

The Interplay between Language Skills and Dynamic Assessment

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Abstract

Dynamic assessment (DA), as a pro-learning style of assessment, has been investigated in the educational literature for three decades or more. DA has been encouraged by the dearth of conventional static tests to prepare precise information about the individual's learning abilities, change processes, specific deficient functions, and mediational strategies that are in charge for cognitive modifiability. DA, strongly rooted in Socio-cultural Theory (SCT) and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is essentially defined as an approach which takes into account personal differences and their uses for teaching which accepts intervention in the assessment method. As stated by Lantolf and Poehner (2011), both collaborative functioning and interaction with others in DA differentiates it from traditional assessment. In DA processes, the emphasis is on the process rather than the products of learning. The important point is that dynamic assessment, as opposed to non-dynamic assessment (NDA), does not separate teaching from testing but instead takes them into account as two aspects of the same thing. Many authors have offered that DA could be used in all language skills, while others postulated that it cannot be useful in the ordinary classes. Regarding the significant contributions of DA in EFL/ESL contexts, the present paper, therefore, aims to review some important studies that have implemented DA on different language skills and the process of their research. It brings to the fore different theories underlying DA, including SCT and ZPD. It then elucidates two approaches to DA, namely interactionist and interventionist. It finally suggests some strands of research and emphasizes the implications of other studies conducted on the interplay between language skills and DA.

Keywords: Dynamic assessment, Interactionist DA, Interventionist DA, Mediational strategies socio-cultural theory, Zone of proximal development

1. Introduction

Abeywickrama and Brown (2010) state that assessment is a well-known and sometimes misunderstood term in the recent educational practice. Data from traditional (summative assessment) show that students learn without any feedback from a teacher. The assessment measures and summarizes what learners have learned often at the end of a semester. On the other hand, formative assessments (FA) assess students in the process of forming their skills and help them in the growing process to get the goals.

Additionally, Dynamic Assessment (DA) is a type of formative assessment which is viewed as an instrument to evaluate the present skill and then to predict future ability of the learners (Caffrey, 2006). DA is administrated by a helper who scaffolds and prepares social support for learning, so DA measures both independent performance and the mediated one. Independent performance shows what a learner has achieved alone whereas the mediated performance reflects what a learner obtained with the help of the mediator (Poehner, 2005).

Former styles of traditional assessment measure just the learning product. Here, the only feedback the learners receive is single marks for their performance on a test. As a matter of fact, it is their actual knowledge, and teachers fail to prepare context sensitive feedback necessary for deeper understanding in learning. On the contrary, dynamic assessment (DA) as a process-oriented approach proposed by Vygotsky (1978) concentrates on the process of learning. DA has substantiated to be fruitful in all language skills namely, reading (Ajildeh & Nourdad, 2012; Caffrey, 2006), writing (Isavi, 2012; Tianshun & Lv, 2013), speaking (e.g., Hill & Sabet, 2009), listening as a product (e.g. Field, 2008; Rost, 2001; Rubin, 1994) and listening comprehension (Ableeva, 2010; Alavi, Kaivanpanah, & Shabani, 2011; Emadi, 2015; Hashemi Shahraki, Ketabi, & Barati, 2015; Hidri, 2014; Shabani, 2014).

The recent research studies have mainly focused on different mediational strategies and investigated the advantages and disadvantages of these mediations such as accepting response, structuring the text, identifying a problem area, replaying of a passage, asking the words, providing metalinguistic clues and so on, so this paper aims to elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of DA, different approaches to DA, the implications of DA in all four language skills, and provide some strands of research in this regard. Moreover, the present paper is an attempt to bridge the gap in the literature by preparing a review of various studies based on DA on different language skills.

2. Review of the Literature

Dynamic assessment (DA) as a type of process-oriented approach, originally developed in cognitive psychology, comprises the concepts of interaction and mediation and is known as a valid procedure to test more deeply in the learners' skills. As stated by Lantolf and Poehner (2011), both collaborative functioning and interaction with others in DA differentiates it from traditional assessment. DA is not viewed as a replacement to other kinds of testing, but it is considered as a complement to them. In the last two decades, there has been a raising interest of research conducting dynamic-interactive assessment (DA) as an alternative approach to traditional testing, where the process of learning and acquisition are tracked so that not only

instruction could be modified but also constructive feedback could be prepared to enhance students' achievement.

