

The Impact of Dynamic Assessment Theory Self-Efficacy of College English Majors in Oral English Class

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ABSTRACT

Dynamic assessment is a method of evaluation that facilitates and diagnoses students' developmental potential by providing mediated support during the assessment process. Compared to traditional assessment methods, dynamic assessment can more effectively analyze learners' capabilities and more accurately predict their future development. This study explores the application of dynamic assessment in English speaking instruction and its impact on learners' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a core concept in social learning theory and is considered a significant factor affecting learners' language proficiency. The results indicate that experimental teaching with dynamic assessment is an effective way to foster learners' self-efficacy, but its effectiveness varies among learners with different levels of efficacy. This suggests that in future practice, when applying dynamic assessment teaching, evaluators should update their intervention guidance in real-time according to the changes in the zone of proximal development of learners at different levels, to promote the development of all learners. Self-efficacy is an important indicator for validating the effectiveness of dynamic assessment and has a significant impact on the effectiveness of dynamic assessment experimental teaching.

KEYWORDS

Dynamic assessment; Self-efficacy; oral English

1 Introduction

Dynamic Assessment, also known as Learning Potential Assessment [2], is an evaluation method that promotes and diagnoses students' developmental potential by providing necessary support during the assessment process. Compared to traditional assessment, Dynamic Assessment can more effectively analyze learners' abilities and more accurately predict their future development potential. It not only diagnoses individual differences but also promotes individual development, offering a new perspective for foreign language teaching and assessment [3]. Initially regarded as an effective tool for cognitive and intellectual diagnosis, Dynamic Assessment began to expand from the field of psychology to second language acquisition in the late 1980s. Numerous empirical studies have confirmed its feasibility and effectiveness in second language teaching. These studies cover language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing [5], opening up new paradigms for language teaching and assessment.

Self-efficacy is an important concept in social learning theory, proposed by the renowned psychologist Albert Bandura [1]. Bandura posits that human behavior, thinking, and emotions are not only influenced by the outcomes of actions but also by expectations about one's own capabilities and the outcomes of those actions. A substantial body of research has confirmed that

self-efficacy is a key factor affecting learners' language proficiency and can significantly predict learners' academic achievements in foreign languages.

Scholars both domestically and internationally have conducted extensive research on the relationship between self-efficacy and English-speaking learning. Studies indicate that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and students' oral performance, learning motivation, and the use of learning strategies [4]. Dynamic assessment theory, as an emerging method of evaluation, is still in the exploratory stage of its application in English teaching. Dynamic assessment theory emphasizes interactivity, participation, and dynamism in the evaluation process, and compared to traditional evaluation methods, it is more capable of fostering students' self-efficacy.

2 Research methods

This study conducted an in-depth examination in English speaking classrooms, and based on the students' oral expression and classroom participation, ultimately selected two classes (approximately 80 students each) as the experimental group, and another two classes (also approximately 80 students each) as the control group. The age range of the students is between 18 and 20 years old.

The research content involves pre- and post-tests of oral questions, using authentic IELTS speaking test questions. The questions include answer-and-question tasks and personal statement tasks, covering various aspects such as study, life, and work.

The model consists of three stages: pre-testing, intervention, and post-testing. 1) In the pre-testing phase, the evaluator helps the subjects adjust their emotions, introduces the speaking test, and asks questions; the subjects' responses are recorded; if the answers are relevant, grammatically correct, and fluent, the intervention is terminated; if the answers are incorrect, the intervention phase begins.

2) In the intervention phase, the evaluator refers to a mediation guidance table, selects appropriate items based on the subjects' responses, and provides timely guidance or hints. 3) In the post-testing phase, the effectiveness of the intervention phase is verified: the evaluator asks the questions again, the students answer again, and their responses are recorded. If the post-test results are not satisfactory, indicating that the mediation phase is ineffective or the effects are not apparent, then the post-test phase becomes the pre-test phase for a new round of dynamic assessment, and a new round of intervention begins.

This process continues in a cycle until the subjects answer correctly or until no further progress can be made.

Mediation guidance table	
Relieve students' anxiety	Introduce sentence patterns
Analyze oral questions	Practice the usage of connectives and analyze logic between sentences
Scenario set: airplane, restaurants, parks and so on	Explain difficult vocabulary
Introduce collations	Acknowledge cultural information behind topics

To measure oral expression ability, this study will collect the textual content of students' responses to questions, analyzing the effectiveness of the model from two dimensions: length of the response (the number of valid words spoken within a specified time to measure students' oral fluency) and richness of vocabulary (the number of advanced vocabulary words used). For the measurement of self-efficacy, this study will design a self-efficacy questionnaire survey.

3 Research analysis

3.1 Improvements in Oral English

Teachers observed an increase in the length of students' responses by the end of the semester, indicating that the interventions made during the term were effective. The experimental group showed a slightly higher increase in response length compared to the control group, suggesting that dynamic assessment has a positive effect on the length of students' spoken output compared to traditional assessment models.

