

IMPROVING EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING
SKILL THROUGH DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาการใช้การทดสอบแบบพลวัต (DA) เพื่อการเรียนรู้การสอน โดยมีเป้าหมายเพื่อศึกษาว่า DA ซึ่งมีรากฐานอยู่บนแนวคิด Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) ของไวโกทสกี จะพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนได้อย่างไร วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยคือ (1) เพื่อศึกษาว่า DA ช่วยให้นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรีพัฒนาทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้ในระดับใด (2) เพื่อวัดระดับการรับรู้ความสามารถของนักเรียนในด้านทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ เมื่อได้ผ่านกระบวนการของ DA และ (3) เพื่อตรวจสอบทัศนคติของนักเรียนที่มีต่อ DA ผู้เข้าร่วมการทดลองในงานวิจัยนี้มีทั้งหมด 10 คน ทุกคนเป็นนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี ซึ่งเรียนอยู่ในวิชาภาษาอังกฤษพื้นฐาน 1 (ENG 101) การศึกษานี้ใช้เครื่องมือวิจัยทั้งสองแบบคือ ทั้งแบบเชิงปริมาณและแบบเชิงคุณภาพ สำหรับเครื่องมือวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยจะให้ข้อมูลทางวาจาทันทีหลังการสอบ นอกจากนี้ยังมีการเก็บข้อมูลผ่านการสัมภาษณ์ และการให้ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยจัดบันทึกความคิดเห็นในไดอารี่ ในส่วนเครื่องมือวิจัยเชิงปริมาณประกอบไปด้วยผลคะแนนจากการทดสอบสามระยะ คือ 1) ก่อน DA 2) หลัง DA และ 3) การทดสอบซ้ำเพื่อดูความยั่งยืนของพัฒนาการ ในตอนท้ายของการทดลองยังมีการเก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถาม เพื่อวัดระดับการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัย และการใช้แบบสอบถามวัดระดับทัศนคติที่ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยมีต่อ DA ผลการวิจัยพบว่าระดับความสามารถในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยพัฒนาขึ้น และการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัย ก็แสดงการเปลี่ยนแปลงในทางที่ดีขึ้นเช่นกัน ข้อมูลจากเครื่องมือวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพแสดงให้เห็นว่าผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยได้สร้างระบบการเรียนรู้ที่มีความหมายผ่านกระบวนการของ DA กล่าวโดยสรุปได้ว่า DA ส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ที่ผู้เรียนมีความเป็นเจ้าของการเรียนรู้ด้วยตนเอง สิ่งนี้ทำให้ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยตั้งใจเรียนรู้อย่างเต็มที่ในขณะที่ทำแบบทดสอบใน DA ดังนั้นจึงเป็นไปได้ว่า DA มีโอกาสจะเป็นประโยชน์กับชั้นเรียนที่มีนักเรียนที่ต้องการความช่วยเหลือเป็นพิเศษในบริบทของการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

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Prathana Siwathaworn :
IMPROVING EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING
SKILL THROUGH DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT. Advisor: Asst. Prof. Jirada Wudthayagorn, Ph.D.

This study focuses on the application of dynamic assessment (DA) for pedagogical purposes. It is aimed at investigating how the students' English speaking skill could be improved through DA, which is grounded in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). The objectives of this study were (1) to investigate to what extent DA assists EFL undergraduate students to improve their English speaking skill, (2) to explore the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill through DA, and (3) to examine the students' attitudes toward DA. The participants of the study were 10 university students who studied in an EFL classroom of *Foundation English I* (ENG 101). Both qualitative and quantitative research instruments were employed in this study. As for the qualitative instruments, the participants' verbal report, semi-structured interviews, and diaries were adopted. The quantitative instruments employed in this study were the three tests (pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest), a self-efficacy questionnaire, and an attitude questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that through the test-train-retest design, DA improved the students' English speaking skills and their perceived self-efficacy toward English speaking skills. The data from qualitative instruments showed that the participants gained meaningful learning experiences through DA procedures. All participants expressed positive attitudes toward DA. The results of this study indicated that DA encouraged the students to construct a sense of ownership in their own learning and to become actively engaged in the test tasks. Thus, this study has shed light on the possible application of DA for a remedial classroom in an EFL context.

Field of Study: English as an International Language Student's Signature

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

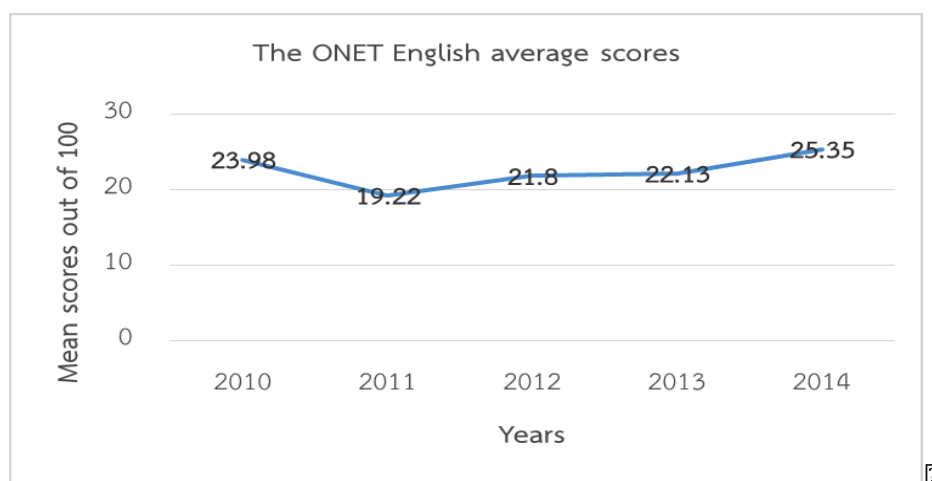
Today, English serves a crucial role not only as a language of wider communication but also as a means of social advancement. This role of English is especially true in such a regional level as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) where every government member has adopted English as a lingua franca Kirkpatrick (2012). Since Thailand is a member of ASEAN, Thai people also adopt English as a means of a personal growth in various sectors of workforce e.g. business, science, medicine, information technology, traveling, education, and service industry. Thai workers who have high proficiency in any content area but low proficiency in English may find it hard to progress in their career, especially when they have to compete with proficient English speakers from other ASEAN countries.

Regarding the top-down policymaking, several Thai governments have put a serious effort to improve English education in schools. This effort brought about the 1999 National Education Act and 2002 Education Curriculum, which imposed more communicative learner-centered approaches on English education in the classroom (Teng & Sinwongsawat, 2015). When focusing on language skills, the policy makers seemed to pay more attention on the students' ability to speak English. As such, in the year 2012 the Ministry of Education started a program called "2012 Thailand's English Speaking Year." The aim of the program was to prepare Thai people to be a part of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 (Kitjaroonchai, 2012). After this announcement, all schools nationwide were suggested by the Education Minister to increase English use in schools in various ways e.g. by designating one day in a week to be an English-speaking day or by setting up English corners in classrooms. As reported in *the Bangkok Post* (Intathep, 2012), the minister clearly stressed that the Thai students' confidence should be built up to the point that they dare to speak

English with foreigners in their real lives. Hence, it can be seen from these efforts that, in educating the Thai students to be competent English users, the ability to speak English has been prioritized by the policy makers.

However, despite the previous efforts, Thai students' English proficiency in general as measured by the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) is marginally substandard according to the report from the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS). Out of a mark of 100, the average of English scored by Thai students of grade 12 nationwide from the year 2010 to 2014 is shown in the following Figure.

Figure 1: The ONET English average scores from 2010 to 2014



These average O-NET English scores of five consecutive years reveal that the policy makers have not seen a tangible improvement in the English performance of grade 12 students yet. What is more, this group of students is those who are likely to further their study in the tertiary level. Therefore, it is not a surprise to find the figures and facts about the student intake from the registrar office of one of the highly competitive universities in Thailand indicating that about 34.8 % of first year students in one of its campuses in the academic year 2015 (2,622 students out of 7,533 students) gained O-NET English scores lower than 30 on a scale of 100 (see more in <http://www.regweb.registrar.ku.ac.th/>).

This fact about the students' low O-NET scores can be used to predict the students' level of English speaking ability to some extent. Even though it primarily tests grammar, vocabulary and reading, speaking is also included as an indirect test. The speaking section in this test examines whether the students know how to communicate in certain contexts. The students do not express the language orally but their overall communication skills are tested through multiple-choice questions. According to Pae (2012), the relationship between speaking skill and other receptive skills are complex, but they are interconnected. Rahnama, Rad, and Bagheri (2016) state that listening and reading can improve speaking. The students' reading skill can have an impact on the fluency and accuracy of their speaking. Therefore, the students' low speaking ability can be inferred from these low O-NET scores.

Thai students' low English scores have become an issue of major concern to various stakeholders of English pedagogy e.g. teachers, administrators, and scholars. For instance, Noom-Ura (2013) argues that the English education in Thailand remains an unsolved matter. Using questionnaires in her quantitative survey study, she investigated the factors that attributed to the unsatisfactory results of English language teaching in Thailand. Her small-scale survey that was conducted among thirty-four teachers of English language from nine secondary schools unfolded what Thai secondary school teachers perceived as the main causes of problems in English language teaching. The findings showed that most teachers in the survey perceived that students and assessment were the most problematic factors. With regard to problems in assessment, the researcher found that listening and speaking tests had a high degree of problems.

To look closer at the aspect of speaking assessment, it is interesting to learn from Khamkhien's study. Khamkhien (2010) investigated the assessment of speaking competence in the Thai context. He asserts that, of all four English language skills, speaking is the most important in learning a second or foreign language. However speaking is difficult for Thai students to master due to a lack of genuine interaction inside and outside the language classroom. His research study revealed that the EFL



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context was one of the factors that prevented Thai students from being motivated to attain their full potential in speaking skills. Besides that, another factor that some scholars regard as a challenge for administering constructive speaking lessons and speaking tests is the teachers' knowledge and skills in assessing speaking (Khamkhien, 2010; Ratanapinyowong, Poonpon, & Honsa, 2007).

In conclusion, the mismatch between the Thai policy makers' attempts to improve English pedagogy in Thailand and the low English performance of Thai students in the national English test have raised considerable concerns to all stakeholders, especially among English educators who work closely with the students. A strong demand of the English communication skills, the speaking skill in particular, to make the students ready for the competitive labor market after the opening of AEC, results in the movement to make a change for effective administration of English speaking pedagogy and assessment.

Thus, the present study was generated to respond to this movement with the application of an alternative assessment called dynamic assessment. Dynamic assessment (DA) provides opportunities for learning to occur during assessment wherever the traditional assessment acts as gatekeeper. According to Kozulin (2001), this testing method has been proved to be effective by the teachers and researchers who work with specific groups of learners that have learning difficulties and are different from the mainstream students e.g. socially at risk students, culturally deprived people, impaired individuals, mentally retarded children, people with psychiatric disorders, and language learners of ethnic minority groups. As for the present study, since the EFL students with low English proficiency were the specific group of the research, they deserved to be provided a chance to work through DA process in order to investigate what hindered their progress in the speaking skill.

1.1.1 The Students' Background

The following description of the students in the present study focuses on the two main characteristics: their EFL background and their low proficiency.

1.1.1.1 EFL Students

The participants in this study were Thai students studying in a university in Bangkok, Thailand. They studied English as a foreign language. The foreign language contexts as explained by Littlewood and Yu (2011) refer to the language pedagogy in which the classroom is the main or only source of students' exposure to the target language because everything that surrounds them is regularly in their native language. According to the cognitive view of EFL learning, a foreign language is typically processed less automatically than a native tongue, which could lead to more deliberate processing. This makes EFL learning become more analytic, rule governed and systematic (Keysar, Hayakawa, & An, 2012).

Accordingly, the Thai students in the present study were not extensively exposed to the real use of English outside their classroom. This limited exposure to real English use led to their limited speaking skill. Besides this limitation, the differences in the sound systems of English and their first language could affect the intelligibility of their English speaking since a number of English sounds do not occur in their mother tongue (Kanokpermpoon, 2007).

1.1.1.2 Low English Proficiency

Based on the O-NET report, the English scores of the students in this study were below 30 on a scale of 100. These scores revealed their low English proficiency. This feature is something that the group of the students in this study had in common. According to Hasson (2011), the test takers who score uniformly low on standardized tests are still heterogeneous in their ability.

Unlike other students who passed the entrance examination with higher proficiency in English, the students in this study were qualified to study in the university with high entrance scores in other subjects, but not English. This means that they had the ability to further their studies in a tertiary level but they were just underprepared to start with general English courses in the university. Therefore, they

were assigned to enroll in ENG 111 (Foundation English I), which provided them fundamental preparation prior to the study of other compulsory English courses.

1.1.2 English Course in the Present Study

This study focused on ENG 111 (Foundation English I) in a public university in Bangkok. The objective of the course was to enhance the students' knowledge and four language skills through the practice of grammatical points, language functions, and vocabulary in a fundamental level with an emphasis on communicative competence. This course was also expected to be a place where students with low level of English proficiency should get assistance to develop their language learning capacity so that they would be able to study English at the tertiary level effectively.

1.1.3 Using DA to Improve the EFL Students' Speaking Skill

DA is grounded in Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). The theoretical framework of ZPD influences both teachers and researchers to re-address the merits of the traditional psychometric assessment (or static assessment as called by some researchers in contrast to dynamic assessment). The ZPD – a gap between what an individual can do by him/herself and what he/she can do with help from adults or peers – entails an interactive and collaborative nature in DA. Therefore, DA is a process-oriented approach of assessment. The purpose of this approach is not to classify or screen students but to generate improved performance through the provision of the examiner's assistance during the test. The assistance (or mediation) makes a positive change in the students by redirecting and reorienting the students' ability to learn while taking the test. In this way, the students as test takers in DA are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning while working with the examiner (see Barn, 2014; De Beer, 2006; Kozulin & Garb, 2004; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lidz, 1991; Nazari, 2012; Poehner, 2009; Poehner & Lantolf, 2010).

The instructors who regard assessment and instruction as two separate entities may rely on a kind of traditional one-shot tests for principally reporting what and how much the students gain from previous instruction. However, it is found in

many cases that the traditional methods of testing become impractical when the aim of the test is to draw diagnostic information from the students who encounter learning difficulties, or to predict their future courses of action (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1998; Tzuriel, 2000). In this way, DA is an alternative to the traditional static test, which can serve some different aims more appropriately.

Regarding the general situation of English language testing in Thailand, Jaturapitakkul's (2013) research revealed that the traditional static assessment still existed as a dominant method in most English language classrooms. Meanwhile, a shift to an innovation of the classroom assessment was called for by a number of Thai scholars (Darasawang & Reinders, 2015). Thai teachers and students were also asked to take new roles and responsibilities in the classroom. For instance, Prapphal (2003) advised Thai teachers of English language to act as facilitators, mentors, as well as examiners and evaluators. Likewise, the students should act as learners, collaborators, problem solvers, thinkers, as well as examiners and evaluators in their own learning. These active roles reflect the aspect of reciprocal interaction between teachers and students, which resembles examiner-examinee relationship that is embraced in DA procedure. This kind of relationship enables them to work jointly towards future improvement of the students (Haywood & Tzuriel, 1992; Lidz & Pena, 1996).

Hence, the researcher of the present study incorporated DA into ENG 111 (Foundation English I) that was an English course provided to a group of Thai university students who had low proficiency in English. This study emphasized the application of DA as an alternative assessment for testing the students' English speaking skill. The speaking skill that was tested in the test task of DA in this study included five key components that were syntax, meaning, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency.

Within the DA procedure, the face-to-face interaction between the teacher (who taking the roles as an examiner and a mediator) and the student (as an examinee) was promoted in order to bring about an enhancement of the students'

actual speaking performance to their potential performance. In other words, the investigation focused on the students' learning potential in the assessment situation to optimize their speaking performance. At the same time, the strengths and weaknesses of an individual student's speaking skill were also characterized.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

DA is adaptable to be used by practitioners of multidisciplinary fields (Lidz & Pena, 1996). It has been studied in a considerable volume of literature in various academic areas, such as educational psychology, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology, linguistics, applied linguistics, and second language pedagogy.

Although DA has been investigated for several decades by researchers around the world, it has not broken into mainstream educational activity yet. Poehner and van Compernelle (2011) suggest "if DA is to realize the full potential of Vygotsky's proposals for the ZPD, greater attention needs to be paid to the integration of the goals of diagnosing and promoting development as a unified activity" (p.198). According to Nazari (2012), there is a need for further studies to be commissioned at all language skills and sub skills, with learners of different ages, genders, sociocultural backgrounds and proficiency levels to better reveal the precise role of DA-based instruction.

Regarding the research studies of DA in Thailand, it is particularly far from common practice. What is more, its implication in such a specific area as speaking skill of low proficiency students within the context of EFL teaching and learning is very little explored. Therefore, it is expected that by probing into this under-researched aspect of DA in the present study, both education practitioners and EFL students would be provided with a new perspective in how to enrich language learning through assessment.

1.3 Purposes of the Study

This exploratory study is designed based on the following purposes:

- 1) To investigate to what extent DA assists EFL undergraduate students to improve their English speaking skill;
- 2) To explore the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill;
- 3) To examine the students' attitudes toward DA.

1.4 Research Questions

This research focused on answering the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?
- 2) What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill?
- 3) What are the students' attitudes toward DA?

1.5 Expected Outcome

The strategy training in DA procedure has been a major area of interest among practitioners and researchers of DA studies. Previous studies indicated that this sort of training that was embedded in direct interactions between the mediator and the student in DA process could bring about significant improvement in the students' language performance, especially in the group of students with learning disability or low proficiency (Law & Camilleri, 2007; Lidz, 1992; Martin, 2015; Pena, 2000; Swanson & Howard, 2005). Furthermore, it was also found in some research on DA that the positive results on the students' test scores after going through DA process increased the students' motivation to earn further achievement in their later performances (Haywood & Lidz, 2007; Li & Li, 2015; Pishghadam, Barabadi, & Kamrood, 2011; Zoghi & Malmeer, 2013).

As a result, the present study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of DA in improving the speaking skill of EFL university students with the expectation

that the students' scores of the posttest and delayed posttest which taking place after DA sessions would be higher than the scores of the pretest which taking place before DA sessions.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Dynamic Assessment (DA)

DA is an assessment technique that integrates instruction with assessment. It can be used to measure the test takers' thinking, perception, learning, and problem solving through an active teaching process which occurs during assessment. Based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, DA is designed to gauge the test takers' growth by providing them with various kinds of support (or mediation) to modify their performance level and to evaluate the enhanced performance that results (Fahmy, 2013; Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1998; Hasson, 2011; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Tzuriel, 2001).

In this study, DA is an alternative assessment approach used for gathering diagnostic information from EFL low proficiency students. It is administered with a provision of examiner's graduated hints that support the students while taking the speaking test. The students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the changes that occur during interacting with the examiner in the DA sessions are documented and analyzed in order to find ways to promote the students' EFL learning development.

1.6.2 EFL Students

The term "foreign language," according to Stern (1983), is used in contrast to "native language," which is in the same way as the term "second language." However, there is a conceptual distinction between "foreign" and "second" in the context of teaching and learning a language, as found in the two acronyms TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) and TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language).

Stern (1983) explains that the teaching or learning of English as a non-native

language outside of the country or speech community where it is commonly spoken is denoted by EFL. While ESL is used in the context where English is learnt and used within one country, e.g. the learning and using of English by an immigrant who is a speaker of other language in the US.

EFL students in this study refer to Thai students who live in a non-English-speaking country (Thailand) where English is taught as a subject among other foreign languages like Chinese, Japanese, French, or German. These Thai students study English as their foreign language in a classroom setting. Their exposure to English is limited, not extensive.

1.6.3 Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is described as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information” (Florez, 1991, p. 1). According to Thornbury (2005), the speaker needs more than the knowledge of a language in order to be able to speak that language. This means that since the act of speaking a language occurs in real-time and usually with little time for preparation, the speaker’s speaking skill also involves the ability to assemble the memorized amount of words and terms (Thornbury, 2005). Therefore, a person’s knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary does not guarantee the person’s ability to speak the language. Instead, in order to be able to speak a language, a person also needs to master certain degrees of some other aspects such as the sound systems, syntactic structures, and hesitancy to speak (Luoma, 2004).

Speaking skill in this study refers to the students’ ability to comprehend the spoken utterances and to repeat them. In order to accomplish the elicited imitation task in this study, the students’ listening comprehension has to occur almost simultaneously with the oral production of the chunk of information on a sentence level. According to Benati (2009), speaking skill consists of various features that can be measured through a speaking test task. In this study, five features of the students’ English speaking i.e. meaning, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency are

targeted. Firstly, in the meaning part, the overall content of the sentence is the focus. Secondly, the syntax part refers to word order, and grammatical category of the words in the sentence. Thirdly, in the vocabulary part, the specific sets of vocabulary taught in ENG 111 course are tested in the students' spoken sentences. Fourthly, in the pronunciation part, the intelligibility of the students' English pronunciation is the focus. Finally, in the pronunciation part, the focus is on how smoothly or easily the students can speak.

1.6.4 Self-efficacy

According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, self-efficacy, a key concept in this theory, is strongly related to how the students judge their capabilities to produce valued outcomes of a certain task and to prevent undesired ones (Bandura, 1995; Dodds, 2011). Since the students' self-efficacy beliefs directly affect their personal control (how they think, feel, motivate themselves, and act), it can play a major role in predicting the students' psychological changes and their future performances (Bandura, 1997). In this way, the students' own performances offer the most reliable guides for appraising their perceived self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy in the context of this study means the students' recognition of their own English speaking ability. This recognition influences how they make use of their capabilities to accomplish their speaking tasks. It is also related to the students' satisfaction with their level of English proficiency that can affect the way they put an effort into their learning process.

1.7 Significance of the Study

In general, apart from the summative scoring of the standardized traditional English assessments, teachers are not provided with information about how their students approach the speaking test task and how they encounter the difficulties they have during the test. However, this kind of information can be drawn by means of DA. In the assessment procedure of DA, individual differences among students can be disclosed. This contributes to an individualistic and direct planning for a



subsequent intervention program for improving the students' speaking skill. Thus, after this research, the usefulness of DA as an alternative way to assess the students' speaking ability should be promoted. It is also expected that DA should create a greater opportunity for the students to pass the course with self-confidence, learning improvement, and more engagement in their own language learning.



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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the review of the literature, the research foundation of dynamic assessment (DA) is presented. The target of the review is to explore the theoretical framework of DA and the development of English language learners' speaking ability.

2.1 Vygotskian View on Language Pedagogy

Lev Vygotsky, a prominent scholar who put emphasis on social factors that influence a child's language learning, asserted the teachers should be concerned with the child's progression of learning rather than his/her yesterday of development (Rieber & Carton, 1993). In his sociocultural view of learning, he suggested that teachers always take their learners forward through social process of co-construction in the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The ZPD refers to the area beyond what learners can do independently. Within this area, it is possible for learners to accomplish a task when their level of potential development is stretched to the extent that they can move away from their existing performance level towards the possible higher level in a social setting with more proficient people. These people are regarded as mediators who provide learners with guidance or assistance in meaningful interaction (Bavali, Yamini, & Sadighi, 2011; Haywood, 2012; Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015; Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). Vygotsky's prevailing concept of ZPD has been extensively adopted by language testing researchers to probe into an individual learner's ongoing learning and cognitive development. It is also a theoretical foundation of Dynamic Assessment (DA), which is the main focus of the present research.

2.1.1 Defining Dynamic Assessment (DA)

According to Sternberg (2000), DA is unique in its provision of social contexts



of learning within an assessment. It is a learning-oriented assessment consisting of an instruction in problem solving during the test. It offers a procedure that simultaneously assesses and promotes development that takes individual's ZPD into account (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). According to Haywood and Lidz, DA is based on the following fundamental concepts:

- 1) Some abilities that are important for learning (in particular) are not assessed by normative, standardized intelligent tests;
- 2) Observing new learning is more useful than cataloguing (presumed) products of old learning. History is necessary but not sufficient;
- 3) Teaching within the test provides a useful way of assessing potential as opposed to performance;
- 4) All people typically function at less than their intellectual capacity;
- 5) Many conditions that do not reflect intellectual potential can and do interfere with expression of one's intelligence (Haywood & Lidz, 2007, p. 7).

These theoretical bases of DA characterize it as a measurement of the degree of an individual's learning potential. This means that while the normative (or static) assessment measures what has already been learned, DA measures what can potentially be learned. In DA procedure, an individual's modifiability or increase in metacognitive strategies to use in problem solving are focused (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000). With respect to this feature, it provides insight that is difficult to obtain through other assessment approaches (Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011). This insight will enable teachers or researchers to understand the learner in an educational setting, and as a result, they can design intervention plans to make the student more successful in their learning based on this understanding (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000).

DA has been widely used in educational psychology and second language



pedagogy to compensate what traditional normative tests lack. In other words, DA is not a replacement but a complement or an alternative to the normative tests (Heritage et al., 2015; Nazari, 2012). The following table illustrates how DA and normative assessment are different.

Table 1: Comparison of “Normative” and “Dynamic” assessment approaches
(Haywood & Lidz, 2007, p. 6)

Comparison criterion	Normative assessment Self with others	Dynamic assessment Self with self
What is compared		
Major question	How much has this person already learned? What can he/she do or not do? How does this person’s current level of performance compare with others of similar demographics?	How does this person learn in new situations? How, and how much, can learning and performance be improved? What are the primary obstacles to a more optimal level of competence?
Outcome	IQ as global estimate of ability reflecting rank order in a reference (normative) group Current level of independent functioning (zone of actual development)	Learning potential: What is possible with reduced obstacles to learning? How can such obstacles be reduced? How does the individual function with the support of a more experienced interventionist? (zone of proximal development)
Examining process	Standardized; same for everybody Focus on products of past experience	Individualized; responsive to person’s learning obstacles Focus on processes involved in intentional acquisition of new information or skills

Comparison criterion	Normative assessment Self with others	Dynamic assessment Self with self
What is compared	Identification of limits on learning and performance; identification of differences across domains of ability Documentation of need for further assessment and possible intervention	Identification of obstacles to learning and performance; estimate of investment required to overcome them Hypotheses regarding what works to overcome obstacles to learning
Role of examiner	Poses problems, records responses; affectively neutral	Poses problems, identifies obstacles, teaches metacognitive strategies when necessary, promotes change; affectively involved

2.1.2 Focus of DA

In DA process, the examiner is not a neutral recorder. His/her role is to work with the examinee to produce change in their test performance. Haywood and Lidz (2007) discuss the examiner's role that is not neutral in DA as follows:

With DA we are not neutral, and we do mess with the test and the learner in order to find routes to move the learner to the next level of development. We have to create a "process" so that we can see how the learner learns and how we can promote increased competence (Haywood & Lidz, 2007, p. 41).

The role of the examiner in this way makes DA appear to be antithetical, and a challenge to reliability that is one of the main factors used to determine the accuracy in a standardized normative assessment. Poehner (2005) points to this aspect as one of the main differences between the normative and the dynamic test.

As for the normative test, if it fails to meet the reliability that is the source of accuracy, the test will be considered inappropriate. What is more, the interaction of an examinee with another person in the normative test, is usually considered cheating and a threat to test-retest reliability. However, Poehner (2005) and other scholars e.g. Weir (2005) and Mehri and Amerian (2015) argue that is all about priority setting. Since one of the DA's basic goals is to bring about change and to modify the test performance and see the learner's potential for change in the course of interaction, the priority of DA is not the consistency of the test scores. Murphy (2011) supports this idea in his notion that "all dynamic assessment initiatives, in some form or another, seek to remediate and are thus concerned with the whole individual rather than simply the individual's scores on a test" (Murphy, 2011, p. 194). According to Carlson (1995) the test scores of the normative tests do not provide instructionally relevant information about the examinees' learning potential, cognitive or metacognitive process. Thus, when the objective of the examiner is primarily on enhancing the examinees' learning ability rather than reporting the current level of their ability, DA is found to be accurate in this way. In agreement with Carlson, Tzuriel highlights the focus of learning ability in DA by defining it as "an assessment of thinking, perception, learning, and problem solving by an active teaching process aimed at modifying cognitive functioning" (Tzuriel, 2000, p. 386). This aspect of DA makes it desirable in assessing outcome effects of cognitive education programs that focus on enhancing "learning how to learn" skills.

Regarding the role of the learners as examinees in DA, they are active learners who are engaged in the learning process during the test, and are capable of change (Lidz & Elliott, 2000). It is emphasized that the examinees' real potential can be revealed if they are assisted to remove or minimize their obstacles (Haywood, 2012). In this way, the collaboration between an examiner (as a mediator) and an examinee is an important feature in DA procedure. In this collaboration, the responsiveness of the examinee to the mediation (e.g. prompts, hints, clues, reminders, or leading questions) yields useful diagnostic information (Lauchlan, 2012). Furthermore, the information derived from this collaborative environment offer a meaningful basis for

the diagnosis of the learner's ability to learn. This brings about valuable information for generating a subsequent plan or guidance for teachers to work with the ones who have learning difficulties. In short, DA offers a different way of assessing learning ability. It allows learning and change to take place during testing, which is simply not an option in a traditional psychometric, static assessment approach (Lauchlan, 2012; Poehner, 2005; Tzuriel, 2000).

2.1.3 Main Facets of DA

DA is applicable when the purpose of the test is for social applications rather than decision-based evaluation (Sternberg, 2000). In terms of validity framework, DA results from the reconceptualization and expansion of test validity by adding a social dimension to the evaluation of test design, administration, and score interpretation. Therefore, based on this new perspective on assessment, collaboration in DA is not seen as a threat to reliability. Instead it is considered a source of learning and development (Summers, 2008; Wajda, 2011).

Accordingly, Kunnan takes into account the social role of assessment in his principles of test fairness framework. In this framework, his principle of beneficence proposes that an administration of a test ought to bring about benefits in society by providing test-score information and social impacts that are beneficial to society (Kunnan, 2014). In line with Kunnan, Poehner and van Compernelle (2011) state that "DA addresses fairness through the provision of mediation that is sensitive to learner needs and thus yields fine-grained diagnoses of abilities while also supporting ongoing development" (p. 194). There are not only biological sources of differences among learners, but also social and cultural sources of abilities. They emphasize that the co-construction of mediator-learner interaction in DA is a purposeful activity. This interaction provokes a view of the ZPD as transformative activity (Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011).

In the present study, the purpose of the test is in accordance with this principle in that its priority is the positive washback of DA on learning development of the students and an intervention for students who have special needs. The most

desirable washback of DA on the group of students in this study is learner empowerment and learner autonomy. In the next section, cognitive modifiability and how the learners can be empowered through DA process will be discussed.

2.1.3.1 Using DA for cognitive changes and learner empowerment

It is argued by McNamara and Roever (2006) that the underlying cognitive abilities of an individual can be read off from the data of performance. Furthermore, these scholars also highlight that the individual's cognitive abilities can be modified. This argument is in accordance with Tzuriel's (2000) notion. Basing his notion on the concept of ZPD, Tzuriel indicates that human achievement is modifiable above and beyond its manifest level of performance. In DA literature, a number of researchers find that DA offers an optimistic view on an individual's capacity to learn; therefore, they use DA to study the extent to which an individual is able to improve their test performance (Ableeva, 2010; Dörfler, Golke, & Artelt, 2009; Fahmy, 2013; Kletzien & Bednar, 1990; Lauchlan, 2012).

For these reasons, the application of DA gives way for a shift from using assessment as a gatekeeper to using assessment as a gateway to promote learners' learning potential and individual differences among learners (Jensen, Robinson-Zañartu, & Jensen, 1992). Lawrence and Cahill (2014) state that teachers can empower their learners by using the process-oriented feature of DA. The collaboration between the teacher and the learners that occurs in DA process can lead to constructive changes in the learners' motivation and the sense of ownership in their learning.

Jensen et al. (1992) state that there are some learners who have learning difficulties that cause them to become low achievers when compared to their peer group. These learners may face with behavioral problems as well as emotional problems associated with low self-esteem and poor self-confidence. However, a large amount of former research on DA and its impact on the learners' learning revealed that DA could raise their confidence and self-perception due to the positive

experiences that they gained from DA process. This role of DA as a tool for learner empowerment is supported by the studies of many other researchers e.g. (Barrera, 2003; Poehner, 2008; Speece, Cooper, & Kibler, 1990; van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014).

Tzuriel (2000) indicates, “DA provides accurate information about the individual’s learning ability, specific deficient functions, change processes, and meditational strategies that are responsible for cognitive modifiability” (p. 385). This aspect motivates clinical and educational practitioners, who need to find more adequate and prescriptive diagnostic measures, to use DA with such a particular group of learners as learning disabled children, minority students, and low-achievers. Thus in its history, DA has been used to study various groups of learners with diverse purposes. However, since the present research focuses on the use of DA for collecting diagnostic information of learners who have difficulties in their language learning, the studies with similar purpose will be more emphasized.

2.1.3.2 DA research in specific groups of learners

Learning problems may not always stem from the learners’ inadequate intellectual abilities or low cognitive problem-solving skills. They may result from some other causes e.g. cultural-historical differences in ethnic groups, or minority students. Vygotsky’s theoretical concept of ZPD also includes culture-centered approach to cognitive skills. This approach emphasizes different systems of psychological tools and method of the learners’ acquisition practiced in different cultures (Kozulin, 2001). This means that the learners from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds may perceive the same task differently. Therefore, it is important to be aware of individual differences in this aspect.

In educational psychology, speech and language researchers use DA as a means to distinguish between learners from nonmainstream backgrounds who are language different versus language disordered (Lidz & Pena, 1996). For instance, Swanson and Howard (2005) demonstrated in their empirical research study the use

of DA procedure to separate poor readers from readers with reading disabilities. Their research participants were 70 children (39 females and 31 males) in Southern California, who were all classified in the same group as learning disabled (LD). DA was proved in this research that it influenced the readers' information-processing ability. The researchers emphasized that the potential of an individual was suggested by his/her responsiveness to probes and how different types of scores (e.g. gain score, maintenance score) spread out. Changes in these scores were detected. This reflected the children's modified performances occurring during DA sessions. Thus, their research findings indicated that the children with modifiability had the potential to learn and were different from the disabled ones.

DA is also used as a tool to conduct comprehensive assessments of children's learning potential and mastery of skills on particular tasks. For instance, Baek and Kim (2003) studied the effect of DA based instruction on children's concept development in Korea. They defined the DA based instruction as a teaching method using the diagnostic information types in order to increase individual children's learning. The participants were 59 kindergarten children between the ages of 4 and 5 in Korea. DA in this research was used to gather qualitative and quantitative diagnostic information about children's developmental characteristics, learning strategies, problem solving strategies, developmental level, etc. The data collected through a quasi-experimental research design showed that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in the levels of children's number concept achievement. Therefore, the researchers concluded that dynamic assessment based instruction was a more effective influence on children's learning than static assessment based instruction. They also suggested that DA based instruction should be used extensively for improving the children's cognitive learning.

There are many other DA research studies that individualize the use of DA in specific situations for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to address educational needs of diverse groups of learners. In the section about the studies of

DA in ESL/EFL contexts, more examples of DA uses are presented.

2.1.3.3 Feedback of the language production in DA

Schachter (1991) regards feedback as responsive provision of information to learners in terms of their success or failure in the process of production. There are two types of feedback: positive and negative. The positive feedback reaffirms learners' successful performance; whereas, the negative feedback (also known as corrective feedback) draws learners' attention to their unsuccessful output by implying that something is wrong with their speech (Chu, 2013).

In DA, the examiner (as a mediator) uses both positive and negative feedback. However, the latter type is more focused because of its impact on learners' language development. The language errors produced by the learners during the test reveal about the gap in their competence and their unaided progress. Errors are also seen as evidence of learning (Hammerly, 1991). Based on Vygotsky's concept of ZPD, there are domains which learners cannot reach if no assistance is available (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994).

Regarding the corrective feedback in DA, it is socioculturally based. This makes it unique and different from conventional types of feedback. The feedback that occurs in DA process incorporates the feature of operationalized scaffolded feedback according to a sociocultural perspective of language learning that entails collaborative negotiation between interlocutors (Rassaei, 2014). The feedback provided by the examiner-mediator in DA session is attuned to a learner's needs or, more specifically, to a learner's ZPD (Rassaei, 2014).

