

- new modes of assessment: In search of qualities and standards*, (pp. 141-169). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- East, M. (2007). Bilingual dictionaries in tests of L2 writing proficiency: Do they make a difference? *Language Testing Journal*, 24 (3), 331-353. doi: 10.1177/0265532207077203
- Fredericksen, N. (1984). The real test bias: Influences of testing on teaching and learning. *American Psychologist*, 39, 193-202.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond testing: Towards a theory of educational assessment*. London: Falmer Press.
- Gipps, C. (1999). Socio-cultural aspects of assessment. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 355-392. doi: 10.3102/0091732X024001355
- Greeno, J. G., Collins, A. M., & Resnick, L. B. (1997). Cognition and learning. In D. Berliner & R. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 15-47). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Hamayan, E.V. (1994). Approaches to alternative assessments. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 15, 212-226. doi: 10.1017/S0267190500002695
- Hargreaves, A., Earl, L. & Schmidt, M. (2002). Perspectives on alternative assessment reform. *American Educational Research Journal* 39 (1), pp. 69-95.
- Haywood, H.C., & Lidz, C.S. (2007). *Dynamic assessment in practice: Clinical and educational application*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Herman, J. L., Aschbacher, P. R., & Winters, L. (1992). *A practical guide to alternative assessment*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Hudson, T. (2005). Trends in assessment scales and criterion-referenced language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25, 205-227. doi: 10.1017/S0267190505000115
- Huerta-Macías, A. (1995). Alternative assessment: Responses to commonly asked questions. *TESOL Journal*, 5 (1), 8-11.
- Jacobs, G.M., & Farrell, T.S.C. (2001). Paradigm shift: Understanding and implementing change in second language education. *TESL-EJ*, 5(1). <http://tesl-ej.org/ej17/a1.html>
- Jacobs, G.M., & Farrell, T.S.C. (2003). Understanding and implementing the CLT paradigm. *RELC Journal* 34 (5), 5-30. doi: 10.1177/003368820303400102.
- Kopriva, R.J. (2008). *Improving testing for English language learners*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Groups.
- Kozaki, Y., & Ross, S. J. (2011). Contextual Dynamics in Foreign Language Learning Motivation. *Language Learning*, 61: 1328-1354.
- Kozulin, A., & Garb, E. (2001). Dynamic assessment of EFL text comprehension of at risk students. Presented at the 9th conference of the European association for Research on Learning and Instruction. Fribourg, Switzerland. Retrieved : www.icelp.org/files/research/DynamicAssessOfEFL.pdf
- Kuhn, T.S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lantolf, J. P. & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McNamara, T. (2001). Language assessment as social practice: challenges for research. *Language Testing*, 18 (4), 333-344. doi: 10.1177/026553220101800402
- McNamara, T., & Roever, C. (2006). *Language testing: The social dimension*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Meltzer, L., & Reid, K. (1994). New directions in the assessment of students with special needs: the shift toward a constructivist perspective. *Journal of Special Education*, 28 (3), 338-355. doi: 10.1177/002246699402800308.
- Messick, S. (1984). The nature of cognitive styles: Problems and promise in educational practice. *Educational Psychologist* 19 (2), 59-74. doi:10.1080/00461528409529283
- Messick, S. (1995). Validity of psychological assessment. *American Psychology*, 50 (91), 741-749.
- Mislevy, R.J. (2003). *Argument substance and argument structure in educational assessment*, Presented at Conference on Inference, Culture, and Ordinary Thinking in Dispute Resolution, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, New York, April 27-29, 2003. Retrieved from: www.cse.ucla.edu/products/reports/R605.pdf
- Murphy, R. (2008). Dynamic assessment precursors: Soviet ideology and Vygotsky. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 29 (3), 193-233.
- Murphy, D., & Maree, D. F. (2006). A review of South African research in the field of dynamic assessment. *Psychological Society of South Africa*, 36, (1), 168-191.
- Murray, D.E., & McPherson, P. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for reading the web. *Language Teaching Research* 10 (2), 131-156. doi: 10.1191/1362168806lr189oa
- Naeini, J., & Duvall, E. (2012). Dynamic assessment and the impact on English language learners' reading comprehension performance. *Language Testing in Asia*, 2 (2), 1-22.
- Nassaji, H., & Cumming, A. (2000). What's in a ZPD? A case study of a young ESL student and teacher interacting through dialogue journals. *Language Teaching Research*, 4 (2), 95-21. doi: 10.1177/136216880000400202
- Özgür, Y. (2008). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and dynamic assessment in language learning. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 8 (1), 301-308.
- Pellegrino, J.W., Baxter, G.P., & Glasser, R. (1999). Addressing the "two disciplines" problem: linking theories of cognition and learning with assessment and instructional practice. *Review of Research in Education*, 24 (1), 307-353. doi: 10.3102/0091732X024001307
- Poehner, M. (2007). Beyond the Test: L2 Dynamic assessment and the transcendence of mediated learning. *Modern Language Journal*, 91 (3), 323-340. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00583.x
- Poehner, M., & Lantolf, J. P. (2005). Dynamic assessment in the language classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 9 (3), 233-265. doi: 10.1191/1362168805lr166oa
- Rea-Dickins, P., & Gardner, S. (2000). Snares and silver bullets: disentangling the construct of formative assessment. *Language Testing Journal*, 17 (2), 215-243. doi: 10.1177/026553220001700206
- Shohamy, E. (2001). Democratic assessment as an alternative. *Language Testing Journal* 18 (4), 373-391.
- Shohamy, E., & Hornberger, N. H. (2008). *Encyclopedia of language and education*. Springer Science and Business Media LLC.
- Sternberg, R. J. & Grigorenko, E.L. (2002). Dynamic testing: *The nature and measurement of learning potential*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walters, F. S. (2012). Fairness. In G. Fulcher & F. Davidson (eds), *The Routledge handbook of language testing* (pp. 469-479). Oxon: Routledge.
- Wyatt-Smith, C., & Cumming, J. (2009). *Educational assessment in the 21st century: Connecting theory and practice*. London: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-9964-9
- Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



