

Employing Tasks to Improve Argumentative Essay Writing of EFL Teachers: A Case of Interactionist versus Interventionist Dynamic Assessment

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Abstract

Dynamic Assessment (DA), which stems from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, invests in the mediation of teacher to improve learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This study investigated the impact of DA on the development of argumentative essay writing of EFL teachers and consisted of a pretest, mediation, a post-test, and a transcendence test (TRT). Accordingly, 66 novice EFL teachers were selected based on convenience sampling and were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and a control group ($n_1=n_2=n_3=22$). The interactionist DA group (IA-DAG) and the interventionist DA group (IV-DAG) received non-standardized and standardized feedback types, respectively. However, the control group practiced non-DA writing instruction. Subsequently, a series of writing tasks were used for teaching writing. After nine sessions, the groups took a post-test, and after two weeks, TRT was administered. Appropriately, several statistical procedures were conducted to analyze data. First, repeated-measure ANOVAs were performed to examine the beneficial effects of the instructions in the groups. Second, the mixed between-within-subjects ANOVA was run and the results revealed that there were main effects for treatment types and time. Also, the result of one-way ANOVA on the post-test showed the outperformance of the IA-DAG over the other groups. Besides, the results of the one-way ANOVA on the TRT indicated no significant differences between the IA-DAG and IV-DAG. However, both groups had significantly higher mean scores than the non-DA group. The study has implications for L2 writing teachers, material developers, and educators.

Keywords: Argumentative writing, Interactionist Dynamic Assessment, Interventionist Dynamic Assessment, Mediation

1. Introduction

Learning to write in a foreign language is not an isolated classroom activity produced by an individual, but a social and cultural experience (Weigle, 2002). The absence of an addressee presents a challenge to writers due to not receiving immediate feedback from listeners regarding the intelligibility of the intended message. Therefore, the presence of an interactant may have a facilitating role in creating a flawless composition. A significant shortcoming of the product-oriented approach to writing has been its poor focus on individual abilities and the role of feedback in assisting learners throughout the process of composing writing (Brown, 2001). The introduction of the process approach, as Hyland (2004) noted, seems to have been motivated by the preference for guidance through intervention in the process of essay writing. In this approach, the teacher's role is to help students develop strategies for getting started, drafting, removing their problems, and

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editing. Shifting the focus from products of prior learning to the processes of competence formation led to the development of Dynamic Assessment (DA) in which teachers and students jointly perform activities, with teachers' mediation as a necessity to help students cope with their problems in the process of L2 learning. The underlying assumption of DA derives from Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which relates it to higher mental functioning and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Understanding cognitive development becomes possible by focusing on individuals' ZPD and how, with the mediation of a more knowledgeable person, the individual becomes more capable of doing a task. The relation between DA and writing can be authenticated by drawing on the views which highlight the reciprocal relationships between thinking and writing as two cognitive processes (Kellog, 1994; Rashtchi, 2007). Following Lantolf (2005), the researchers of the present study believed that DA has the potentials to enhance language learning within the classroom context. Therefore, they aimed to explore whether the implementation of DA principals could facilitate the L2 writing skills of Iranian EFL learners.

Moreover, the application of DA in writing could contribute to bridging the gap between individual and group ZPD (Poehner, 2009). The researchers of this study assume that writing is an appropriate vehicle for fostering individuals' ZPD because the mediation of the teacher in the processes that student-writers go through while writing and providing pertinent feedback can contribute to producing compositions, which have clarity, relevance, and accuracy.

Interventionist and interactionist (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004) are two approaches to DA with different characteristics. Interventionist focuses on mediation established on pre-determined hints from implicit to explicit, whereas interactionist invests on learners' responsivity for mediation. Each approach has been the focus of several studies. While DA has been the source of numerous studies on L2 writing development (e.g., Birjandi & Ebadi, 2010; Miao & Lv, 2013; Shrestha & Coffin, 2012) several researchers have also focused on interventionist and interactionist DA (e.g., Khodabakhshi, Abbasian, & Rashtchi, 2018; Khoshshima, Saed, & Mortazavi, 2016; Rahimi, Kushki, & Nassaji, 2015). Thus, drawing on the previous studies and benefiting from task-based writing, this study investigated the comparative effects of the two approaches on EFL teachers' argumentative essay writing. The underlying assumption was that employing writing tasks would facilitate teachers' mediation and can shorten the time constraints which DA-based classrooms might encounter. The use of writing tasks could contribute to the manipulation of DA in regular classrooms instead of classes, which are usually instructed by teachers who are experts in the field of applied linguistics (Filip, 2017). Additionally, the researchers of the present study presumed that focus on the impacts of interactionist and interventionist DA could reveal what type of feedback could promote learners' ZPD while they are engaged in the act of writing. The researchers believed that this finding could help teachers, educators, and practitioners obtain a deeper understanding of L2 writing development and the way to approach the skill in the classroom.

2. Literature Review

DA originated almost half a century ago in response to dissatisfaction with traditional assessment methods in providing the assessors with sufficient information about learners' problems (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2000). DA tools help instructors identify the conditions under which learners can show their potential ability if they receive assistance. Learning potential is identified and assessed by applying ZPD (Haywood & Lidz, 2007) defined by Vygotsky (1978) as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of the potential development as determined through the problem solving under the adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). To understand how Vygotsky's mediational procedures might be approached in DA, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) propose interventionist and interactionist DA as two kinds of accessible mediation. They argue that the two approaches vary in the ways they respond to learners' difficulties. That is to say, while in the interactionist model, the mediators can freely intervene to provide learners with various forms of assistance, in the interventionist model, the mediator has to follow some programmed rules.