As such, the scaffolded feedback can be seen as a form of interactive support. It is learner-centered. The specific focus of this type of feedback is to enable learners to accomplish something slightly beyond their present ability (Lantolf, 2005). It is provided while the learner is doing the task; therefore, this kind of feedback is based on what the learner is struggling with at the time it was provided (Rassaei, 2014).



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In addition, Dörfler et al. (2009) state that in order to exploit the learners' full potential, it is important to carefully give feedback which functions as a cognitive aid to the learners. This aid should also be solution-oriented. To enable them to be self-regulated learners at the end, this kind of feedback acts like a guidance for the learners to the correct solution without offering too much information.

In this study, the scaffolded feedback in DA occurred while the feedback provider (or mediator in DA process) was interacting with an individual student in a face-to-face interaction. The specific role of the feedback provider during DA process was to co-construct with the student the language development in his/her ZPD. This co-construction of knowledge was expected to promote an understanding of each student's problematic areas. With this understanding of an individual student's learning barriers, the teacher could gear their teaching in the language classroom to assist the student's progress. In the aforementioned process, the students' learning struggle was perceived as a part of their learning process which also indicated the degree of their persistence in dealing with the speaking task.

2.1.3.4 Research of feedback in DA

In DA literature, there is some research focusing on the results of feedback given in DA process. For example, Stevenson, Hickendorff, Resing, Heiser, and de Boeck (2013) analyzed sources of school children's performance change from pretest to posttest on a dynamic test of analogical reasoning. Through the pretest-training-posttest design, the children were provided during training with two kinds of feedback to solve the figural analogies test; one was graduated prompts which were a form of stepwise elaborated feedback in which increasingly detailed instruction was provided on how to solve the task, the other was feedback in which only correctness of each solution was provided. The results showed that improvement after training occurred differently according to different types of feedback. The graduated prompts trained children to improve more than the latter group. Accordingly, Tavakoli and Nezakat-Alhossaini (2014) studied the implementation of corrective feedback in a more dynamic context. They asserted that to make the corrective feedback more

efficient and interactive, it should be provided in a stepwise manner, ranging from the most implicit to the most explicit. In their research, the effect of using DA framework accompanied with corrective feedback given in an interactive way revealed the results in line with the findings of Stevenson et al. (2013).

In the present research study, DA is applied as a measurement method of the ZPD as well as the gathering of qualitative diagnostic information for individual undergraduate students. The dynamic interactive exploration of the student's level of development and thinking process is administered to investigate how the students' language production can be modified and ways in which appropriate strategies can be enhanced.

2.1.4 Mediation

Mediation in DA is instructional. It creates possibilities for learning development, diagnosing, and predicting lines of future intervention (Martin, 2015; Tzuriel, 2000; van Compernelle, 2013). According to Poehner and van Compernelle's (2011) close analysis of transcribed interactions between a mediator and second language (L2) learners, mediation occurs in collaborative and cooperative interactional frames. The collaborative frame orients strongly toward diagnosing and tracking learner abilities; meanwhile, the cooperative frame includes efforts to help learners further develop knowledge and understandings, which entails re-specifying and co-constructing a goal through interaction. After a number of empirical research studies on DA, the DA mediation is characterized by Lantolf and Thorne (2006) as follows:

Mediation cannot be offered in hit or miss fashion but should be tuned to the learner's ZPD. It should account for individuals' actual level of development as well as it should be continuously recalibrated in order to accommodate changes in the learner's ZPD (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 356).

Mediation makes DA a purposeful activity (Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011). The focus of mediation is to activate the mental processing of the examinees when they may have the information or knowledge to do the test, but do not use it when required (Garb, 1997). Thus the strategies to deal with the task are introduced to them by the examiner only when the examinees are struggling with difficulties. In this way, the emerging abilities that are developed through support during the test empower them to achieve the task (Hill & Sabet, 2009).

The degree of mediation that appears in DA process can be used to indicate the shift from other-regulated to self-regulated learning – a process by which the examinee engage in different strategies to regulate his/her cognition, motivation and behavior, as well as the context (Pintrich, 2000, as cited in Seng, 2003). In Summers' (2008) research on a model of dialogic engagement in DA, the examinee's process of self-regulated is noticeable when the examiner's assistance becomes less and less needed. Later, the dialogic activity of mediation between the examiner and the examinee diminishes. Eventually, the examinee relies on his/her own learning potential through the use of private speech, and this means that mediation from the examiner is no longer required to complete a task.

2.1.5 Mediated Learning in Feuerstein's Theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)

It should be noted that DA finds its roots in special education and therefore there are a number of DA research studies situated within a special education context. These studies place their specific attention on the ideas of Reuven Feuerstein, an Israeli psychologist. After Vygotsky, Feuerstein continues to develop the learning potential assessment within a general theory of mediated learning (Fernández-Ballesteros & Calero, 2000). Feuerstein observed that a learner is exposed to two types of learning situations. The first one is direct learning which includes an unmediated interaction between learning material and the learner's mind. The second type of learning situation is the mediated one. In the former situation, learning will take place if the learner's mind is ready to accept the learning material.

On the contrary, in the latter, the learner will not learn if he/she does not know how to accept the material, cannot identify its meaning, or does not know how to respond. Therefore, the mediated learning is needed (Fernández-Ballesteros & Calero, 2000).

Feuerstein defined MLE as “a quality of interaction between child and environment which depends on the activity of an initiated and intentioned adult who interposes him/herself between the child and the world. In the process of such mediation the adult selects and frames stimuli for the child, creates artificial schedules and sequences of stimuli, removes certain stimuli and makes the other stimuli more conspicuous ... Mediated learning experiences are a very important condition for the development of the very unique human conditions of modifiability, or the capacity to benefit from exposure to stimuli in a more generalized way than is usually the case” (R. Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991, p. 26, as cited in Kozulin et al., 2006).

MLE is one of the most well-established and influential approaches (Poehner, Zhang, & Lu, 2015). Several studies have found the usefulness of MLE as a theoretical framework and as an operational system. MLE studies usually consist of a pretest-mediate-posttest format to determine the learners' learning potential by examining their level of modifiability through its procedure (Lidz, 1991). MLE offers a clinical perspective on learning assessment. An open-ended dialogue is extensively used in this approach to reveal underlying difficulties and to begin the process of mediating development. Feuerstein advocated rich descriptive profiling to capture what occurs during mediation. During MLE, the learners are guided through a problem-solving task by a mediator who adjusts his or her degree of assistance to solve the task. The MLE tasks, the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) developed by Feuerstein (1979) are deliberately designed to be detached from specific content subjects since the objective of the assessment is to enhance the test takers' cognitive modifiability. It is claimed by Feuerstein that these materials need to be content-free because the acquisition of the most basic cognitive functions and

strategies, which is the process of learning how to learn, does not require any specific content materials (Kozulin et al., 2006).

Reuven Feuerstein and Raphael Feuerstein (1991, as cited in Seng, 2003) form 12 parameters to characterize MLE. Three of these parameters – 1) intentionality/reciprocity, 2) mediation of meaning, and 3) transcendence – are considered indispensable parts of mediated interaction. Firstly, the intentionality/reciprocity provides the reason and clear purpose of interaction and engages the learners in responding with comfort and mutual understanding. In an educational setting, this means that the teacher not only has a clear intention of what to teach, but also shares his/her intention to the learners. Poehner (2005) emphasizes the aspect of intentionality in DA process by stating that “the mediator must intend to mediate just as the teacher must intend to teach” (p. 68). This aspect makes the learning explicit, not incidental. The cognitive development of the learner is initiated through the mediator’s guiding, regulating, and refocusing of his/her attention and participation in the learning tasks that the learner may not be able to accomplish on his/her own. The concept of “reciprocity” in this mediated learning refers to the interwoven interactions between the mediator and the learner. This term represents the learner’s role as both an active recipient and a co-constructor of knowledge (Poehner, 2005). The learner’s contributions in DA reflect how learning is taking place during DA process.

Secondly, the mediation of meaning conveys the importance and relevance of the learners’ experience. Meaning involves the learners’ cultural background, value system, aspirations and needs. In MLE, the awareness of meaning constitutes a major component of the motivation system. In certain groups of learners, especially culturally deprived children, the significance of objects and actions cannot be intuitively understood by the learners without assistance. They need adults, or their more knowledgeable peers to connect or elaborate on the meaning of those objects and actions. The mediation of meaning engages the learner in cause-and-effect and inferential thinking. In this way, the learner is expected to develop the cognitive



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ability in comparing and categorizing based on perceptions and explanations of how the objects and actions relate (Lidz, 1991).

Finally, the transcendence takes the learners beyond the immediate experience toward broader issues and generalizable themes. This refers to the transfer of learning across context and situation (Falik, 1997; Seng, 2003). Feuerstein regarded this attribute as the core of human learning. It is the kind of learning that should happen not only to specific groups, but also to every learner (Poehner, 2005).

Based on the belief that the course of the child's development can be changed by education (Kozulin et al., 2006), some scholars assert that DA approach in Feuerstein's MLE system is one of the techniques used for measuring the level of cognitive functioning of the low achieving individuals who perform poorly in school and on intelligence tests. The improvement of these individuals after experiencing the mediated learning during the assessment process can be expected if they receive appropriately supportive interactions (Fernández-Ballesteros & Calero, 2000).

2.1.5.1 Research of the mediated learning

Following the MLE framework, Fernández-Ballesteros and Calero (2000) operationalized a potential development program to assess an individual's cognitive modifications as the result of the training. They started the construction of this program by addressing three questions: 1) which tasks should be chosen; 2) which type of training were the most suitable; 3) what should be the ultimate criteria of learning.

The first question was directed to the justification of the tasks. According to Fernández-Ballesteros and Calero (2000), there were four answers to this. Firstly the tasks they selected were made up of 68 matrix problems that appear on 132 slides. These tasks required a minimal verbal load and that were outside the educational curriculum, as suggested by Feuerstein. Secondly, the tasks involved cognitive strategies necessary for the performance of the tasks and they permitted the development of training. Thirdly, the tasks lent itself for the inductive reasoning (for a

qualitative analysis protocol) and the test-retest reliability, (for a quantitative approach in finding the modifiability scores). Finally, the tasks were suitable for demonstrating the potential modifiability of the learners.

To answer the question about the type of training, Fernández-Ballesteros & Calero's (2000) training programs were based on verbal interactions between the examiner and the learners (as test takers). The aim of the training was to improve the learners' approach to the task and self-regulation through significant supports from the examiner such as cues, feedback, and strategies. It could also be the case that the learners' poor performance did not result from their low ability. They may be unfamiliar with the assessment process, or with the task directions. Therefore, the training would enable them to actively engage in the task. Finally, the learning criteria were based on quantitative and qualitative analysis protocols. In the quantitative analysis, a significant numerical difference between posttest and pretest was identified. They also classified the learners into gainers, non-gainers, and high scorers from the gain score which was equivalent to posttest minus pretest. This program is conducted in groups and individually. The quantitative approach was used to analyze the groups of learner; whereas, the qualitative approach was used to analyze an individual learner. The qualitative analysis was related to a clinical approach of DA (the interactionist DA). An observation protocol was employed with which the individual's behavior was observed during each training item. They classified the observed behaviors into categories e.g. error, analysis of the information, answer modality, and appropriateness of the answer.

Pena and Gillam's (2000) research is one of the studies that employed Feuerstein's MLE to investigate the learning ability of the learners from non-mainstream language and cultural background. Pena and Gillam conducted their research to explore the word learning of a four-year-old child who came from a bilingual environment, where Spanish and English were spoken. The child's teacher noted some concerns about language development. The observation of peer interaction within the classroom setting indicated that the child responded to others'

initiations, took turns appropriately, but was typically non-verbal when initiating interactions with peers. Based on their previous experiences with MLE studies, Pena & Gillam found that MLE strategies were a promising alternative for distinguishing language difference from language impairment, especially with the language learners who came from culturally and linguistically diverse background. Therefore, they decided to use MLE in making more appropriate diagnoses with this child. An example of how they administered an MLE session is as follows:

The main goal of these sessions is to teach children about the need to use single-word labels across different contexts. Strategies that are used to teach children about labels include: distinguishing similarities and differences, grouping items in a category, and naming and understanding the special functions of an object. A script provides consistency across the activities and ensures a high level of MLE. Each session includes an introduction which focuses on the goal (mediation of intentionality) and purpose (mediation of meaning) of the activity (Pena & Gillam, 2000, p. 545).

Pena & Gillam argue that those who judge a child as being language different or language impaired need to base their judgement on data from a language-learning context. Thus, their research focused on the child's modifiability between baseline testing and re-testing, and careful observations of the child's learning behaviors during mediation sessions. In data analysis, the changes in response types were investigated and numbers of correct responses and error types in pre- posttest were compared. The evaluation results of the child together with the results from their former research led to the conclusion that children who had low language ability showed limited change on the task; on the other hand, those who had language differences but not language impairment increased the number of correct responses as well as their awareness of the goals and purposes of the task.



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2.1.6 Interactionist DA and Interventionist DA

The format of DA approach is conceptualized and named differently among scholars from diverse academic fields. However, the two different terms: interactionist DA and interventionist DA are commonly found in DA research studies. These two approaches are distinguished by the purposes in using DA and the way in which mediation is given to the examinees (Poehner, 2005; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). In interactionist DA, the purpose is mainly to promote language acquisition. The mediation in this approach is informal, fluid, and dependent upon the examinees' manner and it emerges from the interaction between the examiner and the examinee (Summers, 2008). On the contrary, the mediation in the interventionist DA is formal, rigid, and standardized. In the latter approach, a predetermined list of hints is devised and implemented. These hints are followed rigidly during DA session in order to generate a weighted score (Ableeva, 2010).

2.1.6.1 Research of Interactionist DA

Interactionist DA is clinical. It is based on dialogic relationship between the examiner and the examinee. The mediation given in this format can be negotiated, depending on the situation and the examinee's needs. Focusing on the responsive interaction, the examiner interrupts the examinee to provide hints and guidance whenever needed in order to give him/her the opportunity to revise their performance in appropriate ways. In this approach, individual differences in learning and changes of the examinees are also taken into account, as well as the sources of their differences. Interactionist DA researchers have generally not made efforts to meet traditional standards of reliability and validity because their priority is to intervene so that the examinee's learning potential can be developed, and they will do what allows for that development (Poehner, 2005).

According to Poehner (2008), most of DA studies with diagnostic purposes adopt this approach. For example, Orikasa (2010) conducted a case study of interactionist DA in the L2 learning context by tutoring L2 English oral communication to investigate how interactions between a mediator and a Japanese-speaking student were negotiated and helped enhance the student's performance. The results



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indicated that interactionist DA in the L2 context was effective in helping the learner overcome problems and performed better through negotiated interactions.

Greenberg (2000) conducted a case study to collect diagnostic information and to enhance the learning ability of her student with developmental disability. She used an open interview as her main method of data collection in her case study. Her research employed the unique and important role of DA in determining needs and methods that could maximize her subject's learning potential. The subject was a thirteen-year-old student who suffered from a severe stroke. The main test task in this research was derived from Raven's colored Progressive Matrices which are developed for use in fundamental research into the genetic and environmental determinants of intelligence (Raven, 2000). Through DA procedure, Greenberg gathered important information concerning the subject's needs and abilities that might have been easily overlooked with more traditional assessment. In order to accumulate important data needed for planning long-term intervention for her subject whose cognitive functioning was extremely limited, she designed a 10-hour DA program broken into five two-hour sessions over a period of 33 days. Greenberg saw the functional quality of DA in measuring cognitive processes that were directly connected to learning and had the ability to allow an examiner to evaluate interventions within the testing situation. Therefore, her research method was designed to collect qualitative data based on three different needs: firstly the need to observe the subject's process of learning while engaging in a variety of tasks across several different modalities; secondly the need to observe changes in the process of learning over time; finally the need for thorough exploration of learning problems and evaluation of potential intervention ideas. Through interactionist DA approach, the interaction between the examiner and the examinee during the DA session is not structured but flexible and responsive to the modified performance of the examinee. Thus the recorded observations of the examinee's performance are important. Greenberg stated that the main uses of the observations in her research were for a) studying the features of responses from her subject, b) finding whether or not her subject needed assistance and what type of assistance was most helpful,

and c) recording the learning strategies and processes that her subject could use effectively and/or needed to learn to use more effectively.

In terms of test score report, apart from the DA sessions, the subject also took a static test so that the researcher could compare the subject's score with same age peers. However, the DA test scores which were obtained through a non-standardized scoring were used together with the observations for reporting the learning process in which the subject engaged, including the independent performance and the performance when the subject receiving mediation. It is recommended by Greenberg that detailed descriptions of individual tests, effective and ineffective interventions, and the processes used by the subject be reported thoroughly. She also emphasizes that the description is vital for other researchers who might be interested in learning about DA and possibly decide to use it themselves.

Fahmy's (2013) study is another example that shows promising results for interactionist DA based instruction in promoting language acquisition. He conducted his research with 12 adult learners of Arabic at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. Since both DA and task-based language instruction (TBLI) share the same emphasis which is on the importance of student-centeredness, he combined TBLI with DA for investigating the participants' structural control of Arabic speaking in the context of classroom language learning. The participants went through unofficial Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI), intellectual style survey, biographical background questionnaire, and interventionist-DA interviews in the pre-DA phase. During the DA phase, the participants' ability to speak Arabic was observed and mediated through the daily interactionist DA. Meanwhile, the participants' strengths and weaknesses were also diagnosed. In the post-DA phase, participants were reevaluated by OPIs and interventionist-DA interviews. Their perceptions toward DA were also explored in this phase. The results of comparing the different evaluations conducted in both the pre- and post-DA phase reveal that all participants' structural control of Arabic was improved.

Thus, Fahmy concluded that the combination of DA/TBLI instruction was practical and successful in making a difference for the participants' learning process.



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Regarding the participants' perceptions of DA, they showed positive attitudes toward DA/TBLI instruction's capability for diagnosing and promoting their language learning. In addition, he asserted that without DA assistance, the OPI alone could not provide accurate diagnostic feedback in details.

2.1.6.2 Research of Interventionist DA

While interactionist DA is qualitative and open-ended, interventionist DA is more quantifiable and standardized. Interventionist DA takes the sequence of pretest-intervene-posttest format. It provides quantitative interpretation through three types of scoring: an actual score, a mediated score, and a learning potential score. The actual score indicates what the examinees can do by themselves. The mediated score denotes the amount of support the examinees require to complete the test. The learning potential score is a predictor of how the ability can be prolonged. The intervention phase, which occurs between the pretest and posttest, is carefully designed to gradually direct the examinee to arrive at the correct answer. During this phase, predetermined guidance is usually offered in the form of scripted prompts, ranging from implicit to explicit. The mediated score is calculated according to the number of attempts the examinee takes. In this way, resultant diagnoses include not only whether learners answered correctly (their actual score) but also the amount of support they required (mediated score) during the test (see Bavali et al., 2011; Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Leung, 2007; Poehner et al., 2015; van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014).

The DA study of van Compernelle and Zhang (2014) is an example of interventionist DA. They combined the function of an elicited imitation task in tapping into the implicit linguistic competence of the learner with the function of DA approach in linking conscious knowledge of language to perform language abilities. The focus of the research was to carry out a dynamically administered elicited imitation test for gathering diagnostic and instructional growth of the learner's emerging L2 capacities. Their research presented a single case analysis of an ESL advanced learner.

The test task in van Compernelle and Zhang's research included 36

sentences which were divided into 6 sets of 6 sentences. These sentences were stimuli for the learner to repeat. They consisted of both correct and incorrect sentence structures because the researchers wanted to direct the learner's attention to the meaning rather than to the form.

Therefore, after listening to the sentence in the audio recording, the first thing the learner had to do was to tell whether the sentence was true or not true. Then the learner repeated the sentence in correct English within 5 seconds. The researchers included three word-final morphological features, which were theoretically known as the indicators of three different acquisitional stages. These features were plural *-s* (early stage); past tense *-ed* (intermediate stage); and third-person singular *-s* (late stage).

The mediation in DA phase drew the learner's conscious attention to the task at hand. When the learner faced the difficulties, his/her metalinguistic knowledge was stimulated by the mediation to come into play. Since the mediation was designed according to the interventionist approach, it appeared in a form of scripted prompts for the examiner to follow. To illustrate the mediation session, van Compernelle & Zhang provided a description of the prompts as follows:

Table 2: van Compernelle & Zhang's Outline of Interventionist DA Procedures (van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014, p. 404)

Step	Procedure	Points
1	Play item and let student respond without assistance (independent performance).	4
2	If attempt 1 is not correct, prompt with: "Sorry, that wasn't quite right. Listen to the statement one more time and try to repeat it in correct English again." Play statement again, followed by second attempt to repeat.	3
3	If attempt 2 is not correct, prompt with: "Sorry, that wasn't quite right either. Listen to the statement again and pay attention to the noun/verb ____." Play statement again, followed by third attempt to repeat.	2
4	If attempt 3 is not correct, prompt with: "Sorry, that still wasn't quite right. Listen to the statement again and think	1

Step	Procedure	Points
	about the plural form of ___ / ending of the verb ___ / past tense form of the verb ___.” Play statement again, followed by fourth attempt to repeat.	
5	No more attempts. Provide the correct form and an explanation. Play statement again.	0

They also provided a clear example of how the mediated score was calculated as follows:

The test-taker has four attempts to respond to each sentence. The first attempt is unassisted, as would be typical on a non-DA test. If the response is incorrect, however, the learner is provided with a low-level prompt (i.e., they are told the answer was incorrect and to try again, this time focusing on a smaller part of a text, highlighted on the reading tests or excerpted and replayed on the listening test). If the test-taker fails to respond correctly on the second attempt, he or she is provided with another more explicit prompt and a smaller excerpt of the text is then highlighted. This continues (i.e., increasing explicitness of prompts and highlighting smaller parts of the text) until the test-taker either selects the correct answer or exhausts all four attempts, at which point the correct answer is provided and an optional explanation is offered (van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014, pp. 399-400).

Van Compernelle & Zhang used both quantitative and qualitative analyses in this case study. They focused on the way in which results obtained from the test can be used to create a profile of a learner's competencies. The learner's microgenetic development was also tracked to find the changes across test items. The findings of this research revealed that the learner was responsive to mediation and made gains in controlled performance. The collected data in this research provided evidence that the mediation in DA supported the learner in linking his/her conscious knowledge of English morphology to his/her performance.

2.1.7 DA Research in ESL/EFL Contexts

DA provides opportunities for learning to occur during assessment. This quality brings DA to English as a second language (ESL) research and language testing. DA has recently been given an increasing attention since its application in language testing yielded encouraging outcomes. It is developed initially for ESL learners and later validated with foreign language learners. Its scope is expanded from children to adult language learners (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). DA has been administered with different language proficiency groups of learners and different cultural background. DA is also expanded from classroom-based to computer-based instruction in both ESL and EFL contexts. It is found that a variety of language skills from various languages other than English e.g. French, Chinese, Russian, etc. are studied in DA literature.

For example, Kao (2014) investigated her students' Chinese writing performance through DA. This study explored the effectiveness of an enrichment program that integrated concept-based instruction and DA. Seven Chinese learners at an intermediate to advanced level participated in the 6-week enrichment program in a study abroad context. The Chinese language in this research was studied through its rhetorical norms from various perspectives, including culture, language, and different writing patterns.

The focus of the intervention in DA sessions was to guide participants to learn the concept of different Chinese writing patterns and the influence of each pattern on organization, the placement of thesis statement, and the presentation of ideas, supporting examples and descriptions in a Chinese text. The interactionist DA sessions were conducted in the form of both one-to-one mediation and group mediation. The mediator's role was to facilitate the learners' understanding of rhetoric styles, transforming their initial awareness into actual writing performances that reflected informed, intentional choices through their selection of particular rhetorical styles for a given composition. With the threefold objective of DA in this study: to assess language abilities; to intervene in learning; and to document

learners' growth, the teacher/mediator was able to better identify the quality of learners' understanding of Chinese rhetoric structures. In applying DA to her study, Kao discussed the limitation of DA as follows:

- 1) DA, the interactionist approach of DA in particular, was time-consuming, when implementing one-to-one interactions in the second language classroom.
- 2) It is hard to discuss the issues of reliability and validity – the issues that are fundamental in mainstream psychometric assessments – of DA. However, Kao suggested that these issues of DA could still be considered shifting from a norm-referenced perspective to a development-referenced perspective.
- 3) DA required that DA examiner have more skill, better training more experience, and greater effort than was the case in traditional standardized testing. There were considerable subjective issues for the examiner to determine e.g. what cognitive functions were deficient and required mediation; what kinds of mediation were to dispense; when further mediation was not needed, or how the differences between pre-mediation and post-mediation performances were to be interpreted (Tzuriel, 2013, as cited in Kao, 2014).

However, despite these challenges, Kao found that the interactionist approach provided the conceptual basis and assessment procedures to give interaction a key role in assessment. Her findings revealed that DA: a) enhanced the teacher's understanding in identifying individual learner's abilities; b) assisted the teacher to document and to promote learners' development over time; c) helped each learner establish autonomy in regulating one's own learning and agency in constructing Chinese articles with his/her own perspectives on writing styles; d) guided the future mediator/teacher to provide appropriate mediation that was attuned to learner's ZPD (Kao, 2014).



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Another example of a DA study in foreign language education is Anton's (2009) research on DA of advanced foreign language learners. She applied interactionist approach in her DA study with five advanced foreign language learners in an advanced Spanish language program at the university level. The examiner in this study interrupted the narrations of the examinees to provide hints and guidance whenever needed so that the examinees could improve their performance. A qualitative analysis of the results in this study shows that DA allowed for a deeper and richer description of learners' actual and emergent abilities. Anton claimed that DA allowed for a deeper and richer description of the learners' actual and emergent abilities. The collected data from her research were useful devising individualized instructional plans to support an individual learner's needs.

DA is studied in reading and listening skills more than in writing and speaking skills. There is even little research of DA on EFL speaking performance investigation. Only a few recent studies are found e.g. Azarizad's (2012) study on DA of speaking performance of EFL intermediate learners in Iran, and Anton's (2009) research on DA of advanced foreign language learners in narrative tasks. DA, as Haywood (2012) states, still needs substantial development; therefore, the present study is conducted to extend the use of DA for diagnostic purposes in the aspect of EFL speaking assessment of low proficiency students, which is not widely studied.

2.2 Speaking Skill and Language Testing

People usually regard someone who knows a language as "a speaker" of that language, not "a reader," "a listener," or "a writer" (Ur, 1996, p. 134). Ur's remark displays how speaking is intuitively perceived by people as more important than other language skills. Luoma (2004) indicates a similar notion that "the ability to speak in a foreign language is at the very heart of what it means to be able to use a foreign language" (p. ix). But then when people ask, "What is speaking?" a simple answer to this is given by Fulcher (2003) that speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. Bygate's (1987) concept of speaking is more directed to its feature in that "speaking is transient and improvised, and can therefore be viewed



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as facile, superficial, or glib” (p. vii).

Despite its important role in language ability, both Bygate (1987) and (Underhill, 1987) note that speaking, as a skill in language pedagogy, is generally taken for granted and receive little attention, especially in the area of language testing. Speaking does not lend itself well to objective testing because it consists of a combination of factors that influence the performance. Speaking is usually less formal in use and there is a large number of “speech events” that characterize the spoken language (Fulcher, 2003). Benati (2009) explains that a single speech of an L2 learner contains many aspects that can be measured, e.g. the type and frequency of errors produced by the learner, the complexity of his/her morphosyntax, the range and richness of his/her lexicon, or the fluency (speed, smoothness) with which the learner speaks. All these aspects make it difficult to assess reliably the speaking skill of the test takers.

Benati’s previous explanation is in accordance with Underhill’s (1987) remark. Underhill states that a speaking test cannot be treated like a traditional psychometric test which offers a test taker no opportunity to behave as an individual. The psychometric test measures the aspects of human behavior that are predictable and measurable rather than unpredictable or inconsistent. For example, the multiple-choice format – as one of the psychometric objective test techniques – reflects a language proficiency of an individual at a single point on a linear scale. Any form of an individual’s self-expression is concealed in such a test.

Underhill asserts that a speaking test that involves a judgment on human aspect of an individual is desirable. However it involves a subjective judgment by one person or another; therefore, it is likely less reliable and needs a lot of effort to make it reliable. In comparison with the tests of other language skills in literacy domains like reading and writing, the speaking test appears to be more difficult in administering. Hence, it is normally found that there is little space in general language tests that is devoted to measure the examinees’ ability to speak the language (Underhill, 1987).

With respect to a movement of “direct testing” in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a performance-based approach to communicative language testing had an



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influence on researchers, especially in applied linguistics (see Bachman, 2002; McNamara, 1997a). For instance, Savignon (1972) suggests that, in investigating the oral performance of language learners, it is important that the learners be engaged in an act of communication. This means that in order to have the learners perform their foreign language speaking ability, the examiner needs to design a speaking task consisting of communicative uses of language and an interactive format like dialogue or discussion. This aspect is also emphasized by McNamara (1997b) that the learners have to show their speaking ability through actual performances of relevant tasks rather than through abstract demonstration of knowledge represented by pencil-and-paper tasks. After this movement, a growing number of research studies on communicative speaking tests in the language testing literature arise – as can be found, e.g. in Fulcher’s (2015) comprehensive research timeline of second language speaking assessment from the year 1864 to 2014, and in Boxer & Cohen’s (2004) book about speaking research in second language pedagogy.

However, despite the growth of speaking research worldwide in recent decades, it appears that Underhill’s (1987) remark on the lack of appropriate speaking test is still true at least in Thailand. Sinwongsuwat’s (2012) review on assessment of Thai EFL learners’ speaking skills shows the overwhelming use of multiple-choice test type in paper-and-pencil based test to assess speaking skill, particularly in large-scale school and university admission exams. The following is her interesting comment on how Thailand needs more speaking studies for improving its educational testing context.

While there are concerns with implementing the national education policy to assure students’ overall English proficiency of certain standard as well as launching programs to deal with teachers’ apparently problematic classroom teaching and testing practices, as far as speaking abilities are concerned, there is a dearth of empirical studies taking a closer look into what is actually practiced in Thai EFL classrooms, where language teaching and assessing are intertwined



(Sinwongsuwat, 2012, pp. 76-77).

2.2.1 Defining Speaking Ability

2.2.1.1 *Speaking as a language ability*

Luoma (2004) states that speaking is an integral part of people's daily lives. Speaking is considered a meaningful activity of interaction which is social- and situational-based. Luoma describes spoken language as a language consisting of the following linguistic features: the sound of speech; spoken grammar; spoken words; fixed phrases; fillers and hesitation markers; and slips and errors. In comparison with writing, the major aspect that makes speaking different from writing is that speakers do not usually speak in sentences. Most of the time they produce "idea units," which are short phrases and clauses connected with *and*, *or*, *but*, *that*. This is because the major focus of the speaker is to communicate ideas that the listeners need to comprehend in real time. Both speakers and listeners are working within the parameters of their working memory. Thus the language units are often limited by pauses or hesitation markers, or spoken with a coherent intonation contour (Luoma, 2004, p. 12).

This description of spoken language shows that speaking is a purposeful and communicative action consisting of the linguistic features that are closely related to meaning. Based on this view, how the speakers use language (or the language function) is spotlighted by Gottlieb. Gottlieb (2006) explains that language function can be both social and academic in nature. Salutations, apologies, offers, invitations, complaints, and requests, etc., are examples of social language function. While academic function is related to behaviors associated with cognition, such as categorization, interpretation, and justification. The social features of speaking generally comprise implicit, underlying interaction with another person. Therefore, it is typical to find "endemic" features of spoken grammar and vocabulary that are organized in particular ways (Fulcher, 2003; Gottlieb, 2006; Luoma, 2004).

Since the understanding of the nature of language is fundamental to the understanding of L2 speaking ability (Luoma, 2004), a brief overview of the nature of

language ability is presented in the next section.

2.2.1.2 Nature of language ability

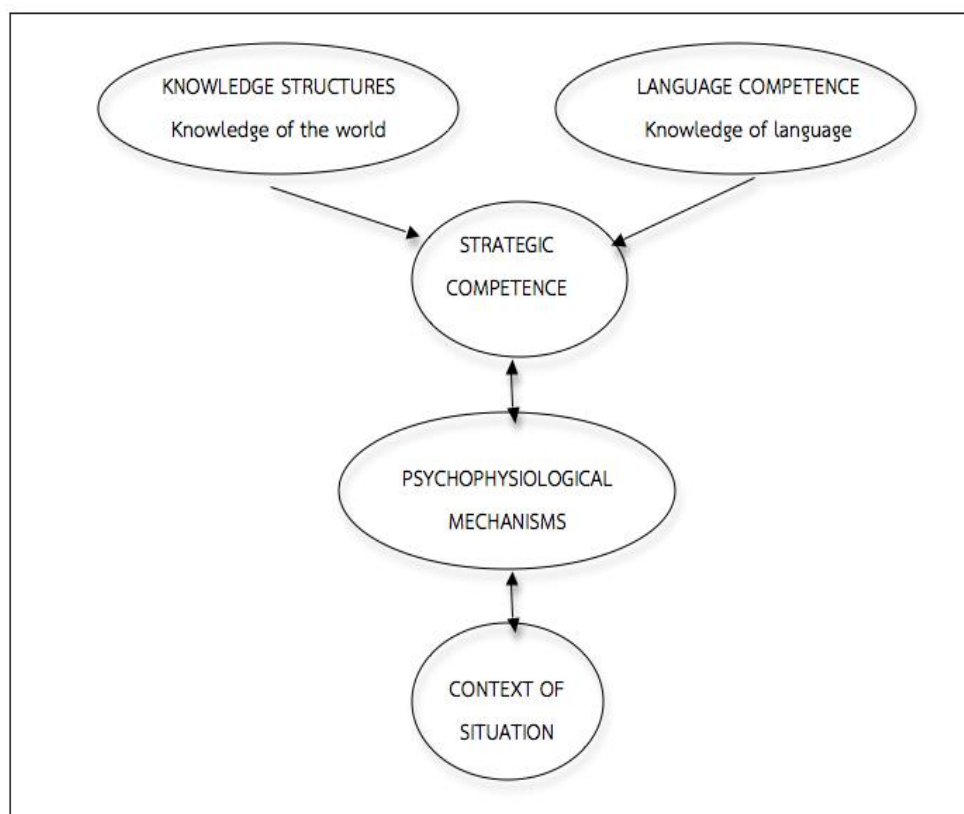
Language is a complex, structured (or rule-governed) system. It is primarily used as a tool for oral communication. Once a language user masters the complex system of the language, he/she can use it through a top-down approach. However, for a language learner, it is best learned and mastered through a bottom-up approach, one step at a time, with the learner using every aspect of the growing system as it is learned and to the extent that it has been learned (Hammerly, 1991).

Hammerly's idea toward the nature of language manifests not only what language is but also how language is learned or taught. Hammerly additionally explains that the contextualized use of the language is not ignored, but this idea imply that the way to approach language as a complex system can be done holistically and in a step-by-step, cumulative way when the whole system fails to come under control (Hammerly, 1991).

The concept of language ability (or proficiency) is defined by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as "the capacity for creating and interpreting discourse" (p. 95). It is associated with an individual's competence or ability to use language regardless of how, where, or under what conditions it has been acquired (Bachman, 1990). The ability to use language reflects the individual's acquisition of language inside and outside of school (Gottlieb, 2006). The famous model of language ability of Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) is one of the most influential theoretical frameworks. This model reflects the interactional nature of language. It represents a major paradigm shift from the structuralist linguistics that sees language as being composed of discrete components and skills to the notion of communicative language ability (Bachman, 1990).



Figure 2: Components of communicative language ability in communicative language use (Bachman, 1990, p. 85)



Bachman and Cohen (1998) explain that the communicative competence in this model is built upon Canale and Swain's (1980) theoretical bases of communicative approaches with an expansion of the role of strategic competence in providing a means for explaining how the various components of language competence interact with each other and with features of the language use situation. The knowledge structures refer to the real-world knowledge, or knowledge schemata, which provide the information base for the language users to use the language with reference to the world in which they live (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Psychophysiological mechanisms mean the neurological and psychological processes that are involved in the actual execution of language (Bachman, 1990). The other two components in the model: language competence and strategic competence are mainly focused here.