2.1 Socio-cultural Theory

According to Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural, learning is considered as a social process. The distinctive characteristic of this theory is the critical role of interaction in the development of cognition. Human requires interacting with others to have developmental changes and activation of learning potential in case of language learning for learners.

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter psychological) and then inside the child (intra psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

Following Poehner (2008), a person's cognition is mediated socially during interaction. In fact, human is helped to show the developmental changes, so socio-cultural theory emphasizes mediated relationship not direct relationship between the world and a person and is the basis for dynamic assessment (DA). According to DA approach, a learner's talents are the functions that are fully internalized as well as those that are in the process of developing.

2.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky in the early 1930s nominated the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD) the last two years of his life. Vygotsky's interests put premium on formulating and understanding children's thoughtful development. In the early 1930s, Vygotsky dealt with the revolutionary school reform. In the course of his amendment activities, he posited ZPD. Based on Vygotsky's postulations, the development of a child implies the active collaboration of human cultural experience with adults and consists of two levels, namely potential level and actual level of development. The exact level shows the independent performance of the enterprise which is without the help of others and is in line with the zone of actual development. The potential level of development shows adult-child collaboration in performing the task. Simply put, activating the potential level requires scaffolding of others. These activities are seemed to simplify the child's skills that are in the process of maturation. The potential level is in line with the zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky (1978) states the ZPD as the gap between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as verified through problem solving under adult mentorship or in collaboration with more capable peers. These concepts also were applied to describe developmental processes. Tzuril (2001) mentions that in determining the child's cognitive development, one should regard actual developmental level and the potential one. The actual level of performance can be measured by observing the kid independent performance like the static standardized testing approach, whereas the potential level can be measured after the kid has been helped to perform the task, as is done in DA. Similarly, the ZPD proposes a moving target in teaching: instruction that is beyond a learners' actual level of development may increasingly influence

and guide development. At the same time, ZPD is not demonstrated by observing the solo performance but through active interaction and collaboration among teachers (mediators) and learners, in which different kinds of mediation are offered by the teacher and replied by the learner.

Mediation is used to display learners' ZPD while concurrently moving the ZPD forward by preparing appropriate feedback (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011). The ZPD is the area between what a child can do independently and what a child can do under the guidance of more talented people. In other words, the mediator's duty is to know certainly how to push the learner forward in a way to persuade active participation and consequently, to achieve the goal. Mediation in the ZPD can help learners to use perform successfully and cognitive strategies in a problem solving task. To apply ZPD in the classroom, it is vital to know not only where a learner is functioning now, but also how to assist him/her best to master more advanced skills. Understandings and Abilities in a learners' ZPD are the ones which have not emerged yet but could happen if the learner engaged with skilled others (Hidri, 2014).

Chaiklin (2003) states the concept of the ZPD underlines the interaction between a talented person and a novice person on a performing task; in fact, the novice person becomes independently proficient in later stages. Underlying this general conception, three major aspects are highlighted. The three aspects will be named *potential assumption*, *generality assumption* and *assistance assumption*. The first aspect is on the opinion that a person is able to do a task alone, while in collaboration, it is possible to perform a great number of tasks. The second aspect deals with how a teacher should interact with learner. The third aspect focuses on *properties of the learner*, including a learner's potential for learning. These aspects bring the idea that it will be possible to improve learning.

Ableeva (2010) mentions that Vygotsky was the first scholar who tried to estimate both the actual and potential developmental level. The notion that higher forms of thinking, (voluntary memory, attention, planning, learning, perception) are always mediated is a central point in ZPD. Basically, these functions are mediated through our interactions and collaboration with others. These interactions are internalized and prepare the basis for cognitive functions (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008).

2.3 Definitions of Dynamic Assessment (DA)

Assessment is a reality of daily life. Assessment has undergone an ideal shift, from psychometrics to a broader pattern of educational assessment, from an examination and testing culture to an assessment culture (Gipps, 1994; Lynch, 2001). Accordingly, a number of other assessments have become pervasive. Assessment is an important activity in any instructional operation. As a school of thought, which is progressively gaining acceptance, it debates that it is crucial for both teachers and learners to be implicated and have control over the assessment procedures, methods and outcomes, as well as their underlying rationale (Derakhshan, Rezaei, & Alemi, 2011). Nowadays, people are estimated to reach promotion at work, education or to get a driver's license. To do so, people make great attempt to succeed and even any help during assessment is regarded biased. However, dynamic assessment developed more than 80 years ago by the Russian psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky. Studying the