In line with Vygotsky's preference for cooperative dialoguing, interactionist DA, as the name implies, gives way to the interaction between the mediator and the learner and is highly sensitive to his/her ZPD. It focuses on the development of one or a group of learners and has no pre-determined endpoints. In contrast, interventionist DA selects the kinds of problems learners may encounter, and mediation is then "scripted as hints, prompts, and leading questions that vary in their degree of explicitness" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 15). According to Lantolf and Poehner (2004), interventionist and interactionist approaches usually involve three stages of pretesting, mediation, and post-testing. However, two models have provided a ground for researchers to compare their impacts on improving learners' ZPD and the performances that result from such improvement.

Another point worthy of mentioning is the concept of transcendence, which refers to the re-contextualization of generalizability and refers to the ability of learners to reapply their newly acquired knowledge through DA in innovative contexts (Poehner, 2009). Bachman (2004) defines generalizability as the extent to which one can make inferences about individuals' future performance in non-assessment contexts based on their performance in the assessment context. However, while generalizability assumes that contexts are homogeneous, transcendence presumes their variability. Thus, transcendence is not limited to a specific context; it aims at helping learners move beyond the here-and-now demands of a given problem (Poehner, 2007). Learners should realize that they learn a skill not for merely completing a classroom task but, more importantly, for their 'real world' applications in the future.

Perhaps a good example of an interactionist DA of writing ability is the study by Nassaji and Swain (2000) that is relevant to the issue of tailoring mediation to an individual's needs. They paired a tutor with two ESL learners. With one of the learners, the mediation was dialogic, and the tutor attempted to co-construct a ZPD with the learner by implicit corrective interaction and moving systematically toward explicit feedback, depending on the learner's responsiveness to the mediation. The results showed that the learner receiving negotiated mediation in the ZPD had been less accurate than the non-ZPD student when independently producing the initial composition but showed more considerable improvement as a result of the mediation, outperforming the non-ZPD student on the final composition.

Xiaoxiao and Yan's (2010) case study attempted to produce a DA-based process for English writing instruction. Reflections and results showed the primacy of dialogic teaching in enhancing learners' writing interest and improving writing competence. Shrestha and Coffin (2012) also explored the value of tutor mediation in the context of academic writing development among undergraduate business studies students in open and distance learning. They concluded that DA could deal with the areas that students need the most support in managing information flow. They argued that DA could contribute to undergraduate students' academic writing development by responding to their individual needs.

Also, Birjandi and Ebadi (2010), in their web-based qualitative inquiry employing interactionist DA based on Vygotsky's cooperative dialoguing, indicated that through microgenetic analysis and Skype, it is possible to obtain a more productive and accurate understanding of students' potential level of L2 grammatical development. Davin (2011) explored whether and how group DA could improve Spanish learners' performance in forming and using interrogatives. She reported that some students moved from assisted to unassisted performance during group DA. Others required the provision of some peer mediation through the small group work activities that she incorporated into the more extensive instructional sessions, and some could not form interrogatives after the mediation, for whom she claims the mediational support was not within their ZPDs. Mehri and Amerian (2015) reported that the implication of the interactionist DA carried difficulties in class and concluded that the advantages of group DA outweigh the interactionist one due to practicality reasons. Along the same line, Razavipour and Rezaee (2017) highlighted the diagnostic benefits of group DA because of the inherent practicality it has for the classroom application compared to the interactionist DA.

In writing argumentative essays, learners need to follow the rules of language for producing accurate and coherent texts. Besides, they need to generate ideas, express their thoughts, and meanwhile be able to convince the readers, which makes writing a perplexing activity for them. The use of tasks can stimulate learners' cognitive involvement, extend their focus on the components of language, and thus facilitate writing (Rashtchi & Mohammadi, 2017). As Messi (2001) argues, tasks provide the required exposure learners need before starting to write. Also, they can help learners overcome their limited competence in the English language and the way they should organize their ideas (Wei, 2017). The aim of using tasks in this study was to examine whether they could decrease the challenges regarding time constraints for implementing DA principles (Filip, 2017).

The current quasi-experimental study with a non-equivalent pretest-post-test control group design (Best & Kahn, 2006) explored the efficacy of two models of DA in enhancing the L2 argumentative writing of Iranian EFL teachers. The interventionist procedure provided intervention in the form of the prompts sequenced from general to more specific while the interactionist one provided feedback based on the individual's responsiveness. The objectives of the present study urged the researchers to formulate the following research questions:

Research Question One: Does interactionist DA have any impact on the Iranian EFL teachers' argumentative writing?

Research Question Two: Does interventionist DA have any impact on the Iranian EFL teachers' argumentative writing?

Research Question Three: Does non-DA have any impact on the Iranian EFL teachers' argumentative writing?

Research Question Four: Which type of intervention is more effective in enhancing the Iranian EFL teachers' argumentative writing, measured across three intervals?

Research Question Five: Is there any difference between the writing performances of the study groups in the post-test?

Research Question Six: Is there any difference between the writing performances of the study groups in the transcendent test?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Participants were 66 male (n=19) and female (n=47) Iranian EFL novice teachers (graduated from Islamic Azad University, Chalus, Tonekabon, and Nour Branches) who were selected based on convenience sampling. Their ages ranged from 25 to 30, and their English teaching experience was between two and five years. It is worth mentioning that the researchers applied Palmer, Stough, Burdinski, and Gonzales's (2005) criterion that categorizes teachers with less than five years of experience as a novice. They had applied to work in a private language institute in Tonekabon and, as a prerequisite, had to participate in a Teacher Training Course (TTC). As the requirement of the TTC, they had to take part in a writing program. Initially, 96 persons who had registered for the course took a general English proficiency test (GEPT) adopted from IELTS 11 General Training (2016), and those whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean (M=52, SD=1.5) were randomly assigned to three groups of 22 members. The participants' scores on GEPT, using IELTS band score calculator, indicated that the participants were at B2 (intermediate) level of language proficiency equal to 5.5 on IELTS exam. The band score calculator is accessible at (https://www.examenglish.com/IELTS/IELTS_Band_Scores.html).