The language competence – or language knowledge (Bachman & Palmer,

1996) – is divided into two types. One type is the organizational knowledge. This type is formed by grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge, which control the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences. The other type of the language knowledge is the pragmatic knowledge. It includes the knowledge that enables the language users to create or interpret discourse. The pragmatic knowledge comprises functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. The language users use both kinds of knowledge to perform acceptable language functions and to understand how language is used in a particular context.

Bachman (1990) notes that both organizational competence and pragmatic competence are closely related to each other. Each of these consists of several sets of specific areas of language knowledge, which is best illustrated in the following Table.



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Table 3: Areas of language knowledge (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 68)

Area of language knowledge	Feature
Organizational knowledge:	How utterances or sentences and texts are organized
Grammatical knowledge	How individual utterances or sentences are organized Knowledge of vocabulary Knowledge of syntax Knowledge of phonology/ graphology
Textual knowledge	How utterances or sentences are organized to form texts Knowledge of cohesion Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization
Pragmatic knowledge:	How utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users and to the features of the language-use setting
Functional knowledge	How utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users Knowledge of ideational functions Knowledge of manipulative functions Knowledge of heuristic functions Knowledge of imaginative functions
Sociolinguistic knowledge	How utterances or sentences and texts are related to the features of the language-use setting Knowledge of dialects/varieties Knowledge of registers Knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech

The strategic competence, which is rooted in the work of cognitive psychologists, refers to the mental capacity for relating language competencies to features of the context of situation in which language use takes place and to the



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language user's knowledge structures. Bachman and Palmer (1996) expand the role of strategic competence as metacognitive strategies, including goal setting, assessment, and planning. These strategies are considered higher order executive processes providing a cognitive management function in language use. Bachman and Palmer adopt these strategies from Sternberg's meta-components in his model of intelligence composed of planning, monitoring, and evaluating individual's problem solving. Bachman and Palmer (1996) suggest that the three areas of metacognitive components in their model provide an essential basis both for designing and developing potentially interactive test tasks and for evaluating the interactiveness of the test tasks.

It is clear that in this model Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlight the interaction between the language users and their context.

2.2.2 Speaking Ability Models

Speaking ability is defined differently in multiple theoretical perspectives. In this chapter, Bygate's model, Levelt's model, and activity theory are presented.

2.2.2.1 Bygate's model: an ESL perspective

Bygate (1987) basically divides language ability into two sets: the knowledge and skill. The former concerns the knowledge of a set of grammar and pronunciation rules, vocabulary, and knowledge about how they are normally used. The latter relates to the ability to use that knowledge. This ability consists of two types of skills. One is the skill in applying grammar and vocabulary, and how to pronounce each word correctly. The other is the management of interaction (turn-taking and agenda management). Bygate further explains that speaking ability involves the use of production skills, facilitation and compensation devices. The skill of resolving specific kinds of communication problems is also included.

2.2.2.2 Levelt's model: a psycholinguistic perspective

In psycholinguistic perspective, the real-time processes that underlie the performance of an individual's language competence are important for investigating the general cognitive processes. Levelt (1989) remarks that "speaking is one of man's

most complex skills” and the speaker is regarded as “a highly complex information processor” (p. 1). In his blueprint for the speaker, the speaker as a processor consisting of four different processing components: conceptualizing; formulating; articulating; and self-monitoring. All of these components are mental activities and relatively autonomous. The product of these processes is not speech itself, but a specification of an utterance that is adequate for controlling the processes of articulation or speech production. O’Sullivan (2014) states that Levelt regards conversation as being extremely contextualized and purposeful. The contribution of Levelt’s speaking model is a practical approach to test validation referred to as cognitive validity, which includes the underlying cognitive processes in the language use.

2.2.2.3 Activity Theory: a sociocultural perspective

From the sociocultural perspective, language is culturally and socially mediated. Language is learned through interactions and experiences with others. Thus language is both the result of and the tool for social interaction (Chu, 2013). An individual as a whole person is the focus in sociocultural view. Lantolf’s (2005) advice for the researchers who want to study human learning is that they should not just ask who is doing what, but also how, when, where, and most importantly why the individual does it. It is worth noting that by asking “why the individual does it,” the researchers can probe into the motives and goals of the individual’s actions. This kind of investigation is indispensable for activity theory.

Activity theory involves all aspects of human action. Although this theory is not directly initiated to be a model of speaking ability, its emphasis on social mediation and interaction makes it relevant to performance-based oral proficiency assessment (Sun, 2012). Speaking in this framework is considered to be a social activity that occurs with a purpose. When an individual speaks, he/she connects and simultaneously interacts with the social context (e.g. people, culture, physical objects) that is unstable. Therefore, the individual’s speaking performance of a given task is not predictable. In other words, speaking is not a stable, fixed act. Instead, it is an active, dynamic act particularly when it happens in a real language use situation

(Chu, 2013). The interaction between the speaker and the speaking task is described by Lantolf as not a one-way but a two-way street. In this regard, he asserts “we should anticipate that learners will also shape the task in unexpected and creative ways in order to make sense of their own learning activity” (Lantolf, 2005, p. 348).

2.2.3 Speaking Skill in a Second/Foreign Language Pedagogy

Listening and speaking naturally interact. Most English language learners are likely to have greater comprehension than language production (Gottlieb, 2006). Speaking generally involves two-way communication with interactive role switching between the speaker, who conveys a message, and the listener, who interprets and responds to it (Underhill, 1987). Looking at speaking from a second language pedagogy stance, Luoma (2004) notes it is perceived to be the most difficult skill to teach and to test reliably. This notion is in accordance with G. Brown and Yule (1983) who state, “Spoken language production, learning to talk in the foreign language, is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help the student with” (p. 25). The teachers may have to struggle with a number of questions about how to deal with their ESL/EFL speaking class. Some of the questions are such as “what is an appropriate form of spoken language?,” “how important is pronunciation?,” “what is the teacher to do about the incompleteness and frequent ungrammaticality of spontaneous native speech?,” “is it reasonable to use “authentic” materials when invented dialogues read aloud can be made so much more interesting, witty, clear, and correct?” (G. Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 3).

According to Ur (1996), some other difficulties in teaching speaking may arise from the students themselves. For example, to avoid making mistakes, criticism, and losing face, the students are inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Furthermore, the students may have no motive to express themselves, or simply have nothing to say. In the classroom context, there is often an uneven participation of the students, especially in a large class. Some may speak a lot, some a little and others not at all. The students may refrain from speaking just because they feel unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language. Finally, certain psychological factors within the students e.g. lack of confidence, shyness, or

anxiety may hinder the students' speaking skill.

2.2.4 Good Characteristics of Speaking Skill

Good characteristics of speaking skill are viewed differently among researchers. The concept of "good" language speakers is also varied. It is synonymously labeled with other words like proficient, fluent, knowledgeable, bilingual, or competent (Iwashita, Brown, McNamara, & O'Hagan, 2008). Green (2014) states that the good characteristics of speaking skill are often indicated in the rating scales, describing observable evidence and features of oral production as follows:

Table 4: Features of more and less proficient speech (Green, 2014, p. 131)

Less proficient speech	More proficient speech
Shorter and less complex speech units	Longer and more complex speech units
Less and more limited use of cohesive markers (and, but, etc.)	Fewer errors per speech unit
More errors per speech unit	More (and more varied) use of cohesive markers
Limited to use of common words	Use of more sophisticated and idiomatic vocabulary
Pauses linked to language search	Pauses linked to content search
Pauses within grammatical units	Pauses between grammatical units
More silent pause time	Less silent pause time
Shorter stretches of speech between noticeable pauses	Longer stretches of speech between noticeable pauses
Speed of delivery noticeably below typical native speaker rates	Speed of delivery not noticeably below typical native speaker rates

It is noticeable that the characteristics illustrated in previous Table cover the features of grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, fluency, and

pronunciation. According to Iwashita (2010), grammatical accuracy and lexical diversity (vocabulary) are perceived by experienced language teachers to be the most important across all level. When the student's level of proficiency increases, other factors such as pronunciation, fluency, and sociolinguistic factors will come into play, and become important. The progress of the student's spoken grammar is often tracked according to the grammatical forms that they can produce accurately (Luoma, 2004). The spoken grammar is different from the written grammar in that it involves interpersonal implications. The grammatical forms for speech are not restricted within the sentence level but they also function at the level of discourse organization and pragmatic realizations (Goh, 2007). In this way, the features of grammar to be focused in a speaking test should be "specifically related to the grammar of speech" (Luoma, 2004, p. 12).

In terms of fluency, the speech that contains good quality of fluency will be regarded as fluent or smooth. On the contrary, the speech that lacks fluency appears to be slow, uneven, and the speaker looks hesitant or stumbles when speaking (Fulcher, 2003). Fluency is defined differently by Fillmore (1979) and Brumfit (1984). Fillmore regards fluency as the ability to fill time with talk. He states that the fluent speaker does not have to stop many times to think of what to say next or how to phrase it. Fluency in Fillmore's definition also involves the speaker's ability to access and control many of the language's lexical and syntactic devices as well as the speaker's familiarity with interactional and discourse schemata. While Brumfit's explanation of fluency is rather relevant to the student's second language acquisition. He defined fluency as "the maximally effective operation of the language system so far acquired by the language student" (Brumfit, 1984, as cited in Nation, 1989, p. 377).

Researchers usually pay attention to accuracy-fluency distinction. According to Fulcher (2003) it is easier to point to the good and poor aspects of accuracy in the learner's speech. If the learner speaks accurately, it means he/she is capable of constructing sentences and longer stretch of language that follows acceptable rules of language. However, the good and poor aspects of fluency in the learner's speech



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is not quite easy to indicate. Instead, it is more complicated. Fulcher elaborates on this by giving the following example:

A learner may pause for two or three seconds between propositions. The pause may be filled or unfilled. Does this indicate that the learner needs to pre-structure speech and is therefore at a stage where speech is not automatic? Or is this an example of content-planning hesitation – something which expert speakers do all the time when they are considering what to say next? (Fulcher, 2003, pp. 30-31)

This example shows that the pauses are not always an indicator of speaker's lack of fluency. The rater of a speaking test that depends on a linear scale of fluency may face with a problem in making decision toward this aspect.

In terms of pronunciation, Luoma (2004) states that the good characteristics of pronunciation are related to comprehensibility of the speech. It includes speed, intonation, stress and rhythm. Formerly, native speakers' pronunciation was used as a reference of good pronunciation of L2 students. Thus, L2 students were taught to attain a native-like standard. This practice is rejected by some applied linguists nowadays. They argue that native-like attainment is an unrealistic goal for most adult L2 students since accent and identity are intertwined (Isaacs, 2014).

2.2.5 Measuring Speaking Skill

The teachers or the researchers can use self-assessments and/or peer assessments to assess the features of the students' speaking skill. In self-assessments, the students assess their own performance, and in peer assessments, they assess each other's performance. These methods are a powerful means of engaging the students in the assessment processes and helping them take more control of their own learning (Green, 2014). For example, De Saint Léger (2009) conducted self-assessment with 32 students of advanced French in a tertiary institution. The participants self-assessed their speaking skill and their level of participation in French oral tasks. They were also asked to set their learning goals accordingly. The researcher states that this is the way to let the students reflect how



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they perceive themselves as L2 speakers. This study reports that the students' self-perception evolves in a positive way over the study period, especially in relation to fluency, vocabulary, and overall confidence in speaking the second language. As for the results of individual goal setting, de Saint Léger claims that it encourages the students to take more responsibility toward their own learning. Thus, the researcher affirms that self-assessment brings potential pedagogical benefits to the students.

There are many other ways to assess the speaking skill e.g. achievement assessments, which may take a form of progress tests used to gauge the ongoing improvement in the students' speaking skill. If this kind of assessment is administered at the end of a course, then pass/fail decision-making is usually involved. The teachers who want to track the students' speaking progress may rely on the formative uses or the summative uses of assessments. The former acts as guidance of what the teachers and the students will do next; whereas, the latter gives a retrospective picture of what has been achieved (Green, 2014). While summative assessments are usually used as part of the grading process, formative assessments are used as part of the teaching and learning process. A distinct feature of formative assessments is student involvement. Like self-assessments and peer-assessments, formative assessments engage the students in the assessment process. The students are involved as an assessor of their own learning and as resources to their peers. The role of the teacher in formative assessments is to help students identify their learning goal, set clear criteria for success, design test tasks and provide feedback as the students learn (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007).

2.2.6 Using DA to Measure Speaking Skill

DA is an integration of instruction and assessment. It is conceptually grounded in Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is usually untapped by other assessments (Poehner et al., 2015). The ZPD – a gap between what an individual can do independently and what he/she can do with help – entails an interactive and collaborative nature in DA. Both teachers and students take active roles in DA procedure.

DA is a process-oriented and development-oriented approach. The purpose of this approach is neither to screen the students, nor to be part of grading process. It aims to bring about improved performance through the provision of the examiner's assistance (or mediation) during the test. The mediation plays an important role in DA, and it distinguishes DA from other assessments. Another feature that makes DA different is the focus on the students' learning processes and the way feedback is given to make positive changes in their oral production before they finish the test. Based on the concept of ZPD, DA provides the insight into the modifiability of the students in their learning. Thus, the role of the teachers in DA is more proactive because their mediation or feedback is immediate, responsive to the students' needs, and sensitive to the students' changes that occur in their ZPD.

The participants of this study are those who have limited speaking skill. Their poor scores in the summative or achievement assessments do not help them tackle their problems, but lead them to lose self-confidence (because they repeatedly get low scores without knowing "why"). Therefore, the researcher attempts to find an alternative approach of assessment to make some positive changes in their ways of learning. DA shares some similar features with formative assessments and self/peer-assessments in that all these assessments are concerned with individual empowerment, promoting students' engagement in the assessment process, and increasing their responsibility toward their own learning. In other words, the central feature that they share is a view of assessment as social practice with a focus on the learner-as-individual.

However instruction and assessment remain separate entities in formative assessments and self/peer-assessments; while, they are integrated in DA. This aspect can be regarded as both an advantage and a disadvantage of DA. The disadvantage is that it affects fairness and reliability of the test because the resulting score no longer represents the students' solo performance. The advantage lies in the social aspect of an individual's proficiency. According to sociocultural theory, an individual's proficiency does not function in isolation, but emerges from the interaction or collaboration that occurs between individuals (Poehner, 2005). This means that collaboration is the source of learning and development. Because of this, an



individual should not be deprived of their chance to collaborate with more competent others to develop and make use of their full proficiency during assessment.

Hence, DA is a good option for this study because it offers a meaningful evaluation to the students to help them identify what they can really do, what they can do with help, and what they can't do. It focuses on how an individual student learns. It is sensitive to changes resulting from learning. These changes are promoted in a positive direction. The type of help that promotes positive changes will let both the teachers and the students know what works for them or what does not work. Eventually, an enrichment program for each individual student who has learning difficulties can be designed based on the information gathered from DA.

2.2.7 Factors that Affect Speaking Skill and How They Are Associated with DA

O'Sullivan (2000) points out that the characteristics of the test takers can have an influence on the language ability, including speaking ability, in their test performance. O'Sullivan categorizes these factors in three groups: 1) physical/physiological characteristics; 2) psychological characteristics; 3) experiential characteristics. He summarizes the details of each factor in the following Table:

Table 5: Factors affecting speaking skill (O'Sullivan, 2000, pp. 160-161)

Physical/Physiological	Psychological	Experiential
Short-term illness e.g. toothache, cold, or flu	Personality	Education
Longer-term illness or disabilities e.g. problems with hearing, speaking (stammer, lisp), or vision (dyslexia)	Memory	Examination preparedness
	Cognitive style	Examination experience
	Affective schemata	Communication experience
	Concentration	Target language country residence
	Motivation	Topic knowledge
Age	Emotional state	
Gender		

2.2.7.1 Physical/Physiological characteristics

The test takers may have some special needs that require special measurements, accommodations, or modification for their physical illness or disabilities. According to O’Sullivan (2014), these modifications of test delivery are important and needed to be taken into consideration. In the high-stakes and standardized tests, e.g. Cambridge English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in the UK and The *TOEFL iBT*[®] test, it is announced that the test takers with disabilities or health-related needs are provided reasonable accommodations. The Cambridge ESOL provides special arrangements across its test as follows:

- Braille Versions
- Enlarged Print Versions
- Hearing-impaired (lip-reading) Versions
- Special Needs Listening Test Versions
- Separate Marking for candidates with Specific Learning Difficulties
- Exemption from Listening or Speaking components (Weir, 2005, p. 53).

As for the ETS (Educational Testing Service), who develop the *TOEFL iBT*[®] test, they allocate a webpage for this group of test takers to apply for the special accommodations before registering for the test (see <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/disabilities>). Weir (2005) states that this special provision is so important that it is now a legal requirement in some countries such as in the USA.

2.2.7.2 How physical/physiological factors are associated with DA

Special attention on the physical/physiological factors is an indispensable part of DA approach because a core construct in DA is the notion of modifiability (Elliott, 2000). According to Lidz and Elliott (2000), the general model of DA can be applied to a wide variety of domains and learners of various groups e.g. age, gender, disadvantaged minority. A number of DA studies, especially in the field of psycholinguistics, have shown the established benefits of DA on diverse populations



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of biological differences and impairments.

One of the most obvious features of DA that promotes its use in these specific groups of learners is the shift of the focus (in non-dynamic assessment) on what the learners already know and can do to the focus on learners' responsiveness to the interaction and interventions provided during assessment (Lidz, 1997). An example of DA study in this aspect can be found in Martin's (2015) research. Martin investigates a narrative-based DA procedure with learners who have language disabilities. She states that DA "throws diagnostic light" on the nature of her learners with special educational needs (Martin, 2015, p. 51). It uncovers information about the learners' capacity to modify their task performance during the test. The learners in this research are identified by the Esther's and Mark's language test scores in the U.K. to be two years behind their statistical test-language age band. Martin claims that DA approach incorporates diagnostic and predictive teaching/learning methods that can better inform her learners' language learning potential. It is found in her research that the learners' modified language interactions in DA process gauge the change in their storytelling ability. That is the learners perform what they cannot do on their own in the non-dynamic assessment but they can do cooperatively with the mediator in DA. This change reveals the qualities of improvement.

Therefore, while the standardized test scores reveal her learners' deficits through normative comparison, the diagnostic function of DA identifies differences in each learner's natural development in the narrative task, including the development of new vocabulary, phonological organization in words and grammatical forms. Martin concludes that the interactions that are co-constructed between the mediator and the learner in DA process are the basis of task-focused and learner-focused interactional framing in DA. This co-construction is the joint creation of various aspects in the dynamic feature of social interactions taking place within DA including a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995). This feature provides a better prediction of the learning ability of the learners especially those who have biological differences and impairments.

According to Poehner and Lantolf (2005), DA is not just an alternative

assessment that can be used to assist learners to get through the test task, but it offers a more valid and fine-grained assessment for identifying the learners' general intellectual abilities as well as their potential for improving those abilities. De Beer (2006) emphasizes that the provision of social interaction in DA makes the assessment fairer for the minority groups, including socially at risk learners, culturally deprived people, impaired individuals, mentally retarded children, and people with psychiatric disorders, due to its open-ended view of the learners. Accordingly, Lidz and Pena (1996) support the use of DA as a nonbiased assessment approach to accurately identify the learner groups of special needs to find their embedded learning ability.

2.2.7.3 Psychological characteristics

The psychological characteristics of the test takers play an important role in the language test performance, especially among those in higher education (Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, 2015). O'Sullivan (2014) advocates that the test takers' psychological characteristics such as their interest, emotional stage, motivation, learning strategies, and learning styles may have an influence on their speaking skill. In psychological perspective, these characteristics are regarded as the basis of individual differences. Some of these characteristics, especially motivation and learner learning strategies are studied extensively among ESL/EFL researchers. Being aware of their crucial role in language learning, the researchers operationalize motivation and learning strategies to be contributors to the level of success in second/foreign language learning (Dornyei, 2005).

With regard to motivation and attitude, Gardner (2007) states that these two factors have more impact on ESL/EFL learners than on those who study first language. This is because the first language learning is an integral part of growing up; while, ESL/EFL learning may involve some kinds of pressure in the learning situations. Not all ESL/EFL learners learn the second or foreign language because they want to. Some may have to learn it. Regarding the attitude, those who want to learn the target language are regarded as integrative learners. These learners are likely to have

positive attitudes towards the speakers of the language and culture. Thus, they will probably see the communicative value of the language, and be motivated to acquire high proficiency in the language so that they can gain access to the culture and speakers of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). As for this group of learners who are willing to communicate, Oxford et al. (2014) stress that they will seek out and make use of communication opportunity. Thus they will apply functional practice strategies for social interaction.

In the area of motivational constructs, researchers usually take into account the integrative and instrumental dichotomy. The former refers to the language learning for personal advancement and cultural enrichment and the latter refers to the language learning for immediate and practical goals (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Gardner (2007) takes another set of two motivation types into consideration. It is the distinction between language learning motivation and classroom learning motivation. The language learning motivation means the motivation to learn and acquire a second language. This type of motivation is related to any opportunity to learn the language. The classroom learning motivation (as suggested by its name) refers to the motivation in the classroom situation or in any specific situation. The focus is on the individual learners' perception of the task at hand. This type is mostly state oriented and associated with the language class. Furthermore, Gardner (2007) remarks that motivation is not a simple construct. It incorporates the behavioral, cognitive, and affective components in language learning. Its impact on language learning achievement is also complicated. It requires obvious observation of specific motivation that exists in specific language learning situation. This remark is in accordance with Haywood's discussion concerning motivation that takes place in DA approach, which will be presented in the next section.

According to Oxford et al. (2014), motivation and attitude are variables that are usually studied in relation to learners' learning strategies. It is found that motivation is often correlated with the frequency of use of language learning strategies and with the development of language proficiency. Oxford (2011) asserts that the learning strategies are learners' goal directed action. They enable the learners to become active language learners. They assist the learners to enhance



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their language proficiency, accomplish a task, and make learning more efficient and easier.

Empirical evidence supporting Oxford's notion on the beneficial effect of learning strategies on learners' speaking skill can be found in Nakatani's (2005) research. Nakatani investigates how the learners' speaking skill can be changed through the explicit instruction of oral communication strategies and the extent to which these strategies can improve their speaking skill. It is found in his research that the learners in the strategy-training group significantly improve their speaking skill. The qualitative data confirm that their success is partly due to an increase general awareness of oral communication strategy.

2.2.7.4 How psychological factors are associated with DA

Haywood and Lidz's (2007) observation of the kind of motivation that exists in DA context leads to their remark that it is task-intrinsic motivation that occurs to the test takers in DA process. This type of motivation is inherent in information processing and action. They explain that an individual's satisfaction that is derived from the task with which he/she is confronted is considered intrinsic motivation; whereas, the one that is derived outside the task for incentives and rewards is considered extrinsic motivation. An important distinct feature between these two types of motivation is that the intrinsically motivated individual seeks satisfaction (by focusing their attention on the task at hand); while, the extrinsically motivated individual may not seek satisfaction but avoid dissatisfaction instead (by focusing on other factors outside the task). The following Table illustrates the differences in the characteristics of intrinsically motivated and extrinsically motivated persons.

Table 6: Characteristics of persons who are predominantly intrinsically motivated or predominantly extrinsically motivated (Haywood & Lidz, 2007, p. 29)

Intrinsically motivated persons	Extrinsically motivated persons
<i>Seek satisfaction by</i>	<i>Avoid dissatisfaction by</i>
concentrating on:	concentrating on:
Task involvement	Avoidance of effort

Intrinsically motivated persons	Extrinsically motivated persons
Challenge	Ease
Creativity	Comfort
Responsibility	Safety
Learning	Security
Psychological excitement	Practicality
Aesthetic considerations	Material gain

It could be seen from the Table that the individuals who are intrinsically motivated are more engaged in the task and more active in implementing it. Haywood asserts that intrinsic motivation is relevant to DA. Since the goal of DA is to promote learners' learning potential development and to assist them to move beyond or overcome obstacles in their problem-solving process, it is important for the mediator to initiate the interaction in a way that the learner's intrinsic motivation is fostered. This means that the test takers in DA need to be encouraged to process information and work on problem solving with the motive to do one's best without expectation of task-extrinsic reward (Haywood & Lidz, 2007).

With regard to the learning strategies in DA context, the co-constructed interactions that constitute the learning strategies that arise during problem solving in DA are considered the most useful unit of analysis (Donato & McCormick, 1994). Poehner (2008) analyzes the interactional patterns within DA and points out that how the learners respond to the mediation, their requests for additional or specific kinds of assistance, and their refusal to receive further support during DA process are the picture of their reciprocating behaviors. This reciprocity provides the teachers with a systematic document to track the learners' development so that the teachers can build up a clear picture of the learners' profile (Poehner, 2008). At the same time, this profile enables the learners to identify what strategies they can adopt to achieve the task. This process lets the learners perceive themselves as an individual who possesses strengths and weakness in their own learning styles and learning strategies, and who is capable of giving a better performance when receiving appropriate mediation.

Poehner's analysis of the learning strategies derived from the process-oriented approach of DA shows how these strategies can be individualized. This is consistent with the argument made by Donato and McCormick (1994). In Donato and McCormick's view, the learning strategies derived from the social interactions in DA can be understood only by examining their genesis in culturally-specific situated activity. This means that the study of language learning strategies in DA needs to focus on the investigations of learners' growing use of strategies during their language learning experience instead of relying on static taxonomies of language learning strategies.

2.2.7.5 Experiential characteristics

The experiential characteristics that can affect the speaking skill include the learners' former education, examination preparedness, examination experience, communication experience, etc. These characteristics are regarded as external influences that affect the learners' ability to speak. In terms of learners' examination preparedness and their examination experience, there is a claim that the learners who lack the abilities prerequisite to taking the test may perform poorly. Helping the learners to identify a number of prerequisite abilities and increasing the learners' familiarity with the demand of a particular test task can improve the poor performance that is caused by this aspect (Oakland, 1972). Therefore, some high-stakes and standardized tests like iBT TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS, provide example tests for their test takers to practice on line so that they can learn the inherent structure of the speaking task and its prompts. The test administrators of these tests also provide the speaking rubrics to let the test takers prepared themselves in order to achieve the expected scores.

2.2.7.6 How experiential factors are associated with DA

DA approach is sometimes viewed as "teaching to the test," or "assessment-driven instruction" (Nazari, 2012, p. 60). This is because the instructions that take place in DA involve the training of test-taking strategies that are responsive to the test takers' needs when they encounter the test. However, the purpose of instructing the test takers on how to do the test is different from that of the cram schools. In



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the cram schools, the teachers help the learners to become test-wise in order to achieve the highest scores, which appears to be product-oriented instruction. On the contrary, the instruction in DA is rather process-oriented. The mediator in DA approach attempts to provide supportive environment for the learners in order to facilitate their process of learning. The training of test-taking strategies and the co-construction of understanding toward the prompt of the task help the learners start the test with more confidence and gain more control over the way to respond to the task.

Making assessment more informative to the learners is a way to bring about positive experience towards the test so that they can put an effort into accomplishing the task. According to the sociocultural theory that DA is grounded on, the process-oriented instruction starts out as “other-regulation.” The learners may be provided with various kinds of assistance and scaffolding through dialogic relationship with the mediator, who is modeling higher mental functions such as, analysis and synthesis (cognitive strategies), or planning, monitoring, and evaluation (metacognitive strategies) to the test takers (Oxford, 2010). The learners internalize and transform these strategies through a number of dialogues (social interaction) until it becomes “self-regulation” within the learners themselves (Oxford & Schramm, 2007, p. 53). For example, the mediator may give verbal feedback that enable the test takers to restrict their attention to the most directly relevant aspects of the test task.

According to Haywood, restricting attention is a good metacognitive strategy for improving learning during DA. This method enable the test takers to break down problems into manageable parts so that they can work on the solutions sequentially by asking themselves “what should I do first?” instead of “what should I do?” (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). The verbalization of the learners’ problem solving while engaging in the test will reflect how they become self-regulated. Then the mediator will know when to withdraw him/herself from a guiding role and take only the role of an observer tracking the progress in the learners’ modified behaviors and test performance (Schneider & Ganschow, 2000).



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2.3 Speaking Task Types

The speaking task types can be generally categorized as direct tests, indirect tests, or semi-direct tests (Bailey, 2005). Firstly, the direct test of speaking involves a procedure in which the test takers actually speak the target language, interact with the examiner or with other test takers, and generate the expected utterances to the task. This task type is authentic in that it resembles everyday conversations, discussions, or transactions. The speaking tasks that belong to this type are such as an oral interview, a conversation, and an unscripted role-play. The face-to-face IELTS speaking interview is also an example of this kind.

The interaction in the oral interview is illustrated in the Figure below:

Figure 3: Interaction in the interview, adapted from Green (2014)



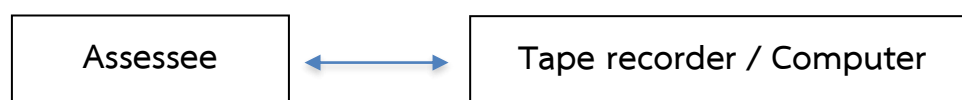
Fulcher (2003) notes that the face validity of this task type is high because the test procedure sends a message to the test takers that it is important for them to be able to verbally produce normal or real speech. Fulcher (2003, p. 181) states “direct tests have been considered automatically ‘valid’ by definition.” However, some scholars do not agree with this consideration. They argue that the definition of normal or real speech is dubious or even may not exist. Therefore, instead of relying on face validity, the test administrators or test designers need to present a validity argument for their speaking test (Fulcher, 2003).

Secondly, the indirect speaking task type is the task in which the test takers do not speak. An example of the speaking task in this group as suggested by Bailey (2005) is a conversational cloze test in which the original text is the transcript of an actual conversation. What the test takers do in this task is to fill in the missing word, phrases, or sentence that would be appropriate in the context of that conversation. This kind of speaking task type is quite practical and reliable; therefore, it is widely used in the standardized English examinations in most educational setting in

Thailand. Bailey (2005, p. 23) notes that the indirect test of speaking is claimed to assess what is called “enabling skills.” The enabling skills are thought to underlie the test takers’ speaking skill. For instance, the test takers’ ability to distinguish different sounds in a pair of phonemes is thought to be the enabling ability of the test takers to produce those sound contrasts when they really speak. In terms of practicality of the test, Bailey (2005) states that this type is quite easy and time efficient for the test administrators to handle, especially when administering with a large number of test takers. The reliability of the test is also high since the scoring is based on a set of controlled answers. However, in terms of validity of the test, the test takers may not feel that their speaking skill is really tested because the tasks do not require them to verbally use the language to communicate with others (Fulcher, 2003). At the same time, this type may limit the positive washback to the test takers themselves because the test procedure does not encourage them to put an effort in practicing speaking English with others inside and outside the classroom.

The last speaking task type is the semi-direct test. This task type requires the test takers to produce oral language, but there is no real interaction in a conversation, interview, or role-play (Bailey, 2005). An example procedure of the semi-direct test is that the test takers listen to prompts and tasks delivered to them by recorded voice, and then they respond by talking to a recording device. The computerized administration of the speaking test over a computer (on line) or a telephone as found the iBT TOEFL and in the Versant test belongs to this type. These high-stakes tests have proved the practicality of the semi-direct speaking task in that it is possible to administer with a large number of test takers worldwide at the same time.

Figure 4: Interaction in the Semi-Direct Task, Adapted from Green (2014)



Bailey (2005) mentions that this type brings about positive washback when the learners put an effort to practice speaking because they realize that in order to accomplish the task, they have to produce oral language in the test. However, in terms of authenticity of the test task, since it is not a face-to-face interaction, it is possible to make the test takers feel awkward or unnatural to talk to a computer or a tape recorder and interact with the voice from an anonymous person. This causes an artificial feeling about the semi-direct test procedure (Bailey, 2005).

In terms of reliability of the test task, especially in the interview, Green (2014) makes a comparison between the interview of the direct speaking test task and that of the semi-direct task. He indicates that they can be different to some extent. An examiner of the interview in the direct test usually takes the role of an interviewer who has a set of questions written on paper to ask. Despite having the same set of questions to ask, different examiners may ask the questions differently in the interview due to different personalities and questioning styles and the way they interact with the test takers. This may bring about the effect that the test becomes more difficult or easier for some test takers than others (Luoma, 2004). On the other hand, the reliability of the semi-direct test task is not affected by the interviewer's manner because this aspect will not occur in this type. The recorded questions and the prompts are standardized.

Hence, it could be seen that all speaking task types consist of both advantages and disadvantages. To consider what speaking task type is useful for DA, according to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), the answer is any type of test task can be administered in DA. It can be a direct, indirect or semi-direct speaking test task. The primary concern of DA test procedure is to involve the language evaluation in social situation. Instead of letting the test takers do the test task alone, the examiner increases his/her role in being a mediator (supporter) and interacts with them in the test procedure.

To provide further explanation for this answer, we need to trace back to where DA is founded. DA is derived from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. It is originally practiced in psychology, psycholinguistics, and special education. In these fields, DA functions as an assessment for learning and improvement. The assessment



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procedure of DA is designed to be an integral part of deliberate efforts to help learners learn how to assemble and use knowledge (Lidz & Elliott, 2000). It is the mediation in DA procedure that plays a key role in diagnosing the learning problems and improving the learning potential of the learners. Regarding the task, Feuerstein (the founder of mediated learning experience – MLE theory), created the Learning Potential Device (LPAD), which is a series of cognitive problem-solving tasks used to determine the examinees' potential from observations of repeated responses to tasks and from the mediation that is used to help the examinees think and learn more effectively while coping with the task (see more information about LPAD in [http://www.icelp.info/feuerstein-method/assessment-\(lpad\).aspx](http://www.icelp.info/feuerstein-method/assessment-(lpad).aspx)).

After DA gains attention from L2 assessment researchers and practitioners, it is known to be a systematic framework for relating assessment practices to language teaching and learning (Poehner et al., 2015). The function of DA in psycholinguistics is applied to the ESL pedagogy, which is to address learning difficulties and to allow instruction to take place in the assessment to promote language learner development. However the LPAD tasks which are widely used among psycholinguists become limited in language learning. Thus, the framework of DA is applied to the normal language test task. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that the characteristics of LPAD tasks are cognitive problem-solving tasks that creates the learning difficulties for the test takers to cope with so that the conscious awareness of their learning potential can be raised. Therefore, the language test task for DA should contain this feature.

It takes similar type of consideration for examiners to set up a speaking test task for the test with DA process and for the one with non-DA process. The examiners need to start with the kind of expected responses from the task that they want to make an inference to the construct of the speaking test (Fulcher, 2003). This means that to start with the speaking task selection, the examiners of DA or non-DA need to consider the type of tasks that is appropriate for eliciting the target area of the language to be tested.

For example, if the objective of the test is to assess the learners' ability to distinguish and produce intelligible sounds of English words, a task that requires the

examinees to read sentences containing minimal pairs is more appropriate than a debate, a role-play, or an interview. The read aloud task in this case is more suitable than other direct speaking tasks because it is more controlled. Most importantly, it directly serves the purpose of the sound distinction on the word level. Then, if the examiners want to combine the task with DA process, Hill and Sabet suggest that they take the following into consideration:

- The integration of mediated assistance into the task procedure;
- The discovery of the test takers' ability to overcome the performance problems and to transfer what they have internalized to the new problems;
- The observation of the test takers' zone of proximal development (ZPD);
- The collaborative engagement between the examiner and the test takers to diagnose problem areas (Hill & Sabet, 2009, pp. 538-539).

In short, a non-DA test task can become a DA test task by adding a social aspect and the modified roles of examiners, test takers, and the activity in the test procedure. This modification facilitates the examinees' ability to accomplish the test task. The characteristics of the speaking task for DA should lend itself for the integration of support aimed at raising the test takers' conscious awareness to the ability to use the needed language features in the task. In this way, the speaking skill of the test takers is optimized.

2.4 Elicited Imitation (EI): A Sentence Repetition Task

The present research adopts elicited imitation (EI) as a speaking test in the DA process. According to the behaviorist's view, the primary mechanism in learning a language is imitation (Gass & Selinker, 2008). A number of researchers have long proposed EI as a way to investigate second language acquisition (see Hamayan, Saegert, & Larudee, 1977; Naiman, 1974; Sarandi, 2015; Wong & Hwa Ling Teo, 2012; Yan, Maeda, Lv, & Ginther, 2016). SLA researchers attempt to broaden the repertoire of measurement instruments that can be used in language testing. Among other common speaking tasks such as modified interaction (or simulation), small group

interactions, narration, reading a text aloud, utterance/discourse completion, interview, role-play, etc., EI is considered applicable for collecting the language use in L2 testing (Shohamy, 2000).