ing and explaining forms of human mental functioning is by studying the process of their development, and not the outcome of development. Development arises in the dialogic interaction that occurs among individuals and it is the interactive nature of development, as indicated in Vygotsky's theory of proximal development, which views the child (or a learner) as developing within a sociocultural context (Murphy & Maree, 2006). In point of fact, development is the result of interaction and in order to measure the development one needs to assess the individual in interaction.

Final Remarks

Vygotsky's view of learning as a shared-joint process in a responsive social context, and his reflection of learners as far more competent performers when they have proper assistance have all been the foundation of the promising interactive assessment of DA, not just a transient fad. As such DA might truly be the commensurate reply to many concerns: To Freire (1970) and the disdain for the *banking concept of education*, to Messick (1984) and concern for, *social consequences*, to Shohamy (2001) with regard to *democratic assessment*, to Mislavy (2003) in terms of a need for *evidentiary reasoning*, to Broadfoot (2005) who cautions against *danger of making decisions in dark alleys and blind bends*, and to Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) and their concern with *silver bullets and snares*.

Perhaps, the most illuminating and commendable feature of DA is the analysis of the information gained through its interactive procedure following a test-intervention- retest format. This information, which is not readily available through standardized testing but crucial for effective remedi-

ation, is the definitive goal of DA. Hence, it is hoped that DA will find wider application in educational settings.

Indeed, the role and ultimate goal of DA is to suggest what is needed to defeat the pessimistic predictions that are often made on the basis of the results of standardized normative tests. In order to produce significant improvement DA suggests the kinds and amount of intervention needed. In other words, it responds an individual learner's potential for future development by embedding instruction in the assessment process itself.

REFERENCES

- Antón, M. (2012). Dynamic assessment. In G. Fulcher and F. Davidson (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language testing*, (pp. 106-119). Chippenham, UK: Taylor & Francis.
- Bachman, L.F. (2000). Modern language testing at the turn of the century: Assuring that what we count counts, *Language Testing*, 17 (1), 1-42. doi: 10.1177/026553220001700101
- Bailey, K. (1996). Working for wash back: A review of the wash back concept in language testing. *Language Testing Journal* 13 (3): 257-279. doi: 10.1177/026553229601300303
- Barootchi, N., & Keshavarz, M. H. (2002). Assessment of achievement through portfolio and teacher-made tests. *Educational Research*, 44 (3), 279-288. doi: 10.1080/0013188021013533
- Barnard, R., & Campbell, L. (2005). Sociocultural theory and the teaching of process writing: The scaffolding of learning in a university context, *TESOLANZ Journal*, 13, 76-88.
- Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*. London: Taylor & Francis
- Berry, R., & Adamson, B. (2011). Assessment reform, past, present, and future. In R. Berry & S. Adamson (eds.), *Assessment and reform in education: Policy and practice*, (pp.3-15). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Broadfoot, P. (1996). *Education, assessment and society*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Broadfoot, P. (2005). Dark alleys and blind bends: Testing the language of learning, *Language Testing*, 22 (2), 123-141. doi 10.1191/0265532205lt302oa
- Brown, D.J., & Hudson, T. (1994). The alternatives in language assessment, *TESOL Quarterly*, 32 (4), 324-677.
- Brown, D.J. (2004). Performance assessment: Existing literature and directions for research, *Second Language Studies*, 21 (2), 91-139.
- Cioffi, G., & Carney, J. J. (1983). The dynamic assessment of reading disabilities. *Reading Teacher*, 36, 764-768.
- Cumming, J. J., & Maxwell, G. S. (1999). Contextualising authentic assessment, *Assessment in Education*, 6 (2), 177-194.
- Dann, R. (2002). *Promoting assessment as learning: Improving the learning process*. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Groups.
- Davies, A., & LeMahieu, P. (2003). Assessment for learning: Reconsidering portfolios and research evidence. In M. Segers, F. Dochy, & E. Cascallar (eds.), *Optimizing*

Agency in the UK are suggesting that the teachers' overarching task now is to provoke excitement in students not just about, but in the complex world of learning (Dann, 2002). That is, the learner is no longer to be a mere receptacle (Freire, 1970) for the insertion of tightly prepackaged knowledge; they are to be active participants in authentic learning.