All in all, two experimental groups, interventionist DA group (IV-DAG) and interactionist DA group (IA-DAG), and one non-DA group (Non-DAG) contributed to the fulfillment of the objectives. The results of the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S) showed that the distribution of the scores on the general English proficiency test was normal (.477>.05). Those

individuals whose scores were beyond one standard deviation from the mean participated in other classes and were not the concern of this study.

3.2. Instruments

For data collection, the researchers used a proficiency test (GEPT), a writing pretest and post-test (designed and validated by [Saniei, 2014](#), Appendix A), and a writing transcendence test (TRT, Appendix B). For scoring the writings, the researchers employed Scoring Guide for Writing (2002) by California State University Fresno (Appendix C).

GEPT adopted from IELTS 11 General Training (2016) examined the homogeneity of the participants at the outset of the study. The test covered listening, reading, (40 questions each), and writing (two questions) sections. The researchers did not employ the speaking section due to time constraints. The reliability of listening and reading sections computed via Cronbach's alpha legitimized its use ($r = .89$).

Moreover, to estimate the writing ability of each group before and after the treatment, a valid test ([Saniei, 2014](#)) was used ($r = 0.81$). Section A had 40 items consisting of different writing activities. Section B required the students to write an argumentative essay in about 530 words (Appendix A). The participants' performances in section B, which included writing a 530-word argumentative essay on the given topic, were scored by two raters in the pretest and post-test. Two raters, who had a Ph.D. in TEFL and eight years of experience in teaching English writing, scored the essays. The inter-rater reliability of the pretest ($r = .98$) and post-test ($r = .99$) showed consistency between the raters.

Additionally, the researchers used a two-section TRT (Appendix B) similar to the pretest and post-test in form but presumably more difficult and complex to examine whether the participants could extend their newly acquired knowledge beyond the here-and-now demands of a given task ([Feuerstein, 2000](#)). Section A, which consisted of 40 items, was taken from [Saniei \(2014\)](#), who had validated the test. However, once again, three university professors, who compared the tests agreed that this section was more complicated and more complex than the pretest and post-test. Additionally, the researchers piloted the test with 20 participants and measured its reliability via Cronbach's alpha ($r = 0.76$), which was almost similar to the reliability index (0.73) reported by [Saniei \(2014\)](#).

Section B of TRT required the participants to write a 530-word argumentative essay on '*Domestic violence is not a private matter. It's a horrific crime. How far do you agree or disagree?*' selected by the researchers of the present study. The researchers prepared a list and asked 30 students and instructors of TEFL to decide on the most challenging topic. The inter-rater reliability between the raters' scores in section B was 0.81.

3.3. Materials

For teaching the writing skills, the researchers employed nine audio-video files which were performed by native English teachers (available at www.engvid.com). The criteria for selecting the videos were their compatibility with the syllabus of the classes. The files covered issues that the teacher intended to cover during the course. All participants watched the videos and received the teacher's explanations where necessary. A series of writing tasks developed by the researchers was also used for implementing DA principles in teaching writing (Appendix D).

3.4. Procedure

After assigning the participants to three groups, they took the writing pretest in the first session. From session two to session ten, they received nine 90-minute instructions on writing in October and November 2018. Each session comprised of two stages. The first stage was the same for the three groups and started with the instructional videos explained in the materials section. Different features of writing, such as discourse markers, sequence markers, boosters, and hedgers, were addressed. Also, the teacher lectured on issues, such as coherence and cohesion, and how to start, support ideas, and end an essay.

In the second stage, the participants worked on the writing tasks which the researchers used to implement DA activities. The tasks were the same in the three groups; however, the type of intervention was different. While the instructor did not intervene in the process of writing in the control group, the experimental groups received mediation, although differently. The researchers followed Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) regulatory scale, which is designed based on a continuum of corrective strategies, ranging from implicit to explicit. For example, asking a learner to find his/her error was interpreted as an implicit prompt while the clear explanation of the correct pattern was considered an explicit mediation. It is worth mentioning that the teacher applied concurrent DA (Poehner, 2009) in which interactions shifted between primary and secondary interactants as one learner's question or comment set the stage for another learner's contribution.

3.4.1. Interactionist DA Group (IA-DAG)

In the interactionist type of treatment, first, the learners received explicit instruction regarding the content of the task they had to accomplish. Then while doing the task, the teacher provided corrective feedback in the form of non-standardized prompts based on how the participants responded to her feedback. The learners and the teacher tried to resolve the problem together; however, the learners' responsivity formed the type of feedback they received. The following protocol illustrates the interaction between the teacher and the participant. The extract is taken from Task one, part A, sentence 2. The participant wrote, "*Although I was an ambitious student, but I managed to do my share of playing.*" The interaction between the teacher (M) and participant (P) helped him remove the erroneous part of the sentence.

M: [with a questioning tone] 'but I managed to do?

P: but I managed...[pause]

M: 'but'? Although I was an ambitious student, 'but'? [emphasizing with a questioning tone]

P: but must be omitted [stating hesitantly]

M: very good. Why?

P: because of although

P: Yes. We should write, 'Although I was an ambitious student, I managed to do...

M: Exactly.

3.4.2. Interventionist DA Group (IV-DAG)

Interventionist DA comprised the teacher's feedback in the form of a set of implicit-to-explicit mediational moves given to learners when they had problems to perform the intended task. That is, the teacher intervened in the process of task completion and assisted the learners in writing the correct answers. The instruction in this group was through pre-planned prompts and feedback, arranged from implicit to explicit. The excerpt below represents the interaction between a participant and the teacher/mediator in which she was trying to find the errors in sentence 2 of Task two (part A).