EI can be used to elicit the learner's implicit knowledge of the language (Sarandi, 2015). It is a testing method that requires the test taker to listen to a spoken stimulus sentence and then attempt to repeat it back as accurately as possible. The basic premise of EI language testing is that as a stimulus grows in complexity, the performance of the test taker should degrade in a corresponding manner. This is because, as the test taker is exposed to a given stimulus, he/she forms a representation of that stimulus and then attempts to reproduce a response based on the representation they have stored. Short-term or working memory may serve to bypass the encoding/decoding steps.

The EI users may face the question whether the subjects really understand the sentences they are repeating, or whether they are simply parroting the sentences. Vinther (2002) suggests that controlling for complexity of the sentences allows researchers to make sure that the subject's language proficiency is being investigated rather than their memory capacity. At the same time, Vinther (2002) also recommends the use of a gradual increase of sentence length. This is the way to vary the difficulty level of the EI task in order to target at multiple proficiency levels.

EI is a language test task that has been extensively used to examine second language proficiency and development. EI test has its root in cognitive psychology which asserts the capacity to imitate is intuitive (Erlam, 2006). It is regarded by Graham, Lonsdale, Kennington, Johnson, and McGhee (2008, p. 1604) as "an oral language testing technique which promises to be inexpensive, efficient, and reliable." In the same manner, Underhill (1987, p. 86) states that "it is a quick and effective test." These positive features increase the practicality of EI, and make it preferable for practitioners (including the researcher of the present research) who administer a small-scale test with time constraint and limited budget.

A number of language scholars, especially in 1970s and 1980s, acknowledge the validity of EI as an effective teaching/learning method for the development of English productive skills (see Bley-Vroman & Chaudron, 1994; Erlam, 2006; Hamayan



et al., 1977; Naiman, 1974; Ota, 2010; Yan et al., 2016). Furthermore, EI's reliability and validity were measured in Henning's (1983) study and it was found that, in the three oral language assessment techniques (elicited imitation, oral interview, and sentence completion), EI has the highest validity and reliability.

Regarding the speaking test tasks in general, there are indirect and direct test of speaking (O'Loughlin, 2001). The indirect speaking test evaluates what lies beneath the test takers' productive skills through pencil and paper tests consisting a task like multiple choice, gap-filling, or cloze test. On the other hand, the direct speaking test task actually makes the test takers speak. EI is the direct speaking task that requires simultaneous processing of how the speakers organize what they have to communicate (Hamayan et al., 1977).

The feature of sentence repetition that is adopted as an EI task in the present study is one of the three main types of repetition-related tasks that are used in language pedagogy. The other two types are reading and looking up, and shadowing (Ota, 2010). In EI sentence repetition procedure, the test taker is required to listen to a sentence and repeat it. This becomes its limitation as it is considered to be neither authentic nor communicative (Underhill, 1987). However, in recent research, EI is proved to consist of concurrent validity, with high correlation between the EI test and the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) scale (Gaillard, 2014). In Bley-Vroman & Chaudron's (1994) study, EI is thoroughly investigated and the researchers gain the insight into four different steps of the learner's EI process as follows:

- The speech comprehension system: The subject hears the input and processes it, forming a representation;
- Representation: The resulting representation includes information at various levels;
- Memory: The representation must be kept in short-term memory;
- The speech production system: The subject formulates a sentence based on the accessed representation. (There may



also be monitoring of the phonetic plan, comparing it to the model (Bley-Vroman & Chaudron, 1994, p. 247).

The test method of EI requires that in order to remember and successfully imitate a sentence, the test taker should organize it in some manner. Hamayan et al. state that “the sentence cannot simply be parroted from short-term memory, the subjects must encode them through the use of some semantic, syntactic or other mnemonic devices” (Hamayan et al., 1977, p. 46).

The education practitioners use EI in ESL/EFL research for several reasons. For example, Wong and Hwa Ling Teo (2012) used EI to measure second language learners’ underlying knowledge of restrictive relative clauses. The main purpose of the study was to determine if the EI task is a suitable testing technique to elicit and tap the underlying mental representation of L2 learners. Their research participants were two groups of learners, L1 Malay and L1 Chinese speakers. The results obtained from the EI task were compared with the results obtained from the GJT (an established task often used in second language acquisition) to determine if the results correlate. The findings were that the participants were generally better at judging and imitating grammatical items in both tests and a positive correlation was indeed found between both tests for grammatical items.

Another example is Gaillard’s (2014) study. After realizing that there was a real need for an aural/oral evaluation tool to be used as an aural/oral component in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and language teaching for French, Gaillard implemented an EI research study with 200 participants who took an EI test for measuring their French global proficiency. The EI test scores from these participants were interpreted through the validity framework developed by Chapelle, Enright, and Jamieson (2008). It was found in her research that this framework helped to organize various evidence that could be used to present an interpretive argument for the EI tasks.

2.4.1 The Reason for Using EI in the Present Study

There are three main reasons for choosing EI to be the speaking test task in the present study. These reasons are (a) the characteristics of the participants, (b) the language course in this study, and (c) how the task lends itself toward its integration with DA process.

The participants in this study are Thai university students who have low proficiency in English. The opportunity for speaking English in their real life is limited due to the EFL context around them. According to the cognitive view of EFL learning, a foreign language is typically processed less automatically than a native tongue, which could lead to more deliberate processing. This makes EFL learning become more analytic, rule governed and systematic (Keysar et al., 2012). Furthermore, the data gathered from the participants in the pilot study revealed that they were not extensively exposed to the real use of English in authentic situations. Thus, this limited exposure to real English use resulted in their limited speaking skill.

Regarding the English course in this study, it is ENG 111 (Foundation English I). The objective of the course is to enhance the students' knowledge and four language skills through the practice of grammatical points, language functions, and vocabulary at a basic level with an emphasis on communicative competence. It is important to note here that this is not purely a speaking course. Therefore, speaking skill is just one of the four language skills taught in the class. Each class consists of 50 students. With this number of students, the speaking practice, especially on an individual basis, is minimal since it takes a lot of class time.

Based on the interview data of the participants in the pilot study, little class time was allocated for individual speaking practice. Most of the time the teacher taught grammar, vocabulary, and reading. The speaking practice that occurred in the class were based on the textbook, which consisted of a lot of pronunciation drills and spoken expressions that were drawn from the dialogues in the book. Due to the time constraint of the course, the oral practices of dialogues were usually skipped. As a result, the English speaking in the class was carried out most of the time in the forms of discrete words, phrases or sentences.



In this regard, EI that is designed to take the form of sentence repetition task is suitable for the context of this study. This form can elicit prompted production from the students on a sentence level (Rebuschat & Mackey, 2013). It is a semi-direct speaking test task that uses recorded prompts. Underhill (1987) states that EI is a quick and effective test task. Although it does not look authentic or communicative, it can discriminate well at all levels of the test takers' language ability.

Another feature that supports the use of EI task is the flexibility of the prompts. It is flexible for the examiner to design the prompts that reflect the language focus taught to the participants in the course. Furthermore, the stimulus sentences in EI are designed to progressively increase in terms of length (number of words), morphological complexity, and syntactic complexity. This aspect of the EI task corresponds to DA approach in this study which is administered to elicit the diagnostic information about the participants' strengths and weaknesses in their speaking skill. Thus the increase of the length of the sentences means the increase of the challenge or difficulty that the examiner adds into the task. In this way the examiners can test the limit of the participants' speaking skill and at the same time they can compel the participants to continually stretch their abilities to reach the higher level of the proficiency (Poehner, 2008).

In short, there are many reasons that support EI to be an appropriate speaking task for the participants in this study. The most important reason is that the characteristics of this speaking task are suitable for the context of the language course and the level of proficiency of the participants. Since active interaction between the participant and the examiner is the main component of DA procedure, it is possible that EI task and DA can be closely interwoven in this research.

2.5 Validity of the Assessment

Validity is regarded by Bachman (1990) as the most important quality of test use. It concerns the extent to which meaningful inferences can be drawn from test scores. Messick (1989) states that validation is an evaluation process of theorizing constructs, or abilities, and gathering evidence of individuals' abilities to support

claims one wishes to make. Thus, the major concern of the test administrators and test users is to control the issues of validity of their tests.

The validity of an assessment can be distinguished into two main types: internal validity and external validity. Firstly, internal validity is an inductive estimate of the degree in which about casual relationships can be made. If there are extraneous variables playing a role in the test results, the researcher may have a problem of internal validity. Secondly, external validity refers to the degree to which results can be generalized to and across populations. It deals with the degree to which the conclusions in the research can be generalizable to other persons, groups and in the contexts outside the experimental setting (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Falchikov, 2005).

Internal validity needs to be taken into consideration for the studies that assess the effect of interventions. The researchers have to provide reasonable conclusions that the established cause-effect relationship is due to the manipulated independent variable made under controlled conditions. According to Campbell and Stanley (2015), there are eight threats of internal validity that the researchers need to be aware of. These threats are history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection of participants, mortality, and interaction effects. The researchers who rely solely on the test scores with no monitors of these threats could be at risk of making invalid conclusion.

One of the most important sources of invalidity that is inherent in the nature of both DA and speaking test (which are the main components of the present study) is the subjectivity. Based on literature review of DA, the mediator provides the students various kinds of assistance in order to reveal the abilities that have not yet been fully formed but are in the process of emerging. At the same time, the quality of this interaction might bring about changes in the students' thinking process. (Lantolf & Poehner, 2013). Hence, the results of the test are inevitably affected by the mediator's assistance.

However, this aspect is perceived by DA practitioners not a threat but rather a matter of fairness to the learners. This is because the provision of mediation that is



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sensitive to learner needs yields fine-grained diagnoses of abilities and also supports ongoing development, which is the major purpose of DA (Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011). Nevertheless, being aware of the drawbacks of subjectivity in DA research, some researchers design beforehand the mediation process to be more systematic in the form of scripted prompts hierarchically arranged from most implicit to most explicit. The scripted prompts that the present study adopts are illustrated in the following Table.

Table 7: Mediation prompts

Sequence	Mediation prompt for the EI task
1	Shaking head to show rejection, saying “try again” Replaying the item
2	Giving the first hint (by naming the source of problem e.g. grammar, pronunciation, vocab), Replaying the item
3	Giving the second hint (more explicit than the second prompt) Replaying the item
4	Correct response and explanation provided

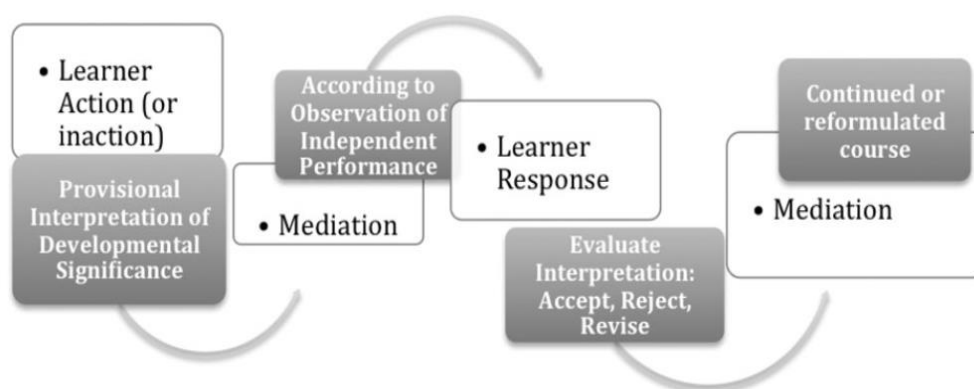
The use of “Try again” as the first prompt, when the learners’ first attempt in repeating the sentence is unsuccessful, is designed to open the opportunity for the learners to trace their own errors by themselves first. It functions as a tool to bring the learners into their ZPD. If the learners can figure out their own errors and also can correct them in their second attempt, they will earn a high mediated-score. The learners’ ability to correct themselves in this stage shows that they can regulate their own performance. This helps both mediator and learners to identify the existing level of their ability in dealing with the task at hand, and at the same time it helps raise the learners’ awareness of their own responsibility in improving themselves. In this way, the first prompt supports learners to be engaged in self-correction first before receiving further support from the mediator.

The prompts of the 2nd and the 3rd sequences are designed as a simple guideline for the mediator in the present study to adjust the right kind of interaction

and scaffolded feedback for an individual learner in each DA session with the learners. While following these prompts, the mediator still have some flexibility to vary the mediation according to different needs, responses, or speaking errors of the learners. This flexibility is also for the learners' own sake in that they still have a chance to think, notice, and identify the problem by themselves in order to correct the error before the mediator tells them explicitly. By providing these prompts which gradually increase in the degree of explicitness, the mediator can facilitate the participant's cognitive learning in relation to the existing and ongoing development.

In order to increase the reliability and the validity of DA study, Poehner (2011) devises a more systematic way to track the test takers' process, which is called a model of micro validation in L2 DA interactions, as illustrated below:

Figure 5: Model of micro validation in L2 DA interactions (Poehner, 2011, p. 275)



The model in Figure 5 provides a detailed description of how the mediator and learner (as a test taker) interact during DA. In his article about validity and interaction in the ZPD, Poehner (2011) explains that DA process starts with the learner action, which refers to the learner's production of the erroneous construction. The errors might be resulted from the difficulties that the learner encounters in the test. Then a provisional interpretation of the developmental significance of the learner's action plays a role. In this step, further interaction is required before the learner could accept or reject this interpretation. In the next step, meanwhile the mediation is provided to the learner, his/her response to the

mediation is also evaluated.

Poehner (2011) emphasizes that at the outset of a DA interaction, mediation is typically implicit because it is not based on any preceding learner response but only on the identification of a problem in learner independent performance. If the learner responds by providing the correct forms at this point, the mediator's provisional interpretation will need to be revised because such a response suggests that the learner in fact does understand this feature of the language. The interaction moves on to the new sequence of the aforementioned interaction. It is usually found that the learner produces many incorrect responses while handling the task. Following this sequence offers important evidence in support of the original provisional interpretation as the learner again produces spoken errors. A continued course of mediation is thus appropriate to assuring the extent of the learner's knowledge. In other words, the mediator offers increasingly explicit mediation: providing a metalinguistic clue.

By making explicitness of learning phases, and the in-depth report of the co-constructed interactions that occur in this model, it is possible to increase the internal validity of the research, and at the same time, the educators who are dealing with other groups of learners will be able to replicate the process in other similar contexts.

In terms of the subjectivity in the speaking test, the researcher will deal with the reliability of the speaking test (the elicited imitation, EI) in the following ways. The researcher will design the test items that are related to the course content. The internal consistency of the test items in EI tasks will be calculated with reliability estimate (Cronbach's alpha). To rate the EI oral production, the researcher will use the rating scale which is relevant to the test construct. The scale development for the EI will be collaboratively designed by the instructors and scholars of the L2 speaking instruction.

2.6 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is one of the psychological factors that can have an effect on language learning (Dornyei, 2001). The concept of self-efficacy is based on social



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cognitive theory, and it is adopted as a general framework for understanding and predicting human behavior (Dodds, 2011). Albert Bandura, a social cognitive theorist, refers to self-efficacy as “people’s judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). To elaborate on Bandura’s definition, when people believe in their capabilities to carry out, organize, perform and achieve a certain task, they have a tendency to be confidently involved in what they are working on (Dodds, 2011; Ersanlı, 2015).

Self-efficacy beliefs are extensively applied to explain performances in many fields including language pedagogy. In the field of ESL/EFL, self-efficacy questions are often representative of each of the four language domains: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. “I can understand English films without subtitles” (self-efficacy beliefs related to English listening proficiency) or “I can introduce myself in English” (English speaking self-efficacy beliefs) are two examples that can be found in an English self-efficacy survey.

Self-efficacy is not intended to measure one’s actual abilities but the capability to produce valued outcomes and to prevent undesired ones, therefore, provides powerful incentives for the development and exercise of personal control (Bandura, 1995; Dodds, 2011). According to González and Dolores (2010), self-efficacy is a construct about cognitive elements (called self-efficacy beliefs) of self-perception. Since self-efficacy beliefs overlap with self-confidence, González and Dolores compare the similarities and differences between self-efficacy and self-confidence. Both constructs can be measured against a specific task, and are related to satisfaction with the level of proficiency in the target language. However, while self-confidence is emotional satisfaction, self-efficacy refers to satisfaction with the cognitive resources that the student has (González & Dolores, 2010).

2.6.1 Research on Self-efficacy in ESL/EFL Context

Bandura (1997) highlights that self-efficacy beliefs directly affect an individual’s efforts and actions. In other words, self-efficacy beliefs affect how the students think, feel, motivate themselves, and act. Thus, they serve as an excellent predictor of the students’ future performance. An example of research study that



supports this assertion can be found in Ersanli's (2015) research. Ersanli studies the relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and language learning motivation was conducted with 8th graders in Turkey. The researcher explains that the reason to study with this group of students is that they are required to take exams that determine the high school they are to enroll. This means that the students possess high academic concern and they are confronted with important decision-making towards their learning path.

Adopting Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale and Language Learning Orientations Scale by Noels et al., Ersanli administers it with 257 students (142 female and 115 male). The results show that there is no statistically significant difference in the students' academic self-efficacy beliefs in terms of gender. However, there is a low-level negative correlation between English language learning motivation and self-efficacy beliefs. The researcher suggests that "If the students are guided and informed about the advantages of learning a foreign language, their outcome judgments in relation to foreign language learning will be more positive and they might be more motivated to learn the target language, work more eagerly to overcome difficulties, take on challenging tasks and develop interest" (Ersanli, 2015, p. 477).

It is interesting to find that Ersanli's suggestion is relevant to the purpose of DA approach in the present research study in that the students are engaged in an active learning process that enables them to become a self-regulated learner. With the same aim, the DA process and the students' self-efficacy beliefs are related to some extent. Therefore, in the present study the students' perceived self-efficacy will be explored through Wang et al.'s (2013) Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy – QESE (see Appendix A). The developers of this questionnaire assume that students with high scores on QESE would learn and perform English better and invest more efforts to regulate their learning, compared to those with low QESE scores.

2.6.2 Self-efficacy and Dynamic Assessment

In summative assessment, when an individual learner's performance is measured, his/her test results are usually compared with his/her peers to refer to the

level of his/her abilities in the group. Unlike this assessment, an alternative assessment like DA focuses more on individual differences. DA measures each learner's present performance against his/her former performance. The results of the learner's performance measured through DA process provide a richer description of each learner's abilities that is vital for designing individualized plans of development according to the learner's different needs and understanding of his/her capabilities (Reuven Feuerstein et al., 1979). In order to promote the learner's understanding of what he/she is capable of (or the learner's perceived self-efficacy), self-assessment was included in this study while DA sessions were conducted. According to McIntyre, self-assessment let the learners "measure their progress from task to task against their own increasing awareness and new knowledge" (McIntyre, 2017, p. 93).

In the learning environment where the learners' performances are compared with their peers, the less confident learners whose performances usually appear low in the group may feel inferior and eventually withdraw their interest from the class. This phenomenon was found among the group of students in the ENG 111 course in this study. The students who did not see their progress in their own learning would claim that they were not good in English. The errors they made in language productions were perceived as their failures. According to McIntyre (2017), the students' fear of failure makes them avoid making mistakes; as a result, more often than not they are likely to refrain from classroom interactions. Due to this fear, the low-achiever students usually perceive themselves as someone who could not compete against their high-achiever peers. Based on this perception, the students appear to have low self-efficacy which may have an influence on the development of their perseverance in accomplishing their learning tasks (McIntyre, 2017).

In order to develop perseverance, the students need to recognize the value of their errors. If the students' roles of learning could be changed into new roles as seekers and processors of information, their own errors could become a great source of information for them to solve their individual problems. This also transforms them into active learners (Maddux, 1995). In this study, the students' speaking performances were examined. After completing the task, the students had a chance

to look back at their own speaking performances. This is also an opportunity for them to investigate their self-efficacy.

According to Maddux (1995), the students' own performance-based information offers them reliable guides for evaluating their perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) emphasizes that students whose learning performances appear to be poor, they may do so due to the lack of needed skills. However, the students' poor performance may also be a result of the lack of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) also claims that successes increase the students' self-efficacy and failures reduce it. However, as soon as the students possess a belief in their own capability to accomplish a task, a failure may have less influence on their self-efficacy. Furthermore, the students' dissatisfaction with former performance can stimulate the desire to improve their performance in their subsequent attempts. The students can also sustain their persistence in their future tasks when their self-efficacy remained intact (Locke, Cartledge, & Knerr, 1970).

In addition, regarding how the students acquire self-efficacy, Maddux (1995) notes that the positive feedback like "Good job," or "You can really do this," reinforcing the students to believe that they can do the task at hand. However, this enhancement of the students' self-efficacy may occur temporarily if there are not many subsequent efforts. Based on the students' view toward their perceived self-efficacy, Maddux indicates that when they are asked to self-evaluate their efficacy, they weigh and combine a number of components such as their perceptions of their ability, the task difficulty, the amount of effort put into the task in relation to their performance goals (Maddux, 1995).

In short, with respect to the use of DA in relation to its association with the students' self-efficacy, the students' competing against oneself and personal achievement were emphasized in the interactive DA process that was designed for this study. Both positive and negative changes that occurred as a result of one's own learning were pointed out and discussed in chapter 4 and chapter 5. This method allowed both the teacher-mediator and the participants to work collaboratively in finding appropriate ways for personal development. In chapter 4, the participants'



thinking processes that were revealed through their verbal report and diaries were a great source of performance-based information that was used for evaluating the perceived self-efficacy of the participants in this study.

2.7 Summary

This chapter presents the review of related literature covering the fundamental theory of DA, its definition, its main focus, and its important features. Previous DA studies in educational setting and those that are based on Feuerstein's MLE system are discussed. It can be seen that DA is used with various groups of learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

A brief overview of speaking skill and speaking construct is also discussed. Several perspectives on speaking skill are presented through speaking models which show how speaking may be processed. Regarding the speaking test task, the elicited imitation is selected and its features are discussed. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study, namely the research design, the participants, the instruments and procedures used in gathering the data, and the methods employed in analyzing the data.

3.1 Research Design

The purposes of this study are to investigate how DA can assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill, to explore the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill through DA, and to examine the students' attitudes toward DA.

To serve these purposes, this study was designed to be a multiple-case study. 10 participants were included as 10 cases for the purpose of comparing and contrasting their behaviors within their particular context. According to Mackey and Gass (2016), this approach has the potential for rich contextualization that can shed light on complexities of the unpredictable phenomenon of second language studies.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the speaking test in this study was conducted for pedagogical purposes. It was used as a means of both exploring the students' strengths and weaknesses and improving their speaking skill. Thus the data of each case were highly individualized.

According to Bachman (1990), the test results that are used for diagnosing learning problems should be geared toward qualitative information of student performance, not evaluative decision. The tests that focus on evaluative decision normally seek only reliable and related information on which the decision is based. For that kind of tests, other sources that are considered irrelevant are usually not included. However, in this study the test did not function as a tool for making an evaluative decision. It was conducted to gain insights into the participants' speaking

skill and how they interacted with the speaking task in a mediated environment. Thus, the data gathering process in this research included the quality of in-depth explorative approach to increase the validity of the results. The findings of each case that were derived from various different research tools needed to be combined to help the researcher draw a firm conclusion. This combination was made by mixing the data from the quantitative research tools (e.g. the questionnaires and the rating of the test scores) with those from qualitative research tools (e.g. diaries, interview, and verbal report) that were all implemented across stages in this research.

Harwell (2011) states that the qualitative data should be collected through an inductive approach in natural setting. In this way, the data collection is less systematic and standardized because it is conducted in a flexible and open research process. While the qualitative data are rich and likely to involve the researcher's perspectives, experiences, or biases in the data collection process, the quantitative data are objective, replicable and generalizable (Dornyei, 2007; Harwell, 2011). However, the quantitative data usually reveal little about the exact nature of the relationship. Thus, by combining the quantitative data with the qualitative components, the researcher can increase the strengths and reduce the weaknesses of the study (Dornyei, 2007).

Based on the concepts presented in literature review, this study incorporated a test-train-test structure which is typical of DA studies that aim at revealing the participants' learning potential through the modified behavior or cognitive change caused by the mediated learning. The training between a pretest and posttest took place in DA sessions where the examiner's intervention and instruction were executed whenever the participants faced difficulties during the test. In this phase, the participants' mediated learning was facilitated by means of interactionist DA approach (see Chapter 2, part 2.1.6.1 for the explanation of interactionist DA). The sessions of mediation were video recorded for a subsequent one-to-one retrospective interview (or stimulated recall).

The pretest (a non-dynamic test) was used to establish the participant's level of independent performance. The posttest (a non-dynamic test) was used to measure the degree of improvement or change (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002).



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3.2 The Speaking Test in DA

According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), what makes a procedure of a particular assessment dynamic or not is the presence or absence of the mediated learning that is integrated into the test. In other words, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, open-ended essay, or even oral proficiency tests in themselves may or may not be dynamic. The assessment of the speaking skill in the present study was carried out both ways, static and dynamic. The test was static when it was used as a pre- and posttest. Then the same test turned to be dynamic in the DA sessions occurring between the pre- and posttest. The static assessment sessions were used to compare and find the changes that may occur after the intervention.

Since a combination of the interactionist model and the interventionist model was applied in this research, the protocol for the mediated learning in DA sessions was not strictly pre-established. The examiner was allowed to carry out flexible forms of mediation that was found appropriate.

Regarding the scale of the test, the speaking test in this research was not a large-scale or standardized test. Instead, it was a small-scale, curriculum-based test. The researcher intended to use it as a method for understanding the students in an educational setting and for finding ways to help them perform better in English courses of higher levels.

3.3 The Test Task

EI, in the form of sentence repetition, was selected to be the test task in this study. It assessed the spoken production of the examinee after he/she listened to the recorded stimulus sentence. This speaking task did not require the kind of interaction between an examinee and another interlocutor as found in interviews, role-plays and other test tasks of speaking that involve multiple speakers. Instead, it required the reproduction of specific structures e.g. grammar, vocabulary, or syntax.

Regarding the sentence-based feature of EI in this study, a set of 30 stimulus sentences was designed to comprise a standard set of sentences that replicated the grammar and vocabulary taught in ENG 111, the English course of the students in this

study. The task was managed to be implemented through the procedure suggested by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) and Erlam (2006). The procedure began when an individual participant listened to a recorded sentence spoken by a native speaker. Then, after the stimulus sentence was said, the participant had to wait for five seconds before repeating it orally. In the real practice, the participant was told to wait for the beep sound which notified them of the time to speak. According to (Erlam, 2006), the five second pause between the stimulus and the participant's repetition reduced the chances of parroting. This delay also engaged the participant in the simultaneous processing of reconstructive imitation: namely listening, decoding, recalling, and reproducing (Yi, 2013). This encouraged the participant to pay attention to the meaning of the stimulus sentence and repeated it with their understanding of its meaning.

In terms of the length of the sentence, it was designed to be long enough to tax the participants' short-term memory so that they would not repeat the sentence by rote. Instead, they had to use their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary learned from the lessons to repeat the sentence (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). The number of words in the stimulus sentences of this study varied from 6 words to 15 words (see Appendix E, for examples of the stimulus sentences in EI task). Hence, all the sentences were also arranged with gradual increase in its length, which was the way to vary the level of difficulty in the task as recommended by Vinther (2002).

3.4 Participants

This research is a small-scale study involving 10 participants (5 males and 5 females). According to Stake (2006), including several participants provides the researcher with an opportunity for studying similarities and differences across cases with some emphasis on the binding concept of idea. Mackey and Gass (2016) state that there is no set limit on how many cases to be included in the multiple-case study. However, if there are too many cases, less intensive scrutiny and presentation of each one are possible and some of the main advantages in the nature of case study (e.g. internal and ecological validity, vividness of the case) are thereby lost.



They further suggest that 8 cases are preferable. However, the researcher was aware of the possibility that there might be some dropouts. Therefore 10 cases were set for this reason. It should be noted here that eventually there was no dropout, and the data of all 10 participants were included in the data analysis.

Regarding the genders of the participants, Gallagher, Bridgeman, and Cahalan (2002) report that significant differences of performance across genders were found in their research. Yu (2012) who studies the relationship between gender, test medium, or attitude also reveal similar results. Hence the subgroups of different genders were set in this research. For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the participants throughout this research. Their Thai names were replaced with English names. Therefore, the names of 5 males were Oliver, Arnold, Franky, Nick, and Barnes. The names of 5 females were Ann, Farrah, Patsy, Jessica, and Pamela.

Regarding the selection of the participants, they were recruited through a purposive sampling technique and also on a voluntary basis. The recruitment was administered first by using Baghaei et al's (2012) Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS). This tool took the form of questionnaire (see Appendix H). MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001) define willingness to communicate (WTC) as the intention of a person to initiate communication, when he/she is given a choice. The researcher applied this questionnaire in order to form a participant group half of which are students with high level of willingness to communicate (WTC), and the other half are those with low level of WTC.

It was planned that the feature of high and low WTC that stems from basic personality traits (Mahmoodi & Moazam, 2014) should be counted to add more varieties into the group of participants besides the different aspect of gender. This idea was derived from Macintyre, Dornyei, and Clément's (1998) argument which indicates that WTC is one of the individual difference factors influencing L2 acquisition and its goal of instruction. They state that the learner's decision to speak has an influence on their achievement in language learning. Thus, adding this feature to the group of participants would add more dimensions to the analysis of the impact of DA on participants with different WTC levels.

However, in the real practice the researcher could not make two sub-groups of high and low WTC as planned because the results of the questionnaire showed the homogeneity in their level of WTC. Thus the researcher could not point to this aspect in the data analysis.

3.4.1 Participants' Basic Information and Their A1, A2 English Levels

All participants were first year students in a public university in Bangkok, Thailand. They studied in the same class of ENG 111. They were the same age (18 years old). Barnes was the only one in the group who had been in England for one month when he was in grade 11. The other 9 participants had never been abroad. Regarding their places of residence, neither of them grew up in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. They came from different parts of Thailand. 5 participants were from the eastern region, 3 from the northeastern region, and 2 from the southern region.

In order to recheck their general English proficiency, the researcher asked all of them to take a mock test of TOEIC examination which was taken from a complete TOEIC practice test in Rogers' (2006) book before beginning the data gathering process. The result from the test showed that the highest score the participants could earn was 315 points (out of 990). This denoted that they belonged to the group of basic users.

Furthermore, with a specific focus on the participants' English speaking proficiency, the researcher asked them to take a placement interview that was conducted in English by a Canadian English instructor who was one of the interviewers for the language placement tests administered to all students enrolling for English conversation courses in a university's language center. This interview was carried out individually. The results of the interview showed that 8 persons were at A1 level and the other 2 were at A2 according to CEFR's (Common European Framework of Reference) guideline. This affirmed that their speaking proficiency was also at the level of basic users.

Franky and Pamela were the two participants whose speaking proficiency was at A2. Based on CEFR description, people at this level could:

... greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers (North, 2005, p. 34).

The aforementioned description signifies what people at A2 level could do. However, both participants were just above A1 but their English speaking ability did not cover the full scale of A2 because their speech was still ungrammatical and disconnected. Their oral production appeared more like a chain of phrases that were not well organized. The following Excerpts illustrate how they replied the interviewer's questions:

Excerpt 1: Franky's placement interview

Interviewer: Tell me about your family.

Franky: My family have my father, mother, my sister and me. I live with my uncle.

Interviewer: Why do you live with your uncle, not parents?

Franky: For I'm live at Pattaya with my grandmother. And ... change .. to live at my uncle .. and .. I like my major at here.

Excerpt 2: Pamela's placement interview

Interviewer: Please tell me about your family.

Pamela: I have 3 people in family ... have mother and brother

Interviewer: What do you do in your free time?

Pamela: I .. watch TV play music .. I play basketball.

The rest of the group (8 people) were at A1 level. According to CEFR description, people at this level could:

... interact in a simple way; ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have; initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate

need or on very familiar topics rather than relying purely on a rehearsed repertoire of (tourist) phrases (North, 2005, p. 34).

Excerpts 3, 4, and 5 illustrate some of the participants' poorly spoken responses. There were a lot of grammatical errors and wrong word use. Also, they usually reacted to some questions with silence. Sometimes, they were not able to find the English words and used their L1 words instead.

Excerpt 3: Jessica's placement interview

Interviewer: What do you do in your free time?

Jessica: Snack and listening music

Interviewer: Tell me about something you can do well.

Jessica: ผัดผักรัก ... [She responded in Thai.]

Excerpt 4: Oliver's placement interview

Interviewer: Tell me about something you usually do.

Oliver: I ...

[He took a long pause to find English words for expressing the ideas in his mind. Then he shook his head.]

Interviewer: Where are you going this weekend?

Oliver: Sometimes sport

Excerpt 5: Patsy's placement interview

Interviewer: What do you do in your free time?

Patsy: Social

Interviewer: Tell me about something you can do well.

Patsy: ... [She kept looking at the floor.]

3.4.2 Participants' Informed Consent

To adhere to ethical conduct in research, before asking for the participants' agreement to engage in this research, they were given a brief introduction to the research objectives, the data collection process, the research time frame, and the time schedule for implementing the tasks in this research. Since the data collection

of this research was a time-consuming process, it was crucial that the participants volunteer to take part and were willing to devote their personal time to the research. However, they still had an option to quit whenever they wanted. Eventually, after they received relevant information and made a decision to take part in this research, all of them signed a consent form.

3.5 Research Instruments

In multiple case studies, multiple instruments for data collection are typically used by a direct observer. Having more tools means gaining richer data so that the researcher can generate the whole picture of individuals and events in their natural settings for others to see (Mackey & Gass, 2016; Stake, 2006). In general, such qualitative research as case study is free of prior assumptions. The goal of this kind of study is to understand as completely as possible the phenomenon being studied through triangulation of information and interpretation.

Triangulation involves the accumulation of multiple types of data sources in an investigation to produce understanding and to assure that the facts being collected are indeed correct. In this study, the investigation of the participants' speaking performance in DA sessions was aimed to unfold not just what was happening but also how and why a particular thing happened. For this reason, both qualitative research tools (verbal report, diaries, and interview) and quantitative research tools (questionnaires and rating of test scores) were employed in the data gathering process of this research.

3.5.1 Verbal Report

Verbal report is a type of introspection technique. According to Fulcher (2003), this research instrument has much to offer in studying second language speaking. It produces the evidence of the participants' speaking strategies from their own perspective. In its gathering protocol, the video recording was used to help the participants observe themselves dealing with the task at hand. All participants were asked for their permission before the start of recording. While they were watching the video, the researcher asked them to reveal what was going on in their minds at the

time they were doing a task. In every verbal report the participants' gestures, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, and their speech production were pointed out for them to explain in detail.

The verbal report was conducted in the participants' first language because it was important for them to be able to express their ideas clearly and fluently. The session of verbal report occurred immediately after he/she completed the task so that he/she could draw from their memory the thoughts and feelings that occurred earlier in DA session and verbalize them while they were still fresh in their mind. The participants were also allowed to pause or replay the video whenever they found something they wanted to elaborate on. According to Kirkgoz (2011), the participants who went through verbal report protocol had a chance to identify their own problems and also to track their own progress. In this way, they could make self-evaluation and their cognitive processes could be drawn as well.

Mackey and Gass (2016) note that verbal report consists of three types: self-report (the speaker's report of general approach to something); self-observation (the report on what the speaker has done in specific events), and self-revelation (or think-aloud). The types of verbal report that mainly occurred in this research were the self-report and the self-observation. Most of the time, the participants were encouraged to describe what happened to them without interruption. This process started with the researcher's instruction: "Please tell me as much as you can about what you are doing and what you are thinking." However, sometimes the participants hesitated to express themselves. During the moment of hesitation, there was usually a long pause, and the explanations were not insightful. It was then that the researcher got involved to help them recall what was in their mind through the stimulated questions e.g. "what happened?", "why are you moving your hand like that?", or "how did you feel at that moment?"