	Experimental group	Control group
Before tests	token: 1530;type:451	token: 1124;type:373
After tests	token: 5257;type:1332	token:4338;type:1171

By analyzing the high-frequency vocabulary, it was found that after removing the same high-frequency words, the number of high-frequency words used by the students increased, their range broadened, and their meanings became more specific. For example, before the experiment, students frequently used words provided in the questions, such as "unforgettable" or "transportation." After the experiment, the high-frequency vocabulary used by students did not include words that had appeared in the questions. The high-frequency vocabulary used by students after the experiment was more specific in meaning. For instance, when answering questions about describing people, they frequently used words like "hair" and "appearance" to describe physical looks. When answering questions about describing cities, they used words like "food," "sea," and "culture" to introduce the city's characteristics from multiple perspectives. Overall, after removing the same high-frequency vocabulary and words that appeared in the questions, students used 23 high-frequency words after the experiment, compared to only 18 before, indicating an increase in the frequency of content words used and a growth in vocabulary. Analysis of students' use of collocations revealed that before the experiment, students could construct sentences with simple phrases, but their vocabulary was rather monotonous and lacked diversity. After the experiment, students expressed topic-related vocabulary more richly, and their sentence structures also became more diverse. For instance, before the experiment, students would generally describe a person using the formula "beautiful" + name, but after the experiment, they began to provide descriptions of both physical appearance and inner qualities, using specific words such as "hair," "character," and "mind" to depict specific beauties in Nara. Another example is that before the experiment, students would typically describe experiences or stories using a simple structure of an adjective followed by the experience, whereas after the experiment, they were able to use subordinate clauses to narrate more complex stories, while also employing more specific and diverse adjectives to describe the events.

Before test	favorite/ like/ city/ movie/ beautiful/ prefer/ travel/ high/ train/ speed/ experience/ take/ people/ wuhan/ memorable/ unforgettable/ forget/ Beijing/ Chongqing/ life/ rail/ travelling/ trip/ face/ girl/ good/ hope/ plane/ scenery/ skin/ wonderful/ world/ adventure/ entrance/ grandma/ great/ heart/ home/ long/ love/ rich/ school/ speech/ transportation
After test	like/ city/ beautiful/ people/ high/ speed/ time/ train/ kind/ story/ film/ favorite/ life/ heart/ convenient/ food/ movie/ appearance/ scenery/ travel/ wuhan/ experience/ tells/ think/ Beijing/ Chongqing/ fast/ long/ prefer/ beauty/ face/ feel/ full/ hair/ love/ rich/ sea/ see/ culture/ family/ famous/ friends/ great

3.2 Improvements in Self-efficacy

Through a questionnaire survey, it was found that the average score of the students in the overall self-efficacy questionnaire was 3.34. This indicates that the students generally have a strong sense of

self-efficacy in the classroom. They have a strong belief in their ability to successfully complete certain tasks, suggesting that dynamic assessment theory has a positive impact on students' confidence in learning. Students have seen an improvement in their academic self-efficacy; for example, when asked, "Even if the homework is difficult, I can learn it," 50% of students had a positive attitude, and 5.88% had a negative attitude. When asked, "I am certain that I can do well in this year's studies," 74.51% of students had a positive or neutral attitude, while 25.49% had a negative attitude. In terms of participating in oral classroom activities, 75.5% of students felt they could actively participate in class discussions and speeches, and 67.58% believed they could concentrate well on lectures. This shows that dynamic assessment theory plays a positive role in students' classroom engagement and completion rates. However, the researchers also found through the questionnaire that the average score for the general self-efficacy questionnaire was 3.712, for the academic self-efficacy questionnaire it was 3.21, and for the self-efficacy regulation questionnaire, it was 3.09. This indicates that when facing academic pressure, students' self-efficacy is still insufficient, and their belief in their ability to complete tasks well needs to be strengthened. The lowest average score for self-efficacy regulation suggests that students lack confidence in achieving a sense of academic accomplishment through autonomous learning, and their belief in learning still requires continuous intervention from teachers. In addition, analysis of academic efficacy revealed that when faced with the statement, "As long as I don't give up, I can complete almost all homework requirements," 29.41% of students disagreed, 32.35% were neutral, and only 38.24% strongly agreed. This indicates that students have varying levels of self-efficacy when facing different courses, and teachers cannot rely on dynamic assessment in one subject to enhance students' confidence and belief in learning across all courses.

4 Conclusion

This study explores the application of dynamic assessment theory in English speaking instruction and its impact on students' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to complete tasks and has a significant influence on learning motivation and performance. Dynamic assessment theory facilitates students' developmental potential by providing support during the assessment process, and compared to traditional assessment, it can more effectively analyze learners' capabilities and predict their development.

The study's results indicate that dynamic assessment significantly enhances students' English-speaking abilities. Students in the experimental group showed improvements in the length of their responses and the richness of their vocabulary, using more specific and diverse words. Additionally, students' self-efficacy was boosted, as they had a more positive attitude towards their learning confidence and expectations.

Specifically, the average English final exam score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, demonstrating that dynamic assessment has a positive effect on students' overall English grades. Questionnaire survey results show that students have a strong sense of self-efficacy in the classroom, especially in maintaining a positive attitude when facing difficulties. However, students' self-efficacy under academic pressure still needs to be strengthened, particularly in terms of achieving academic success through autonomous learning.

The study also found that students' self-efficacy varies across different courses, indicating that teachers cannot rely solely on dynamic assessment in one subject to improve students' confidence in learning all subjects. This suggests that teachers need continuous intervention to help students establish more comprehensive and steadfast beliefs in learning.

In conclusion, dynamic assessment theory has a positive role in English speaking instruction, as it

can enhance students' oral skills and self-efficacy. Future research should further explore how to improve students' self-efficacy in different subjects through dynamic assessment and how to more effectively promote students' autonomous learning abilities.

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