P: We know that 'before to come' is not correct.

M: very good. How should it be corrected?

P: 'before come' or ...

M: 'before come' ? is it a good substitute?

P: [Pause.]

M: 'before' is a preposition, can we use a bare infinitive after it?.

P: 'oh, right.' We must put 'ing' after 'before.'

M: That's it.

P: Before coming?

M: exactly.

3.4.3. Non-DA Group (Non-DAG)

Non-DAG received the teacher's explicit corrective feedback after accomplishing the tasks. The teacher did not assist learners during the process of task completion. For example, the only piece of information they received on the task for the use of exemplification in argumentative essay writing was: The task you are to accomplish now is about the use of exemplification in English writing. As you see on the board, there are various signals that you can apply. Write examples in your writing. This task will provide you with good practice in applying these signals in your writing.

3.5. Post-test

The participants sat for the writing post-test in the 11th session and for TRT with a two-week interval in non-dynamic environments.

4. Results

4.1. Research Question One

For answering the first, second, and third research questions, the researchers performed three repeated-measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA). The reason was to provide a picture of each groups' writing development independent from other groups in the three tests. The descriptive statistics (Table 1) shows that the writing scores of IA-DAG increased from Time1 (M=12.04, SD=1.25) to Time2 (M=15.40, SD= 1.14) and to Time3 (M=15.18, SD=1.09).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Writing of IA-DAG Across Time

	Mean	SD	N
Time 1	12.0455	1.25270	22
Time 2	15.4091	1.14056	22
Time 3	15.1818	1.09702	22

The results of the test showed a statistically significant change from pretest (Time1) to post-test (Time2) and TRT (Time3) $F(1.33, 27.96) = 104.71, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .83$. Employing the commonly used guidelines by [Cohen \(1988, pp.284-287\)](#), this result is very large, indicating that 83% of the changes in the dependent variable (writing) were because of the treatment the group received.

Table 2: RM-ANOVA for Writing Scores of IA-DAG Across Time

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared (η_p^2)	Eta
Time	Sphericity Assumed	155.485	2	77.742	104.714	.000	.833
	Greenhouse-Geisser	155.485	1.331	116.776	104.714	.000	.833
	Lower-bound	155.485	1.000	155.485	104.714	.000	.833
Error (Time)	Sphericity Assumed	31.182	42	.742			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	31.182	27.961	1.115			
	Lower-bound	31.182	21.000	1.485			

Multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments showed a statistically significant improvement from Time1 to Time2 ($p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -3.72 \text{ to } -2.99$) and to Time3 ($p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -3.92 \text{ to } -2.34$). However, the improvement from Time2 to Time3 was not statistically significant ($p = 1.00, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.55 \text{ to } 1.01$) (Table 3). Therefore, the researchers concluded that interactionist DA resulted in significant short-term and long-term improvement in the participants' argumentative writing scores.

Table 3: Multiple Comparisons for Writing Scores of IA-DAG Across Time

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-3.364*	.140	.000	-3.729	-2.999
	3	-3.136*	.304	.000	-3.926	-2.347
2	1	3.364*	.140	.000	2.999	3.729
	3	.227	.301	1.000	-.556	1.010
3	1	3.136*	.304	.000	2.347	3.926
	2	-.227	.301	1.000	-1.010	.556

4.2. Research Question Two

The results of the descriptive statistics showed that the writing scores of the IV-DAG increased from Time1 (M=12.09, SD=1.26) to Time2 (M=14.31, SD=1.17) and Time3 (M=14.86, SD=1.08) (Table 4).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics, Writing of IV-DAG Across Time

	Mean	SD.	N
Time1	12.0909	1.26901	22
Time2	14.3182	1.17053	22
Time3	14.8636	1.08213	22

The results of the RM-ANOVA (Table 5) indicated a significant difference between the mean scores of the group across three tests from Time1 to Time2 and Time3 $F(1.79, 37.73)=56.86$, $p<=.001$, $\eta_p^2=.73$ shows a large effect size.

Table 5: RM-ANOVA for Writing of IV-DAG Across Time

Source		Type II Squares	Sum of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared (η_p^2)
Time	Sphericity Assumed	94.939	2	47.470	56.865	.000	.730
	Greenhouse-Geisser	94.939	1.797	52.840	56.865	.000	.730
	Lower-bound	94.939	1.000	94.939	56.865	.000	.730
Error (Time)	Sphericity Assumed	35.061	42	.835			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	35.061	37.731	.929			
	Lower-bound	35.061	21.000	1.670			

Multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments showed a statistically significant improvement from Time1 to Time2 ($p<=.001$, 95% CI= -2.81 to -1.63) and to Time3 ($p<=.001$, 95% CI= -3.57 to -1.97). However, similar to the IA-DAG, the improvement from Time2 to Time3 was not statistically significant ($p=.207$, 95% CI= -1.28 to .19) (Table 6). Therefore, interventionist DA resulted in significant short-term and long-term improvement in the participants' argumentative writing scores.

Table 6: Multiple Comparisons for Writing of IV-DAG Across Time

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-2.227*	.227	.000	-2.818	-1.636
	3	-2.773*	.308	.000	-3.574	-1.971
2	1	2.227*	.227	.000	1.636	2.818
	3	-.545	.285	.207	-1.286	.195
3	1	2.773*	.308	.000	1.971	3.574
	2	.545	.285	.207	-.195	1.286

4.3. Research Question Three

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for answering the third research question. As shown, the writing scores of the Non-DAG increased from Time1 (M=12.04, SD=1.21) to Time2 (M=13.68, SD=1.21) and Time3 (M=12.90, SD=1.23).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Writing of Non-DAG Across Time

	Mean	SD	N
Time1	12.0455	1.21409	22
Time2	13.6818	1.21052	22
Time3	12.9091	1.23091	22

As Table 8 shows, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the group across three tests. A statistically significant change was observed from Time1 to Time2 and Time3 ($p < .001$, $F_{1,52} = 32.08 = 36.03$), $\eta_p^2 = .63$.