"Unless the fire be lit in the mind and spirit of the students, it will be something less than that promised in such a learning experience" (Dann, 2002, p.). In other words, if individuals do not interact cognitively and affectively with their environment, learning will not occur. This perspective, according to Dann, places considerable emphasis on the role of the learner in the process of learning. As such, McNamara and Rover (2006) suggest responsibility of both candidates and test score users in the procedures for validation of test score inferences becomes imperative. They argue that within the discourse of psychometrics limits, what can be said about the social dimension of language testing is that it lacks a theory of the social context in which tests have their function.

The role of the social context is in evidence in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, which is characterized by the independent

performance of an individual in comparison to his or her performance when assisted by a more knowledgeable or older peer. The difference in performance is thus attributed to the development evident in the individual's zone of ability when aided by a more competent peer (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). Not surprisingly, the zone of proximal development is at the heart of sociocultural perspectives and defines the dialogic nature of teaching and learning processes (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), sociocultural theory is most compatible with theories of language in that they are focused on communication, cognition, affect, and meaning, merging with a theory of mediated mental acts that lead to development. These acts occur when the learner and the "more knowledgeable other" are engaged in moving the learner forward in his or her problem solving.

As previously indicated, human learning is a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities. Final assessment examinations are the most widely used testing methods in educational settings with the main concern behind this product-oriented testing being that teachers examine the students' progress on materials they have been taught after a certain amount of time (Özgür, 2008). In order to understand learning and development according to Vygotsky (1978), however, focus should be on the process rather than product. Likewise, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) concur that the only appropriate way of understand-

The process-oriented value system informs a theory of measuring students' attainments that has become known as assessment for learning. This approach is embedded within teaching and learning context and aims at moving learners from a lower to a higher level of proficiency in ways that enhance learner autonomy and learner motivation

substantial information about both present and potential performance that is not readily obtainable from other sources. DA assists teachers in reorienting their practice towards the goal of supporting learners. The mediation provided may provide an indication of time and resources that might be needed to move the individual's development forward. Standard assessment procedures are not sufficient for estimating a student's learning potential and provide little help in identifying the conditions under which progress may be made (Cioffi & Carney, 1983).

Kozulin and Garb (2001) have also found DA procedures to be both feasible and effective in obtaining information on students' learning potential. They confirm that the paradigm of DA is useful not only in the field of general cognitive and affective performance but also in the EFL learning domain.

Summary

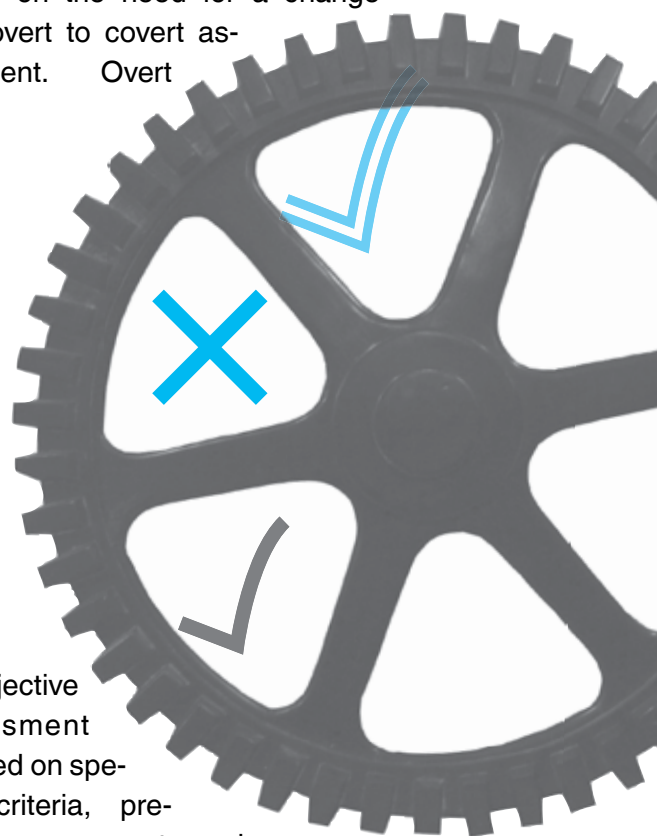
The role of assessment in history has been primarily in its use for selection. So called intelligence tests, for example, emerged as a means of evaluating and cognitively classifying individuals, then grouping them and assigning them a socially constructed label for the purposes of organization in a given society. Indeed, assessment for selection and certification has had a key social role to play in most societies (Gipps, 1999). According to Broadfoot (1996), assessment in developed societies, whether for selection or certification, has had a single underlying rationale: to control mass education and the nature of its goals and rewards. She points out that individuals compete on an equal basis to show their competence. This assumes that the assessment used is valid in its meas-

urement. Post-modern times challenge this notion, however, and fundamentally the challenge is whether the assessment is more concerned with categorization "than with developing a common understanding through dialogue about when learning occurs" (Hargreaves, Earl, & Schmidt, 2002, p. 76).