children's mental skills, Vgotsky (1978) found out that what a kid can do independently is solely a partial image of his/her ability, because a child can do better even with a bit of assistance offered by someone else. According to DA, good instruction implies assessment and good assessment implies instruction (Birjandi & Mosalanezhad, 2010). Haywood and Lidz (2007, p.1) designates this approach to assessment as follows: "an interactive approach to conducting assessments within the domains of psychology, speech/language, or education that focuses on the ability of the learner to respond to intervention." They believe that the special characteristics of DA are an active intervention prepared by the mediator during the testing process of examinees' responsiveness to the intervention.

Dynamic assessment can bring new insights into language classroom assessment which per se accounts for the processes through which development and learning occur. By applying DA, teachers can assess students as an ongoing activity while engaging learners in learning a new task. Learners need scaffolding in performing a new task and after internalizing, they can do the task independently. Following Lantolf and Poehner (2008), instruction and assessment as a sole activity in DA seeks to simultaneously detect and enhance learner's development by proposing mediation. Mediation is provided during the assessment process and is aimed to lighten the problematic areas and not only help learners control the problems but also fosters development. Totally, mediation may consist of leading questions, hints, prompts, feedback, and examples. This cooperative process aims to increase learner development and the mediation provided lead to learners' emerging needs.

Donato and McCormick (1994) believe that mediation has a very essential and critical role in both generating higher mental abilities and constructing of an activity. In case of mediation in language learning, unfocused actions in learning may become adjusted later and modified according to the mediation provided. Dynamic assessment carries out an exploration to determine how much learning can take place in the ZPD during a course of instruction for each individual rather than a score that indicates performance at a specific point in time. As in Nazari (2012), DA clarifies that an acceptable source for assessing stages of learners' progress during instruction (ZPD) is by pointing learners' innate capabilities. Therefore, dynamic assessment assumes that assessment and instruction are interwoven.

According to Birjandi and Mosalanezhad (2010), DA procedures have been used for different purposes. First, DA can differentiate between people with biological learning disability and those with social or cultural background difficulties. Second, it can provide a more valid assessment of learners' general skills and their potential for improvement. Third, it can recognize the problematic areas and their cause and finally offering suggestions for placing learners in suitable instructional programs. Generally, dynamic assessment is an approach to assessment that is very different from the previous kind of assessment.

Kozulin and Garb (2002) believe that the goal of dynamic assessment is to measure the learners' ability and to gain more useful information for effective instructions simply put conducting DA helps teachers to be more familiar with the current level of the learners and how to manipulate the learning process in order to activate the learning potential of the learners. Responsiveness or providing suitable reaction to assistance could only help the

future development and this could be achieved by providing appropriate mediation. Consequently, actual development differs independently of potential development, meaning that the former, cannot be used to predict the latter.

Dynamic Assessment is rooted in SCT which is defined as:

Dynamic assessment integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity aimed at promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's (or in some cases groups) current abilities. In essence, DA is a procedure for simultaneously assessing and promoting development that takes account of the individual's (or group's) zone of proximal development. (Lantolf & Poehner, 2007, p. 50)

Following Tzuriel (2001), the very important idea in DA is to apply the change criteria within the testing condition as predictors of future developmental and cognitive performance. The justification underlying alteration criteria is that they are closely associated to the teaching processes. Poehner (2008) believes that integration between instruction and assessment grounded in Vygotsky's understanding of development. In fact, if teachers want to assess learners' development in their classes, their assessment should not focus solely on the students' performance in an achievement test. The actual focus needs to be on the students' accomplishment through help of the teachers. DA allows teachers to be aware of the students' learning and achievements from time to time and therefore, students are aware of the learning process and they can request help or feedback while needed in a performing task. While conducting DA, learning potential is achieved because the teacher manipulated the learning process and maximized it. Moreover, diagnostic monitoring contextualized prompting and feedback giving are among the distinctive features of DA.