Table 8: RM-ANOVA for Writing of Non-DAG Across Time

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared (η_p^2)	
Time	Sphericity Assumed	29.485	2	14.742	36.037	.000	.632
	Greenhouse-Geisser	29.485	1.528	19.298	36.037	.000	.632
	Lower-bound	29.485	1.000	29.485	36.037	.000	.632
Error (Time)	Sphericity Assumed	17.182	42	.409			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	17.182	32.086	.535			
	Lower-bound	17.182	21.000	.818			

Multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments showed a statistically significant difference from Time1 to Time2 ($p < .001$, 95% CI= -2.24 to -1.03) and to Time3 ($p < .001$, 95% CI= -1.21 to -.50). The decrease from Time2 to Time3 was also statistically significant ($p = .002$, 95% CI= .26 to 1.28) (Table 9). Therefore, the control group had no gain at Time3.

Table 9: Multiple Comparisons for Writing Scores of Non-DAG Across Time

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-1.636*	.233	.000	-2.243	-1.030
	3	-.864*	.136	.000	-1.218	-.509
2	1	1.636*	.233	.000	1.030	2.243
	3	.773*	.197	.002	.261	1.284
3	1	.864*	.136	.000	.509	1.218
	2	-.773*	.197	.002	-1.284	-.261

4.4. Research Question Four

To answer the fourth research question, a mixed between-within-subjects ANOVA was conducted to analyze the impact of three different treatment types on the argumentative writing of the participants. The test examined whether there were main effects for each of the independent variables and time, and also for their interaction—to test whether the change in writing performance over time was different for the three groups. Thus, Box's M statistic was used. Table 10 shows that the observed covariance matrices in the writing ability were equal across groups ($p > .001$).

Table 10. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

F	2.177
df1	12
df2	19234.385
Sig.	.010

As Table 11 shows, there is a significant interaction between the treatment type and time, Wilks' Lambda = .467, $F(2, 67) = 14.36$, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .317. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilks' Lambda = .117, $F(2, 67) = 234.7$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .883$, with three groups showing an improvement in writing across the three periods.

Table 11: Mixed Between-within Subjects ANOVA Across Time

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial	Eta
							Squared	
						(η_p^2)		
Time	Pillai's Trace	.883	234.771	2.000	62.000	.000	.883	
	Wilks' Lambda	.117	234.771	2.000	62.000	.000	.883	
	Hotelling's Trace	7.573	234.771	2.000	62.000	.000	.883	
	Roy's Largest Root	7.573	234.771	2.000	62.000	.000	.883	
Time * Groups	Pillai's Trace	.594	13.300	4.000	126.000	.000	.297	
	Wilks' Lambda	.467	14.362	4.000	124.000	.000	.317	
	Hotelling's Trace	1.011	15.419	4.000	122.000	.000	.336	
	Roy's Largest Root	.860	27.079 ^c	2.000	63.000	.000	.462	

The results of the main effect comparing the three types of treatment were significant $F(1, 63), 10.45, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .995$, and suggested that there was a statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of the three teaching interventions (Table 12).

Table 12: Between-subject Effects for Groups Across Time

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared (η_p^2)
Intercept	36709.172	1	36709.172	12648.056	.000	.995
Groups	60.646	2	30.323	10.448	.000	.249
Error	182.848	63	2.902			

Two one-way ANOVAs were conducted to answer the fourth and fifth research questions. The results showed a significant difference between the three groups, $F(2, 63) = 12.17, p < .001$ on Time 2, $\eta_p^2 = .27$ (Table 13).

Table 13: One-way ANOVA for Time2Writing

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared (η^2)
Between Groups	33.576	2	16.788	12.176	.000	0.27
Within Groups	86.864	63	1.379			
Total	120.439	65				

Post hoc Tukey test showed a statistically significant difference between IA-DAG and IV-DAG ($p = .008$, mean difference = 1.09, 95% CI = .24 to 1.94). Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference between IA-DAG and the Non-DAG ($p < .001$, mean difference = 1.72, 95% CI = .87 to 2.57). However, the multiple comparisons did not show a statistically significant difference between IV-DAG and the Non-DAG ($p = .179$, mean difference = .63, 95% CI = -.21 to 1.48) (Table 14). Therefore, the participants in IA-DAG outperformed both IV-DAG and Non-DAG at Time2.

Table 14: Tukey Post Hoc for Time2 Writing

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
IA-DAG	IV-DAG	1.09091*	.35404	.008	.2411	1.9407
	Non-DAG	1.72727*	.35404	.000	.8775	2.5771
IV-DAG	IA-DAG	-1.09091*	.35404	.008	-1.9407	-.2411
	Non-DAG	.63636	.35404	.179	-.2134	1.4862
Non-DAG	IA-DAG	-1.72727*	.35404	.000	-2.5771	-.8775
	IV-DAG	-.63636	.35404	.179	-1.4862	.2134

The results of the one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference between the writing performances of the three groups in Time3, $F(2, 63) = 25.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$ (Table 15).