In this regard, Bernstein (1996) puts emphasis on the need for a change from overt to covert assessment. Overt

or objective assessment is based on specific criteria, precise measurement, and standardization, which purportedly allows for Comparing students and evaluating their progress based on a positivist understanding of the world. Yet, this objectivity lends a sense of legitimacy to the assessment. In contrast, Bernstein argues that assessment is covert and not precise enough to make direct comparisons between the students. Overt assessment is potentially controlling rather than progressive and liberating.

Organizations such as Teacher Training



DA	Non Dynamic Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is process-oriented. ● The learners' developmental changes are tracked and supported. ● Learners become more responsible for their own learning. ● The examiner takes an active role during the testing situation. (Anton, 2009). ● The teacher acts as a facilitator of language-processing and problem-solving techniques. ● The student learns to become an active user of self-monitoring strategies to regulate their own understanding. ● The goal is to enhance students' conceptual understandings and to produce more insightful intentional learners. (Campione, 1989) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is product-oriented. ● Learners are not supported. ● These tests are not designed to evaluate specific instructional strategies for remediating learning deficits. ● The examiner is neutral. ● Opportunity to directly influence learning is overlooked within the context of traditional assessment. ● Traditional assessment does not recognize the learner's potential to succeed with adequate environmental support. ● The assumption underlying these tests are: All the students have had the same opportunities to acquire the information and skills probed in the tests. (Campione, 1989)

As the table indicates, DA is concerned with the process of learning rather than the product. Therefore, the learners' movement and development are traced. However, there is no such regard in NDA approaches. In DA, there is an attempt to make the learner aware of his or her own learning, which is an indication of Vygotsky's movement toward self-regulation. Apparently, in such an approach the learner plays an active role in his or her own learning. In NDA approaches, there is no attempt on the part of the assessor to facilitate learning.

As to the foundations of DA, many give Vygotsky credit for his conceptualization of the zone of proximal development and mediation with regard to cognitive and affective development based on sociocultural theory. However, both Vygotsky and Feuerstein are recognized as equal co-contributors to the field (Murphy, 2008). Antón (2012) notes that "DA was first articulated and developed by Feuerstein and his colleagues in the early 1950s" (p. 107). Both Vygotsky and Feuerstein believe that human beings are not static entities, but are

always in a state of transition and engaged in transactional relationships with the world. It is in these transactional relationships that cognitive and affective growth may result. Thus, the teacher and learner both have a part to play in the learning process. In DA it is assumed that if learners have a central role in the learning process through their cognitive interactions, their roles should be equally of great value in the assessment procedures. The learner cannot be regarded in isolation from others.

This process through which social interaction influences learning may be considered analogous to an apprenticeship model of learning (Dann, 2002) whereby the novice learner works alongside an expert in the zone of proximal development. Here, as in DA, it is always social interaction that is the premise for learning and it is social interaction that also promises development during the process of assessment.

DA along with other forms of assessment provides a valuable part of the assessment repertoire. The DA portion of the assemblage is necessary in that it can add

language in use (Hudson, 2005). It reflects a current appetite for language assessment anchored in the world of functions and events. Hudson believes that these developments interact to promote language assessment that recognizes the need to expand beyond a tradition that has focused on language primarily as a decontextualized cognitive skill or ability (Cumming & Maxwell, 1999). Language takes place in a social context (Murray & McPherson, 2006), as a social act, and this needs to be recognized in language assessment. Consequently, much of the recent innovative research in language assessment has been directed to DA and mediated or co-constructed assessment tasks (Shohamy & Hornberger, 2008).

Dynamic assessment

While the limitations of the scientific approach to assessment are being increasingly recognized, it is not surprising to observe a growing interest in applying alternative assessment approaches. One such approach, DA, involves the active engagement of both learner and teacher in a process-oriented assessment framework that engages the participants in the learner's zone of proximal development. By working within the zone of proximal development, DA can now be a reply to some of the questions being asked such as those put forth by Gipps (1994, p. 27) "What form of assessment do we need to properly reflect students' learning? And what form of assessment should we use to ensure a beneficial impact on teaching and learning practice?"

DA is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and as such engagement in DA incorporates the view that learning, culture and development are inseparable. Operationally, DA provides a kind of instructional intervention referred to as mediation (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). In mediation, the more knowledgeable other or teacher offers minimal hints to support and direct the learner as the learner completes a task that is beyond their capacity to some degree. During the process the teacher can see and record just how little or how much assistance was needed by the learner to complete the task. Thus, the purpose of mediation in DA is to reveal the depth of learners' abilities (Poehner, 2007). This in turn is part of what the learner, too, discovers.

According to Murphy (2008), DA is a reply to the need to somehow assess and assist low performing individuals. However, it can be used with individuals of any background and of any ability. Implementing DA has advantages over Non-Dynamic Assessment NDA or static methods of assessment. Most notably, Sternberg & Grigorenko (2002) assert that in DA the focus is on the future and on promoting the development of blossoming abilities whereas in NDA the focus is on the past, on what has already developed. Some of the advantages of DA have been listed in the following table.