2.4 Approaches to Dynamic Assessment

Lantolf (2009) states that two approaches to DA have been developed: interactionist DA and interventionist DA regarding both approaches, instruction as mediation and assessment are enrolled as a single activity with the purpose of identifying learning potential and increasing development. In these two approaches, two general sorts of mediation could be accessible for the mediator. The latter comprises a set of predetermined implications and clues and proposed to the learner through the learning process. The arranged clues are adjusted from implicit to explicit. A distinctive factor of this approach is that mediational strategies do not count on the responsiveness of the learners; henceforth, mediation could be prepared to a large number of individuals simultaneously.

According to Minick (1987, p. 119) interactionist dynamic assessment comes after Vygotsky's preference for "qualitative assessment of psychological processes and dynamics of their qualitative development". As a result, mediation in interactionist DA is in contrast with mediation provided in interventionist DA; that is, mediation is not prefabricated but is discussed and is in accordance with the learner responsiveness.

Back to previous debate, according to Birjandi and Ebadi (2009) interactionist DA is the result of the interaction between the learner and mediator and is sensitive to both context and

the learner's ZPD. On the other hand, interventionist DA is closer to static assessment and quantification. Generally, in terms of mediation providing, regarding interventionist DA, mediations are scaled in form of a graded set of standardized clues from implicit to explicit. Here, the variation of the learners is due to the number of mediations not the content of mediation, in other words, interventionist approach tends to quantitative analysis.

Isavi (2012) demonstrated that the interactionist DA grounded in Vygotsky's idea of cooperative dialoging. In contrast to interactionist DA, the interventionist approach to DA mainly deals with traditional non-dynamic approaches. The present study is in line with interactionist approach to dynamic assessment. In the present study, interactionist DA is applied, so the mediations used are not pre-fabricated and emerge while dialoging learners and according to their responsiveness. Conducting interactionist DA helps to study the teacher-learner interactions in the context of learning and by applying a DA approach to teaching, the listening development could be studied, developed and analyzed.

Following Ajideh and Nourdad (2012), dynamic assessment looks at learning as an individualized activity and it is on the contrary to non-dynamic assessment which tries to compare a learner's performance to others, DA compares the present performance of a learner with his/her recent performance and gains information about the learner's progress over a task, so it aims at moving the learner forward. It can be concluded that if correct mediation is provided, no one can be unaffected and each learner's ability improves through the application of dynamic assessment.

2.4.1 Interactionist Model

Feuerstein's (2002) model combines instruction and assessment and postulates that they cannot be displayed individually. This model mentions that human cognitive skills are not established, and they can be clarified through interventions. Cultural differences are one of the frequent burdens in this model of assessment. Actually the stimulus-response model is altered. It means that the child is interacting with a more qualified peer; he or she would help the child in selecting, amplifying, interpreting, and changing the objects with the child through mediations (Naeini & Duvall, 2012).

2.4.2 Interventionist Model

This model is built on the foundation of the number of prompts required to derive a desired answer. Students' learning potential is estimated by the number of prompts required to get the aim. Feuerstein's (2002) model is different from this model because in this type of dynamic assessment mediation is categorized from most implicit to most explicit and concludes in a correct answer (Naeini & Duvall, 2012).

2.5 *Empirical Studies on Dynamic Assessment*

Although DA is a new scope of research in TEFL, it is not the case in other scopes of knowledge. As Haywood and Lidz (2007) state, DA is not any longer a new way to psychological and educational testing, some of its current uses have been around for more than a half century. Thus, Haywood and Lidz mention that some DA-based have been

concluded on comprehension by Gettinger (1984); on mathematics by Jitendra and Kameenui (1993); and on language and speech by Kozulin and Garb (2002).

However, TEFL DA investigators in general do not have such a powerful literature. That is why Poehner (2008, p. 5) maintains that “to date, few studies have tested L2 performance from a DA perspective, although the increasing interest in Vygotskian theory among applied linguists has led to some investigation of how DA principles might be used in L2 contexts.” Research studies have been conducted on dynamic assessment in other skills. Considering writing, Tianshun and Lv (2013) concluded that teacher’s mediation and interaction; peer collaboration and learners’ involvement in the process of development can reduce or overcome problems of learning. The study constructed a dynamic assessment framework which involved three stages of writing process into the pre-writing – mediation – post-writing dynamic assessment model. Here, a comparative study was conducted to notice the differences between the control and experimental group in achieved scores, writing products regarding accuracy, complexity, fluency and local and global coherence. The statistics indicated that DA approach benefits ESL writing.

