

INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION: DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT AND ITS CRITICISMS EXAMINED

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Dynamic Assessment has recently been voiced of constructivism, the socio-cultural theory of learning. This article, challenging the psychometric and product-based test, makes an attempt to delve into the epistemological and ontological theories of Dynamic Assessment (DA) and their criticisms. DA is the offspring of Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Feuerstein's mediated learning experience (MLE). It emphasises constructing a future through mediations. Interestingly, this development-oriented process of collaboration relies on the unification of instruction and assessment which is a strong threat to the reliability of the psychometric tests. This study also deals with the battle of views on DA. It discusses the appealing face of DA embracing ethical values, fairness and social equity, and the process based assessment. It also argues the negative face of DA comprising modifiability, interventionism, and stability. It finally concludes that each system should be criticised by certain criteria. Faced with the scarcity of research both theoretically and empirically, the critical analysis of this new generation of test in an L2 setting might be helpful for further discussions, suggestions and implications in the second language learning arena.

Keywords: dynamic assessment; constructivism; mediation; modifiability; ZPD; interventionism.

Introduction

In the postmodern era, reforms in language teaching, as expected, have not left the assessment orientation untouched and along with changes in the second language teaching, the assessment has also shifted from the product-based to the process-based methodology. This innovative system appreciates developmentalist views of language learning (Gipps, 1994; Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Cook, 2013).

However, the gap between "theory" and "practice" in ELT is thoroughly noticeable. The traditional static tests with predetermined criteria are still dominant in measuring the learner's achievement (Birjandi and Sarem, 2012; Poehner, 2008). This psychometric approach to testing is compatible with deterministic, unilateral, behavioural and transmissional paradigm (Kuhn, 1962 as cited in Nunan, 1999). Indeed, the advocates acknowledge the traditional test for its reliance on the discrete items. They also highly credit the standardisation and normalisation of the test (Grigorenko and Sternberg, 1998 as cited in Teo, 2012). Some researchers, notably Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996) make an attempt to develop techniques and procedures to maximise the consistency of scores, the accuracy of constructs and the generalisability of the test to the new condition. Surprisingly, most test developers and teachers are still following these static tests in their classes. In fact, they consume decontextualised tests underlining validity and reliability and undermining social facets in language testing.

Despite the public acceptance, the critical voices doubt the validity of the results of these tests (Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Poehner, 2008). Moreover, Gipps (1994) contends that these tests devalue the quality of teaching. McNamara (2000) also criticises the static test for its ignorance of the significance of social dimensions in language testing. He states that "through marrying itself to psychometrics, language testing has obscured, perhaps deliberately, its social dimension" (p. 1). Similarly, the proponents of constructivism pose a certain challenge to the purpose of the static test by discussing that it fails to make learners as constructors or problem solvers (Johnson et al., 2007 as cited in Birjandi and Daftarifard, 2011). They also claim that the static test, overemphasising normative sampling, unfairly devalues the performance of the minorities (McNamara and Roeber, 2006). Tsagari (2004) in his article entitled "Is there life beyond language testing?" raises a number of issues about the traditional test and the need for assessment reforms. The first concern is dissatisfaction with types of information via conventional tests which are incongruent with the current perspective of the second language learning practice. Indeed, they fail to describe the students' ongoing growth or process. Furthermore, hardly are they appropriate for gathering information as far as their attitude, motivation, interest and learning strategies are concerned (Barootchi and Keshavarz, 2002). The other significant issue deals with the washback effects of high-stakes or standardised tests which negatively influence the curricular, educational and psychological levels. These tests narrow the school

curriculum, restrict the methods and approaches to learning, demotivate students and impede their reasoning power (Gipps, 1994; Alderson and Wall, 1993 as cited in Tsagari, 2004). As to summative tests, they aim to summarise students learning at one point in time (Brown, 2004), not providing the immediate and contextualised feedbacks necessary for learning. The examiner is assumed to be as neutral as possible during the testing procedure (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). More importantly, the traditional test acknowledges the instruction-assessment dualism (Poehner, 2008).