DA and Non-Dynamic Assessment comparison extracted from Naeini & Duvall (2012)

assessment lies in the ability to individualize assessment (McNamara & Roever, 2006) to mimic good teaching practices, and to involve teachers more deeply in the assessment process.

Alternate Modeling

An alternative model to the static psychometric model of assessment is a more dynamic one in which the student's learning potential, or capacity, is the focus (Gipps 1994, p. 30). Not only is it of interest to assess what the student already knows, but it is also fundamental to understand the student's learning strategies, their ability to be aware of their learning, and their ability to have control with regard to their learning. An interactive or mediated assessment can indicate not only what a student knows, but can also reveal what they are able to do with regard to strategies, metacognition, and regulation of learning.

McNamara (2001) states that making the needs of learners a priority represents an alternative approach to assessment, rather than an alternative assessment type. He argues that any deliberate, sustained and explicit reflection by teachers and learners on the qualities of a learner's work can be thought of as a kind of assessment. In this approach teachers and learners are engaged in systematic reflection on the characteristics of an individual performance as an aid to the formulation of learning goals in a variety of contexts. During the assessment activity the teacher is not involved in the comparison of performance of different individuals, although a comparison can create aware-

ness of the different characteristics or features.

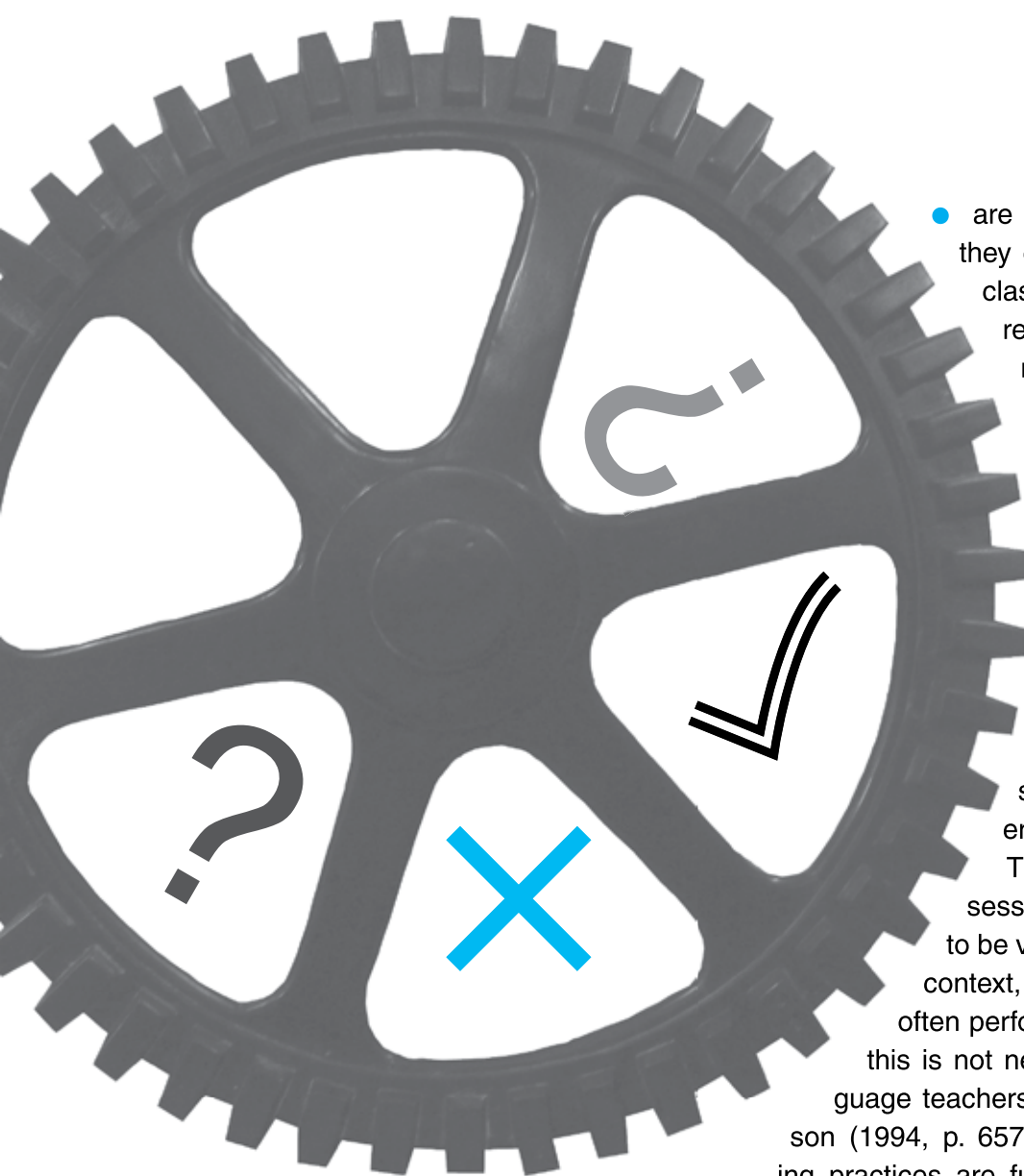
In such assessments, there is no interest in finding out who is relatively better or worse. Performance is not considered against any particular yardstick rather performance is viewed in terms of the individual's development as per a sociocultural theory of human development. Yet, as McNamara (2001) notes, this kind of assessment activity necessarily involves record keeping and reporting to fulfill managerialist agendas. He adds that there is an ongoing need for assessment to respond to the theoretical challenges presented by

An interactive or mediated assessment can indicate not only what a student knows, but can also reveal what they are able to do with regard to strategies, metacognition, and regulation of learning

advances in validity theory and in the epistemological upheavals in the social and behavioral sciences.

