing details and makes them focus on their mistakes. This can facilitate the internalization of grammatical and lexical items, as well as writing techniques, i.e., mind mapping, idea generation, and development, etc. much more than the interactionist model zooming in on the qualitative interpretation of ZPD (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005) and assisting learners in reaching their ZPD by surmounting encountered obstacles (Poehner, 2008). In addition, the improvements of paragraph and essay writing and writing organization can be justified by the

presentation of learning materials from the most implicit to the most explicit in this mode of dynamic assessment namely the interventionist model since it can help learners move from other-regulation to self-regulation stages via less direct and explicit assistance and mediation (Lantolf, 2009) far faster than the interactionist model.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The results of the study, which demonstrated more significant efficacy of the DA models of instruction for IELTS task 2 writing instruction compared to conventional methods, have some practical implications for IELTS stakeholders mainly, instructors and IELTS candidates as EFL learners, and even materials developers, and can help them achieve their goals more efficiently. The findings of the current research offer an insight into the effectiveness of the employment of dynamic assessment in general and the interventionist DA as a model in particular in the preparatory courses of the IELTS academic writing task 2. IELTS teachers could exploit both DA forms, especially the interventionist model, in writing preparatory courses of the academic version of IELTS task 2 to identify students' writing problems and remove them via dynamic face-to-face communication, especially based on the interventionist model, with IELTS candidates which could play a constructive role in the betterment of their performance in academic writing task 2. In simpler terms, this study puts forward some implicit pedagogical suggestions for the IELTS instructors to explore novel ways of teaching IELTS academic writing task 2 and refine their current writing instruction procedures. This could be accomplished by assigning IELTS candidates some dynamic-based tasks and by offering mediational guides and feedback based on the interactionist and interventionist DA models in the IELTS preparatory writing courses. Further, the findings of this study may encourage and propel IELTS trainers to utilize DA forms, i.e., the interventionist and interactionist models, in their teaching process of the IELTS writing task 2 to foster the prospective IELTS candidates' writing proficiency and expedite their developmental process.

Similarly, IELTS candidates could diagnose their task 2 writing weaknesses and embark on obviating them through DA aids and mediations they could receive from their instructors. Even material developers might find the results of this study helpful and beneficial. They could put the spotlight on compiling and preparing DA-based textbooks and materials which could be utilized for the optimal instruction and learning of IELTS academic task 2 writing.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the fact that the interventionist model serves a better function in the instruction of the IELTS academic writing task 2 in several ways. First, it has the potential to predict

the learners' future success, based on the number of prompts presented to learners while undertaking writing tasks. Second, it can contribute to learners' conscious raising by offering graduated prompts from the most implicit to the most explicit. This, in turn, leads to the development of IELTS candidates' logical thinking abilities to discover and eliminate their writing problems in the IELTS academic writing task 2.

It is plausible that many limitations could have influenced the results of this research. The most important limitation of this research concerns the limited number of IELTS candidates participating in the study. The results of the study should consequently be treated with the utmost caution. Therefore, further research could be conducted with a larger sample size to verify the findings of the present study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IELTS TASK 2 Writing Band Descriptors

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	fully addresses all parts of the task presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well-supported ideas	uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skillfully manages paragraphing	uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips.'	uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	sufficiently addresses all parts of the task presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas	sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	addresses all parts of the task presents a clear position throughout the response presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralize and/or supporting ideas may lack focus	logically organizes information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use presents a clear central topic within each paragraph	uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word-formation	uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear	arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately uses paragraphing, but not always logically	uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

5	addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail	presents information with some organization but there may be a lack of overall progression makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices may be repetitive because of the lack of referencing and substitution may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate	uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader	uses only a limited range of structures attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate presents a position but this is unclear presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and maybe repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported	presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently, and there is no clear progression in the response uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing	uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader	uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses some structures are accurate, but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	does not adequately address any part of the task does not express a clear position presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant	does not organize ideas logically may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas	uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may severely distort the message	attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	barely responds to the task does not express a position may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development	has very little control of organizational features	uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling	cannot use sentence forms except in memorized phrases
1	answer is completely unrelated to the task	fails to communicate any message	can only use a few isolated words	cannot use sentence forms at all
0	does not attend does not attempt the task in any way writes a totally memorized response			

Appendix B: IELTS Academic Writing Task 2 Questions

Pre-test Task

Some People say that the main environmental problem of our time is the loss of particular species of plants and animals. Others say that there are more important environmental problems.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Post-test Task

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

At the present time, the population of some countries includes a relatively large number of young adults, compared with the number of older people.