Table 15: One-way ANOVA for Time3Writing

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared (η^2)
Between Groups	66.636	2	33.318	25.698	.000	
Within Groups	81.682	63	1.297			
Total	148.318	65				

The results of the Tukey test at Time3 showed no statistically significant difference between IA-DAG and IV-DAG ($p=.626$, mean difference=.31, 95% CI=-.50 to 1.14). However, it showed a statistically significant difference between IA-DAG and Non-DAG ($p<.001$, mean difference= 2.27, 95% CI= 1.44 to 3.09). The multiple comparisons also showed a statistically significant difference between IV-DAG and Non-DAG ($p<.001$, mean difference= 1.95, 95% CI= 1.13 to 2.77) (Table16). Therefore, the participants in IA-DAG and IV-DAG outperformed the Non-DAG in Time3.

Table 16: Tukey Post Hoc for Time3 Writing

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
IA-DAG	IV-DAG	.31818	.34332	.626	-.5059	1.1423
	Non-DAG	2.27273*	.34332	.000	1.4487	3.0968
IV-DAG	IA-DAG	-.31818	.34332	.626	-1.1423	.5059
	Non-DAG	1.95455*	.34332	.000	1.1305	2.7786
Non-DAG	IA-DAG	-2.27273*	.34332	.000	-3.0968	-1.4487
	IV-DAG	-1.95455*	.34332	.000	-2.7786	-1.1305

5. Discussion

The affirmative answer to the first and second research questions showed that interactionist and interventionist DA caused development in the argumentative writing of the EFL teachers. As the results showed, IA-DAG and IV-DAG had significantly better performances in the post-test and TRT compared to the pretest. Thus, it could be concluded that both types of DA had lasting impacts on the argumentative writings of the participants in the two groups. The researchers of this study assume that teachers' feedback in the form of mediation could have positive effects and could raise the participants' consciousness toward the rules of writing. Questioning, negotiating, and waiting for a response from the participants could cause cognitive involvement and contribute to the occurrence of learning.

This conclusion can be verified more clearly when considering the RM-ANOVA run to answer the third research question. While the members of the Non-DAG significantly did better in the post-test and TRT compared to the pretest, their writings on the post-test were significantly better than the TRT which shows that the explicit grammar feedback they received during the treatment was useful, but not adequate to enable them to generalize what they had learned to more complex and challenging situations. That is to say, the type of feedback they received had not tapped their ZPD. It can be inferred that mediation could promote the ZPD of IA-DAG and IV-DAG, and the absence of mediation in Non-DAG was the reason for the group's unsuccessful performance in TRT. In line with [Lantolf and Thorne \(2007\)](#), the researchers of this study believe that the corrective feedback that the participants received through interactions with their teacher and peers during the classroom activities could enhance their writing ability. Lantolf and Thorne (2007) suggest that learners with the assistance of corrective feedback within ZPD can eventually be able to be self-regulated and use L2 automatically. The feedback that the participants received scaffolded them to promote their ZPD to write (Nassaji & Swain, 2000). Therefore, drawing on the findings obtained from the Non-DAG, and in line with Nassaji and Swain (2000), it can be asserted that the use of corrective feedback is intensified via mediation and negotiation between the learner and a more knowledgeable person. Consistent with [Rashidi and Bahadori Nejad \(2018\)](#), another conclusion is that unlike IA-DAG and IV-DAG, learning in Non-DAG was not developmental.

The answer to the fourth research question was also affirmative. The results of the mixed between within ANOVA revealed that time was a significant factor. The different interventions had different effects on the study groups, and the treatments manipulated in the study had statistically significant impacts in the three intervals. This result also verifies that the participants in the three

groups had different performances on the post-test and TRT. It seems that the participants in IA-DAG and IV-DAG could experience a cognitive development over time (Alavi & Taghizadeh, 2014; Fani & Rashtchi, 2015) to adjust what they have learned to a new context.

For answering the fifth and sixth research questions, two one-way ANOVAs were performed. The results of the first ANOVA showed that IA-DAG outperformed the two other groups in the post-test. The researchers attribute this difference to the type of timely feedback the groups received. IA-DAG received non-standardized feedback, which appeared to have a more beneficial impact on the post-test due to considering the participants' needs. This type of feedback necessitates the teacher's move from implicit to explicit and explicit to implicit depending on the learners' response to the feedback. Therefore, drawing on Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Poehner (2005), it could be stated that offering learners different types of feedback while performing a task had more short-term advantages than the pre-determined implicit to explicit corrective feedback. Similar to Khoshima, Saed, and Mortazavi (2016), the present study showed the efficacy of interactionist DA over non-DA. The supremacy of interactionist type of feedback received by the participants of the study also finds support from Besharati (2018) and Rahimi et al. (2015). However, unlike the present study, both studies were case studies.

Surprisingly, the results of the second ANOVA revealed that although the interactionist approach seemed to be more effective in the post-test, no significant differences were observed in TRT. This finding not only indicates the efficacy of mediation in teaching writing; However, it also blurs the differential effects of the interactionist and interventionist dichotomy in the long duration. This inference can be extended in two directions. First, the use of writing tasks was important in shortening the length of mediation in the classroom. Thus, it could facilitate the implementation of interactionist DA among a relatively large group of learners instead of a small number of students commonly studied in the interactionist approach (e.g., Besharati, 2018; Rahimi et al., 2015). Another reason for the findings could be attributed to the existence of individual differences playing an active role in shaping the results. Since the post-test was similar to the pre-test, the possibility that IA-DAG members could have benefited from practice effect more than IV-DAG could be considered. However, the lack of significant differences between interactionist and interventionist approaches is similar to the findings by Khodabakhshi et al. (2018).

6. Conclusion

Providing feedback is commonly appreciated as one of the leading tasks that teachers employ. The type of feedback that teachers provide in non-DA situations is usually not comprehensible for learners and may not adequately stimulate their focus on the rules of the second language. The dialogical feedback substantiated in DA can engage learners in the act of writing and enable them to understand and apply the feedback teachers give to them. The interaction between the teacher and the learners and learners with one another can have a facilitative role in writing and can compensate for students' lack of inattentiveness for grasping teachers' comments. The primary characteristic of mediation, that is, considering the students' needs in the areas which they need support, can contribute to the development of writing ability. The vital advantage of DA in writing classes is that it can foster learning opportunities. The use of tasks can have a facilitative role and provide learners with the expertise to control both content and mechanics of writing.