According to Allison (1998), the recall can be initiated by both the participants and the researcher. Thus this research also involved the technique of stimulated recall that enabled the researcher to gather valuable information about their thinking process which might be lost if the recall was done by the participants alone.

3.5.2 Participants' Diaries

Participants' diaries are another qualitative research tool that provides valuable information about their cognitive and affective domain through the form of narrative self-report. They provide a personal record of the participants' experiences that can be most useful as a memory aid (Weir & Roberts, 1994). They are considered to be written feedback that enables the researcher to find the cross-referencing of the triangulated data. They help the researcher gain insight into the causes of the participants' actions, as well as their attitudes toward the test and toward their own learning. In this study, the participants were allowed to use their first language to convey their thoughts and feelings. They were also encouraged to write their diaries right after the session or as soon as possible so that they could record the event accurately while they still remembered it. In terms of the content of the diary, the researcher reminded them to write about their positive and negative learning experiences. To help the participants produce a reflective diary, a brief suggestion of what should be included in the diary was also given to them. For instance, they should write about the evaluation of their overall performance, some positive or negative feedback on the interactions that occurred in DA session, or how to improve their work in the next session.

3.5.3 Interview

The interview in this study was semi-structured. It took place after the posttest was implemented. The researcher interviewed each participant on an individual basis. The participants' first language (Thai language) was used in the interview so that they could express their ideas without language barrier. The following are some example questions used in the interview (see Appendix G for all interview questions).

- Do you have any difficulties in speaking English?
If yes, what are they?
- Have you ever taken dynamic assessment before?
- Please describe what you did during dynamic assessment.



- Please describe the kinds of feedback and assistance that you received from the examiner. Which one is useful to you and which one is not?

These questions were constructed to prompt discussion. Obviously, most of them were open-ended and provoked reflection on the participants' former experiences in DA sessions. Aside from using these planned questions, the researcher also asked other questions which were impromptu in order to probe for more details about interesting topics that emerged during interview.

3.5.4 Questionnaires

Four types of questionnaires were used. First, Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS), adopted from Baghaei et al. (2012), a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, was used with 30 students in ENG 101 class for recruiting them to be the participants of the study.

The second type was a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire was designed to collect basic information of ten participants. The researcher conducted this questionnaire for surveying the participants' background characteristics which may broaden the understanding of some influencing factors, and also some similarities or differences in their speaking performances. There were 9 items in this questionnaire. All of them were open-ended and written in Thai. The participants were asked to write their answers in the questionnaire individually after they had signed the consent form to take part in this research. The 9 items asked about: 1) name; 2) faculty; 3) the number of years of their English learning; 4) former experiences in foreign countries; 5) whether they have any foreign friends, if yes, which countries those foreign friends were from; 6) opportunity of their English use in daily life through listening, speaking, reading, and writing; 7) the expectation they put on English class; 8) opportunity of speaking English (see Appendix D for the Thai version of this questionnaire).

The third and the fourth types were a self-efficacy questionnaire and an attitude questionnaires. Both were five-point rating scale questionnaires. As for self-

efficacy questionnaire, it was adapted from Wang, Kim, Bong, & Ahn (2013). It was carried out twice as a pre-self-efficacy and a post-self-efficacy questionnaire. The former was carried out before the pretest, and the latter after the posttest. As for attitude questionnaire, it was used to collect the data about each participant's reactions and opinions on the test tasks and the DA process. To answer the questionnaire items in the attitude questionnaire, the participants needed to measure their favorableness toward the given statements listed on the left column of the table (Best, 1977). The attitude questionnaire was carried out after the posttest.

To avoid participants' misinterpretations of the meaning in the questions, all questions in every questionnaire were written in Thai. When the questionnaires were carried out, the researcher was close at hand for further clarification of any questions that the participants found unclear.

3.5.5 Development of EI test task

The EI test task was the main speaking test task in this research. It was designed to be in a form of a sentence repetition that was administered as an individual test task in a face-to-face setting. There were two parallel sets of the EI tasks. The first set was conducted as the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. The second set was used in DA sessions which took place between pretest and posttest. The EI tasks used in DA sessions consisted of 6 subsets for 6 DA. In each subset, there were 5 stimulus sentences. The sentences of these 6 subsets were written and arranged according to the flow of the lessons in the textbook of ENG 111 course (see Table 8).

All of the stimulus sentences for the participants to listen and repeat in this research were spoken by native speakers. After recording these spoken sentences, the researcher used Audacity Program (a free and open-source audio editing application) to adjust the quality of the sound and to insert some additional features into the audio-record. These features included an arrangement of equal pauses in between the sentences as well as a beep sound.

To avoid the participant's parroting, the researcher generated a five-second delay between the stimulus sentence and the beep sound. In other words, the beep sound was arranged to occur in five seconds after each stimulus sentence. The beep served as a signal of the time to repeat for the participants. Therefore, it was a rule for the participants that after hearing the stimulus sentence, they had to wait until the beep sound signaled to them to start speaking.

Regarding the sentences in EI tasks, all of them were taken from the textbook of ENG 111 course, called *Speakout* (Elementary level) written by Frances Eales and Steve Oakes. Each lesson in this book was aligned with CEFR A1 and A2, comprising "can do" statements that described what the students "can do" after finishing each unit of the book. To focus on the students of elementary level, the authors claimed that the book encouraged the students to use English in talking and writing about their own experiences in various simple contexts namely lifestyle, places, food, and people or things in the past. All English conversations in the book were also claimed to be authentic and they were systematically designed for an integration of other language skills e.g. vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading and writing. Furthermore, the authors intended to expose the students to the English accents of both native and nonnative speakers in a wide range of English-speaking contexts.

The aforementioned objectives of the book were in accordance with those of ENG 111 course. Thus, the researcher of the present study developed the EI test items based on these objectives. The speaking objectives of each unit that the students were expected to achieve after each week were mainly focused. The vocabulary and grammar parts of each unit were also identified so that the researcher could include them in the stimulus sentences of the EI task.

The following Table illustrates the objectives of each unit with an emphasis on what the students should achieve in terms of vocabulary, grammar, listening and speaking abilities. In the last column of the Table, the EI test items are presented to show how they were related to the language focus in each unit.

Table 8: Language focus of each unit and the design of EI test items within one semester

Week/Unit	Language Focus	EI Test Items
Week 1,2	- Introduce yourself and others	- Jenny and Ken are my old friends from Canada.
Unit title: Welcome	- Make requests - Conversation at tourist places - Negative forms of auxiliary "be" - Countries and nationalities	- Those new students aren't from China. - Can I have the hotdog but no coffee, please. - That's seven euros and twenty-five cents altogether. - How much is a single ticket to France?
Week 3,4	- Talk about activities and groups	- His father helps the kids with their repts.
Unit title: Lifestyle	- Talk about daily routine and jobs - Make an arrangement - Negative forms of "do" - Third person -s	- I have breakfast with my roommate four or five times a month. - We have to arrive at the airport before midnight. - The train leaves from the platform at five twenty.
Week 5,6	- Talk about your family	- My sister often goes to school after 7 a.m.
Unit title: People	- Describe someone you know - Time expressions - Personality - Adverbs of frequency	- I think people play this game in a lot of Cities. - I haven't got my own room and my boss isn't funny. - John meets about one hundred people online every day. - At the weekend, they usually play volleyball or go swimming together.
Week* 9,10	- Describe a living place	- There are two swimming pools in front of the hotel.
Unit title:	- Describe places on a map	- The post office is opposite my school and on the left of the museum.

Week/Unit	Language Focus	EI Test Items
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about things you can do in your town - Talk about favorite things - Clause connectors: and, but, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You can send a letter at the post office only five minutes' walk away. - My sister doesn't like spicy dishes. - There isn't a living room but there is a bathroom in this apartment.
Week 11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about your eating and drinking habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I eat two apples every evening but I don't have them for lunch. - How many friends does a man make in his lifetime?
Unit title: Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much/ How many - Countable/ Uncountable nouns - Clause connector: Because - Use pronoun reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students never eat any garlic because they hate it. - Sam travels around the country and he usually stays in a hotel.
Week 13,14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about someone's life in the past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jim's mother was a very good teacher and his father was a doctor. - He came to the park with his girlfriend last Thursday.
Unit title: The past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about past events - Past simple verbs - Auxiliary verbs "be," and "do" in past simple - Clause connector: so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He drove to the museum last month but he didn't see his teacher there. - Ted didn't stay in the hotel yesterday, but he is in his house today. - My boss didn't feel happy so he went to see his dad.

**Note: Week 7 was set for a revision. Midterm examination occurred in week 8, and final examination in week 15.*

3.5.6 Validation of EI Test Task

In terms of the validation process of the EI test items, the stimulus sentences that were developed as described in section 3.5.5 were sent in a checklist form to three experts to rate the validity of the test items using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Index. This checklist contained a rating scale of +1 (indicating that the item was not appropriate), 0 (indicating that the item was questionable), and -1 (indicating that the item was appropriate). The three experts were informed that the research instrument in the checklist was a speaking test that was conducted to investigate the speaking skill of the undergraduate students who were studying Foundation English course in a university. These three experts were full-time university instructors who have had a great deal of English teaching experience in tertiary level. Most importantly, they were also the instructors of ENG 111 course; therefore, they had already been familiar with the scope of the language focus or the extent of the course content to be measured.

The experts were not only asked to review whether the generated stimulus sentences in the checklist were the representative of the language focus of each unit, they were also asked to evaluate the parallel of the two sets of EI test tasks. The parallel of each pair of sentences was important for the production of two equivalent sets of EI test tasks.

After receiving the results of IOC evaluation from the experts, an analysis of the results was conducted through a formula that is $IOC = R/N$, where R refers to the total score from the three experts and N refers to the number of the experts. Based on the calculation result, the value of IOC evaluation of the EI test items was high at 0.98, which means that they were accepted and congruent with the objectives. The experts agreed that the test items reflected the language focus and that the purposes of the test were clearly explained.

3.5.7 Validation of Other Research Instruments

Three experts who have taught English to university students for more than ten years were asked to evaluate the validity of the interview questions, the questionnaires, and the stimulus sentences as test items in DA and all non-dynamic



tests (pre-, posttest, and delayed posttest). The validation process was conducted by using the index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method. To find the value of IOC evaluation, the researcher calculated three experts' judgments which were shown through the scales of -1 (for not appropriate item), 0 (for not sure of its level), and 1 (for appropriate item).

The values of IOC evaluation from the three experts for 1) interview questions and demographic questionnaire, 2) self-efficacy questionnaire, and 3) attitude questionnaire were 0.97, 0.89, and 0.89 respectively. Based on this IOC evaluation, the instruments of the present research were considered acceptable.

3.6 Rating of Test Scores and Scoring Rubric

To increase the reliability of the study, the rating of test scores was conducted by two raters. One of the two raters was a teacher of ENG 111 and the other was the researcher. The findings of the pilot study were used for the raters to try out the rating scales of the participants' speaking skill. Then the raters shared the results of their ratings of the sample speech and discussed how each one assigned the scores. When there was a contrast in the rating, they negotiated and made a mutual agreement. After that, they revised the descriptors to be used in the main study.

Both raters based their ratings on the same rubric which was derived from Gaillard's (2014) analytic scoring rubric (see Appendix F for the details of the scoring rubric). It consisted of five criteria to measure the participants' speaking skill. A brief description of each criterion is illustrated below.

3.6.1 Meaning

The content of the message could be complex in some sentences. For each sentence, the raters should consider the overall content of the message. For instance, if two ideas were expressed in the sentence, but the participants failed to repeat one or both of them, they did not succeed in demonstrating complete control of this criterion.



3.6.2 Syntax

The syntax criterion in this rubric referred to word order, and grammatical category of the words in the sentence. Each sentence was built with a particular syntax. For each item the raters must consider the syntax globally (e.g. was the syntax of the question respected? or was the negation completely realized?).

3.6.3 Vocabulary

A specific set of vocabulary was used in the stimulus sentences according to the content of ENG 111 course. In order to check the participants' knowledge of vocabulary learned from the class, the specific set of vocabulary needed to be in their spoken sentences.

3.6.4 Pronunciation

In this feature, the raters focused on whether the pronunciation hindered comprehension. In order to achieve the intelligibility of their pronunciation, the participants needed to focus on the word stress in English sounds system. If the participants' pronunciation was difficult to understand and this affected the meaning of the whole sentence, their pronunciation score would be reduced.

3.6.5 Fluency

The fluency criterion for EI task in this research was about how smoothly or easily the participants could speak. Pause, self-correction, and hesitation in the participants' oral production could reduce the score in this criterion. This criterion helps evaluate the ease of production of the participants, and his/her eloquence by investigating to what extent the learner could repeat the sentence, or whether there were any hesitations during speaking (Gaillard, 2014; Siwathaworn & Wudthayagorn, 2018). The attained inter-rater reliability of the ratings in three tests, which was measured by using Pearson's correlation *coefficient*, were 0.979, 0.980, and 0.980 for the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest respectively. These reliability values indicated that the ratings of the two raters were quite congruent.

3.7 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study to verify the feasibility of the inclusion of EI tasks in DA approach, to experiment DA procedure, and to examine the instruments of the main study. There were 10 participants in the pilot study. Even though the participants in the pilot study and those in the main study were from different classes of ENG 111 in different semester, both groups shared similar educational context (e.g. the same course, university, age, level of English proficiency).

The pilot group went through the full procedure of data collection so that every research instrument could be examined. After the pilot study was implemented, it was found that the mediation ran smoothly in DA sessions. The clues given by the examiner were changed gradually from most implicit to most explicit as planned (see Table 7 for more details of the four steps in mediation sequence). Different kinds of support were provided according to specific need of each participant. It was also found that the participants almost never produced the correct sentence right after they heard it. They generally took all three steps of retry in the mediation sequence. They received every support in mediation sequence until they reached the last step where the examiner provided them with correction and some explanation of the sentence structure.

With respect to the EI task, the researcher started with an analysis of the content of ENG 111 course in order to generate the test items. There were 2 sets of stimulus sentences. The first set was for non-dynamic tests (pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest). The second set was used in DA sessions. Both sets contained parallel forms of sentences ranging in length from 6 words to 15 words. The set of sentences for non-dynamic tests comprised 15 sentences which were used as the stimulus items for the participants to repeat without mediation. These test items were also reviewed by experts and the instructors of ENG 111 course to ensure that the structure of these sentences corresponded to the course content.

The initial design of the stimulus sentences followed Hamayan and colleagues' (1977) advice. They state that if the stimulus sentence appears to be



short and simple, adding a memory load into it could ensure that the participants really comprehend the meaning of the sentence they repeat. Therefore, in the second half of the set (from stimulus items number 8 to 15), there were some sentences with ungrammatical structure mixed with the grammatically correct sentences. The following examples show the feature of a mistake that was intentionally added to make the sentence ungrammatical in various aspects.

**There is two swimming pools near my hotel.*

(A mistake in subject and verb agreement)

**How much cups of coffee do you drink in a day?*

(A mistake in question words)

**I eat two apples every evening but I don't have it for dinner.*

(A mistake in pronoun reference)

The instruction given to the participants to do this group of sentences was that they needed to decide whether the sentence they heard was right or wrong before repeating it. If it was wrong, they had to correct it and say the correct version of that sentence.

However, it was found that none of the participants could detect the error. It seemed to them that every sentence was correct; therefore, no correction had been done. The participants stated that this challenge was too difficult for them. They suggested that all the stimulus sentences contain only the correct grammatical structures. The researcher agreed with them because this problem could possibly occur to the participants of main study as well.

Aside from that reason, this problem also caused a difficulty in collecting the test scores. All of them got zero score for not correcting the mistake even though some of them could repeat most words in the sentence. It seemed that the zero score in this case did not correspond to their real ability. Some participants also reported that it was rather discouraging than challenging to have an unpredictable mistake in some of the stimulus sentences. Fulcher (1996) remarks on this aspect in his article about the issues in task design. He highlights that this could bring a

negative effect to the test results because not knowing what would be expected of them can be the prime cause of anxiety for the test takers. Therefore, in the main study, all stimulus sentences would contain only grammatical structures.

3.8 Data Collection

The research procedure of this study consisted of 2 phases. The first phase concerned the development of research instruments and the administration of the pilot study. The second phase was the main study. In this section, the stages of data collection in the main study are mainly focused (see Table 9 for more details of each stage).

Table 9: Stages of data collection in Phase 2 (the main study)

Stage	Procedure
1 (Recruitment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruiting 10 participants from ENG 111 class, through WTC questionnaire
2 (Orientation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explaining the study objectives and the research procedure to the participants ● Asking for the participants' informed consent ● Collecting the participants' biographical/language background information through demographic questionnaire ● Arranging the research schedule with each participant
3 (Training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training the participants how to do EI task within DA process ● Training the participants how to do verbal report ● Participants' diary-keeping practice
4 (Pre-test)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distributing a pre-questionnaire of the speaking self-efficacy to the participants to fill out

Stage	Procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting a pre-test session (an individual non-dynamic test) ● Collecting the pre-test scores through speaking rubrics and estimates of inter-rater reliability
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>(DA sessions followed by verbal report and diary-keeping)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting 6 interactionist DA sessions of each participant ● Conducting video and audio recording of each participant's DA session ● Right after each participant's DA session, conducting a verbal report, using the video recording of that DA session to stimulate the recall ● Audio recording the participant's verbal report ● Diary keeping by the participants (written in Thai, right after the test) ● Transcribing the audio recording of the participants' verbal report
<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>(Posttest)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting a posttest session* (an individual non-dynamic test) ● Collecting the post-test scores through speaking rubrics and estimates of inter-rater reliability ● Conducting a semi-structured interview
<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>(Questionnaires)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distributing an attitude questionnaire to the participants to fill out ● Distributing a post-questionnaire of the speaking self-efficacy to the participants to fill out
<p style="text-align: center;">8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting a delayed posttest

Stage	Procedure
(Delayed posttest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting the delayed posttest scores through speaking rubrics and estimates of intra-rater reliability

**Note: The results of the posttest of this study are mainly used for indicating whether each participant benefit or does not benefit from the mediation. Therefore it is suggested by Kozulin and Garb (2002) that the posttest should be given soon after DA sessions, to avoid interference from classroom learning.*

3.8.1 DA Procedure

The DA training session was implemented in the third week of the semester. The participants saw a video clip of a student doing EI task in DA process that the researcher made as a demonstration (a mock DA). Then the researcher explained the goals of the activity and the roles of the participants in DA session.

After watching the video, the participants tried doing a mock DA. The researcher asked for their permission to take a video recording, while they were doing a mock DA. Then, this video clip was used for verbal report and diary keeping training.

Since this research did not include every student in ENG 111 class, DA sessions had to be carried out after class. Six DA sessions were implemented after six lessons of the course. Each session took about 15 minutes, and it was conducted on a one-to-one basis. At the end of each session, the researcher conducted verbal report with the participant. After that, he/she wrote a diary reflecting his/her learning experiences in the same day. It would be better if he/she could write the diary right after the session. However, sometimes some participants had to write it at home due to a tight schedule.

The first DA session started after the training which was in the fourth week of the semester. The stimulus sentences in the test were designed to be related to the language structure taught in the lessons of each week. For example, if the lesson

consisted of the teaching of WH-questions, the use of preposition of place, how to tell the time, and the words for family members, then the prompts in the EI task after this lesson would contain these elements in the stimulus sentences.

Following the last DA session, an attitude questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and a self-efficacy questionnaire was conducted to examine the participants' overall attitude toward the DA system, how they learned through DA process, the changes that occurred to them, and their levels of perceived self-efficacy.

3.8.2 An Illustration of DA Procedure

The following is a transcription of a part of Ann's work with one sentence in her DA session. In this script, Ann used all four graduated prompts, which meant that the stimulus sentence was replayed four times for her. However, her changes after receiving each prompt could be observed. This script also illustrates what the interaction between a participant and the mediator was like in DA sessions.

Excerpt 6: Ann's DA session

<i>The stimulus sentence:</i>	<i>The train leaves from the platform at 5:20.</i>
<i>Ann (first attempt):</i>	<i>The tourist from .. the tourist form pas-sa-pot in 5</i>
<i>Mediator:</i>	<i>Try again</i>
<i>The stimulus sentence:</i>	<i>The train leaves from the platform at 5:20.</i>
<i>Ann (second attempt):</i>	<i>The train leaves passport at 5:20</i>
<i>Mediator:</i>	<i>Wrong vocabulary</i>
<i>The stimulus sentence:</i>	<i>The train leaves from the platform at 5:20.</i>
<i>Ann (third attempt):</i>	<i>The train leaves from passport at 5:20.</i>
<i>Mediator:</i>	<i>You've made a better sentence but there is still one word that is not correct. *</i>
<i>The stimulus sentence:</i>	<i>The train leaves from the platform at 5:20.</i>
<i>Ann (fourth attempt):</i>	<i>The train leaves from from uh .. the .. at 5:20.</i>

- Mediator: *I think you know what's wrong in your sentence, right?*
- (Giving explanation)*
- Ann: *Yes, it isn't passport.*
- Mediator: *Right, think carefully. You could almost finish this sentence. Let's find the missing word from what you've got.*
- Ann: *O.K. The train leaves from something at 5:20.*
- Mediator: *Yes, what's that thing? Actually, it's a place. Can you guess from the subject of the sentence? This word is related to the train. I know you can call it in Thai.*
- Ann: *ชานชาลา*
- Mediator: *Right.*
- Ann: *Sorry, I forget the English word. It's in the book. I studied it yesterday.*
- Mediator: *O.K. The correct word is "platform." Anyway, your error – passport – is a good guess. It sounds similar to "platform."*
- Ann: *Yes. Also the train is related to traveling and you need a passport when you travel. That's why I said it.*

**Note: This is an English translation of the Thai original version. Most of the interaction, especially since the explanation part, occurred in Thai, except the stimulus sentence and the participant's attempts in repeating the sentence.*

3.9 Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study was conducted following the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative data were analyzed by using a thematic analysis. The audio recordings of DA sessions, interviews and verbal report were

transcribed. The transcriptions, as well as the participants' diaries, helped the researcher understand the breadth and depth of the participants' learning that occurred within DA contexts. Rich data of the transcribed dialogues between the examiner as the mediator and each participant as an examinee, including the data from the participants' diaries were coded and categorized to determine changes in the participants' speaking skill, and to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses.

The inductive thematic analysis method was used in this study. This method refers to the way of data coding without any preexisting coding frames (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is because the researcher holds the concept of individual differences. It is not only the characteristics of each individual that are different, but the ZPD of each one is also varied. The researcher adopted Summers' steps of thematic analysis as follows:

- Reducing the raw information;
- Identifying Themes within sub-samples;
- Comparing themes across sub- samples;
- Creating a Code;
- Determining the reliability of the code (Summers, 2008, p. 173).

The transcripts were coded on an ongoing basis. When a new pattern emerged, a re-coding was subsequently made. The same coding system was used for all transcripts. The data were analyzed several times, each time from a different perspective. A comparison of the observations of the researchers and those of the independent observer regarding the categories of the coding scheme was conducted to ensure the consistency of the results. The reliability of the coding was estimated by means of Cronbach alpha coefficient. The received reliability value was 0.87, indicating that the coding was acceptable.

Regarding the test scores, the researcher compared the scores from the two tests; pretest and posttest. They were compared to find the differences which indicated improvement of the participants' speaking skill before and after DA mediation. The results from questionnaires were analyzed by using SPSS program to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative



findings were integrated into a meta-inferential discussion. The following Table summarizes the data analysis as follows:

Table 10: Data analysis

Research Questions	Instruments	Method of Analysis
1. To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?	Verbal report, interview, diaries Test scores	Thematic analysis and frequency Mean scores
2. What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill?	Verbal report, interview, diaries, pre- and post-questionnaire of self-efficacy scale	Thematic analysis and frequency Mean scores
3. What are the students' attitudes toward DA?	Attitude questionnaire, interview, diaries	Mean scores Thematic analysis and frequency

3.10 Summary

In summary, the present chapter reveals the research methodology, research design, population and sample, researcher instruments, data collection and data analysis of the study. The results of the main study will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the data from the demographic questionnaire, self-efficacy questionnaire, attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, participants' diaries, participants' verbal report through stimulated recall, and the test scores from speaking tests in DA, pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest sessions. The results were examined in light of the present study's three research questions. Thus, this chapter includes five main sections as follows:

- 4.1) demographic descriptive results;
- 4.2) results for research question 1 (To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?);
- 4.3) results for research question 2 (What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill?);
- 4.4) results for research question 3 (What are the students' attitudes toward DA?); and
- 4.5) summary.

4.1 Demographic Descriptive Results

The data presented in this section were collected through the demographic questionnaire and the interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data were investigated to get a brief profile of the participants of this study. In terms of quantitative data, the following Table presents the variation in the participants' educational background, namely the names of their faculties, their majors, and the length of time of their English study. Their overseas experience and their friendship with foreigners were also reported.



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Table 11: Demographic information of the participants (n=10)

Demographic Information	Percentage
Faculties	
- Faculty of Agriculture	70%
- Faculty of Agro-industry	20%
- Faculty of Fisheries	10%
Departments	
- Home Economics	40%
- Soil Science	30%
- Food Sciences and Technology	20%
- Fishery Products	10%
Years of English Learning*	
- 16	20%
- 15	50%
- 14	10%
- 13	0%
- 12	20%
Overseas Experience	
Having been to a foreign country	10%
Having never been to a foreign country	90%
Friendship with foreigner(s)	
Having foreign friend(s)	0%
Never having foreign friend(s)	100%

**Note: The standard number of years of English study in the classroom based on the basic education core curriculum (2008) of the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, Office of the Basic Education Commission,*

Ministry of Education was 960 hours within 12 years of basic education, from grade 1 to grade 12 (see

http://academic.obec.go.th/images/document/1525235513_d_1.pdf).

The data in Table 11 reveal that most participants were from the Faculty of Agriculture (n=7). Of these seven participants, four studied in the Department of Home Economics and the other three in the Department of Soil Science. The rest came from two different faculties. Two participants were from the Faculty of Agro-industry, in the Department of Food Sciences and Technology. The other participant was from the Department of Fishery Products, Faculty of Fisheries.

Regarding the number of years of the participants' formal English learning, 50 percent of the participants (n=5) reported that they had studied English for 15 years. The shortest length of English learning experience, which was declared by two participants was 12 years. With regard to the question asking about their former experiences in foreign countries, only one participant (Barnes) reported that he had been to England for one month when he was in grade 11. However, next to this item was the question asking whether they had foreign friends or not, all of them said "No," including Barnes who had been to England. When asked to explain why he did not have any foreign friends even though he had been to England, Barnes revealed that during his homestay in England, he stayed with an old British man in a farm area where there were not many people of the same age. He stayed in the old man's house most of the time. Barnes said what he got from living there was survival skills, not British friends. He learned how to communicate with his host through body language. Barnes rarely talked to him because the old man's English accent was very difficult to understand. Therefore, Barnes did not consider that he had made friends with the local people there.

4.1.1 The Participants' Perceived Opportunity to Use English

The participants were asked to rate their opportunity to use English in daily life in percent. Their responses are presented in the following Table.

Table 12: Perceived opportunity of the participants' English use on daily basis

Perceived Percentages of Daily Use											
Language Skills											
	Ann	Farrah	Patsy	Jessica	Pamela	Oliver	Arnold	Franky	Nick	Barnes	M
Listening (100%)	10	10	40	30	10	30	60	30	20	45	28.5
Speaking (100%)	5	10	30	20	2	10	20	20	20	10	14.7
Reading (100%)	15	30	30	10	10	10	40	10	10	40	20.5
Writing (100%)	15	10	30	5	5	15	30	10	10	5	13.5
Rank	9	8	2	5	10	5	1	4	7	3	

According to the data in Table 12, it could be seen that the productive English skills (speaking and writing) gained lower perceived percentages of daily use than the receptive skills (listening and reading). The average percentage also showed that English listening was the skill that the participants perceived to be the highest in terms of its opportunity to be used in their daily life, while English speaking was almost the lowest of the four skills. These data indicated that the participants' English learning was mainly focused on passively receiving and understanding the language rather than actively producing it.

After the percentages of all four skills per one participant were computed, it was found that Arnold (rank 1) was the one who reported the highest perceived percentage. This showed that in his perception he had a lot of opportunity to use English in his daily life. On the contrary, Pamela (rank 10) was the one who reported the lowest overall perceived percentage of her daily English use. As for Arnold, this information corresponded to what he did at the beginning of the recruitment phase and at the period of DA sessions. At the recruitment phase, after letting all students in the ENG 101 class know about this research, the researcher asked the whole class if anyone was interested in participating. Then, Arnold was the first who raised his hand. He even walked to the researcher and said, "Please recruit me." During DA sessions, he always came early and waited outside the room.



Arnold's eagerness to take part in this research showed that he really tried to find opportunity to use English. When the researcher asked him about his perceived opportunity in daily English listening to which he gave the highest percentage (60%), he explained that this number was mainly based on his habit of listening to English songs. He liked listening to songs, especially English pop songs. He listened to them almost every day. This made him think that he had a lot of opportunity to listen to English.

As for Pamela, the researcher observed that her personality was different from Arnold's. She was a good student but she seemed to be quite reserved. She usually sat quietly, apart from other students in the classroom. According to Table 12, she gave the lowest total percentage of the perceived opportunity in using all four skills. The perceived percentage of her English speaking in daily life was especially low (2%). She explained later that she found English speaking was not much important to her. She lived in a remote area of Nakhon Phanom, a province in the northeastern region of Thailand, and there were not many foreigners there.

Pamela stated that before studying in university, she once worked part time in a popular convenient store in her neighborhood during one summer vacation. The foreigners that she met while working there were Chinese tourists who could not speak English. Pamela and the Chinese tourists communicated through hand gestures and a calculator. She found that English was not useful in such a circumstance. She said that after she graduated, she may have to go back to work in her hometown and face that kind of situation again. Therefore, she found that the English use in her daily life mainly occurred when she studied English in the classroom. To her, English was just a subject that she had to study to graduate.

Regarding the perceived opportunity to use English speaking skill of all ten participants, it was found that Patsy was the one who put the highest number of perceived percentage (30%) on this part. She explained later that although there were few foreigners in the place where she lived (Nong Khai Province, in the Northeastern region of Thailand), her opportunity to speak English occurred when the lady who lived next door to her married an American. This man liked to talk to her because there were not many people in her neighborhood who could converse with



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him in English. However, she gave the perceived percentage of speaking opportunity at only 30 because she did not like to speak English with him. She said that this American man had a huge body, and he looked strange to her. She also did not want his jealous wife to misunderstand her.

Aside from the data presented in Tables 11 and 12, the other three open-ended questions in the demographic questionnaire were: a) what they expected from studying English in the classroom; b) when and how they used their English speaking skill; c) how they strengthened their English language skills in general. The data collected from the participants' responses to these questions are shown in the following sections.

4.1.2 What the Participants Expected From Studying English in the Classroom

Seven participants expected to be able to apply what they learned from the English class to the real situation. They also wanted to communicate with westerners ("farang" in Thai) successfully. Pamela expected that her English skills would help her study other subjects more easily. Franky specifically expected that the English class would equip him with the ability to use English in a translation job (both English to Thai and Thai to English translation). Barnes wanted to be able to read English books.

4.1.3 When and How the Participants Used Their English Speaking Skill

Six participants gave a similar response to this question, stating that they spoke English in the classroom with their teachers and their classmates. Pamela emphasized that the time she spoke English a lot was when she tried to recite the English grammar, vocabulary, or patterns of dialogues from the lessons in order to take midterm or final examination. While Nick was a master of ceremony in some formal events of his former secondary school, he occasionally had to recite a short English script while speaking with his audience. As for Oliver, the real use of English speaking for him occurred when he helped some foreigners who got lost. Barnes' family owned a gas station with a small minimart in Chonburi Province (in the eastern

region of Thailand). His mother usually asked him to take care of the foreign customers. He said what he could do well in speaking English was to tell the prices of gas to his customers.

4.1.4 How the Participants Strengthened Their English Language Skills

Five participants stated that multimedia technologies could help them optimize their English learning. They mentioned that visiting YouTube was the main method because there were many interesting things to watch, and most of the contents in YouTube were in English. Franky preferred to surf the Internet. He said there were many kinds of web pages. He was particularly interested in the translation of English songs on the web. But Barnes paid more attention to online games. He said he could practice using English in the games.

4.2 Results for Research Question 1

Research question 1: To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?

This research question focuses on the investigation of the impact of DA on improving the participants' English speaking skill.

4.2.1 Results From Pretest and Posttest Scores in Each Criterion of Speaking Rubric

Table 13: The participants' scores in five criteria of pretest and posttest (n=10)

	Scores*											
	Pretest**						Posttest**					
	Me	S	V	P	F	GT	Me	S	V	P	F	GT
Ann	9	16	23	10	8	66	22	33	35	20	17	127
Farrah	6	13	21	5	5	50	14	22	24	15	10	85
Patsy	4	10	10	4	3	31	6	18	17	5	5	51
Jessica	5	7	16	5	3	36	9	19	24	8	4	64
Pamela	17	27	31	16	19	110	28	41	38	25	28	160
Oliver	2	12	16	2	2	34	4	15	23	6	0	48
Arnold	9	23	24	6	7	69	26	34	35	21	19	135
Franky	15	22	26	16	14	93	34	37	38	35	29	173
Nick	7	17	20	6	9	59	19	26	32	15	11	103
Barnes	15	28	29	19	15	106	26	29	31	30	23	139
Total	8.9	17.5	21.6	8.9	8.5	65.4	18.8	27.4	29.7	18	14.6	108.5

Note: * Full scores of each criterion = 60 points / Grand total (GT) = 300 points

** The test tasks in pretest and posttest were exactly the same. Five groups of scores (60 points each) were given to five criteria: Me = Meaning score, S = Syntax score, V = Vocabulary score, P = Pronunciation score, and F = Fluency score.

Table 13 describes the participants' scores of pretest and posttest which represented their speaking ability in the EI tasks. In this Table, there was a noticeable difference in the grand total of mean scores in all criteria between pretest and posttest (GT=65.4 and GT=108.5 respectively). This difference revealed the participants' improvement in their speaking performance. From pretest to posttest, the mean score of each criterion moved up, which was in the same direction as the grand total of all mean scores. These movements are illustrated as follows:

- Meaning mean score shifted from 8.9 to 18.8 (difference=9.9);
- Syntax mean score shifted from 17.5 to 27.4 (difference=9.9);
- Vocabulary mean score shifted from 21.6 to 29.7 (difference=8.1);
- Pronunciation mean score shifted from 8.9 to 18 (difference=9.1); and

e) Fluency mean score shifted from 8.5 to 14.6 (difference=6.1).

The aforementioned results showed that the total mean scores of vocabulary criterion were the highest (21.6 in pretest and 29.7 in posttest); on the contrary, the total mean scores of fluency criterion were the lowest (8.5 in pretest and 14.6 in posttest). The differences between pretest and posttest of each criterion's total mean score ranged from 6.1 to 9.9. Meaning and syntax scores had the same difference (9.9), which was the highest in all criteria, while fluency scores had the lowest difference (6.1).

When focusing on the participants' individual performance, the researcher found that the participant who earned the most overall score in pretest was Pamela (GT=110), while Franky was the one who earned the most overall score in posttest (GT=173). The comparison between pretest and posttest scores of Franky and that of Pamela revealed that Franky had a bigger difference between these two scores (difference=80) than Pamela (difference=50). This showed that in posttest Franky could improve his speaking skill much more than Pamela.

The participant who earned the least overall score in pretest was Patsy (GT=31), while Oliver gained the least overall score in posttest (GT=48). Oliver was also the one whose pretest and posttest scores moved up with the smallest difference between the two scores (difference=14). This showed that he could improve his speaking skill in posttest less than any other participant in this study. However, when comparing the test performances in groups of males and females, the following results showed how the males surpassed their female counterparts in pre/posttest scores:

- a) The mean of GT in pretest scores of male group was 72.2 and in posttest was 120 (difference=47.8)*;
- b) The mean of GT in pretest scores of female group was 58.6 and in posttest was 97.4 (difference=38.8)*.

*Note: * Researcher's calculations, results not shown in the Table*

This showed that the male group could do better than the female group in both pretest and posttest. The difference also showed that the male group were better at improving their speaking than the female group.