Do the advantages of this situation outweigh the disadvantages?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Appendix C: Excerpts from the Researcher's Field notes

The following excerpt is a part of what Ali gradually wrote on the following topic based on his interactions with the teacher. This is, in fact, an example of what was observed by the researcher in the interactionist-based writing class on session 3 recorded in the form of field notes for further analysis and scrutiny.

Topic: When a country develops its technology, the traditional skills and ways of life die out. It is pointless to try and keep them alive. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

We want to think and write about an important essay. We know that development is an essential thing for each country and each country has traditional skills. Now, if technology can ~~destroys~~ traditional skills, shouldn't we try for developing it? i think that it's wrong. We now that the number of people will increase and people can't leave ~~with out~~ technology but

L (Learner): excuse me, I've written a few sentences but I don't know I'm writing correctly or...

T (Teacher): Let me see...

T: let's read your topic sentence '*We want to think and write about an important essay*'.....umm...look, the first sentence is off-topic and non-academic...it's like you're giving a lecture or something like that in front of the class. Don't you think so?

L: Got the point...yes... So, how I can start?

T: Think...

L: Can I start from the next sentence?

T: Sure...go ahead...

L: We know that...

T: Be careful with the capitalization of the beginning of a sentence and try to write more academically and formally.

L: Oh, yeah... I can writeAll of us know that...or....it is a fact that...as you taught us the last session.

T: Good. .or....as a matter of fact, .or...it is needless to say that....with the advent or emergence of technology.....

L: Wow, great...loved the last one...'with the advent of technology, we know that'....no ... 'with the advent of technology, development is an essential thing for each country'

T: What kind of development? It's *too* broad, I think... What can you say instead of thing?

L: Technological development

T: Perfect...try to use different parts of speech of a word, synonyms, ~~antonyms~~.

L: 'technological development has become an essential part of each country or society. Can I say needless to say here?'

T: Yes...

L: 'Needless to say that, the development of technology can cause ~~the loss~~ of traditional skills.'

T: The noun for lose is loss...and you can say traditions ... don't use the same words... instead of cause, you can say lead to, end in... What about instead of a way of life?

L: Can I say death...? Lifestyle..?

T: Yes, well done... or disappearance ...read the rest...

L: 'Now, if technology can destroys...'

T: What kind of verb do we need here after the modal verb 'Can'?

L: Oh, ~~no~~'s', a foolish mistake.

T: Don't worry...think how you can change this sentence into....

L: 'some people think that now...no no...if ...no...what can I say, Uhhh...because the development of technology leads to the ~~destruction~~ of traditional skills, we shouldn't attempt to....' Right?

T: Yes, but you must write destruction with 'u'.... be careful with the spelling.

L: Then I add..., 'i think it is wrong'.

T: You used the word 'think' once before. What else can you say?

L: 'Believe'

T: Or 'from my point of view', 'I hold the belief that'...or you can say 'overall, I disagree with the opinion expressed'... (Highlighting expressed) it means 'that is expressed'...it is grammatically shorter but it has the same meaning...ok ...go on...

L [laughing]: I should use a capital I, too. The last sentence is ok... I think. Right?

T: No, two or three more spelling problems...Look. Take your time.

L: now? With k...another foolish mistake...

T: Ok. leave? and live? What is the difference in meaning?

L: uhhaaa...got it.

T: no space between without...it is one word... and it is a fragmented or incomplete sentence...

L: I wanted to write 'technology has bad effects on people.'

T: Be critical of your own work... is it relevant to our topic? Just think that it is someone's writing and you want to score it...you should write relevant points formally while you pay attention to grammatical points too. Ok?

L: Ok. Thanks.

What follows is an example of the researcher's observations of the interventionist group who were given the following topic and received treatments based on the interventionist approach in the fourth session.

Topic: Some people think that children should learn geography in school. However, some others think that it is more important to teach subjects that are more relevant to life. What is your opinion?

This is a part of what Zahra gradually wrote with the aid and feedback that she received from her teacher or mediator based upon the interventionist-based model.