In a similar vein, Isavi (2012) investigated the effects of DA on Iranian L2 writing. It attempted to apply the regulatory scale of Aljaafreh and Lantolf’s (1994) and indicates that not only the DA approach can successfully increase the EFL learners’ writing skill but also it can empower the teacher to more accurately estimate learner’ writing skill after identifying the nature of the error and prepare the learners with necessary support; therefore, improve the writing ability. This study revealed that nearly all participants had difficulty in writing and the learners could write better with the guidance of the mediator (teacher). Different types of mediation indicate different ZPDs, which needed the mediator to provide support differently to different learners. Their study was one of the very early researchers where an assistant cooperated with three learners who were trying to make grammatical features such as modal verbs, use of tense, articles, and prepositions in their writing. The assistant met them individually in the writing course and made revisions on their previously written investigation. This revision was conducted on the foundation of a regulatory scale which would alter from most implicit to most explicit.

Nassaji and Swain (2000) pursued Aljaafreh and Lantolf’s (1994) research and tried to find out if ZPD-sensitive assistance was important to make it a better performance or if any type of assistance could be efficient to assist the students move beyond what they could do independently. They were also keen on knowing which one of the assistances was more influential to progress development. So, Nassaji and Swain (2000) paired a mediator with two ESL learners. With one, the mediation was ZPD-sensitive; with the other it was quite random, i.e. without any attempt to adapt the level of mediation to the learner's responsiveness. The findings showed that the one getting ZPD-based help had been less exact when individually expressing the first composition but as indicated bigger improvement due to the help given performing better than the non-ZPD student on the final composition task.

In spite of the fact that good amount of discussion has been provided in theory of DA in language teaching, the number of practical or empirical studies which could exert direction

for methodological uses are very rare. In one of those studies Kozulin and Garb (2002) emphasized DA and second language reading accomplishment. The researchers made a pedagogical curriculum that consisted of a DA element concentrating on aiding student develop total reading comprehension strategies. In the pretest class of the investigation the students were needed to read a clear text in English and to respond a collection of comprehension items. In the treatment session, the teachers, who had been taught on treatment, tested the exam with the learners, mediating for them the reading strategies needed in each item. In the post test, after the mediation, learners finished a posttest that obviously was in line with the pretest. Following the processing of the data, investigators planned a formula to obtain what they name 'Learning Potential Score' which calculated the difference between the pre and posttests. It is discussed that this score gave a more comprehensive image of the learners' capability than purely concentrating on the final achievement tests in reading (Kozulin & Garb, 2002).

Regarding reading, Shabani (2012) dynamic assessment of L2 learners' reading comprehension processes was investigated. It indicated the application of computerized version of dynamic assessment, which clarified, that electronically delivered mediatory scaffolding could improve the students' reading comprehension processes. The results demonstrated that both electronically delivered mediatory scaffolding enhances the learners' reading comprehension processes and computer can be a replacement for humans in guiding readers by directing the learners' attention to the key sections of the text and helping them to understand the text better. It also indicated that Computer-DA procedure attempts to control tester-testee interaction effect by providing a scripted menu of prompts in a computerized, consistent, and standardized procedure, which did not vary from a learner to other learner but at the same time, it affected the interactionist DA value of mediation throughout assessment. In a similar domain, Ajideh and Nourdad (2012) studied the effects of dynamic assessment on EFL reading comprehension in different proficiency levels.

The other dynamic-assessment study on advanced second language learners is done by Anton (2009). Five third-year Spanish seniors did the entrance tests offered for the informing students during the collection of information for this research. The five tests consisted of word, grammar, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking. The five learners obtained or got mastery over the lowest needed grades. The speaking and the writing exam followed the DA methods to realize the capabilities and weaknesses for each learner. The speaking DA interviews were estimated following the directions of the American Council on the pedagogy of Foreign Languages measure for competence, and learners experienced four parts in these 10 to 15-minute conversations.

Another study which concentrated on DA in advanced English language acquisition classrooms is Poehner (2005). In the study, first, students built an oral narrative in the English language after seeing a short video clip; they got no mediation in the first activity. Then they were given a second clip from the same story but this time they got clues, key questions, recommendations, and clear response when building their oral narratives. The assessment which emphasized on the performance differences between the first and second exams were implemented as the foundation for an individualized pedagogical program in which learners

were taught in scopes that had been realized during the DA classes as requiring special attention. In other words, learners' level of performance with the help of a mediator made it clear if they require special attention in the language acquisition process.