In the face of these criticisms challenging the adequacy of the dominated static test, the shift of paradigm towards the holistic-humanistic-transformation process and more significantly Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory has led to the emergence of a novel orientation in the history of assessment known as Dynamic Assessment (Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Poehner, 2008; Murphy and Maree, 2006). In Dynamic Assessment, which is an instruction-assessment process, the learner is a meaning-inventor in a democratic community where the fairness and symmetric power are appreciated (Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Poehner, 2008). Undoubtedly, in the age of accountability and the importance of assessment literacy for educational teachers, any research on Dynamic Assessment (DA henceforth) would be helpful in the second language learning setting; particularly it becomes important in the context of Iran, where students are still tested inappropriately.

This study starts with a brief summary of DA, its theoretical foundations and two main approaches to DA as found in the literature, followed by the recent critiques. In this regard, the accuracy of the theories and assumptions underlying DA are evaluated. The paper attempts to tease out the common ground on which DA is based. This is followed by an analysis of key concepts underpinning Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Feurestein's (1987) Mediation theory. This study, examining the claims and criticisms, discusses that confusions about DA arise from inaccuracy of interpretations regarding Vygotsky historical-dialectical-monist philosophy. Ultimately, it concludes that it is unjustifiable to gain definitive decisions concerning the adoption of a single culture testing as a panacea for ELT.

Dynamic assessment

The last few years have witnessed the introduction of DA as a response to criticisms against conventional, static tests which measure the learner's current knowledge (e.g. Lidz, 1978 as cited in Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Murphy and Maree, 2006; Poehner, 2008). The dynamic assessment website defines DA as "an interactive approach to conducting assessment with the domains of psychology, speech/ language, or education that focuses on the ability of the learner to respond to intervention" (cited in Birjandi and Sarem 2012, p. 750). Similarly, Poehner (2008) elaborates the concept of DA as the "active collaboration with individuals simultaneously reveals the full range of their abilities and promotes their development. In educational contexts, this means that assessment (understanding learner's abilities) and instruction (supporting learner development) are a dialectically integrated activity" (p. 2). These definitions underline the active collaboration, learning development, dialectic activities, and unifying instruction-assessment. DA is different from Non-Dynamic (ND) assessment as far as ontological and epistemological perspectives are concerned. While the latter is a psychometrical orientation, the former is "a development oriented-process of collaborative engagement that reveals the underlining causes of learners' performance problems and helps learners overcome them" (Hill and Sabet, 2009, p. 537). DA is believed to stem from Vygotsky's theory embracing the integration of assessment and instruction in learning development (Lidz, 1978 as cited in Birjandi and Sarem, 2012). However, the first researcher who coins "Dynamic" in contrast with statistical testing is Luria (1961) and Vygotsky himself does not conceptualise this construct as DA (Poehner and Lantolf, 2005; Ortega, 2014). Vygotsky's theory is grounded in an alternative epistemological paradigm of "historical-dialectical-monism" rather than dualism (Liu and Matthews, 2005; Murphy, 2008; Tan, 2015). Surprisingly, the integration of instruction and assessment in the literature has a long history. It appears in Socrates' work in which assessment is an instructional intervention. DA questions the traditional instruction-assessment dualism by assuming that assessment is an integral component of effective teaching. This occurs when intervention is embedded in assessment in order to interpret the learners' ability as well as their future development. In fact, a teacher as a promoter provides the situated feedback during this planned meditational and continuous process of teaching. The central notion to DA is the examiner's mediations and examinees' response to mediations through the assessment process (Haywood and Lidz, 2006).