Let's say we should respect to both opinions but we should discuss about both of them with detail. For people which think geography is not important to learn in school, let's say, you are a bit wrong because geography is related to everything. For example...

T: (Underlined the first sentence 'Let's say we should respect to both opinions but we should discuss about both of them with detail.' and paused)

- L: (Just looked at the teacher silently)
- The teacher repeated the sentence in a questioning manner.
- The learner did not get the point so the teacher repeated the first part 'let's say we should respect...'
- T: Do you think it is a good sentence to use at the beginning of an essay without any introduction, general statement, etc.?
- L: (Thinking and gazing at the teacher without saying anything)
- T: (in Persian) *بگه*, it better to write like this or start with a statement like 'nowadays there is a debate about the subjects that should be taught at school. There are 2 groups with different ideas... I think'?
- L: sure, yeah...it is great...so let me rewrite it, I'll come to check it quickly.
- T: Great...you need to have an introduction paragraph...think about the organization of your essay and the development of ideas...
- A few minutes later, the student had rewritten this sentence.
- Nowadays, there is a debate about the school subjects. Some people and parents think that teaching geography at school is not useful but other people think that geography is an important lesson. Let's say we should respect to both opinions but we should discuss about both of them with detail.*
- T: Uha...it is much better...you have added something. Let me see.
- [Highlighting 'let's say....']
- L: What's wrong? I said my opinion here.
- T: Let's say?
- L: I don't know...
- T: Is it a good sentence for expressing your idea?
- L: No? What can I say? I think?
- T: Yes or you can say: from my point of view, I believe that I hold the view that...It should be formal and should be a phrase for expression of beliefs.
- L: I see (in Persian).
- T: The teacher highlighted 'but we should discuss about both of them with detail' and looked at the student inquisitively without saying anything.
- L: Should I omit the word 'but'?
- T: Yup...that's one...still there are some more mistakes.
- L: Discussion is a noun. Yes?
- T: That's right.
- L: So, it is ok... Discuss about, isn't it?
- T: the verb is ok...but...pause...
- L: After 'should' we have a simple verb. So, what's the problem?
- T: About? said the teacher in a questioning manner?
- L: Yes...translating the word and preposition in Persian
- T [smiling]: No, it doesn't have any preposition in English...discuss+ s.th
- L: I didn't know this....thanks. Can I continue writing?
- T: One more mistake. Check it carefully. With detail?
- L: with details? Plural 's'?
- T: Nope. With detail or in detail?
- L: With detail...
- T: In English, unlike Persian, they say in detail. Keep it in your mind.
- After a while, the teacher went toward the same student who had added this new sentence: *For people which think geography is not important to learn in school, we should say: you are a bit wrong because geography is related to everything. For example*
- After a few seconds
- T: [underlining the word 'which']: People 'which' think?
- L: [Silence]
- T: Which?
- T: Which or who?
- L: Who?
- T: Yes, write more carefully. You should use 'who' for people in a subject position before a verb.
-

T: [Highlighting the phrase 'for people who think']: Correct the mistake here yourself

L: to people.

T: or you can say...uh... those or those people who claim that geography is an unimportant course or subject to learn in school...ok. Now read the rest of the sentence... 'we should say: you are a bit wrong?' asked the teacher. Is it formal and academic to use direct speech in writing?

L: No...so what can I say? Uhhh...

T: How can you say the same point using different words?

L: Should ...should? My mind is blocked...writing is really hard...

T: Be relaxed. I'll help you improve it. The teacher started reviewing the whole parts and restating them to the teacher in Persian. Then, she asked once more what can be written after 'Those or those people who claim that geography is an unimportant course or subject to learn in school...'

L: should know that they are a bit wrong.

T: A bit wrong?

L: Yes a bit.

T: a bit or to some extent? Which one is formal?

L: To some extent? A bit is not formal? I didn't know.

T: That's right. You will learn them gradually. Don't worry. Go ahead. Thanks.

L: thank you.

Bibliographic information of this paper for citing:

Daneshvar, A., Bagheri, M. S., Sadighi, F., Yarmohammadi, L., & Yamini, M. (2021). A probe into Iranian learners' performance on IELTS academic writing task 2: Operationalizing two models of dynamic assessment versus static assessment. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 8(2), 25-58.