4.2.2 Results from Delayed Posttest in Comparison with Posttest

Table 14: Posttest and delayed posttest scores from EI tasks (n=10)

	Scores*											
	Posttest**					Delayed-posttest**						
	S	V	P	F	GT	Me	S	V	P	F	GT	
Ann	22	33	35	20	17	127	27	34	33	23	19	136
Farrah	14	22	24	15	10	85	14	28	28	15	10	95
Patsy	6	18	17	5	5	51	8	20	21	8	7	64
Jessica	9	19	24	8	4	64	12	20	28	11	7	78
Pamela	28	41	38	25	28	160	34	38	39	33	34	178
Oliver	4	15	23	6	0	48	7	15	25	7	4	58
Arnold	26	34	35	21	19	135	25	36	35	23	20	139
Franky	34	37	38	35	29	173	37	45	46	39	36	203
Nick	19	26	32	15	11	103	25	32	34	25	22	138
Barnes	26	29	31	30	23	139	27	35	36	34	28	160
Total	18.8	27.4	29.7	18	14.6	108.5	21.6	30.3	32.5	21.8	18.7	124.9

Note: * Full scores of each criterion = 60 points / Grand total (GT) = 300 points

** The test tasks in posttest and delayed posttest were exactly the same.

Delayed posttest took place two weeks after posttest.

Five groups of scores (60 points each) were given to five criteria: Me =

Meaning score, S = Syntax score, V = Vocabulary score, P = Pronunciation score, and F = Fluency score.

According to Table 14, the grand total of the mean scores of delayed posttest (GT=124.9) was higher than that of posttest (GT=108.5). This showed that, after improving their performances in posttest, the participants kept making progress in their delayed posttest. However, the difference between the grand total mean

score of both tests (124.9 – 108.5) was 16.4. This difference was smaller than the difference between pretest and posttest (which was 43.1). This revealed that the participants could still improve their speaking performance in delayed posttest but this improvement was not as much as the progress they made in posttest that occurred one week after 6 DA sessions.

From posttest to delayed posttest, all mean scores of each criterion continually moved up but this time in a smaller step than what they did from pretest to posttest. These improvements are illustrated as follows:

- a) Meaning score shifted from 18.8 to 21.6 (difference=2.8);
- b) Syntax score shifted from 27.4 to 30.3 (difference=2.9);
- c) Vocabulary score shifted from 29.7 to 32.5 (difference=2.8);
- d) Pronunciation score shifted from 18 to 21.8 (difference=3.8); and
- e) Fluency score shifted from 14.6 to 18.7 (difference=4.1).

It could be seen from the above data that vocabulary score (M=32.5) was still the highest. However, the data showed that pronunciation and fluency components in the participants' speaking were notably enhanced in delayed posttest. In this round, the highest difference between the two tests was found in fluency scores. In other words, fluency criterion in delayed posttest had the biggest gap (difference=4.1). This is quite different from the pretest data of fluency criterion in Table 13, which had the least difference between pretest and posttest. This change seems to show that the participants paid more attention to their fluency in the delayed posttest.

- **The participants' explanation for the changes in their performances across the three tests**

The data from participants' interviews provided some explanations for their changes. For example, Jessica explained that in pretest everything was new to her. The EI task was her new experience. The face-to-face context of this speaking test forced her to speak English. To her, speaking English generally got her anxious easily, so she usually kept away from it. In pretest, she did not make much effort to do the

test. Therefore, none of her sentences in pretest was complete and contained just some words that she could remember. The pronunciation and the fluency parts were not in her mind while working in the process of reconstructing the sentence.

After asking every participant about pretest, the researcher found that no one had ever taken the EI task before. They reported that even though they had a chance to practice doing this task in the training session before pretest, they could still feel the pressure and this pressure could easily trigger their anxiety in pretest. They highlighted the face-to-face context in the EI test and commented on this aspect that it made the speaking test more stressful for them. Also, they thought the task was quite demanding and hard to master. Therefore, they would feel very proud of themselves if they earned a full score from any of the stimulus sentences.

All of the aforementioned features of the speaking task in this study seemed to have an impact on the participants' speaking. When they were asked to comment on the five components of the speaking rubric, they stated that vocabulary, meaning, and syntax looked manageable to them, but the fluency and pronunciation were harder to deal with. Some participants said there were too many important aspects to focus when reconstructing the sentence, and they usually started with the vocabulary. Others added that they rarely practiced pronouncing English words like native speakers, so it was quite difficult to listen to a native speaker's pronunciation in the stimulus sentences and to speak like that speaker. The common point that they shared was that in all five criteria, vocabulary score was the biggest and easiest target to aim for.

Therefore, in pretest, the words in the stimulus sentence were taken as discrete units of the sentence that they just tried to catch as much as possible. But after going through DA sessions and they became more familiar with the task, they got a chance to repair and learn through their errors. They said the examiner encouraged them to improve all components of their spoken sentences. Aside from this, they noticed that the vocabulary and sentence structure in the stimulus sentences were taught in the classroom. Thus they felt more confident to handle the words and the arrangement of the words in the sentence. In this way, the priority was still given to the vocabulary and syntax in their spoken sentence but they could



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also allocate their attention to the parts of pronunciation and fluency in posttest and especially in delayed posttest.

Regarding the overall differences of all criteria between posttest and delayed posttest, the range was from 2.8 to 4.1, which was narrower and lower than the range of differences found between pretest and posttest (from 6.1 to 9.9). It should be noted here that while posttest showed the immediate effect of DA, delayed posttest could be used to find the delayed effect of DA on the participants' acquired knowledge and skills (Ajideh & Nourdad, 2012). Therefore, the results of these differences revealed that the participants were not only able to keep the improved performances in all components of speaking skill in posttest, but they were also able to sustain them in the delayed posttest.

To see how an individual participant's respond to their experiences from the tests, further evidence from qualitative data will be presented in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

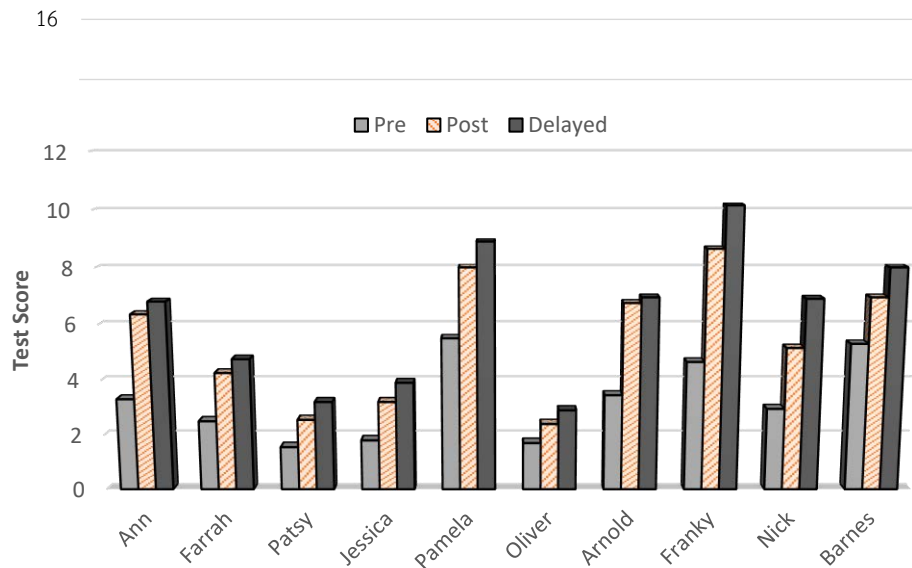
4.2.3 Individual Participant's Scores in Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest

In the previous section, numerical data were presented to display the diversity in the participants' scores based on five speaking criteria in the EI task. In this section, a bar graph is used to show a clearer picture of the improvement of an individual participant's speaking skill across pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest as illustrated in the following Figure.



Figure 6: Individual participant's raw scores of pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest

(Full score=15)



	Ann	Farrah	Patsy	Jessica	Pamela	Oliver	Arnold	Franky	Nick	Barnes
■ Pre	3.3	2.5	1.55	1.8	5.5	1.7	3.45	4.65	2.95	5.3
▨ Post	6.35	4.25	2.55	3.2	8	2.4	6.75	8.65	5.15	6.95
■ Delayed	6.8	4.75	3.2	3.9	8.9	2.9	6.95	10.15	6.9	8

Note: In Table 13 and Table 14, each test was presented with raw scores in grand total of 300 points calculated from 15 sentences (20 points per 1 sentence). In this Figure, the full score of each test was 15 points (1 point per 1 sentence).

The three bars above each participant's name on the horizontal axis represent the three tests which are arranged as pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest respectively. In Figure 6, it could be noticed that the three bars of every participant had the same pattern; each rose higher than the previous one. This means that all participants gained higher test scores in every subsequent test. In this Figure, Franky's and Pamela's bars were higher than those of the others. Their scores were at the top of the group, while Oliver's and Patsy's scores were at the bottom. For each participant, the researcher computed his/her mean scores of all three tests,

then a list of the computed mean scores arranged in descending order is presented as follows:

Table 15: The list of each participant's mean score of the three tests

Participants	Mean scores
Franky	7.8
Pamela	7.5
Barnes	6.8
Arnold	5.7
Ann	5.5
Nick	5.0
Farrah	3.8
Jessica	3.0
Patsy	2.4
Oliver	2.3

According to Table 15, the participants tended to have the mean scores clustering around three ranges which were: a) a range of high-scoring group including Franky, Pamela, and Barnes (range=6.5 – 8.0); b) a range of mid-scoring group including Ann, Arnold, and Nick (range=5.0 – 6.5); and c) a range of low-scoring group including Farrah, Patsy, Jessica, and Oliver (range=2.0 – 4.0).

Both high-scoring and mid-scoring groups showed a big difference in an individual participant's scores between pretest and delayed posttest. The biggest one could be found between Franky's scores of pretest and delayed posttest, which showed that after the intervention of DA he could maximize his potential of improvement and he could also sustain this potential over a longer period of time. On the other hand, Oliver who was one of the participants in low-scoring group had the three bars that were much different from Franky's. The small difference between the scores of the three tests showed that Oliver made little progress. The following Excerpt illustrates how Franky and Oliver performed differently in one EI sentence across pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest.

Excerpt 7: The transcription of Franky's and Oliver's performances after the stimulus item number 13

Stimulus item: Mark meets about two hundred people at parties every year. (The participants would receive 1 point for a complete sentence repetition.)

Franky's performance

Franky: *[Shaking his head]*
(in pretest) (score = 0)

Franky: *Mark meets ...[3 seconds]... 2 hundred peoples and*
(in posttest) *party every years*
(score = 0.65)

Franky: *Mark meet about 2 hundred people and party*
(in delayed posttest) *every year*
(score = 0.75)

Oliver's performance

Oliver: *How many people*
(in pretest) (score = 0)

Oliver: *...[3 seconds]... how many people uh ...[4 seconds]... uh*
(in posttest) *go to party uh party in on the new year*
(score = 0.05)

Oliver: *...[10 seconds]... mark uh mark ...[23 seconds]...*
(in delayed posttest) *... mark uh ...*
(score = 0.05)

Excerpt 7 showed evidence of the progress that one of the high-scoring participants and one of the low-scoring participants made across the three tests. It also displayed different features of individual development that might be the result of different individual ZPD and degree of readiness in each participant to benefit from mediated learning in DA sessions.

4.2.3.1 *How Franky and Oliver reconstructed the stimulus sentence*

In Excerpt 7, Franky could deal with the stimulus sentence in posttest much better than he did in pretest, and he kept improving his performance in delayed posttest. In pretest, Franky refused to say any words when he could not deal with the sentence in this example. Like Franky, Oliver was unable to repeat the sentence. However, instead of letting it pass without saying anything like Franky, Oliver tried to say something by making up a phrase, “How many people,” from the word “people” that he heard. Oliver’s spoken phrase, nevertheless, did not bring him any scores. Instead, it revealed that he did not get the meaning of the sentence at all.

There was another aspect in which both Franky and Oliver performed similarly. In pretest, they repeated the stimulus sentence quickly without hesitation. But then in posttest, there were pauses in their speaking. These pauses could be a sign of hesitation or they could be the moment of their cognitive processing to make their repeated sentence well-formed. As for Franky, after the pause, he continued to repeat the rest of the sentence. He could keep the main idea of the sentence but his reconstructed sentence contained some errors.

Oliver, on the other hand, could not keep the main idea of the stimulus sentence. Once again, Oliver invented his own phrases based on the words he heard. This was the same error that occurred in pretest. Even though Oliver could repeat more words in posttest, he hardly gained any scores because he reconstructed the words into different type of sentence (from statement to question) and into different meaning (e.g. from “every year” to “on the new year”).

4.2.3.2 *Taking notice of Franky’s errors*

Franky’s use of a morphological feature (-s ending) in his reconstruction of the stimulus sentence was clearly noticeable. There were both correct and incorrect uses of -s ending in his sentence in posttest. It is emphasized by some scholars in the field of DA studies such as Poehner (2008) that an error in itself is not as important as an investigation of the underlying source of error. The source of error is considered to be one of the most important information that could be revealed through DA



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process.

Therefore, a closer look at Franky's errors in Excerpt 7 revealed that he seemed to pay great attention to the -s ending of some words in his sentence. Franky pronounced "meets" with the clear sound of [s] at the end of the verb "meet." This aspect of his speaking was correct and raised his scores in the pronunciation criterion. According to van Compernelle and Zhang (2014), a speaker's ability to control over third-person singular -s shows that he/she has reached an advanced language ability.

However, his meticulous attention about -s ending feature caused errors in other two words. He added plural -s in wrong places as found in "2 hundred peoples" and "every years." It seemed he thought of the number of people and the number of year while reconstructing the sentence. This kind of errors was found only in Franky's performance, not in other participants'. Franky was asked to explain this phenomenon in his interview. He stated that every English teacher emphasized the uses of -s ending. Thus, he was really familiar with the use of the third person singular -s and the plural -s but he did not pay attention to these features when speaking English until he participated in this research. His conscious attention on the proper uses of plural -s and third person singular -s was reinforced through the mediation he received during DA sessions.

Since the interactions between the participant and the mediator in DA process occurred in a face-to-face context, the presence of the mediator had an influence on Franky's performance. Franky said that because the mediator was listening to him, he felt he had to speak as clearly and correctly as possible. Franky added that getting 100 percent correct was his goal that he needed to achieve in every DA session.

It happened to him in some DA sessions that he could reconstruct the sentence without support at the first attempt. However his sentence was not 100 percent correct. It was just an omission of -s ending in his repetition that prevented him from achieving his goal. The desire to achieve the full score urged him to be meticulous in his pronunciation of -s ending. For this reason, in posttest he became extremely cautious in pronouncing -s ending; therefore, his overuse of this feature

occurred, as shown in Excerpt 7.

4.2.4 Results From DA Sessions

4.2.4.1 Overall DA scores of the participants

The overall scores from 6 DA sessions are presented in the following Table.

Table 16: The overall scores from DA sessions

	Scores from DA sessions*						(GT)
	1 st DA	2 nd DA	3 rd DA	4 th DA	5 th DA	6 th DA	
	20	20	20	20	20	20	120
Participants							
Ann	0	5	1	3	0	0	9
Farrah	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Patsy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jessica	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pamela	2	0	3	4	0	0	9
Oliver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arnold	2	1	1	3	0	0	7
Franky	6	3	8	6	2	0	25
Nick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barnes	1	1	4	3	0	0	9
Total	11	12	17	20	2	0	62

**Note: 6 DA sessions were conducted in the 9th week, 10th week, 11th week, 12th week, 13th week, 14th week of the semester. The full score of each session was 20.*

The scoring system in DA sessions was not the same as that of pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. The full score of 20 in each DA session came from 5 stimulus sentences. Each of these sentences was worth 4 points, which would be reduced according to the number of prompts an individual participant received (see

Table 7 for the sequence of mediation prompts). The more prompts he/she received, the lower scores he/she gained for each sentence. In other words, each prompt from the mediator in the DA session took away 1 point from the full score of 4. If the participants could make it correct at the first time they repeat, they got 4 points, which signified that they managed to repeat the complete sentence by themselves. If they made it complete after the mediator said, “try again,” they got 3 points, which signified that they could correct their own errors in the sentence. If they made it complete after the first hint from the mediator, they got 2 points. If they made it complete after the second hint, they got 1 point. The score of zero showed that despite receiving supports from the mediator, the participants could not make a correct sentence.

The total scores from the 1st to the 4th DA session (11, 12, 17, 20, respectively) showed a continual increase in the participants’ speaking ability in DA sessions. However, there was a sharp drop of the total scores from 20 in the 4th DA session to 2 and 0 in the 5th and the 6th DA sessions. Obviously, in the 6th DA session, all participants scored zero, which means that they could not complete the task by themselves. They received all supports in every sequence of the mediation prompts from the examiner who was also their mediator.

Regarding the grand total of the scores from all DA sessions (GT=120), the results showed that most participants gained very low scores. These data reported that the participants needed a lot of support from the mediator to deal with EI task. Franky was the one who earned the highest scores (GT=25), which was about 20.8% of the grand total. This percentage showed that Franky also received a lot of help during DA sessions. Ann, Pamela, and Barnes earned the same scores (GT=9), and their scores were in the second rank, after Franky’s. There were three participants (Patsy, Oliver, and Nick) whose grand total was zero. This showed that they always needed help from the mediator in every DA session.

4.2.4.2 Results from three types of scoring: an actual score, a mediated score, and a learning potential score

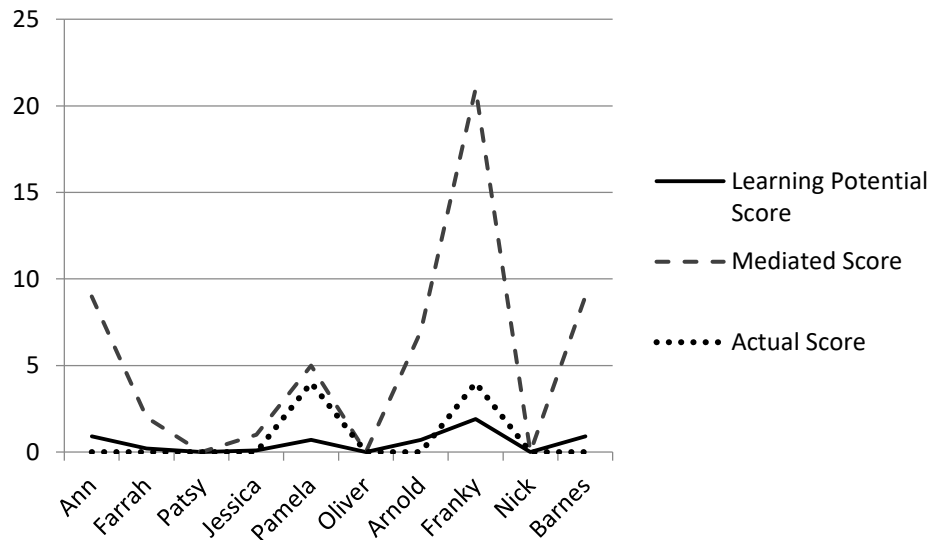
In the following Figure, three types of scores are presented to illustrate: a) how much the participants could do the task by themselves (actual score), b) how much they could do the task with help (mediated score), and c) how much they could sustain the ability that they developed to deal with the same task in the future (learning potential score).



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Figure 7: Investigation of the participants' speaking potential through three types of scoring



Note: Learning potential score (LPS) was computed by using the formula developed by Kozulin and Garb (2002, p. 121). The formula was $(2 \times \text{mediated score}) - \text{actual score}$ and divided by max score. The high LPS is equal to or more than 1.0. The mid LPS is between 0.79-0.88. The low LPS is equal to or less than 0.71 (Kozulin & Garb, 2002). Mediated score was computed from the scores that each participant earned with help. Actual score refers to the score earned through his/her independent performance. The full score of mediated and actual scores was 120.

As can be seen in Figure 7, the line graph of mediated score in this Figure obviously showed different levels of the participants' ability to deal with the task with different amount of support from the mediator. In achieving the task, the less support they received, the higher score they gained. In other words, earning high mediated scores signified that the participants did not totally depend on the guidance of the mediator in DA sessions. This meant that they could repair or correct their sentences when subsequent prompts were provided. It is noticeable that the variation of mediated scores in this Figure corresponded to the variation of pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest scores illustrated in Figure 7. In terms of actual score,

only two participants, (Franky and Pamela) recorded this score in the graph. Both participants earned 4 points (full score) from repeating one sentence correctly without help. Other participants told the researcher in the interview that they wanted to earn the full score like Franky and Pamela but they just could not make it. They further explained that being never correct at the first attempt did not mean that they wanted to be totally dependent on the mediator's support. They highlighted that the task was really hard for them.

The learning potential score (LPS) displayed the results of the participants' responsiveness to mediation and how DA promoted the participants' implicit (automatic) processes of metalinguistic knowledge in the future (van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014). As shown in the LPS line graph, Franky was the one who produced the highest LPS (1.7). LPS of Ann and Barnes were 0.9, while Pamela and Arnold produced LPS of 0.7. LPS of Farrah and Jessica were 0.2 and 0.1 respectively. As for Oliver, Patsy, and Nick, the researcher could not find their learning potential scores because they earned a zero score from every DA session.

The results of the learning potential scores showed how much each participant could expand their learning potential through DA sessions. These results also supported the data found in section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, which explained why Franky could make more progress in the posttest and delayed posttest than Pamela. The participants who produced LPS in a range of 0.7 to 0.9 also showed a substantial improvement in those two tests.

However, despite the fact that Nick's learning potential score was not shown in every DA session, he had a similar range of improvement to Ann and Arnold in posttest and delayed posttest (see the bar chart in Figure 6). Therefore, the investigation from other research instruments, e.g. the retrospective verbal protocol, interviews, and diaries were investigated to find the feature of Nick's improvement and also the improvement of two other participants (Patsy and Oliver) who had a zero score.

As for Nick, he stated in his verbal report and in his diary that he liked to learn English but he had negative feelings toward his own English speaking. He stated that he had "ugly English speaking." This perception was derived from his bad

experience that occurred when he was a master of ceremony in his secondary school. It might be because he was not well prepared to speak the English part in his script. That day he happened to see someone laughed at him while he was speaking English. Due to that situation, when he had to speak English in DA sessions, he needed to be sure of his own accent. If he was not sure how to say any word, he would just omit it. That was why he never got a complete sentence in his DA sessions, and this brought him a zero score. Since the scoring system of posttest and delayed posttest was different from that of DA sessions, Nick could earn some scores even though his sentences in those non-DA sessions were not complete either. Therefore, when his spoken sentences in posttest and delayed posttest got higher than pretest, the scores that he earned also allowed him to see his progress in dealing with the three tests.

Regarding the zero scores earned by Patsy and Nick in DA sessions, while Nick omitted some words in his sentences, Patsy omitted the whole sentence. She said “pass” (which means that she wanted to skip and do the next sentence) quite often while doing the tasks in DA and non-DA sessions. Therefore she earned a zero score in DA sessions and with her omission of some sentences in posttest and delayed posttest, she got very few scores, much fewer than Nick. When the researcher asked her the reason why she did not try harder in reconstructing the sentence, or at least said some words just as the other participants did, she said that after midterm examination she was easily distracted. She was in a stage of making a decision to resign from the faculty that she was studying. She chose the Faculty of Agriculture because her mother wanted her to. After half of the semester had passed, she found out that she did not like it. She always listened to her mother; therefore, she was worried that her mother would tell her to stay on and she would have to obey as she used to do. This uncertain decision lingered in her mind, and it made her lose focus on her study as well as on participating in this research.

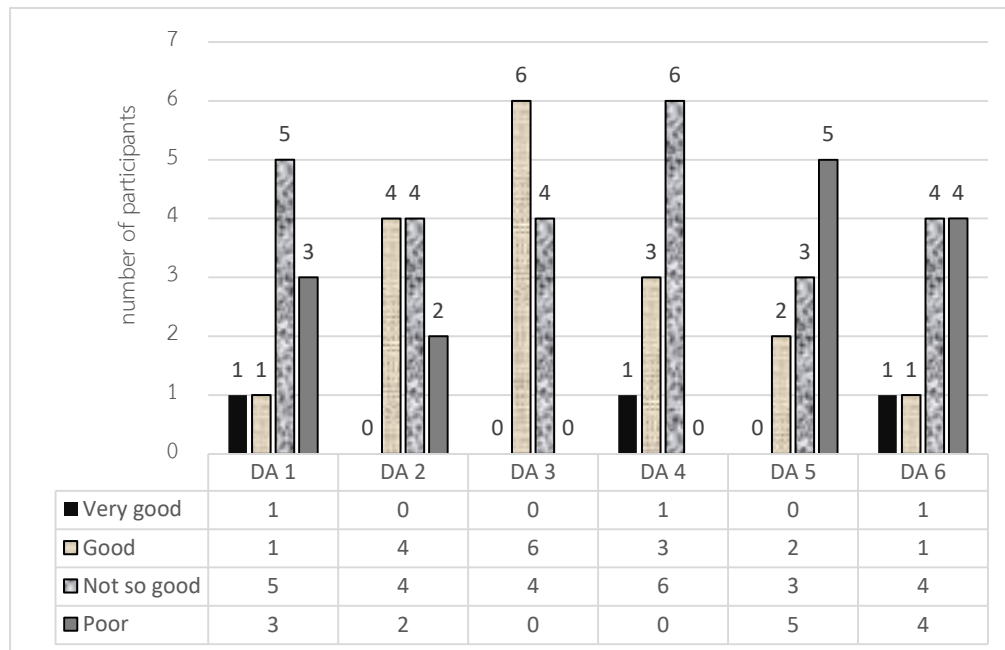
As for Oliver whose scores in non-DA sessions were also close to those of Patsy, he became a busy person after the research had been conducted for a few weeks. He was elected to be the head of the freshmen in his faculty. As a result, he did not concentrate well on the task and it happened that sometimes his DA session

had to be postponed due to his duty of the freshmen head. He also came to the session late. It seemed he had too many things to focus. Therefore, there was a drop in his performance in every session of this research.

4.2.5 The Participants' Self-Evaluation on Their Performances in DA Sessions

After each participant's DA session was finished, he/she was asked to write a diary to reflect his/her feelings about what happened in the session. In order that the diary should be well-organized and have all necessary information, the researcher suggested some possible topics that they should include in their writing. The suggested topics were such as the things they liked or disliked in their work, the problems they had, what they learned from the test, what changes occurred in their work, and the kind of support they received. The researcher purposefully put the feature of self-evaluation into the participants' reflection in their diaries. Therefore, at the end of every diary, the participants were asked to evaluate their own work in four levels: very good, good, not so good, and poor, together with the reason of the evaluation. The findings of the participants' self-evaluation are reported in the following figure.

Figure 8: The participants' self-evaluation after finishing each DA session



According to Figure 8, the levels of the participants' self-evaluation of their speaking performance varied across 6 DA sessions. It was found that the participants gave positive self-evaluation to the 3rd and the 4th DA sessions. No participants found that their speaking was poor in these sessions. However, in the 5th and the 6th DA sessions the participants' self-evaluation turned to be rather negative. It seemed that most participants were dissatisfied with their speaking and labeled their performances mostly in the levels of "poor" and "not so good." These results were consistent with the participants' overall scores in DA sessions that were reported in Table 16. The consistency between the participants' DA scores and their self-evaluation showed that the level of their achievement in the test was related to the level of their self-evaluation. The participants' reflection in the diary entries gave more details about their poor performances and their reactions to these performances in the last DA session as shown in the following Excerpts:

Excerpt 8: Arnold's diary entry after the 6th DA session

I'm not satisfied with my work. This is the 6th time of my DA practice, but I still can't get all words. I lost concentration today and it made me do a bad job.

Excerpt 9: Barnes' diary entry after the 6th DA session

This time there is past tense in the sentence. So the sentence is harder. I'm so slow. I know it's past simple verb but I don't know what it is. The big problem that still remains in the last practice is that I can't differentiate the sound.

Excerpt 10: Ann's diary entry after the 6th DA session

Last time (the 5th DA session) I did not do a good job, and I told myself that it had to be better this time. I gained scores from three sessions in a row. I got a lot of confidence from this. The zero scores of the last time and this time tell me that I need more practice.

Excerpt 11: Franky's diary entry after the 6th DA session

This time I did badly because I couldn't get it all correct, 100%, in any sentence. Maybe I pushed myself too much. I couldn't even find my own errors. The sentences of this practice are longer. That means more grammar. My grammar is still poor.

The participants' criticisms about the results of their work in the task of the 6th DA session suggested that the sentences in EI task were not easy for them. Instead, the task seemed to be beyond their level of competence just as the researcher intended it to be so that it could help to increase their learning potential.

A common reaction of the participants could be drawn from these Excerpts. They seemed to be disappointed with their own work. This disappointment also showed that some of their time, energy and attempt had been invested in implementing the task so that they could achieve full scores; however, the return of their investment was less than they expected. The expectation was evident in some

diary entries, such as Ann's entry in which she wrote "*... I told myself that it had to be better this time,*" which showed that she had already got involved with the task.

In the interview, the researcher asked the participants to give further explanation about the kind of efforts they made in order to accomplish the speaking task in DA sessions. Ann described how she practiced doing the EI task with her dormitory roommate. It was a mock DA test. Her friend spoke an English sentence and she repeated it. She enjoyed that practice. After the practice, she wanted to come to DA session and applied some techniques that she developed to handle the real thing in DA session.

As for Arnold, he practiced through songs. He downloaded an application that allowed him to sing with the singer and the program would evaluate how closely he could sing like the singer. He thought this helped him pronounce English words like native speakers.

Nick paid more attention while studying in the classroom of ENG 101, especially in the parts of listening and pronunciation practice. Since he found that the stimulus sentences in DA sessions were taken from the textbook, he tried to memorize the vocabulary of every lesson. He stated that for him the effective way to practice before coming to DA sessions was to talk to the teacher in the classroom in English. The desire to achieve the EI task made him see the benefit of speaking English in the classroom with the teacher. These examples illustrated the participants' active engagement and their enthusiasm toward their participation in this study.

Furthermore, the achievement that they previously attained in the 3rd and the 4th DA sessions seemed to motivate them to try harder in later sessions. Franky even said that he had pushed himself too much" to do the task in the last session. This remark could be regarded as a sign of his strong commitment in doing the task.

Another point is about the difficulty of the task. They mentioned that they faced a more difficult task in the last session. However, even though the participants felt the task was more difficult, they did not show a sign of giving up. Instead, they told themselves about what they could do this time and what to do next time. This



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is also a sign of positive thinking that they exhibited when they faced their own problems.

The point about losing concentration during the last session was also mentioned. This point should not be overlooked. This was about the concurrence of time schedule of the DA phases and the exam schedule of the participants. At the time the 5th and the 6th DA sessions took place, the final examinations were coming up. As a result, the participants were easily stressed and nervous. Arnold, who mentioned about losing concentration in Excerpt 8, added more information in the verbal report that he stayed up almost all night doing his assignments before final examinations. He added that some other participants were like him. This was true because Franky also mentioned in his verbal report that sometimes he was distracted in the last DA session due to lack of sleep.

In contrast to the negative self-evaluation in the last two sessions, the 3rd and the 4th DA sessions received positive self-evaluation from most participants. Many of them reported what they liked in their performances of these sessions in their diary entries as shown in the following Excerpts:

Excerpt 12: Pamela's diary entry after the 3rd DA session

I made one sentence correct at the second attempt. I could catch the meaning of the whole sentence. I liked that. But there are still some words that I couldn't catch through his (the native speaker's) accent. The examiner told me that I could pronounce some words like foreigners. The sentences are getting longer and longer. I've got to get prepared for the linking words.

Excerpt 13: Barnes' diary entry after the 3rd DA session

I could see my progress because I got some score this time. It brought me confidence. Next time I must receive less help from the examiner. I want to get a full score. Now, I could start well in the first attempt. But the sound link between words cause a problem such as "alotof." I don't know what "alotof" is until the examiner explains that it is "a lot of."



Excerpt 14: Arnold's diary entry after the 3rd session

I got more familiar with the accent of the speaker in the audio recording. But the names were still a problem. I couldn't make out "John." He didn't say that name as Thai people do. I like my work today. I could speak calmly. I have a lot of concentration. I have already learned from the last two sessions (the 1st and the 2nd DA sessions). Now I pay more attention on the meaning and I think before I speak. The best thing is that I got a score.

Excerpt 15: Jessica's diary entry after the 4th DA session

Today I could produce it almost like a sentence. Formerly, what I said was like groups of words. The technique is to listen carefully, get the meaning of the sentence, translate, and reconstruct the sentence from my understanding. But sometimes my understanding caused a problem. I understand that there was a place in the sentence, so I said "school" but actually it is "museum." However, I am happy today. I got a score HOORAY. [She drew a trophy at the end of the page]

Excerpt 16: Ann's diary entry after the 4th DA session

I got some scores from two out of five sentences today. The method that I planned to do in this test worked. Even though I couldn't get the whole sentence correct, at least I know how to deal with it. I caught the meaning then I tried to see the situation as if the sentence was a picture. If the test is a game, I want to win this game.

As can be seen from Excerpts 12-16, the participants gave plenty of vivid expressions in their diary entries after they had achieved some kind of success from DA sessions 3 and 4. It was also noticeable that the participants showed a self-reflection of their own strengths and weaknesses through the description of what they "could do" and what they "couldn't do." For example, Pamela wrote in Excerpt 12, "I could catch the meaning of the whole sentence. I liked that," or "... I couldn't catch through his (the native speaker's) accent."



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An important point that could be drawn from these Excerpts was about their feelings toward the scores they earned from the test. It seemed that the scores represented tangible success that became reachable for them. Jessica's drawing of a trophy and Ann's desire to "win" the test displayed how they connected an achievement in this test with a victory in a race. In other words, it seemed that they created a small competition in DA sessions and the score became a hard-to-win award that the participants strived for. Jessica, who once said she usually avoided speaking English, seemed to be already engaged in the speaking task in DA sessions. In fact, the score that Jessica and Ann earned from the 4th DA session was 1 point and 3 points respectively. Both did not earn the full score, which means they earned the score with support from the mediator. However, it seemed every single point that the participants were able to obtain was meaningful to them. As for Jessica, she stated that the first score she got in the 4th session brought her confidence and pride and she wanted to earn more scores in the next session.

Ann described clearly how she became engaged in the task during her verbal report. She compared her performance in pretest to her performance in the 4th DA session. She said in pretest she had no technique and her mental condition at that moment was purely anxious under the pressure of being tested on the subject that she was not good at. When the researcher explained that the test in this research did not affect her grade, she said to herself "Well, just get the job done."

However, Ann reported that after the 2nd DA session, she started to like this activity. The atmosphere in DA sessions was supportive. The mediator helped her learn a lot. From the feeling of being tested, she said, it was changed to being tutored. DA sessions turned out to be her personal tutoring sessions. She said the sentence structures that she learned from the mediator were indeed the same things that she learned repeatedly in the classroom, such as the subject verb agreement, the pronoun references, or the conjugation of irregular verbs. It was common for her to make errors in these structures. But then she started to be cautious and avoid making errors in these structures after she regarded the task as a game that she needed to win. In order to gain a full score, she needed to master the uses of these structures in her sentence. She stated that in this context speaking English became



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meaningful and fun. She also took the instruction from the mediator in DA session seriously since it helped her achieve her goal.

The participants' explanation above revealed many aspects of changes that happened to them after they had been through DA procedures. It could be seen that their perception toward their own ability to speak English was changed. It appeared that positive psychological factors, such as self-confidence, the sense of pride, goal-setting and taking action to achieve the goal, started to play a role in their learning through the test with the mediator in DA sessions. In the following section, the results from self-efficacy questionnaire will be presented together with the data from other qualitative research instruments.

4.3 Results for Research Question 2

Research question 2: What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill?

In this research, the same questionnaire of participants' perceived speaking self-efficacy was administered twice as a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire was carried out before pretest and the post-questionnaire was carried out after posttest. Also, there were 6 DA sessions taking place in between these pre- and post-questionnaires.

The self-efficacy questionnaire in this study consisted of 20 items. These items were statements that described various aspects of self-efficacy in the participants' English speaking skill. In each statement, the participants were asked to reply by selecting one of the five options in a response continuum according to their degree of agreement, which were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

To make sure that each degree contains equal length of the rating scale, the interpretation of the mean value in each range will be as follows:

- a) $M = 4.21 - 5.00$ is interpreted as a very high degree;
- b) $M = 3.41 - 4.20$ is interpreted as a high degree;
- c) $M = 2.61 - 3.40$ is interpreted as a moderate degree;
- d) $M = 1.81 - 2.61$ is interpreted as a low degree; and
- e) $M = 1.00 - 1.80$ is interpreted as a very low degree.