Nonetheless, regarding a call for a shift in educational measurement, Bachman (2000) concludes his discussion on modern language testing at the turn of the century saying that developments in language performance assessment, provided by related developments in language teaching and educational measurement, have resulted in a better understanding of the nature of the methods, or tasks that we use to elicit performance in language assessment. He also notes that this has led to a better understanding of the ways in which we can design, develop and use such tasks and evaluate their usefulness and more importantly, enriching the store of alternatives in language assessment.

In many ways, developments in language assessment attempt to address the complexity of language in the assessment of



- are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities already in place in a curriculum,
- allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day,
- provide information about both the strengths and the weaknesses of students, and
- are multi-culturally sensitive when properly administered.

Thus, alternative assessment in general seems to be very much grounded in context, being authentic and often performative in nature. Yet, this is not necessarily new to language teachers. As Brown and Hudson (1994, p. 657) note language testing practices are fundamentally different from assessment practices in most other disciplines, not only because of the complexity of the domain being tested but also because of the different types of tests that language teachers and administrators can and do use. In other words, it is common for language teachers to use various types of language tests, including what might appear to be alternative assessment. However, despite the range of options, it is neither the tools nor the tests themselves which offer the alternative assessment.

It is the value in the selection process, as well as the product that the teacher can carefully match to the individual in order to craft the assessment to the individual. Fundamentally, the strength of alternative as-

p. 6) have devised a list of features that various forms of alternative assessment have in common. In their view, alternative assessment types:

- require students to perform, create, produce, or do something;
- tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills;
- use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities;
- approximate real-world applications;
- ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgment;
- call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles.

Furthermore, Huerta-Macias (1995) suggests that alternative assessment types:

for learning, as opposed to assessment of learning, has emerged” (Davies & Lemahieu, 2003, p. 142).

Alternative Assessment

It has been more than a half century that practitioners have voiced the limitations of traditional psychometric assessment procedures in measuring the students’ achievement at the end of educational courses. Assessment reform movements have resulted in the emergence of diverse assessment procedures (Berry & Adamson, 2011). Although the procedures of the administration of the novel approaches may be difficult and more time-consuming, the advantages cannot be ignored. Following the reactions made against the limita-

tions of traditional psychometric assessments, current trends are no longer based on the view that language learning entails a passive accumulation of skills (Hamy, 1994). The informative data collected through alternative approaches to assessment provide a valuable context for more valid interpretations of assessment results.

Bailey (1996) argues that because of the probable inherent errors existing in tests, it might be dangerous to rely on a single traditional test score as the basis for passing a course. She also notes that teachers are increasingly questioning the authenticity of the traditional forms of testing as measures of the learner capability. To that end, drawing on the work of several scholars, Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992,



a lower to a higher level of proficiency in ways that enhance learner autonomy and learner motivation.

The shift away from a positivist (scientific) view point in second language education involves a move from the main principles of behaviorist psychology (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). In accordance with this shift a progression towards the “cognitive, and later, socio-cognitive psychology and more contextualized meaning-based views of language” has emerged (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). Not surprisingly, this shift is coupled by a move from product-oriented to more process oriented instruction and assessment (East, 2007). Interaction

which is of great value in process-based assessment approaches has no role in product-based traditional assessment procedures. The only time interaction is considered in traditional assessment approaches is in estimating the relationship between test scores and student abilities on the targeted constructs. This is fine when ancillary abilities (Kopriva, 2008) do not interact with how the students perform on items meant to measure targeted content. However, the ancillary abilities of test takers, especially English language learners, normally impact on how they answer items.

Traditionally, the approach to assessment was a product of behaviorist assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning. Consequently, standardized tests solely focused on memorization of isolated bits of factual knowledge and procedures that could be easily retrieved from tests

composed largely of multiple-choice items (Fredericksen, 1984). In such product-oriented approach the important aspects of cognition and learning such as conceptual understanding, reasoning, and complex problem solving were often ignored.

Currently, examinations and other forms of assessment are commonly used for the certification of competence, to monitor educational standards, and to serve as an important tool in selection. Assessment procedures must, then, be capable of providing data to determine achievement across a very wide range of content and skills. Assessment procedures must

Assessment procedures must also have the capacity to engage students from diverse cultural and personal backgrounds, and to offer a fair means of judging students with disabilities and other kinds of special needs

also have the capacity to engage students from diverse cultural and personal backgrounds, and to offer a fair means of judging students with disabilities and other kinds of special needs.