Lantolf and Poehner (2007) performed a study of DA elements performed in the environment of a laboratory of a primary-school backed from a main urban university in the Northeastern United States. This institute implemented a second-language Spanish instructor with the pseudonym, Tracy. Tracy made a system in Peru that contained learners to a lot of cultural subjects and its related words. She made a thing that had a separate animal on each dimension, and one learner would say at the time to roll it. This student explained the animal while the other learners watched. Tracy intervened to assist whenever learners had problems. She followed her understanding of the DA teacher's guide (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004) by giving the gradual clues as follow: (a) pausing, (b) saying again the whole phrase in a question intonation, (c) saying again just the section of the sentence with the mistake, (d) asking about what was wrong with that sentence, (e) pointing out the incorrect word, (f) asking either or question, (g) realizing the correct answer, and finally (h) describing why. They believed that arranging classroom performance in this way would enable educators to investigate and assist the group's ZPD while also backing the growth of students personally.

Hill and Sabet (2009) investigated DA in a classroom environment, and it was named Dynamic Speaking Assessments. The research emphasized four possible dynamic-speaking-assessment viewpoints. These four viewpoints were: the transfer of learning, mediated assistance, ZPD, and cooperative engagement. Mediated assistance occurred between an instructor and a student to realize a problem in the speaking activity. Conduct of acquisition assessed the learner's capability to convince what they had obtained initially to new conditions. The student's ZPD could be added for a group of learners who were solving a difficulty, and the emphasis here was on the socio-cultural side of the ZPD.

Jafary, Nordin, and Mohajery (2012) examined the effect of DA on Iranian EFL college preliminary learners' syntactic knowledge. They concentrated on the critical difference among DA and NDA and the possible task of these two forms of testing on the syntactic growth of Iranian EFL College primary learners. They indicated that there is a substantial increase in the performance of learners in DA group in comparison with the NDA group. Kramer, Mallet, Schneider, and Hyward (2009) did an investigation to examine the effect of DA on chronicle performance with grade three students. The results proved that DA participants were better in comparison with those in NDA group. The investigation also revealed that DA is useful device for discerning children with language learning difficulties.

Sadeghi and Khanahmadi (2011) measured the practicality of DA in the growth of Iranian EFL learners' grammar. Sixty intermediate EFL students, every session during the assistance both the experimental and control groups were given a grammar test in which the experimental group received assistance on test items. The findings of their research proved that DA improved the learning of L2 grammar significantly.

The effects of DA based instruction on listening comprehension have been explored less.

Considering the process of listening, dynamic assessment on listening has been conducted in an ESL context. Ableeva (2010) investigated the effects of dynamic assessment on improving listening comprehension of intermediate university students of L2 French. In her study, three stages of pretest, enrichment program, and posttest were applied. The pre and posttest stages were conducted in non- dynamic assessment. The mediator provided mediation in the enrichment program stage. After comparing the results, there was a great progress and development in the learners' listening comprehension ability in dynamic assessment group.

By the same token, Alavi et al. (2011) investigated *group* dynamic assessment as an inventory of mediational strategies for teaching listening. In this study, the researchers investigated the effects of DA based instruction on a group of learners. The results revealed that group dynamic assessment paved the way for collaboration, interaction and could explore a great practice atmosphere among the learners in which penetrates development. Regarding the EFL context, Hidri (2014) explored the developing and evaluating a dynamic assessment of listening comprehension. In this study, two approaches to listening comprehension were applied: static and DA approach. In static approach, the listeners listen to audio text and independently answer the questions while in DA approach, mediation and negotiation was involved when responding to listening comprehension tasks and items. To conclude, both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data revealed better understanding of cognitive processes in learning and better development.

Similarly, Shabani (2014) conducted a study to complete the concept of generalizability from a qualitatively different perspective, namely, Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory (SCT). This study, infused by Poehner's (2009) interactionist group dynamic assessment G-DA, and Feuerstein, Rand, and Hoffman (1979) Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) concept, has explained to track the developmental trajectories of L2 learners' listening comprehension ability within a microgenetic framework in hopes to bring into perspective learners' qualitative changes in their ZPD across a set of different innovative tasks. It was shown that the learners' skill to recognize an unrecognized word of the pretest transcended beyond the posttest task to the TR session, an improvement signaling their progressive trajectories to higher levels of ZPD. On implication side, this study suggested the use of DA as a development-oriented procedure to assess the learners' abilities, a procedure which focused on the learners' emerging abilities in constantly innovative tasks.