To make it clearer for the data presentation, the researcher has rearranged the statement items in Table 17 into subgroups that received similar responses from the participants (see the original version of this questionnaire in Appendix A).

Table 17: The participants' perceived self-efficacy of their speaking skill (n=10)

Statement items	Levels of perceived self-efficacy					
	Before the DA			After the DA		
	M	SD		M	SD	
12. I feel confident that I can communicate what I mean easily in English.	2.60	0.8	Low	3.70	0.67	High
3. I can construct a sentence by using the vocabulary that I learned.	3.10	0.9	Moderate	3.80	0.79	High
4. Even if the speaking task is difficult and I don't have the required vocabulary, I can find the strategy to accomplish the task.	3.20	1.1	Moderate	3.70	0.95	High

Statement items	Levels of perceived self-efficacy					
	Before the DA			After the DA		
	M	SD		M	SD	
13. I feel confident that I can achieve a native-like fluency in English if I practice speaking more.	3.10	1.4	Moderate	3.80	1.23	High
15. I am certain that I can use English outside the classroom.	3.20	0.6	Moderate	3.50	0.85	High
8. I'm confident about my ability to interact with other English speakers.	2.30	0.6	Low	3.00	0.82	Moderate
9. I think I am doing better than other students at speaking English.	2.50	0.8	Low	2.70	1.06	Moderate
10. While speaking English, I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	2.60	1.0	Low	3.30	0.95	Moderate
16. I believe that I am a good English speaker.	2.50	0.9	Low	3.00	1.15	Moderate
20. I can talk about my university in English.	2.30	0.8	Low	2.80	1.03	Moderate

Statement items	Levels of perceived self-efficacy					
	Before the DA			After the DA		
	M	SD		M	SD	
14. I believe that my proficiency in English speaking skill will improve very soon.	3.60	0.7	High	3.30	0.95	Moderate
2. I am certain that if I practice speaking more, I will improve my speaking skill.	4.40	0.5	Very high	4.40	0.70	Very high
1. I have enough ability to improve my speaking skills.	3.90	0.5	High	3.80	0.79	High
18. I can introduce myself in English.	3.70	0.9	High	3.60	0.84	High
7. The more difficult the speaking task is, the more challenging and enjoyable it is.	2.80	1.0	Moderate	3.30	0.67	Moderate
11. When I'm talking with fluent English speakers, I let them know if I need help.	2.90	0.9	Moderate	3.30	1.06	Moderate
17. I can answer my teachers' questions in English.	2.80	0.7	Moderate	3.10	1.20	Moderate
19. I can introduce my teacher to someone else in English.	2.80	0.7	Moderate	3.00	0.82	Moderate

Statement items	Levels of perceived self-efficacy					
	Before the DA			After the DA		
	M	SD		M	SD	
5. I felt less stressed when speaking English in the classroom.	2.50	0.1	Low	2.60	1.35	Low
6. I enjoy meeting tourists because I can converse with them well.	2.20	0.4	Low	2.60	0.97	Low
Mean value of 20 items	3.09	0.8	Moderate	3.42	0.94	High

Note: The administration of pre- and post-questionnaires of the participants' perceived self-efficacy of their speaking skill took place in the 7th week and the 17th week of the semester.

In Table 17, most of the participants' responses in the post-questionnaire reveal an overall upward shift of the participants' perceived self-efficacy after the intervention of DA. As can be seen in this Table, the degree of overall agreement toward all 20 items shifted from a moderate level (M=3.09) to a high level (M=3.42). According to this result, it seemed that the participants had more positive views on their level of perceived self-efficacy after going through DA sessions and posttest. However, the standard deviation of the mean (SD of pre-questionnaire = 0.82 and SD of post-questionnaire = 0.94) indicated that there was some variation in the participants' responses across 20 statements. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate how the participants adjusted their responses in the post-questionnaire. Regarding the directions of the shift in the participants' degree of agreement from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaires, three types of responses were found, which were 1) responses with an upward shift; 2) a response with a downward shift; and 3) same level responses.

4.3.1 Responses in Self-Efficacy Questionnaires Indicating an Upward Shift

The participants' degree of agreement in 10 questionnaire items shifted upward from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire. These items were number 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 20. Among these items, the ones that shifted from the degree of agreement at low level in pre-questionnaire to moderate level in post-questionnaire were numbers 8, 9, 10, 16, and 20. The items that shifted from the moderate degree in pre-questionnaire to high degree in post-questionnaire were numbers 3, 4, 13, and 15. There was only one item that shifted dramatically from low level to high level. It was the item number 12.

The description in the item number 12 was *"I feel confident that I can communicate what I mean easily in English."* The researcher asked some participants who made a drastic shift of their agreement from low level to high level in this item to elaborate on what they think about this statement. They explained that DA procedure had reduced their fear in speaking English.

Jessica, who used to turn away when a foreigner approached her, expressed that after practicing listening and speaking with help from the mediator in DA sessions, she wanted to apply the skills that were developed in DA sessions to the real situation. This helped her overcome her usual reticence and become more confidence in her own ability to speak English. She added that in her understanding the statement number 12 was about the ability to convey the meaning, not to make a correct sentence. She thought that one of the things that she learned a lot from DA sessions was the understanding of meaning and how to put what she understood into words.

Another participant gave different explanation for her higher degree of agreement in the item number 12. Ann explained that she focused on the word "confident" in this item. She thought it was the key word. She shifted her response from low level to high level because she wanted to show she had gained more confidence in speaking English. She compared her work in the first DA session and that in the last DA session. In the first session, she felt that she spoke carelessly due to her anxiety which usually came into play when taking an English test, especially a speaking test. There were many moments in the first session that she did not know



what to say, and she just let it pass by making meaningless sound. She said she was very embarrassed about her sloppy work. Ann added that the lack of confidence made her lose concentration. It seemed her excitement was taking hold of her. The following Excerpt is given as an example of what her spoken sentence in the first DA session was like.

Excerpt 17: The transcription of Ann's performance in the 1st DA session

Stimulus sentence: Could I have the hotdog but no coffee please?

Ann (first attempt): I have a cotton no a copy coffee please

Ann repeated this sentence rapidly. There was no pause. When she pronounced "a cotton no a copy," her voice was soft and unclear. It seemed she hurriedly finished her sentence. It could be seen from this Excerpt that the stimulus was a short question but Ann changed it into a statement. She not only missed many words in the stimulus, but also seemed to lose the main idea of the sentence. Ann said her rapid repetition did not mean that she could do it. Instead, it meant that she did not take much time to think before saying the sentence. However, her performance in the 6th DA session showed a better control in her sentence production.

Excerpt 18: The transcription of Ann's performance in the 6th DA session

Stimulus sentence: Jim's mother was a very good teacher and his father was a doctor.

Ann (first attempt): James' mother is very good ... father is very good doctor.

In this session, the speed of her repetition was slower. She paused and thought before saying. She spoke with clear and loud voice. It is noticeable that she was dealing with a longer stimulus sentence in this session. Even though Ann's sentence in this Excerpt still missed a few words, it was more meaningful than the one in Excerpt 17. According to Ann, she felt that she had more confidence in the last session. She was aware that the task in this session was more difficult but this did not discourage her. She highlighted that lack of confidence could turn an easy



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task into a difficult one as it happened to her in the first session. However, she could deal with more difficult tasks and came up with a better production in the last session because she gained more confidence in her speaking.

Aside from the statement number 12, there were many other statements in the self-efficacy questionnaire that received higher degree of agreement, from low level to moderate level. These statements are as follows:

Item 8: I'm confident about my ability to interact with other English speakers.

Item 9: I think I am doing better than other students at speaking English.

Item 10: While speaking English, I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Item 16: I believe that I am a good English speaker.

Item 20: I can talk about my university in English.

Some of these items were supported by additional explanation from the participants in the interviews. For example, to elaborate on item 8, one participant (Arnold) explained that his participation in this research made him speak English much more than he used to do. His confidence that was gradually developed in DA sessions was stretched out to the level that he wanted to associate with a foreigner. This participant later showed the proof that he really meant what he said. About a month after the data collection was completed, he came back to the researcher and asked for some advice on how to talk to a Singaporean boy that he had just made friends with through a social networking website.

As for item 16, one participant (Nick) explained that before participating in this research he usually perceived that he could not speak English; as a result, he gave “disagree” response to this statement in the pre-questionnaire. However, while participating in this study, he had to speak a large number of English sentences on a regular basis. After speaking as many as 30 sentences with a number of opportunities to retry and repair his spoken sentences in 6 DA sessions, he found that he could speak English. Besides that, the increase of his test scores in posttest and delayed posttest convinced him that he could be a good English speaker. Consequently, the

level of his agreement in item 16 was changed from the low degree of agreement in the pre-questionnaire to a moderate degree in the post-questionnaire.

With respect to the group of self-efficacy statements that had a shift of response from a moderate level to a high level of agreement, the description of each statement in this group was as follows:

Item 3: I can construct a sentence by using the vocabulary that I learned.

Item 4: Even if the speaking task is difficult and I don't have the required vocabulary, I can find the strategy to accomplish the task.

Item 13: I feel confident that I can achieve a native-like fluency in English if I practice speaking more.

Item 15: I am certain that I can use English outside the classroom.

For item 13, one participant (Barnes) emphasized the phrase “*practice speaking more*” in this statement. He stated that he used to believe he could be good at English if he had strong grammar and vocabulary, but after going through DA sessions he would say that the way to be good at speaking was to speak. Furthermore, he also started to believe that it was possible for him to be able to speak English like native speakers because the mediator had suggested many practical techniques for him, especially about how the native speakers make continuous sound between words. In short, he said the practices in DA sessions offered him a good chance to learn and try speaking English like native speakers.

4.3.2 A Response in Self-Efficacy Questionnaires Indicating a Downward Shift

The item number 14 was the only one that received a lower level of agreement in the post-questionnaire. The response of this item moved from high degree of agreement to moderate degree. The description in this item was as follows:

Item 14: I believe that my proficiency in English speaking skill will improve very soon.



Many participants had the same idea about this item. The explanation was that they thought their proficiency in English speaking would not be improved “*very soon.*” They said after receiving a large amount of mediation from the mediator in DA sessions, they realized that there were many things to fix in the way they spoke English. They further mentioned that the mediator’s feedback was very specific and sensitive to their own speaking problems. They also realized that the more they speak English in DA sessions, the more problems in their speaking were found. Before taking part in this research, they preferred to keep their mouth shut when it was time for speaking English. They stated that their refraining from speaking English blocked the disclosure of their speaking problems.

Therefore, after learning from the mediation about their own problems and how to fix them, they knew what to improve and this improvement could not be achieved in a short while. Some participants highlighted that they had low level of speaking skill; therefore, to be able to improve very soon required an intensive training. If they practiced speaking English on their own, it would take them a lot of time.

4.3.3 Same Level Responses in Self-Efficacy Questionnaires

There were 8 items in the self-efficacy questionnaire that received the same degree of agreement in the participants’ response. First, the item that was stable at a very high degree of agreement. Item number 2 was the only one that got this rating in both pre- and post-questionnaires. The description in this statement was as follows:

Item 2: I am certain that if I practice speaking more, I will improve my speaking skill.

The participants stated that this statement was like a factual statement. Many teachers usually told them to improve doing things by practicing. Therefore, they already accepted this concept as a fact.

The second group included the responses that were stable at a high degree. There were two statements that received a high degree of agreement in both pre- and post-questionnaires. The description of each item in this group was as follows:

Item 1: I have enough ability to improve my speaking skills.

Item 18: I can introduce myself in English.

The explanation was that the participants thought these two items were about the qualities of university students. They agreed that university students should be able to do the things described in items 1 and 18, so it was natural for them to possess these qualities. Since they were university students, they thought they could improve their speaking skills (but not “very soon” when compared to item 14). Also, their English teachers usually asked them to introduce themselves in English; therefore, they had done this many times and they thought they could do it well.

The third group consisted of responses that were stable at a moderate degree of agreement in both pre- and post-questionnaires. There were four statements in this group.

Item 7: The more difficult the speaking task is, the more challenging and enjoyable it is.

Item 11: When I'm talking with fluent English speakers, I let them know if I need help.

Item 17: I can answer my teachers' questions in English.

Item 19: I can introduce my teacher to someone else in English.

It seemed that for the participants there was a degree of uncertainty in these four statements. Therefore, most of them put their responses to these statements in a moderate degree. As for item 17, the participants stated that they were not sure if they would always find that the difficult speaking tasks challenging and enjoyable. They emphasized that with their limited ability in English speaking, they still could not handle the task that was too difficult for them. An example to support this idea was given by Nick. He explained that he would not think the task which asking him to

debate in English was challenging and enjoyable. Instead, he would think it was very stressful for him.

With regard to the item 11, the participants stated that the characteristics of the fluent English speakers made them felt uncertain about this statement. They said they would not ask for help from the fluent speakers who looked unkind to them. On the other hand, the participants would prefer to ask for help from the fluent English speakers who looked gentle and pleasant to them.

As for items 17 and 19, the ideas in these statements were related to their English teachers. The participants said since they participated in DA sessions, they had tried to interact with the teacher in English class more often than they usually did. They thought that it was a good way for practicing speaking English, and it would also help them do well in DA sessions. However, the level of their ability to answer their teacher in English depended on the answer itself. They said if it was a simple answer, that answer would be given in English. But if they had a complicated idea in the answer, that answer would be given in both Thai and English because they still could not convey complicated ideas in only English.

Likewise, the explanation from the participants for item 19 was about the level of complication in the content of the introduction. They said if it was a simple introduction, such as telling the name, where he/she came from, or what subject he/she taught, they would have no problem giving an English introduction of their teacher. But if they had to tell others something about their teacher that was beyond general information, they said that would be very difficult for them.

There were two statements that received a low degree of agreement in both pre- and post-questionnaire. The description of these two statements was as follows:

Item 5: I am very stressed when speaking English in the classroom.

Item 6: I enjoy meeting tourists because I can converse with them well.

According to the participants, they seemed to disagree with items 5 and 6. They stated that they still got stressed whenever they spoke English, especially when they had to stand in front of the class. Similarly, in the case of item 6, they seemed to disagree with the idea that they liked to associate with foreigners because they

still got anxious easily and they did not think that their English speaking ability was up to the level that they could communicate well with the foreigners. One participant (Ann) clarified this remark by saying that her speaking ability needed more improvement and she needed to practice speaking English more often in order to be able to speak English fluently with the foreign tourists.

4.4 Results for Research Question 3

Research question 3: What are the students' attitudes toward DA?

The researcher administered an attitude questionnaire after the posttest was finished. This questionnaire consisted of 20 statements that were used for exploring the participants' attitudes toward DA. The participants responded to each statement by selecting one of the five options on Likert five point scales ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree).

To ensure equal length of the rating scale in each category, the interpretation of the mean value of each questionnaire item will be as follows:

- a) $M = 4.21 - 5.00$ is interpreted as a very high degree;
- b) $M = 3.41 - 4.20$ is interpreted as a high degree;
- c) $M = 2.61 - 3.40$ is interpreted as a moderate degree;
- d) $M = 1.81 - 2.61$ is interpreted as a low degree; and
- e) $M = 1.00 - 1.80$ is interpreted as a very low degree.

Table 18: Levels of the participants' attitudes toward DA (n = 10)

Question items	Levels of attitudes toward DA		
	M	SD	Interpretation
1. I think that I had the chance to effectively show my English speaking skill in DA.	4.10	0.88	High
2. I think that the examiner's hints/supports given to me during the test were useful.	4.40	0.70	Very high
3. I felt comfortable while taking the speaking test through DA process.	4.00	0.94	High
4. I think that the teacher could make an accurate judgment on my speaking skill through DA.	4.10	0.74	High
5. My way of speaking English changed while taking DA.	4.40	0.52	Very high
6. The instruction of how to take the test in DA was clear to me.	4.50	0.53	Very high
7. I like taking a speaking test in DA.	4.50	0.71	Very high
8. I could do better in DA than doing the same test alone in traditional assessment.	4.60	0.70	Very high
9. I think teachers should use DA as a part of the classroom assessment.	4.40	0.52	Very high
10. I have gained effective learning experience through DA.	4.30	0.48	Very high
11. DA enabled me to develop new strategies in my speaking.	4.20	0.63	High

Question items	Levels of attitudes toward DA		
	M	SD	Interpretation
12. The hints during DA stimulated me to put to use what I knew.	4.20	0.42	High
13. I actively participated in DA.	4.60	0.52	Very high
14. I feel that my proficiency in English speaking skill has improved through DA.	3.80	0.63	High
15. DA gave me effective learning experience.	4.30	0.48	Very high
16. I was motivated to speak English while taking DA.	4.60	0.52	Very high
17. My anxiety toward the test decreased while taking DA.	4.00	0.82	High
18. DA has made me feel more confident in my English speaking skill.	4.00	0.67	High
19. DA makes me aware of my potential for improving my English speaking skill.	4.10	0.57	High
20. Taking speaking test through DA was a pleasant experience.	4.80	0.42	Very high
Mean value of 20 items	4.30	0.62	Very high

Table 18 shows that all participants tended to give positive responses to this attitude questionnaire. The total mean of all attitude items in this questionnaire was at a very high level ($M=4.30$). It is also found that the mean of each attitude item reported only two degrees of agreement: which were high and very high. The result of this attitude questionnaire was consistent with the participants' self-reflection on the benefit of DA for improving their speaking skill in their diaries. The following are

some related written comments found in the diary entries that showed their positive attitudes toward DA and how they benefited from the DA procedure in this study.

Excerpt 19: Patsy's diary entry after the 6th DA session

I got a lot of chances to listen to English from a native speaker and I could repeat some parts of the sentences correctly. I gained more confidence and at the same time I learned a lot about various types of sentences.

Excerpt 20: Jessica's diary entry after the 6th DA session

In this DA session, I could concentrate and be more careful with the meaning of the words while speaking. The mediator helped me by telling me which part of my sentence was OK, and which part was not. I think it was very good to know both positive and negative parts of my work.

Excerpt 21: Pamela's diary entry after the 6th DA session

I think the supports from the mediator in DA sessions were very useful for me. Comparing my work in DA sessions and in pretest, I think it was good to know my errors right after I made them in DA sessions so that I would not repeat the same errors next time. It was also good to include a self-correction in the test. This motivated me to speak. I liked it when the mediator gave me some guidance to correct them. Most important, I always felt good when I could correct myself. Unfortunately all these good things did not happen in pretest.

Excerpt 22: Nick's diary entry after the 6th DA session

The procedure of DA stimulated me to put to use what I had learned in the classroom, especially the vocabulary and grammar. I think what was improved the most from participating in DA session was my ability to catch the meaning and to speak English confidently with my knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar.

It could be seen from these Excerpts that the participants described different benefits from DA. The participants mentioned various positive changes in their ways of English speaking due to the support or guidance from the mediator in DA sessions. According to some participants, DA procedures also helped them realize that the understanding of meaning of the sentence was important for reconstruction of the stimulus sentences. Their increased self-confidence was also reported as a result of their individual learning through DA. Hence, these results indicated that the participants seemed to be satisfied with the mediation that they received from DA and their responsiveness to this mediation helped them improve both their speaking skills and their self-confidence.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study that provide insight into the three research questions. Regarding the first research question which asks about the extent of speaking skill improvement of DA-assisted EFL undergraduate students, the research results revealed positive improvement in every speaking component of the participants' spoken sentences. The participants got the highest scores in the vocabulary component of their speaking. The differences in the mean scores between pretest and posttest revealed that the participants made more progress in the components of meaning and syntax of their spoken sentences than in the other components. The participants seemed to put more focus on pronunciation and fluency parts of their speaking in delayed posttest because the mean scores of these two parts showed the most notable differences between posttest and delayed posttest. The posttest revealed an improvement of the participants' speaking ability right after DA sessions were implemented; while, the delayed posttest revealed that the participants could sustain their increased abilities to handle their future tasks.

In terms of individual development, three different types of scoring were used to investigate the participants' independent speaking performance, how much they could achieve the task with help, and the extent of the participants' learning potential. According to the scores collected throughout 6 DA sessions, it was found



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that most participants implemented the task with all available supports from the mediator in DA sessions. Regarding the actual score that displayed the independent performance of the participants, it was found that there were only two of them who possessed this score. Other participants explained that the task in DA sessions was difficult for them. Some participants emphasized that the mediator's guidance that they received in DA sessions were useful and caused a lot of positive changes in their speaking performance. In terms of the participants' self-evaluation, they evaluated themselves in a straightforward manner. The level of their satisfaction with their work in each DA session varied according to the level of their perceived achievement from each DA session. Furthermore, there were extraneous factors that may influence the speaking performance of the participants during DA sessions. These factors were such as the pressure from final examinations, personal negative experiences of his/her English speaking in the past, or uncertainty about one's own education plan.

Regarding the second research question which asks about the participants' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill, the results from pre- and post-questionnaires of perceived self-efficacy reported different degrees of changes in their perceived self-efficacy after having been through DA sessions. The features of these changes were categorized into three groups: a) an upward shift from pre- to post-questionnaire of perceived self-efficacy; b) a downward shift from pre- to post-questionnaire of perceived self-efficacy; and c) same degree of agreement from pre- to post-questionnaire of perceived self-efficacy.

To find the research results for the third research question which asks about the participants' attitudes toward DA, the attitude questionnaire was employed. It was found that the participants' overall degree of agreement in opinion questionnaire items was at a very high level.

In the next chapter, discussion of research results, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research will be presented.



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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study seeks to verify the use of dynamic assessment (DA) for pedagogical purposes. It is aimed to investigate how the students' speaking skill could be improved through DA, which is grounded in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of improvement of the students' speaking skill and their perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill during and after receiving DA. Also, the students' attitudes toward DA are examined. The following research questions guide this study.

- 1) To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?
- 2) What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their speaking skill?
- 3) What are the students' attitudes toward DA?

The focus group of this study was a group of Thai university students who had difficulties in speaking English. Aiming at the students' potential to improve their speaking skill in the test task called elicited imitation (EI), DA as an alternative assessment in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) was adopted. EI, the test task of this study, prompted the students to repeat sentences. It was used to target specific elements of the students' English speaking in this study which included meaning, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

In chapter 4, the results indicated that, through the test-train-retest design, DA improved the students' English speaking and their perceived self-efficacy towards English speaking skill. Furthermore, the students' positive attitudes toward DA were also revealed through both qualitative and quantitative data. Besides that, data from retrospective interviews and the students' diaries indicated that DA resulted in meaningful learning experiences. In short, it was revealed in chapter 4 that DA had positive impact on the students' English speaking skill and perceived self-efficacy.

This chapter is divided into five parts. First, the conclusions and discussions of each research question are presented. Next, the implications of the results of this study are discussed. Then, the limitations of the study are reported. After the limitations, the recommendations for future research are provided. Finally, a summary is presented at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Conclusions and Discussions

5.1.1 Conclusion and Discussion of Research Question 1

Research question 1: To what extent does DA assist EFL undergraduate students to improve their speaking skill?

5.1.1.1 Conclusion of the results for research question 1

Analysis of the quantitative data shows improvement in the students' speaking skill across pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. The mean score rose from 2.64 (SD=1.15) in pretest to a mean score of 4.83 (SD=1.96) in posttest and then to a mean score of 7.57 (SD=2.37) in delayed posttest. Regarding the individual scoring, each student achieved higher scores in every test. The results indicate a general ongoing improvement of the students' independent performance before and after the DA sessions. This suggests that the intervention of DA causes positive changes in the students' independent performance. The continued improvement found in the delayed posttest scores reflects potential sustainability of the improvement.

5.1.1.2 Discussion of the results for research question 1

- **The positive effect of DA on students' learning process**

DA, which was employed in this study, focused on the developmental potential. The design of DA process in this study was a combination of two notions: interventionist DA and interactionist DA. As for the interventionist DA based feature, pretest was placed at the beginning and posttest was placed at the end of the DA sessions. The students were expected to be supported and mediated by the mediator. As for the interactionist DA based feature, the mediator provided tasks and

feedback for the students to develop their English speaking skill alongside the DA sessions. The students were prompted to retrospectively recall their thoughts and make judgment on their own learning development. Thus, bridging the pros of each notion helped remove the limitation of DA.

In this study, the instruction and assessment occurred simultaneously and the mediator was the one who chose the mediation in a specific time. It could be seen in chapter 4 that the students positively changed the way they dealt with the speaking task, from giving no or little response at the earlier DA sessions to investing more attempt in order to accomplish the task. Some students' speaking performance in the earlier DA sessions consisted of many non-words. Then in subsequent DA sessions, they could produce more meaningful phrases. As for other students, they changed from being unconcerned about their own speaking performance to being more self-reflected learners who were aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, these results confirmed that the Thai EFL adult learners were in states of transition and transactional relationship with the context, rather than being static.

Thus, it is confirmed that DA is in the realm of cognitive development theory which has a positive impact on the English speaking and the learning process of Thai EFL adult learners.

- **DA as a tool for tracking the students' learning potential**

This study found that a) the students' background knowledge, b) mediations provided by the instructor, and c) the students' responsiveness to the mediation played a role in the students' progress in English speaking skill. Also, this study showed the records of the students' reciprocating behaviors: how the students responded to the mediation, how they planned to handle their future task during DA process, or how they evaluated their own work. These records provided the teachers with a systematic document to track the students' development so that the teachers could build up a clear picture of their students' profile. At the same time, this profile allowed the students to see how and what they could contribute to achieve the task. This process enabled the students to perceive themselves as an individual who possessed strengths and weaknesses in their own learning styles and



learning strategies, and who were capable of change for a better performance when receiving appropriate mediation. These findings are consistent with many studies of DA which focus on the students' learning potential such as the studies of Haywood and Tzuriel's (2002) and Hill and Sabet (2009). It is also in line with the study of Ebadi and Yari (2015), and that of Son and Kim (2017) which claim that DA is applicable to develop the students' speaking skill.

The notions of the interlink between the teacher-mediator and the students are also indicated by Kozulin (2001), Poehner (2012), and Davidson and Fulcher (2009). In previous studies, DA is believed to be the assessment that serves the students' individual differences in various aspects: physical/physiological characteristics; psychological characteristics; and experiential characteristics. Using DA, the teacher could not only equip the students with the assistance on the three sets of characteristics but also maximize their opportunities to optimize their speaking skill. In this study, DA was reported that it served as an alternative approach to integrate assessment and instruction. Therefore, its function was to measure the students' speaking skill and at the same time to handle the sources of diversity among students that influenced their speaking performances. Based on the results of this study, DA can be regarded as a useful tool for fostering the understanding of individual differences among the test takers. This notion is in line with Lidz and Gindis' (2003) study which emphasizes that DA is an assessment of the test takers' cognitive abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and social and emotional characteristics. The provision of dialogic mediation which is based on one-to-one interaction between the test taker and the examiner (as a mediator) is found to be useful in enabling the students to overcome their psychological barriers such as the test anxiety so that they could master the task at hand. The process-oriented learning in DA keeps the students staying focused on how to accomplish the task instead of comparing themselves to their peers or worrying about failing the test. In this way the fear of negative evaluation and negative self-perception could be lowered.

Unlike the traditional assessment in which the teacher takes a role as examiner and stood the neutral stance on the assessment and evaluation process,

DA opens a chance for the teacher to take a role of a mediator in order to create a supportive atmosphere in teaching and giving assistance. Also, the teacher-mediator in DA could intervene in the assessment and evaluation process to provide an individual assistance to the student within his/her content. This process reflects the sense of accountability, according to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) and Lantolf and Poehner (2004). The collaborative interaction with the students in DA process also reflects the notion of diagnostic and dialogic interaction as mentioned by Lantolf and Poehner (2004) that “tends to be intuitive on the part of the teacher rather than guided by principles of learning theories, such as proposed by Vygotsky (p.68).”

The results of this study which indicated that the context should be part of the construct are also corresponded to what Davidson and Fulcher (2009) suggest. In this study, DA served as a platform of post-achievement condition in which the assessment took place in a social context. To achieve their learning goals through DA process, it is required that the students’ cooperation, involvement, and collaborative interactions take control over their unassisted performance outside classroom. Therefore, the task and mediation acted as an interlink between the students’ self-control and the learning goals that were set for them to push themselves beyond their current learning point. The teacher-mediator who took a leading role in DA sessions constantly fine-tuned and directed the students’ learning according to their needs and responsiveness. As the time passed by over the semester, the teacher-mediator and the students became familiar with each other in terms of needs, constraints, abilities, participation, background, and types and amount of needed assistance. These phenomena urged the students a) to consider themselves as non-distant test takers, b) to value their opinion and performance, and c) to attempt to achieve the goal.

- **DA and the students’ plan for future improvement based on their self-assessment**

One possible explanation for the development of the students’ English speaking skill in DA sessions of this study is that the students could plan for their



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own future improvement after they self-assessed their current performance against the benchmark. As described in chapter 4, the students were asked immediately after each DA session to recall what they had done, and then they were asked to evaluate their performance in their diaries. It is obviously shown that there was a shift in the students' report of their perceived level of achievement. They had more and more positive self-evaluations over time. Also, they could identify their strengths and some weaknesses that required improvement. It should be noticed that only two students felt positive towards their performance at the very beginning. After participating in more DA sessions, many other students became more satisfied with their speaking performance.

Furthermore, the students claimed that they could deal with more complicated English sentences as their speaking performance improved. In the other word, the students gained more confidence to overcome the more advanced target language as they joined in DA sessions. Some individual participants also developed their unique needs and ways to understand target language along the mediation.

This result is consistent with many previous studies e.g. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) and Nassaji and Swain (2000), which support the benefits of DA in promoting the students' sense of future improvement. In addition, this study found that the students could independently develop their English speaking skill in posttest and delayed posttest. Similarly, Poehner (2008) states that the students can independently become active in developing their oral skill after joining DA sessions. He also presents a theoretical framework for the possible adaptation of DA to the L2 assessment and instruction, which is successfully implemented in this study. In addition, it is mentioned earlier that the students in this study preferred more complicated sentences after they reached the benchmark. This result is similar to the previous studies which indicate that after going through certain tasks in DA process, the students would show their desire to go beyond their state of current abilities to more advanced ones (Anton, 2009; Travers, 2010; Weisgerber, 2015). These studies pointed that the interaction in the ZPD could redirect the students' attention from a focus on the learning product to the learning process.

Also, the study of Lantolf and Poehner (2013) and the study of Nassaji and Swain (2000) reveal that the students pay more attention to the gap between their current performance and the expected performance. Both studies also report the students' effort to bridge the gap. Similar to these previous studies, this study confirms DA's role as a diagnostic assessment, which is utilized in form of assessment-instruction notion. This study also reveals the significant role of mediator and students in improving collaboration through DA process, leading the precise plan for learning development for the student's own sake.

5.1.2 Conclusion and Discussion of Research Question 2

Research question 2: What is the students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill?

5.1.2.1 Conclusion of the results for research question 2

The students' perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill hereafter is briefly called "perceived self-efficacy." The results in chapter 4 showed that the students' overall level of perceived self-efficacy shifted from moderate level before DA to high level after DA. The data from the interview revealed that the interaction in the mediation was responsive and centered on their personal needs. This brought about an increase in their perceived self-efficacy. They felt good about themselves even when they made a mistake. They stated that it was important that they have a chance to correct their mistakes with individual support. Therefore, they were not afraid or embarrassed of speaking incorrect English sentences in DA sessions. The students reflected that their learning was based on the gentle support and understanding that they received from the mediator. Due to this, they were more eager to put effort to develop their English speaking skill and had more positive feeling towards their own capacities to overcome the task and reach the benchmark.

5.1.2.2 Discussion of the results for research question 2

One of the aims of this study is to demonstrate how DA promotes the students' perceived self-efficacy on their English speaking skill. Two main points of discussion emerged from the results of this study. The first point is about how DA



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promotes the students' perceived self-efficacy. The second point is about how the student's perceived self-efficacy promotes their English speaking skill.

- **DA promotes the students' perceived self-efficacy.**

This study provides sufficient evidence showing that the components of DA (e.g. the student-centered content, the instructor's constructive feedback, and the individual and immediate support) positively influenced the students' perceived self-efficacy. The data obtained from this research showed that the content of, the concept of, and the activities in DA sessions were beneficial to the students and were reflective of their background knowledge, constraints, and needs. The implementation of the speaking task in DA sessions allowed the students to better understand their strengths and weaknesses. The scores obtained from the task in DA sessions were also used as an indicator for the students to see whether they were competent to carry out the task or need to try harder.

In addition, the results of this study revealed that the interaction between the students and the tasks influenced the students' language acquisition as mentioned in the study of Lantolf and Poehner (2013), which suggests that DA could be applied in a case that the instructor wants to improve the students' language acquisition since it stimulates the students' self-efficacy. The benefit of DA lies in the improvement of an individual's proficiency through interactions in its procedure. According to the sociocultural theory, an individual's proficiency does not function in isolation, but develops from interaction or collaboration that occurs between individuals (Poehner, 2005). This means that collaboration is the source of learning and development.

Table 19: The students' speaking performances before, during, and after DA

Before DA (in pretest)	During DA (6 DA sessions)	After DA (in posttest and delayed posttest)
Discrete words, non-word (only sound imitations), no complete sentence	→ Longer and more complex phrases, less non-word, some	→ Longer and more complex phrases, much less non-word,

		occasionally complete sentences		some complete sentences
Many errors per speech unit	→	Fewer errors per speech unit	→	Some mistakes found per speech unit
Few or none of cohesive markers (and, but, etc.)	→	More use of cohesive markers (and, but, etc.)	→	Use of cohesive markers (and, but, etc.) across the sentences
Many long pauses found within sentence production	→	Some short and long pauses found within sentence production	→	Fewer long pauses found within sentence production
Language switching (English and Thai)	→	Less language switching (English and Thai)	→	No language switching (English and Thai)
A lot of unclear pronunciation	→	Clearer pronunciation with some hesitation	→	Clearer pronunciation with less hesitation

According to the results of this study, pronunciation, and fluency were the components in the students' speaking skill that got improved later than other speaking components. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews and the students' diaries showed that the increase of the students' self-confidence might play a role in this improvement. There will be more discussion about this aspect in the subsequent sections.

The EI tasks employed in this study also plays an essential role in stimulating the improvement of the students' perceived self-efficacy. There are many reasons that support the claim that EI is an appropriate speaking task for the students in this study. The most important reason is that this speaking task is suitable to the context of the language course and the level of proficiency of the students. Another reason is that the students' underlying cognitive processes that take place while the students are engaged in reconstructing the sentences enable the teacher-mediator to integrate DA procedure into the task. According to the positive results of the present study, it can be claimed that DA is effectively employed together with EI tasks to boost both students' perceived self-efficacy and language learning.

Initially, the main reason for adopting elicited imitation (EI) is that it is practical for the context of the study even though it is arguable that EI is not a

feature of communicative activities like a role-play or an interview that is more authentic and engages the students in expressing ideas or interacting with others to find information or to talk about certain topics. However, the construct validity of the sentence repetition tasks has been proved by research of a standardized test like PhonePass.

This study supports Brown and Abeywicrama (2010) that sentence repetition task does not only elicit phonological ability but also discourse and overall oral production ability. Furthermore, Ota's (2010) notion of EFL students and their readiness in handling a communicative activity is another reason for using EI task with the students in this study. Ota (2010) insists that, in an EFL situation where students have limited exposure to the daily use of English outside their classroom, it seems unreasonable to expect explicit learning (formal and conscious knowledge of language) to become implicit learning (subconscious knowledge of language) in a specific period of time. In fact, this process takes time and a lot of energy, and it takes even longer time for the low proficiency students. Without readiness in implicit learning, the use of free English production task with them would be like leaving them to sink or swim on their own.