Not surprisingly, there is increasing interest in the potential of assessment procedures that can address these requirements and alternative assessment types are being brought into play for their capacity to measure variety in cognitive capabilities across individuals. As Pellegrino, Baxter, and Glaser (1999) insist, it is crucial to create instructional activities that can enhance learning outcomes and opportunities for all students. In addition, alternative assessment of learning and achievement can be designed to provide useful information to teachers and learners to reflect on in order to consider the content and skills to be studied or taught in order to improve performance. “In this respect, as mentioned by the concept of assessment

tive. A sociocultural perspective stresses how knowledge is conditioned and constrained by the technologies, information resources, representation systems, and social situations with which they interact. Contextualizing assessment exercises, according to Greeno, Collins, and Resnick (1997), decreases the assessor's control and increases the burden on the specification of distinct features of performances and performance situations.

It is not appropriate, however, according to Kopriva (2008), to measure the academic knowledge and skills of English language learners using tools which are not designed to provide valid and useful data about the students. More importantly in the era of increased accountability, the academic achievements of the students should be fairly represented. In addition, traditional testing techniques, e.g. multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, etc., are not appropriate to the current second/foreign language classroom practices because the descriptive information needed to plan instructional strategies cannot be obtained through these limiting conventional testing methods (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002).

A reference to the two value systems presented by East (2007), that is, the product-oriented value system and the process-oriented value system might be illuminating. The product-oriented value system, which is rooted in traditional behaviorist knowledge-based approaches, is concerned with the static assessment of students' learning. Summative tests that take place at a particular moment in time and provide a one-time snap-

shot of the test takers' abilities are the customary approach. On the other hand, the process-oriented value system is influenced by constructivist approaches. Constructive approaches, according to Meltzer and Reid (1994), represent learners as active processors of information who develop their own theories and ways of understanding through selecting, organizing, and connecting. This perspective which is more learner-centered and flexible favors a more sociocultural approach to testing such as DA. The process-oriented value system informs a theory of measuring students' attainments that has become known as assessment for learning. This approach is embedded within teaching and learning context and aims at moving learners from





ing psychological processes and cognitive development spawned a sociocultural perspective (Barnard & Campbell, 2005) in the learning sciences whereby the social context is at the heart of the learning process. One example of this, in language learning, is DA which involves the shared activity of teaching and learning based upon the engagement within the learner's zone of proximal development (Vgotsky, 1978, p. 85). In this paper, we consider the social aspects of testing as contextually relevant and propose a shift from product-oriented methods of assessment to a more process-oriented one.

From Product-oriented to Process-oriented Assessment

In response to the evolving conceptions of knowledge and its acquisition, and the developing technologies for gathering and evaluating response data, assessment practices have changed a great deal over the past century. Not only have the forms of the data been changed, according to Mislevy (2003), but also the conceptions of what the assessment data should include, how the collected data should be interpreted, as well as the kind of inferences made have been subject to transformation.

There have been many changes in the methods of systematically assessing students' academic knowledge and skills over the years (Shohamy, 2001). However, there has not been much progress in how students' cognitive schemata, schooling environments, and backgrounds influence their test scores and experiences. That is, the inferences made about their academic achievements and learning is not fairly valid. And, as Walters (2012, p. 474) suggests, in regards to fairness and validity, "it is reasonable to assume that test bias

will be a continual concern as long as unequal societal and educational divisions continue, as along gender, ethnic, or racial lines". This is troubling because, as we add to our knowledge about the different ways students learn, access knowledge, and develop skills, we realize that scores can sometimes mean totally different things (Kopriva, 2008).

Different psychological stances underlie the assessment argument and the shifts in assessment tools. Mislevy (2003) provides a summary of the four major schools of thought that have influenced views of testing and validation during the last century. The first one is a trait perspective in which hypothetical and unobservable constructs are proposed to locate people along continua of mental characteristics, just as their heights and weights locate them along continua of physical characteristics.

The second school of thought is the behaviorist perspective. In this school, knowledge is collected through stimulus-response associations.

Assessments designed on the basis of this school of thought, estimate the probability of success in a domain based on the number of knowledge bits a student has mastered. The third school proposes the information processing perspective. The information-processing perspective examines the procedures by which people acquire, store, and use knowledge to solve problems. According to Mislevy, the assessment design considers both task features and student performances. Inferences, arising from this school of thought, are made in terms of concepts and problem solving strategies rather than indirectly in terms of the features of problems as an expert sees them.

The fourth is the sociocultural perspec-

Paradigm Shift

Assessment is considered an information gathering activity (Bailey, 1996) used to gauge a specific quantity of knowledge or progress towards that state. Naturally, as part of the assessment process with regard to schooling, data must be collected. Yet, collecting the relevant data at the rate that progress monitoring now demands, has made students face what now appears to be an unprecedented number of exams and tests administered on a regular basis. Thus, it is essential to consider the importance of testing vis-à-vis its inherent value, as well as its implications with regard to test score interpretation, and the possible social consequences of actual and potential test use (Messick, 1995).