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Appendix A: Writing Pretest & Post-test

PART I

A. Rewrite the following sentences, using the structures in parentheses.

1. English is understood all over the world; Turkish is spoken by only a few people outside. (while)
2. A lot of steps have been taken to help old people, but it's not still enough. (although)
3. The rainfall pattern in that area changed, so the water supplies diminished. (because)
4. The crisis could seriously affect the prices of certain products. It could also lead to a shortage of these goods. (moreover)
5. Barbara passed all her examinations successfully. She graduated with honors. (In fact)
6. Animals can communicate with each other through crying. Many birds utter warning calls at the approach of danger. (for instance)

B. Complete the following sentences, using your own words.

7. Our instructor's voice was very low, yet
8. I have to study more for the exam; otherwise
9. John hasn't arrived yet. It seems
10. We cannot afford to buy a new car. Consequently,
11. The presence of nicotine in the bloodstream results in

C. Find the errors in the paragraph below and write the correct forms in the space provided.

(12) Different people spend their weekends with different ways. (13) Some enjoy from going to the mountains to hike, ski, or just relax. (14) Others prefer going to the beach and getting a suntan in there. (15) Still others are agree with staying home to relax, reading a good book, or watching TV. (16) There are also some students who may like to use from this opportunity to keep up with their studies. Obviously, people can find different ways to make a good time of their weekends.

12. Error: Correct form:
13. Error: Correct form:
14. Error: Correct form:
15. Error: Correct form:
16. Error: Correct form:

D. The following paragraph does not have a topic sentence. Read the paragraph carefully and write an appropriate topic sentence in the blank space.

(17).....

The worst distraction is my clock, constantly humming to remind me how little time I actually have. Another interruption is the fluorescent desk lamp which sometimes buzzes, flickers, and then goes out. And, finally, consider that fascinating little invention, the computer, which not only does all kinds of complicated math problems, but also challenges me to games and helps me write letters home. After stopping to worry about the time, fix my lamp, and play with the computer, I am too tired to study, so I just go to bed.

E. Read the following definitions and fill in the blanks with the related words. Pay attention to verbs in parentheses. You may also add your own words to fill in some of the blanks.

Butterfly— an adult insect with four wings, often brightly covered

Caterpillar— the wormlike form of a butterfly in its first stage of development

Pupa— the stage of development between the caterpillar and the butterfly

To hatch— to break out of an egg

Chrysalis— the case that covers a pupa

The metamorphosis of a (18) ----- into a butterfly is one of the (19) ----- of nature. The (20) ----- step (21)(occur) ----- when the (22) ----- hatches from its egg. Next, it (23)(eat) ----- the eggshell from which it has hatched. After eating and growing fat, the caterpillar is able (24)(attach) ----- itself to a leaf, revealing the (25) ----- . The pupa (26)(grow, soon) ----- a protective cover called a (27) ----- . In this phase, which (28) ----- two weeks, the caterpillar begins to change, (29)(develop) -----

into a mature insect. In the (30) ----- phase, a young butterfly pushes through the chrysalis and forces its way free. After (31)(hang) ----- upside down to harden its wings, it then (32)(spread out, them) ----- to dry. It is (33) ----- ready (34)(fly away) ----- and spend its adult life as one of nature's most beautiful creatures.

F. Place the following scrambled sentences in the correct order to constitute a paragraph.

35. Moreover, its deferred payment plan and low tuition represented a great convenience to my parents.

36. For example, the university requires all its agriculture students to gain practical experience by working on local farms while they are still going to school.

37. There were several reasons why I decided to attend Kingston University.

38. Second, Kingston hires only the finest teachers to teach in its graduate program.

39. No wonder I found Kingston University ideal for my study.

40. My chief reason for choosing that university was its wonderful work/study program in agriculture, my chosen field.

PART II

Write a five-paragraph essay on the following topic (about 530 words).

Physical punishment of children must be banned. How far do you agree or disagree?

Appendix B: Transcendence Task (TRT)

PART I

A. Rewrite the following sentences, using the structures in parentheses.

- 1. Libraries are marvelous places. Many people find them boring. (Despite the fact that...)
 - 2. He will not sign the contract. It must be satisfactory. (unless)
 - 3. Some languages, such as Spanish, are descended from Latin. (A good example of this...)
 - 4. Susan sometimes feels nervous. Then she chews her nails. (whenever)
 - 5. The other passengers will get on the bus soon, and then we will leave. (as soon as)
- B. Complete the following sentences, using your own words.
- 6. Television is entertaining; furthermore
 - 7. The road was wet and slippery; consequently
 - 8. Not only is Jack a fast driver, but also.....
 - 9. It is too late to continue the work; in fact

C. Complete the following sentences using the appropriate form of the word in parentheses. Next, arrange them in the correct order through sequence markers (e.g., First, next) to write the sentences of a paragraph on 'How glass bottles are made.'

- 10(a). It ----- into bottles in the mold. (shape)
- 11(b). Sometimes ----- glass is added. (beak)
- 12(c). The bottles ----- to strengthen the glass. (reheat and cool)
- 13(d). Glass ----- from sand, limestone, and soda ash. (make)
- 14(e). They are ready ----- . (use)
- 15(f). The mixture must be ----- heated in a furnace. (strong)
- 16(g). These three materials ----- together in the right proportions. (mix)

Use the sequence markers (first, second, next, etc.)

to arrange the sentences (10-16) to write the sentences (17-23) of a paragraph on 'How glass bottles are made.'

- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.

D. Write a topic sentence for the following paragraph.

- 24.

The word watt used to measure electric power has been taken from the name of the Scottish scientist James Watt. He was the scientist who invented the steam engine. The French physicist Andre Marie Ampere's name is the unit of measurement for electric current. Perhaps a more common example is hertz, the unit of measurement for wave frequency. It has been taken from the name of the German scientist Heinrich Rudolf Hertz.

E. Write a conclusion for the following paragraph.

25. There are a good number of proofs that show milk is the most important cause of good health. First, babies that drink milk tend to resist illness more than babies who do not. Second, the role of milk in making bones strong is already known. Moreover, milk can send poisons out of the body. It also provides minerals most needed by the human body.

F. Fill in the blanks with your own words.

Insomnia, a condition in which a person has difficulty getting enough sleep, has(26)----- causes. (27) ----- --, it can be (28) ----- by body problems such as an overactive thyroid gland, diabetes, or violent muscle twitching. (29) ----- cause of insomnia originates from wrong eating habits. (30) -----, drinking caffeine-containing beverages (31) -----going to bed is considered by many doctors to be a(n) (32) ----- - cause. Experts estimate that in three-fourths of all cases, the cause is a psychological one. (33) ----- anxiety-producing events, a person may experience sleep difficulties for a short time. Some (34) ----- of such events are the death of a loved one or loss of a job. Many persons recover their normal sleep rhythm later, (35) ----- others become frustrated and depressed, and (36) ----- chronic insomnia. Frightening events are (37) ----- considered a psychological cause of insomnia. Violent movies and computers, (38) -----, can affect those who are psychologically ready for insomnia. (39) -----, napping during the day is (40) ----- by some doctors to be a minor cause of insomnia. It can throw off the sleep pattern further.

Part II. Write a five-paragraph essay on the following topic (about 530 words).

Domestic violence is not a private matter. It's a horrific crime. How far do you agree or disagree?

Appendix C: California State University, Fresno Scoring Guide for Writing

Scoring Level	Knowledge of Conventions	Clarity and Coherence	Rhetorical Choices
4-Accomplished	In addition to meeting the requirements for a “3,” the writing is essentially error-free in terms of mechanics. Models the style and format appropriate to the assignment.	In addition to meeting the requirements for a “3,” writing flows smoothly from one idea to another. The writer has taken pains to assist the reader in following the logic of the ideas expressed.	In addition to meeting the requirements for a “3,” the writer’s decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and content made reading a pleasurable experience. Writing could be used as a model of how to fulfill the assignment.
3 -Competent	While there may be minor errors, the paper follows normal conventions of spelling and grammar throughout and has been proofread. Appropriate conventions for style and format are used consistently throughout the writing sample. Demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources; the reader would have little difficulty referring back to cited sources.	Sentences are structured, and words are chosen to communicate ideas. The sequencing of ideas within paragraphs and transitions between paragraphs makes the writer’s points easy to follow.	The writer has made good decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and content to communicate clearly and effectively. The purpose and focus of the writing are clear to the reader, and the organization and content achieve the purpose well. Writing follows all the requirements for the assignment.
2-Developing	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar (such as	Sentence structure and/or word choice sometimes	The writer’s decisions about focus, organization,

	subject/verb agreements and tense), sentence structure, and/or other writing conventions distract the reader. Writing does not consistently follow the appropriate style and/or format. Source documentation is incomplete. It may be unclear which references are direct quotes and which are paraphrased.	interfere with clarity. Needs to improve the sequencing of ideas within paragraphs and transitions between paragraphs to make the writing easy to follow.	style/tone, and/or content sometimes interfere with clear, effective communication. The purpose of writing is not achieved. All requirements of the assignment may not be fulfilled.
1-Beginning	Writing contains numerous errors in spelling, grammar, and/or sentence structure that interfere with comprehension. Style and/or format are inappropriate for the assignment. Fails to demonstrate thoroughness and competence in the documentation.	Sentence structure, word choice, lack of transitions, and/or sequencing of ideas make reading and understanding difficult.	The writer's decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and/or content interfere with communication. The purpose of writing is not achieved. Requirements for the assignment have not been fulfilled.

Appendix D: Sample Writing Tasks

TASK ONE

A. For the topic sentence, write an example, a statistic referring to authority, and a reason to support it. Look at the sample.

Topic sentence: Sometimes, women are discriminated against in the workplace.

Example: *For example, my sister is paid less than her male coworkers in her company, although she does the same work.*

B. Write a paragraph on the following topic considering the given information.

Topic: The effect of taking exams on the blood pressure of students

average students' blood pressure before the exam: 115/55

average students' blood pressure at the end of the exam: 155/115

average students' blood pressure ten minutes after the exam: 150/110

TASK TWO

Diseases of the lungs and the heart, and stroke can be caused by nicotine in the bloodstream or smoke in the respiratory tract. Following is a list of phrases in a chain that may help you write your essay on "*diseases caused by smoking cigarettes.*" You may also use any of the adverbs, connectors, or sequence markers to develop your essay.

Adverbs: commonly, likewise, similarly, accordingly, etc.

Connectors: moreover, therefore, consequently, etc.

Sequence markers: second, after that, next, finally, etc.

nicotine in the → contraction of → slowing → hardening of → less blood to → a stroke
bloodstream blood vessels circulation the arteries the brain

nicotine in the →reducing the ability →releasing → breathing → fast → accelerating the risk
bloodstream of hemoglobin less oxygen faster heartbeat of heart attack

smoke inhalation→ collection of impurities in→ loss of elasticity of →the formation of cancerous
the larynx and lungs the lungs cells in the respiratory tract