In addition, with regard to the characteristics of EI task that promote the use of DA, van Compernelle and Zhang (2014) indicate that the three main cognitive processes – 1) processing a stimulus sentence; 2) reconstructing the sentence internally with their own grammar; and 3) reproducing it in speech – are appropriate for involving the mediation in DA into its procedure. It is argued that these cognitive processes really tap into the students' implicit knowledge and speaking skill. In this study, the tasks are highly contextual tasks that enable the students to speak, and take an active role in the interaction. This feature corresponds to the DA mediation in that the students' need for assistance might arise during these cognitive processes, and the functional quality of DA in facilitating and improving the learning potential of the participants could respond to this need. With this highly-contextual feature of DA, the issue of reliability might be affected. However, the validity of DA is strongly enhanced.

Regarding the washback of DA, in DA procedure of the present study the mediator delivered both negative and positive feedback on the students' English speaking performances. The students practiced and developed their own learning progress based on the immediate feedback they received while dealing with the task. Thus, the DA procedure employed in this study reflects the usefulness of the instructor's constructive feedback. One of the factors that develops positive perceived self-efficacy is the constructive interpersonal feature of the feedback that occurred in this study.

In terms of the consequences of negative and positive feedback, after receiving the negative feedback the students in this study made a decision to put more effort in order to minimize the gap between the current performance and the expected one. In case of positive feedback, the students gained self-satisfaction despite having no further decision to make. This relationship is partially in line with Daniels and Larson's (2001) notion. They claim that the positive feedback improves self-efficacy. Thus, this study provides the promising evidence that feedback provided to the students in DA sessions significantly influences the students' perceived self-efficacy. This is consistent with the literature on the development of self-efficacy suggesting that feedback strongly relates to the development of self-efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Parkes, Abercrombie, & McCarty, 2013).

Also, the DA procedure and the mediator's feedback naturally activate the students' use of self-assessment. In this study, it could be observed that the students naturally employed self-assessment when they encountered the DA tasks. They compared their current performance with the benchmark and made a decision to put more efforts on the next tasks. The more they found that they were drawing close to the benchmark, the better levels of perceived self-efficacy they tended to have.

Self-assessment, which refers to the information or judgment on the students' performance given by the students themselves, is essential for ascertaining the students' thoughts about their progress. For instance, Jessica had little self-confidence before she attended DA sessions. While participating in DA sessions, Jessica gradually developed her self-confidence and self-efficacy on her English



speaking skill based on her own self-assessment on her performances against the benchmark. Other students in this study could also identify their strengths and weaknesses with regard to their English speaking skill. They eventually showed the ownership in their learning after they observed their progress before, during, and after DA sessions. This result confirms Wilhite (1990), who states that self-efficacy strongly relates to self-assessment; that is to say, the student who does self-assessment tends to be more efficient in developing their self-efficacy.

In conclusion, DA is applicable in the context of this study. It can be used to provide a meaningful evaluation to the students to help them identify what they can really do, what they can do with help, and what they can't do on their own. It focuses on how an individual student learns. It is responsive to the students' changes in their speaking performances which are the results of their active learning. These changes are promoted in a positive direction. Eventually, an enrichment program for each individual student who has learning difficulties can be arranged based on the information gathered from DA.

- **The students' perceived self-efficacy promotes their English speaking skill.**

The results of this study reveal that DA effectively promotes the students' satisfaction, students' efforts, and the students' capabilities to succeed in their language learning. These three components have an influence on the students' perceived self-efficacy, which will later directly affect the students' motivation to learn and to overcome learning difficulties. According to Iyengar and Lepper (2000), motivation is dynamic and fluctuated. In this study, it can be observed that the students' levels of perceived self-efficacy were fluctuated according to their self-evaluation of their own speaking performances. Once the students were satisfied with their improved English speaking skill, they would make a decision to do even better.

For example, Franky stated that he was so satisfied with his better English speaking skill that he felt motivated to improve his speaking skill even further. Motivated by his satisfaction, Franky then put more effort in practicing and learning

English speaking skill. With his effort, Franky was able to reach his goal in English speaking skill. This result is in agreement with the related literature and previous studies such as the study of Dodds (2011) and that of Ersanli (2015).

According to the social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a factor that can affect the students' language learning (Dornyei, 2001). In addition, this study confirms that the students who accomplish their goals are driven by their desire to plan, organize, and carry out their own learning. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' perceived self-efficacy is a factor influencing the students' development of the target language skill in DA.

5.1.3 Conclusion and Discussion of Research Question 3

Research question 3: *What are the students' attitudes toward DA?*

5.1.3.1 Conclusion of the results for research question 3

A very high level of the overall students' attitudes towards DA was reported in chapter 4. Also, the students reported in their interview sessions that the experiences gained from participating in DA sessions urged them to explore further to improve their English speaking skill. Although some participants felt that the most challenging obstacles for them were the English native speakers' accent and pronunciation which were different from Thai's, they desired to carry on reconstructing the sentences through DA sessions. In addition, the students stressed that in DA sessions there were the moments that they made a mistake without being embarrassed or ashamed. Regarding the students' participation, the students reported that they felt appreciated joining the DA session. For these reasons, all students reported very high positive attitudes toward DA sessions at the end of the study because they had higher level of perceived self-efficacy and developed their own English speaking skill.

5.1.3.2 Discussion of the results for research question 3

In this study, the students' attitudes toward DA on English speaking skill were examined. The results showed the positive attitudes among the students. It should be noted that none of the students mentioned negative attitudes toward the use of



DA to improve their English speaking skill. The results of this study were in accordance with Ebadi and Yari's (2015) who support the positive perceptions towards the implementation of DA in a classroom to promote the vocabulary development.

It could be observed that the more progressive the students' speaking skill was, the more positive their attitudes toward DA were. In this study, many students claimed that they felt satisfied with their increasing scores as a result of DA; therefore, they had positive attitudes toward DA. The results of this study were consistent with Taheri and Vahid Dastjerdi's (2016) study which revealed a positive relationship between the participants' increasing score and the positive attitudes toward DA. Similarly, the DA sessions provided by Pishghadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood (2011) received the participants' positive attitudes and their participants also indicated the better development as a result of DA.

However, Pishghadam et al. (2011) found that the low-achiever participants showed a stronger preference for DA than the high-achiever participants. The low-achiever ones also experienced more positive attitudes toward DA from the very beginning, while the high-achiever ones gradually displayed more positive attitudes along the period. So, it could be observed that the results from Pishghadam et al. (2011) was consistent with the result of this study. This shows that the use of DA is suitable for low-achiever students.

In this study, the students' levels of English proficiency were initially considered low. However, along the DA sessions, their levels of English proficiency went relatively higher and their English speaking skill was gradually improved. Meanwhile, their attitudes toward DA also became more positive as they realized that they gained learning benefits from DA. Therefore, it could be assumed that the increasing positive attitude toward DA seems to be related to their learning development.

The students' sense of achievement in this study seems to be closely related to their positive attitudes toward DA. The spiral pattern of the students' improved achievement and their positive attitudes toward DA could be observed. During DA, the students simultaneously developed their positive attitudes towards DA as they

participated in DA sessions and felt that they had reached some of their learning goals. The students, who had low level of proficiency, stated that they got adequate support from the mediator. They had chances to use their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary learned from the classroom. They also had opportunities to make judgment on their own learning. These boosted their positive attitudes toward DA. In short, the students' achievement directly modifies their attitude towards DA.

In addition, the students' familiarity with the task in DA procedure also plays an important role in their positive attitudes. When the students became familiar with the content of DA, they could easily adjust their own learning according to the content and have more chances to achieve their goals. These results are in accordance with those of previous studies which also find the link between the participants' achievement and positive attitudes toward DA (Speece et al., 1990; Taheri & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2016).

Regarding the relationship between language proficiency and attitudes toward DA, many studies confirm that the students' proficiency and the attitudes toward DA go hand in hand. According to Haywood and Lidz (2007), the low-proficiency participants tend to gain more benefits from DA than the high-proficiency ones. Tzuriel (2003) mentions that the high-proficiency participants tend to have less positive attitudes toward DA due to their high level of self-confidence. Later, Poehner (2008) explains that the high-proficiency participants might be less responsive to DA. The results of this study support the notions from aforementioned DA scholars, especially in terms of the low-proficiency students and their attitudes toward DA.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Pedagogical Implications

5.2.1.1 Mutual understanding towards the learning goals and outcomes between the teacher and the student

The teacher who desires to carry on DA in their classrooms should promote the mutual understanding on the learning goals and outcomes of DA among the

students. All the DA objectives, processes, and criteria that the students are expected to achieve should be clarified to them before the DA procedure begins. The criteria should be designed to be in line with the students' capacity. In addition, the students should be allowed to raise the questions, concerns, recommendations, or arguments regarding the DA process. These will lead to a shared criteria and promote the students' motivation to participate in the DA.

5.2.1.2 Context-specific consideration

The specific context should be taken into consideration when the teacher designs DA. Each classroom has their own unique context. For example, the participants in this study were non-English major students who had limited background on English speaking skill. They also had limited access and exposure to the English language as well as had low motivation to speak English. In fact, they were in an English classroom just to fulfil their academic requirements, which made them become even less motivated. Therefore, the researcher started from a careful examination of the context and analysis of the students' personality and needs. Then, the appropriate tailor-made DA for each individual student was designed. Most students mentioned that they became more motivated to improve English speaking skill because they felt their needs were paid attention to and they could observe their own development. At the end of DA, they could improve their speaking performances and had higher level of perceived self-efficacy in English speaking skill. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that those who want to practice DA in their classroom should start from examining the context because the context comes into play for the success of the implementation of DA in a Thai EFL classroom.

5.2.1.3 Enriched practices and constructive feedback

In this study, enriched practices and constructive feedback played crucial roles in the students' English speaking skill and perceived self-efficacy development. In chapter 4, it was found that most students acquired a certain level of development at the third DA session. Hence, it is recommended that those who



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intend to promote the students' speaking skill using DA should conduct at least three DA sessions in order to obtain the prospective result.

Regarding the enriched practice provided for an individual student, the students with low English proficiency in this study showed their active involvement and self-monitoring. When DA was first introduced to the students, they simply took the test without much engagement in the task they were dealing with. However, they quickly developed their sense of active involvement and self-monitoring as they received enriched practices in DA sessions and constructive feedback from the mediator. The students soon started to self-monitor their own learning and planned for their future goals. They did not only observe the gap between their current performance and their expected level of performance, they also accurately identified their state of affective factors affecting their performances. These phenomena occurred naturally in this study.

Hence, it is highly recommended that the students should be provided with adequate and enriched practices and constructive feedback during the mediation in order to maximize their active involvement and self-monitoring. Ultimately, they will be able to accomplish their learning goals, which is a direct result of DA.

5.2.2 Theoretical Implications

A number of previous studies stress the significant improvement of adult learners with limited proficiency in English language learning. However, only a few studies emphasize the effect of DA on the development of English speaking skill of EFL adult learners. In this study, the results indicated that the DA process was feasible and effective in both overcoming the students' difficulties in English speaking skill development and responding to different individual needs. All students benefited in various levels of achievements from the mediation. As for the effect of DA on English speaking skill, DA is proved that it could pin-point the students' extra and individual needs for improving this skill. Therefore, this study has established the authenticity and practicality of DA in improving the Thai EFL adult learners' speaking skill. It has also confirmed the notion that instruction and assessment are inseparable entities.



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5.2.3 Methodological Implications

The previous studies do not emphasize the advantages of retrospective verbal protocol or verbal report in investigating the effect of DA on the students' language learning development. They mostly used observation and/or interview; whereas, this study facilitated the students' retrospective memories using a form of retrospective verbal report. According to the researcher's observation and the consistency of the triangulated data, the data obtained from verbal report was valid and reliable. The verbal report also allowed the researcher to investigate the students' psychological processes and affective factors that influenced their improvement in English speaking skill as well as their perceived self-efficacy in their English speaking skill. Upon the effectiveness of the use of verbal report in this study, the researcher proposes that the retrospective verbal protocol could be applied to investigate the effect of DA on the Thai EFL students' English language learning in an EFL higher education context.

5.3 Limitations

The research population for this study was limited to Thai undergraduate students who have low proficiency in English. The results of the assessment also relied on the context and quality of the interaction between the examiner (as a mediator) and the examinee. The speaking ability as a language domain of this study was inevitably associated with the native language and cultural background of the research participants. Upon the aforementioned issues, the results of this study might be only applicable to the universities that have similar contexts. Therefore, the implication of the study might not be generalizable to other groups of students and to other contexts of testing situation.

Another limitation is that the information gathered during DA process was dependent upon the skills of the examiner. Therefore, for those who want to involve DA in their research, planning and evaluating the mediation in DA needs to be piloted, and the mediator needs to practice the steps of support giving; how to help the examinees move to the next level of functioning.



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However, it is assumed that by providing a rich description of the qualitative data, this research might generate a basis of information for the readers to apply to other similar situations.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This study, hence, confirms that DA is an instructional assessment which is highly context-specific. However, it leaves some emerging points unanswered. The future study can be conducted in the following aspects in order to expand the theoretical understanding and practical procedure of DA.

5.4.1 Roles of Affective Factors

The prospective affective factors, based on the observation in this study, could be listed as follows: anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, autonomous learning, and perceived competence. Even though the roles of affective factors in the students' development of English-speaking skill as resulted from DA were not the main focus of this study, it could be found in the results of the study that the students' English-speaking skill was influenced by some affective factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, and perceived competence.

In this study, DA was administered individually. The teacher and each student could together observe the student's progress and areas that required improvement. For example, one student's DA scores appeared to continuously increase, suddenly dropped below par in the last two DA sessions. Later, he explained that during the last two DA sessions he needed to prepare for his final examination and felt very anxious. When he encountered the test task in DA session, he felt less confident and had more anxiety. On the other hand, another student claimed that she felt more motivated to practice more when she observed her positive progress. She stated that she believed that she had more perceived competence in English speaking skill over time.

Therefore, it is recommended that the future research take into account the affective factors affecting the students' development during and after DA process.

5.4.2 Validity and Reliability of DA in Other Contexts

5.4.2.1 *Statistical analysis*

This study shows that DA process could be successfully implemented in Thai EFL public university classrooms. Nevertheless, the validity and reliability of DA in other Thai EFL contexts are still clouded. Other predictive variables of DA also worth investigating are, for example, the low and high anxiety, the low and high self-confidence. A future confirmatory study should be conducted to explore the validity of DA. For example, the roles of affective factors (See 5.4.1) could be labelled as ‘latent’ construct and used as indicators of the success of DA. More statistical analyses should be employed to provide the precise measurement of DA as well as establish the constructive indicators of DA.

5.4.2.2 *More advanced levels of target language*

It is mentioned earlier in the former section that this study only focuses on the sentential level of English speaking skill. A future study, therefore, should investigate the effect of DA on other levels of target language. For example, it should investigate the application and practicality of DA in learning English paragraph writing or story-telling. In addition, the future study might extend to the application and practicality of DA on other mixed skills: for example, listening and writing, or reading and writing.

5.4.2.3 *Students with moderate English proficiency*

This study targets at the students with low English proficiency. It is found that DA could be effectively and efficiently applied with the students in this level of English proficiency. The results of this study expanded the results of the previous studies which targeted at the students with advanced English proficiency (Ebadi & Asakereh, 2018; van Compernelle & Zhang, 2014). Based on this study and the previous studies, DA has been proved to be effective for both low and high English proficient students. However, the research on DA is still an incomplete picture since it needs more research to study the effect of DA on the development of speaking skill of students with moderate English proficiency. Therefore, it is suggested that the



future studies should emphasize the students with moderate English proficiency or compare the effect of DA on the development of speaking skill of the students across all three levels of English proficiency: low, moderate, and high.

5.4.2.4 Different university systems

In addition, the generalizability of the use of DA across English skills, number of students, and level of students should come into focus in future studies because these comparative studies will help expand the area of DA application in broader contexts. In this study, the DA sessions and EI tasks are highly contextualized; therefore, this aspect makes the study encounter an issue of reliability.

Since this study is conducted in a Thai autonomous public university which is exercised independently in terms academic operations and curriculum, future studies should be launched to study DA process that is specifically designed for the other university systems, for example, private university, Rajamangala University System, or Rajabhat University System because these universities are under the government control, making their academic operation and curriculum different. Furthermore, the students in these universities are believed to be different from the students in this study because they have different background and learning purposes.

For example, the curricula in Rajamangala Universities tend to emphasize the hands-on experiences and cooperative education. So, the students in those universities need more authentic practice for their careers (English for Specific Purposes - ESP) rather than academic purpose (English for Academic Purposes - EAP). Applying the model of DA employed in this study to those universities would be fruitful for the future application of DA in a Thai EFL higher educational context.

Also, the replication of this study should be done in the future to compare the results between the private and public university systems in which the course requirements, classrooms, students, subjects, and teaching materials are different. The researcher believes that more confirmatory research and comparative studies will provide more productive results concerning factors, procedures, challenges, and solutions to the use of DA in a Thai EFL context. Eventually, the whole picture of the use of DA in a Thai EFL context could be established.



5.5 DA and the 21st Century Learning Skills

The students' learning in DA process takes place in a form of a social occurrence (Kivunja, 2014) and the test performance is considered to be a result of "the dynamic interaction among the individual, the test materials, and the test situation" (Jeltova et al., 2007, p. 278). The graduated prompting in this research was designed to elicit the best possible performance from the students who possessed low English proficiency.

The DA process lends itself for centering on some specific learning skills such as collaboration and problem solving skills in social occurrence. According to Kivunja (2014), in this social occurrence, the students' cognitive development is affected when they interact with a more capable person who works with them as a mentor. In this study, the problem solving skill that occurred in DA process was not directly taught to the students. On the other hand, the students learned it indirectly through a process that made them strive to find the solution by working in collaboration with a more capable person. The students' responsiveness to the guidance or mediation that they received in DA process helped them move forward to be able to deal with a more difficult task. Furthermore, it was found that many students reported their struggling at times with the task while the mediator facilitated the students' thinking without stepping in to do the work for them (see 3.8.2 for an illustration of the interaction between the participant and the mediator in DA session).

Consequently, it could be said that the students' achievement in DA process emerged from their own struggling and realization of the source of their problems. Most importantly, the self-report in the students' diary revealed that once they learned about what their specific problem was and came up with a solution themselves, they invested more effort and developed persistence with a positive attitude towards their own errors. This encouraged them to become engaged in their learning, to attain the learning goal, and also to generate their sense of learning ownership.

The aforementioned learning feature reflects Trilling and Fadel's (2009) learning and innovation skills that they regard as one of the essential skills for the



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21st century. In this domain, Trilling and Fadel claim that there are specific skills to equip students with, namely a) critical thinking and problem solving; b) communication and collaboration; and c) creativity and innovation (Bellanca, 2010). Even though the use of DA approach in this study did not emphasize all these specific skills, the collaboration and problem solving skills obviously played a significant role in the students' learning process throughout the phase of DA sessions in this study. What is more, the specific speaking ability in repeating the sentence may not be well-matched with the desirable learners of the 21st century, but for the group of low-proficiency students in this study, other learning skills that led to the students' achievement in their speaking can help them to start with a solid foundation for higher and more complicated communication skills. As for the students with low English proficiency the solid foundation makes them move on with confidence and positive perceived self-efficacy.

Therefore, the pedagogical aspect of DA reinforces the use of the 21st century learning skills. DA's application empowers the students to learn more effectively and make positive changes in their ways of learning.

5.6 Summary

This study has shed light on the possible application of DA in the English speaking class in the Thai EFL higher educational context. It explored the effect of DA on the Thai EFL university students who encountered difficulties in developing English speaking skill due to their low English proficiency. Although this is a small scale study and its results need to be verified by other research, the study is significant because the use of DA in EFL speaking classes has rarely been attempted. This study also revealed the students' positive attitude toward DA and the positive changes in the students' perceived self-efficacy as a result of their effective learning through DA process.

The main implication of the present study involves the students' accountability and the assessment-instruction notion as presented in this chapter. Regarding the students' accountability, the students in this study built up a sense of



ownership in their own learning and they purposively and actively became engaged in the test tasks through DA, using the given opportunities to learn English both inside and outside the classroom. For the notion of the assessment-instruction, it was found that DA could be a significant way to integrate assessment with instruction in order to improve the students' English speaking skill. Thus, the results of this study cast the light on the potential remedial classroom practice for the low-proficient students in the Thai EFL context.



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APPENDICES



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Appendix A: Self-efficacy Questionnaire of the Participants' English Speaking Skill (English version), adapted from Wang et al.'s (2013)

	The perceived self-efficacy statements of the participants' English speaking skill	Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I have enough ability to improve my speaking skills.					
2	I am certain that if I practice speaking more, I will improve my speaking skill.					
3	I can construct a sentence by using the vocabulary that I learned.					
4	Even if the speaking task is difficult and I don't have the required vocabulary, I can find the strategy to accomplish the task.					
5	I felt less stressed when speaking English in the classroom.					
6	I enjoy meeting tourists because I can converse with them well.					
7	The more difficult the speaking task is, the more challenging and enjoyable it is.					
8	I'm confident about my ability to interact with other English speakers.					
9	I think I am doing better than other students at speaking English.					



	The perceived self-efficacy statements of the participants' English speaking skill	Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10	While speaking English, I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.					
11	When I'm talking with fluent English speakers, I let them know if I need help.					
12	I feel confident that I can communicate what I mean easily in English.					
13	I feel confident that I can achieve a native-like fluency in English if I practice speaking more.					
14	I believe that my proficiency in English speaking skill will improve very soon.					
15	I am certain that I can use English outside the classroom.					
16	I believe that I am a good English speaker.					
17	I can answer my teachers' questions in English.					
18	I can introduce myself in English.					
19	I can introduce my teacher to someone else in English.					
20	I can talk about my university in English.					

Appendix B: Self-efficacy Questionnaire of the Participants' English Speaking Skill (Thai version)

คำชี้แจง โปรดอ่านข้อความในแต่ละข้อและทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องคำตอบทางขวามือตามความเป็นจริง

5 หมายถึง เห็นด้วยมากที่สุด

4 หมายถึง เห็นด้วยมาก

3 หมายถึง ไม่แน่ใจ

2 หมายถึง เห็นด้วยน้อย

1 หมายถึง ไม่เห็นด้วย

ข้อ	การรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
		5	4	3	2	1
		มากที่สุด	มาก	ไม่แน่ใจ	น้อย	ไม่เห็นด้วย
1	ข้าพเจ้ามีความสามารถอย่างเพียงพอที่จะเพิ่มทักษะการพูดของตนเอง ได้ในอนาคต					
2	ข้าพเจ้าแน่ใจว่าถ้าได้ฝึกฝนการพูดเพิ่มขึ้น ทักษะการพูดของข้าพเจ้า ก็จะดีขึ้นด้วย					
3	ผู้หญิงเก่งในด้านการพูดมากกว่าผู้ชาย					
4	แม้ว่างานพูดจะยากและขาดคำศัพท์ที่ต้องการ แต่ข้าพเจ้าก็ยังมี กลยุทธ์ที่ช่วยให้ทำงานนั้นได้					
5	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกเครียดมากเวลาสอบพูดภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน					
6	ข้าพเจ้าชอบพบปะกับนักท่องเที่ยว เพราะข้าพเจ้าเชื่อว่าจะสามารถพูดกับเขาได้ดี					
7	แม้ว่าข้อสอบพูดจะยากเท่าใด แต่ข้าพเจ้าก็เชื่อว่าจะสามารถทำได้ ถ้าอยู่ในบริบทของการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
8	ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจในความสามารถของข้าพเจ้าในการได้ตอบกับผู้อื่นที่พูดภาษาอังกฤษ					
9	ข้าพเจ้าคิดว่าตัวเองทำได้ดีกว่านิสิตคนอื่นในด้านการพูด					

ข้อ	การรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการพูด ภาษาอังกฤษ	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
		5	4	3	2	1
		มากที่สุด	มาก	ไม่แน่ใจ	น้อย	ไม่แน่นอน
	ภาษาอังกฤษ					
10	ขณะที่พูดภาษาอังกฤษ ข้าพเจ้าจะไม่หวั่นไหวเมื่อเจออุปสรรค เพราะเชื่อมั่นว่า ข้าพเจ้าสามารถจัดการกับปัญหานั้นๆได้					
11	ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจว่าจะสามารถคุยกับคนที่พูดภาษาอังกฤษเก่งๆได้ เพราะเมื่อมีปัญหาในการพูดข้าพเจ้าจะให้เขาช่วยได้					
12	ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจว่าจะสามารถสื่อสารความต้องการของตัวเองเป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างไม่ยากนัก					
13	ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจว่าจะสามารถพูดได้คล่องเหมือนเจ้าของภาษา ถ้าได้ฝึกพูดมากขึ้น					
14	ข้าพเจ้าเชื่อว่าจะพัฒนาความสามารถทางการพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้ ในเวลาไม่นานนัก					
15	ข้าพเจ้าแน่ใจว่า ข้าพเจ้าสามารถใช้ภาษาอังกฤษนอกชั้นเรียนได้					
16	ข้าพเจ้าเชื่อว่า ข้าพเจ้าจะสามารถพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้ดี					
17	ข้าพเจ้าสามารถตอบคำถามอาจารย์เป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้					
18	ข้าพเจ้าสามารถแนะนำตัวเองเป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้					
19	ข้าพเจ้าสามารถแนะนำอาจารย์ของข้าพเจ้าให้ผู้อื่นฟัง เป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้					
20	ข้าพเจ้าสามารถคุยเกี่ยวกับมหาวิทยาลัยของข้าพเจ้าให้ผู้อื่นฟัง เป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้					

ความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติม

.....

.....

Appendix C: Attitude Questionnaire (Thai version)

ทัศนคติที่มีต่อการทดสอบแบบพลวัต

คำชี้แจง โปรดอ่านข้อความในแต่ละข้อและทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ลงในช่องคำตอบทางขวามือตามความเป็นจริง

ข้อ	ทัศนคติที่มีต่อการทดสอบแบบพลวัต	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
		5	4	3	2	1
		มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	ไม่เพียงพอ
1	ข้าพเจ้าได้มีโอกาสแสดงทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเองอย่างเต็มที่ในการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
2	ข้าพเจ้าได้รับประโยชน์จากการบอกใบ้หรือความช่วยเหลือของอาจารย์ ขณะทดสอบ					
3	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกสบายใจ ขณะทำข้อสอบพูดผ่านทางระบบ dynamic assessment					
4	ข้าพเจ้าคิดว่าอาจารย์สามารถตัดสินความสามารถทางการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของข้าพเจ้าได้อย่างเที่ยงตรง ผ่านทางการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
5	ข้าพเจ้ามีการเปลี่ยนแปลงกลวิธีในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของข้าพเจ้า ขณะที่สอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
6	คำอธิบายวิธีการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment มีความชัดเจน					
7	ข้าพเจ้าชอบวิธีการสอบพูดแบบ dynamic assessment					
8	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกว่าจะสามารถทำได้ดีในการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment มากกว่าเมื่อทำคนเดียวในการสอบแบบเก่า					
9	ข้าพเจ้าคิดว่าอาจารย์ควรให้ dynamic assessment เป็น					

ข้อ	ทัศนคติที่มีต่อการทดสอบแบบพลวัต	ระดับความคิดเห็น				
		5	4	3	2	1
		มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	ไม่เห็นด้วย
	ส่วนหนึ่งของการสอบในชั้นเรียน					
10	ข้าพเจ้าได้รับประสบการณ์การเรียนรู้ที่เป็นประโยชน์จากการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
11	dynamic assessment ช่วยให้ข้าพเจ้าได้พัฒนากลยุทธ์ใหม่ๆ ในการพูดของข้าพเจ้า					
12	การบอกใบ้ในช่วงทำ dynamic assessment ช่วยกระตุ้นให้ข้าพเจ้า ได้ใช้ความรู้ที่มี					
13	ข้าพเจ้าพร้อมร่วมมืออย่างเต็มที่ในการทำ dynamic assessment					
14	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกว่าคุณสมบัติในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของข้าพเจ้า ได้รับการพัฒนาผ่านการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
15	การสอบแบบ dynamic assessment ให้ประสบการณ์ในการพัฒนาทักษะการพูด แก่ข้าพเจ้าไม่มากนัก					
16	ข้าพเจ้าได้รับแรงจูงใจให้พูดภาษาอังกฤษ ขณะที่ทำการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
17	ความวิตกกังวลของข้าพเจ้าที่มีต่อการสอบลดลง เมื่อทำการสอบแบบ dynamic assessment					
18	dynamic assessment ทำให้ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกมั่นใจเพิ่มขึ้นเกี่ยวกับทักษะ การพูดภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเอง					
19	dynamic assessment ทำให้ข้าพเจ้าได้เห็นวิธีที่จะพัฒนา ทักษะการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเอง					
20	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกพอใจกับประสบการณ์การสอบพูดผ่านทางระบบ dynamic assessment					



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Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire (Thai version)

แบบสอบถามประวัติทั่วไปของนิสิต

1. ชื่อ
2. คณะ เอก
3. เรียนภาษาอังกฤษมาแล้วกี่ปี
4. ประวัติการเดินทางไปต่างประเทศ
5. มีเพื่อนเป็นชาวต่างชาติหรือไม่ ถ้ามีเป็นคนชาติใด
6. โอกาสในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในชีวิตประจำวันเป็นอย่างไร กรุณาตอบเป็นอัตราเปอร์เซ็นต์
ฟัง _____ พูด _____ อ่าน _____ เขียน _____
7. คาดหวังอะไรจากการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน
.....
8. นิสิตมีโอกาสในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษทางใด หรือเวลาไหน
.....
9. กรุณาอธิบายวิธีการฝึกฝนภาษาอังกฤษของตัวเอง
.....

ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณนิสิตที่ให้ความร่วมมือกรอกข้อมูลในแบบสอบถามนี้

Appendix E: Examples of the Stimulus Sentences in EI Task

The 1st DA session

- Those new students aren't from China.
- How much is a single ticket to France?
- Jenny and Ken are my old friends from Canada.
- That's seven euros and twenty-five cents altogether.
- Can I have the hotdog but no coffee, please?

The 2nd DA session

- His father helps the kids with their reports.
- My brother doesn't play all kinds of games on the Internet.
- We have to arrive at the airport before midnight.
- The train leaves from the platform at five twenty.
- I have breakfast with my roommate four or five times a month.

The 3rd DA session

- My sister often goes to school after 7 a.m.
- I think people play this game in a lot of cities.
- I haven't got my own room and my boss isn't funny.
- John meets about one hundred people online every day.
- At the weekends, they usually play volleyball or go swimming together.

The 4th DA session

- My sister doesn't like spicy dishes.
- There are two swimming pools in front of the hotel.
- There isn't a living room but there is a bathroom in this apartment.
- You can send a letter at the post office only five minutes' walk away.
- The post office is opposite my school and on the left of the museum.

The 5th DA session

- How many friends does a man make in his lifetime?
- I eat two apples every evening but I don't have them for lunch.
- The students never eat any garlic because they hate it.



- How many bottles of milk do you drink in a week?
- Sam travels around the country and he usually stays in a hotel.

The 6th DA session

- He came to the park with his girlfriend last Thursday.
- My boss didn't feel happy so he went to see his dad.
- He drove to the museum last month but he didn't see his teacher there.
- Jim's mother was a very good teacher and his father was a doctor.
- Ted didn't stay in the hotel yesterday, but he is in his house today.



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Appendix F: EI Scoring Rubric

Score	4	3	2	1	0
Meaning	This oral production expresses exactly the same meaning as the one in the original sentence.	This oral production expresses a meaning very similar to the one in the original sentence.	This oral production expresses a meaning that is vague and/or globally different from the one in the original sentence.	This oral production expresses the beginning of a meaning sometimes different from the one in the original sentence.	This oral production does not express any meaning corresponding to the one in the original sentence.
Syntax	This oral production contains exactly the same syntactic structure as the one in the original sentence and has no syntactic mistakes .	This oral production contains the syntactic structures copied the initial sentence with only one syntactic mistake .	This oral production contains more than one/two syntactic structure(s) more or less copied from the ones in the original sentence.	This oral production contains one/two simple syntactic structure(s) more or less copied from the ones in the original sentence.	This oral production contains no syntactic structure .
Vocabulary	This oral production contains all the words of the original sentence.	This oral production contains the words of the original sentence with only one vocabulary mistake .	This oral production contains more than two words of the original sentence.	This oral production contains only one or two word(s) of the original sentence.	This oral production contains none of the words of the original sentence.
Pronunciation	This oral production is perfectly intelligible and perfectly copied from the original sentence	This oral production contains prosodic and/or segmental elements copied from	This oral production contains more than two*prosodic and/or segmental elements more	This oral production contains only one/ two prosodic and/or segmental elements more or less copied	This oral production is not understandable <i>The articulated phonemes do not correspond to the English</i>

	without any prosodic or segmental mistake.	the original sentence. There is only one or two mistake(s) . <i>Clearly intelligible, not hinder comprehension despite small articulatory errors or hesitation</i>	or less copied from the original sentence. <i>In the best case, half of the elements is present.</i>	from the original sentence. <i>A lot of difficulty understanding the sentence. The repeated words are difficult to understand, due to poor phonemic articulation.</i>	<i>phonological system at all.</i>
Fluency	This oral production copied from the initial sentence is expressed with ease and no one hesitation nor pause.	This oral production copied from the initial sentence is expressed with ease and only one/two* hesitation(s) and/or pause(s) or a missing word. There is no break in the sentence continuity. <i>The speech rhythm is slower, slightly more segmented than the one in the original sentence. The speed is not 'normal'</i>	This oral production, more or less copied from the initial sentence is expressed with some ease but with a lot of breaks in the sentence continuity (pauses and/or hesitations and/or missing words are present).	This oral production more or less copied from the initial sentence is expressed with little ease and with a lot of breaks in the sentence continuity (pauses and/or hesitations and/or missing words are present).	This oral production more or less copied from the initial sentence is expressed with a lot of difficulties and has several breaks in the sentence continuity (pauses and/or hesitations and/or onomatopoeias and/or English words insertion and/or missing words are present). <i>Nothing is clearly perceptible.</i>



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Appendix G: The Semi-structured Interview

The purpose of this interview is to investigate how dynamic assessment assists the participants to improve their speaking skill and to understand the participants' perception toward their speaking self-efficacy.

Guiding prompts:

1. Do you have any difficulties in speaking English? If yes, what are they?
2. Have you ever taken dynamic assessment before?
3. How do you feel about the experience of taking the speaking test in dynamic assessment process? Please compare it with that of the traditional assessment (the pretest).
4. Please describe what you did during dynamic assessment.
5. Please describe the kinds of feedback and assistance that you received from the examiner. Which one is useful to you and which one is not useful to you?
6. What do you gain most from dynamic assessment?
7. How do you feel about your English speaking skill before and after participating in the tests?
8. Are there any changes taking place in the way you perform in the speaking tests? If yes, what are they?
9. Please describe your level of confidence, motivation, or anxiety before and after taking dynamic assessment.
10. What do you learn about your English speaking ability after taking dynamic assessment?



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Appendix H: Willingness To Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS), adopted from Baghaei et al. (2012)

Directions: Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree =4, Strongly Agree=5) how willing you are to communicate. There are no right or wrong answers. It is best to work quickly and record your first impressions.

Situations	1	2	3	4	5
1. If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc., I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.					
2. If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc., I would find an excuse and would talk to them.					
3. If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.					
4. I am willing to accompany some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.					
5. I am willing to talk with native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian).					
6. If someone introduced me to a native-speaker of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) I would like to					

Situations	1	2	3	4	5
<p>try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.</p> <p>7. If I encountered some nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc., I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.</p> <p>8. If I encountered some nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.</p> <p>9. If I encountered some nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language I will take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.</p> <p>10. I am willing to accompany some nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.</p> <p>11. I am willing to talk with nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.).</p> <p>12. Nonnative speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) have interesting experiences that I would like to share.</p> <p>13. In order to practice my English I am willing to talk in English with my classmates outside the class.</p> <p>14. I am willing to ask questions in English in the classes at the university.</p> <p>15. I am willing to talk and express my opinions in English in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.</p> <p>16. I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class</p>					



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Situations	1	2	3	4	5
<p>so that I can talk in English with my classmates.</p> <p>17. In order to practice my English I am willing to talk in English with my professors outside the class.</p> <p>18. I am willing to give a presentation in English in front of my classmates.</p> <p>19. In group work activities in the class when the group is composed of my friends I am willing to speak in English.</p> <p>20. In group work activities in the class when the group is NOT composed of my friends I am willing to speak in English.</p>					



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