Consider, for example, the summative assessment, which is used to measure the accumulative achievements of students. This type of assessment, as an external force, may have a profound effect on the learning experiences of students promoting either extrinsic or intrinsic learning (Kozaki & Ross, 2011). In other words, summative assessment may potentially support learning, as well as measure it (Black & William, 2003). However, given the problematic nature of excessive testing it is hardly acceptable to look at summative assessment from a learning perspective. Considering the fact that excessive testing might lead to learning to pass the test, one might argue that revolution is needed in the field of assessment in order to address the seemingly unsolvable problem of undue and increasing amounts of testing (Kuhn, 1970). Furthermore, after overlooking the

issues of utility, fairness, flexibility and relevance for more than a century, we may well be standing at the threshold of significant change (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 2009, p. xi). As such, there is a need to reconsider the current assumptions we can add on assessment and the way we practice it.

Further support for change comes from the fact that education exists to improve learners' knowledge, their understandings, and their skills; and to help them develop (Dewey, 1944). Education, with its eye always on the future, also helps individuals to take advantage of new and emerging forms of learning opportunities (Broadfoot, 2005). Yet, the significant roles of the learners in the educational settings have generally been ignored.

Assessment methods should seek to focus on the process of learning rather than the product of learning, and should recognize the fundamental centrality of the learner Learning, ultimately, is constructed and controlled by the student (Dann, 2002) and if assessment is to give some fair indications of the learner's level of learning and development, in ways which will support development, the

learner will need to come to understand and to contribute to the process of both learning and assessment. Thus, assessment methods should seek to focus on the process of learning rather than the product of learning, and should recognize the fundamental centrality of the learner. To do so, however, there needs to be an attempt to make the role of the learner explicit contrary to the current model in which the role of the learner remains implicit in relation to learning development.

This approach to paradigm shift in assessment rests on the view that learning is a social activity as emphasized by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's work in understand-

A Journey from: Psychometric Tests to Dynamic Assessment

Parviz Birjandi, Department of English Language, Science and Research Branch
Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: pbirjand@yahoo.com

Jila Naeini (Corresponding Author), Department of English Language Science
and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: naeini.j@gmail.com

Emily Duvall, University of Idaho, Coeur d'Alene, US. Email: emily@uidaho.edu



چکیده

روش‌های نمونه‌آزمون‌های زبان در حال تغییرند. مدل‌های متداول آزمون زبان تأمین‌کننده اطلاعات کافی در مورد توانایی‌های افراد نیستند و به‌همین دلیل، اغلب مورد نقد و بررسی قرار می‌گیرند. روش‌های پیشرو مانند ساختارگرایی که بر اصول ارزشیابی معتبر و درست تأکید دارند، روش‌های فرهنگی - اجتماعی که بر مفاهیمی مانند میانجیگری و حوزه تقریبی رشد (ZPD) متمرکزند و همچنین تساوی و انصاف در آزمون و ارزشیابی زبان همه راه برای یک تغییری تعهدآمیز هموار می‌سازند. برای اینکه در آزمون و ارزشیابی زبان هم بر فرایند و پردازش و هم بر حاصل و نتیجه فراگیری تأکید شود، روش‌های جایگزینی ارائه شده‌اند. در ضمن ارزشیابی پویا - که یک روش آموزشی - آزمونی تعاملی و یک روش ارزشیابی روانی - آموزشی است (هیوود و لیدز، ۲۰۰۷) - به دلیل فرضیه آن در پیشرفت افراد از طریق داخل کردن آموزش در روند ارزشیابی به سرعت بر محبوبیت آن افزوده می‌شود. هدف این مقاله بررسی پیشینه و ادبیات مرتبط با آزمون زبان به منظور ارائه دلایل منطقی برای نیاز به تغییر روش‌های سنجش توان زبانی فراگیرندگان زبان به‌سوی یک روش پویا در ارزشیابی است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: ارزشیابی پویا، تئوری فرهنگی - اجتماعی، حوزه تقریبی رشد، ارزشیابی جایگزین

Abstract

Language testing is undergoing a paradigm shift. The prevalent psychometric models of language testing have been frequently reviewed and criticized for their limitations in providing enough information about the individuals' abilities. Progressive approaches, such as constructivism, which emphasize the authentic assessment procedures; socio-cultural approaches, which focus on the concepts like mediation and the zone of proximal development; and arguments for considering social dimensions, as well as fairness in language testing and assessments, have all paved the way for a promising paradigm shift. In order to focus on both the process and the product in language testing and assessment, some alternative assessment approaches have been suggested. Meanwhile, dynamic assessment (DA), an interactive testing - teaching model of psychological and psycho-educational assessment (Haywood & Lidz, 2007), has been rapidly evolving as an approach of interest due to its theoretical foundations which look promising for individual development through embedding instruction in the assessment procedures. The aim of this paper is to examine the available literature in order to understand why a shift in assessment procedures toward DA might be reasonable.

Key Words: sociocultural theory, alternative assessments, dynamic assessment, zone of proximal development