Alternatively, Emadi (2015) represented a detailed description of the listening process framework in an interactive EFL listening classroom. The qualitative analysis of DA protocols instructed to the development of the mediational strategies includes different forms of implicit to explicit feedback. DA-based instruction helped the students move forward and to find developmental changes. Finally, according to the findings, language teachers are proposed to use the mediational strategies; moreover, teachers are suggested to apply more DA approaches in their classes in a more systematic way rather than the traditional kind of testing which focuses only on the learning product.

Hashemi Shahraki et al. (2015) conducted a research which is rooted in Vygotskian socio-cultural theory (SCT) in estimating intermediate learners' pragmatic knowledge of

conversational implicatures in the context of listening when simultaneously recognizing the mediational strategies. Fifty English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners of two intermediate intact classes at a language institute in Iran were selected to participate in their research. Both groups went through a multi-assessment process in the form of dynamic and non-dynamic pretest-enrichment phase- dynamic and non-dynamic posttest. Only the experimental group had mediational assistance during the ten-week G-DA procedure. The study employed qualitative and quantitative data analyses. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative data analyses showed that the mediational support resulted in important alterations in the listening ability of the learners improving their pragmatic understanding of conversational implicatures. The results demonstrated that they support G-DA and its applicability to Second Language (L2) listening comprehension and pragmatics instruction.

3. Conclusions and Implications

This review paper reinforces the idea that DA could be a great diagnostic instrument to investigate the students' problems and errors. An implication of the present review is the possibilities that the teachers are required to be aware of the importance of DA. Moreover, DA can mediate teachers to view instruction and assessment as a unified activity because true assessment is not possible until considering the fact that assessment and instruction are interwoven. Teachers should perform DA in different classes; therefore, face of language can be changed for the students because the learners understand how easily spoken discourse can be understood with a bit of teacher's assistance.

It is hoped that the results of the present review are fruitful for teachers to run their classes based on DA as much as possible to form learners' learning, make them independent, and provide enough ZPD and scaffolding. The results are probably useful for materials developers to devise and incorporate some tasks to require both teachers and learners to capitalize upon DA.

The mediational strategies propose insights for teachers to apply a DA approach in classroom environment both in case of teaching and assessing. Regarding the mediational strategies, it can be concluded that receiving feedback can increase the student's ZPD and they can perform much better in the field. With regard to the learners, this paper found that generally applying dynamic assessment provides appropriate result in language skills. Moreover, it can be concluded that over time the learners were eager to take part in the process of learning and can be aware of their learning process and enjoy attending the classes. DA principles prepare a structure for arranging interactions with L2 learners that not only allows greater perceptions into their skills in the language but also supports their continued development. DA has been the issue of many projects concerning its effects on reading, speech acts and writing. Concerning reading comprehension sub skills, Naeini and Duvall (2012) found that using DA mediates teachers to have more chance to help the students in focusing on certain issues in each meditation session (Derakhshan & Kordjazi, 2015).

To sum up, the quantitative analysis of teacher-learner interaction accounts for deeper description of the learners' actual and potential abilities; therefore, teachers can plan for the individualized instruction of the learners according to their needs. According to Antón (2009),

although interactionist DA is recognized as a time-consuming and hard approach to do, the advantages for learning plans and learners are sufficient and merit applying it in classroom. This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. A potentially productive suggestion can be comparing collaborative and individual DA-based instruction. The researchers can explore which type of instruction is better to conduct, so teachers can get insights in conducting DA-based instruction in their classes individually or in groups.

Further studies could be presented to the learners to know how they feel when practicing listening in a DA procedure. The teachers can be aware of students' feeling and decide to what extent they can use DA in classrooms because students' attitude is very vital toward the way of learning. More studies should be conducted on the interplay between DA and pragmatics in EFL/ESL contexts since pragmatic competence plays an indispensable task in the procedure of language learning and acquisition. Another point to be investigated can be comparing different proficiency level achievers' taking advantage of dynamic-based instruction. To do so, teachers can get insight to apply DA to the learners at the proper proficiency level. It is important to conduct more research on DA in the classroom to fully figure out the impact of this approach of teaching on learner's development.

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