Theoretical constructs of DA

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. DA has its roots in the ZPD introduced by Vygotsky in his socio-cultural theory of child development. The ZPD is viewed as the distance between the actual level (the autonomous level) and the potential level (the mediated level) of the learners' development while they are

interacting with more competent peers (Ellis, 2008; Lightbown and Spada, 2006). “The actual developmental level characterises mental development retrospectively, while the ZPD characterises mental development prospectively” (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Ajideh, Farrokhi, and Nourdad, 2012, p. 104). In fact, the actual level is determined via unassisted tasks and the potential level of development is through assistance. The ZPD can be changed throughout life and it is decided through assisted tasks while learners are moving towards their dynamic and emergent future. More explicitly, the ZPD indicates both developing and developed abilities of learners through dialogic process of interaction between the assessor and the learner. For Vygotsky, the ZPD seems to describe the next level of development via the use of tools and capable peers. Poehner and Lantolf (2005) add the fact that DA is compatible with “future-in-the-making models of development” (p. 237). Indeed, the proponents of DA claim that the superiority of DA over the static test is due to the learner’s hidden potential (in ZPD) or reserve capacity in a dynamic process (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002).

The mediation theory. The key concept in the socio-cultural theory is the mediation found in the work of both Vygotsky and Feuerstein (Poehner, 2008). Feuerstein (1988), emphasising the indirect and mediated interaction between the learner and the environment, claims that in mediation learning a more capable peer enters into the learner’s process of interpretation. This fact can be captured nicely when Vygotsky argues that the human’s relation with the world is mediated by physical as well as symbolic tools, the most essential of which is the language (Alavi, Kaivanpanah, and Shabani, 2011; Murphy, 2008).

Constructivist theories. DA is thought to origin from constructivism. Constructivism deals with the multiple interpretations of the reality. In this sense, learners are assumed to be the inventors of meaning in a constructivist environment. Constructivism emerges out of Piaget’s cognitive development and Vygotsky’s social interaction. While Vygotsky (1978) heavily relies on environmental factors such as socialisation and instruction, Piaget downplays them. The fact is that Piaget is mostly concerned with epistemological and philosophical facets of knowledge (Sjøberg, 2007). To him, the genesis and development of knowledge are central. Indeed, he describes the cognitive development in terms of biological maturation (pre-determined stages of learning), schemes, and the process of assimilation and accommodation. Of course, Vygotsky shares the same view but asserts that an individual’s independent processing of the input cannot account for development. He also states that the social interaction with a more capable person is fundamental in the process of learning (Murphy, 2008). Moreover, by the conceptualisation of the ZPD (rather than Piaget’s scheme terminology), he capitalises on socialisation as the species-specific feature of human beings.

As for language learning and the debates between nature and nurture, Vygotsky (1978) unifies social and mental dualism through the process of internalisation. This process takes place “initially as an interpersonal (I and you) and later as an intrapersonal process (I and me)” (cited in Poehner, 2008, p. 56).

Thus, as Murphy (2008) puts forth, Vygotsky adopts the concept of a flexible brain which could be shaped by the social environment such as collaboration and the dialectic interaction. Importantly, the notion of Vygotsky’s “mind in society” or “context and cognition” is seen in DA (Beals, 2000; Lidz, 1992a; Snow, 1998 as cited in Murphy, 2008, p. 202).

Approaches to DA

DA ties to the realisation of the ZPD construct and the MLE (Mediated Learning Experience). It highlights the learners’ potential which exceeds beyond present capabilities. Their cognitive abilities can be modified via their dialogic interaction if an adequate mediation is provided by a more competent assessor. The conceptualisations of modifiability in the ZPD have resulted in divergent interpretations of DA. This monistic perspective of assessment and teaching displays the extent to which the learner’s ability is modifiable; in other words, modifiability is the indicator of the learner’s prospective capacity or his/her ZPD (Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Lantolf and Poehner, 2004). Lantolf and Poehner (2004) conceptualise the divergent interpretations of DA in terms of the degree of modifiability as interventionist and interactionist approaches to DA.

The interventionist approach to DA. The pioneers of the interventionist approach praise the concept of modifiability via adopting a test-instruction-retest design to assessment which is typical of psychometric tests. Indeed, the instructor intervenes the process of learning while the ZPD is quantitatively computed as the difference between what the testees can do before the remedial instruction (pretests) and what they can perform with assistance and after interventions (posttests) (Lantolf and Poehner, 2004). In terms of mediation, it is scored as a series of standardised hints ranging from implicit to explicit (Poehner, 2008).

The interactionist approach to DA. The interactionist approach welcomes the feedbacks and assessment during instruction (Poehner 2008). This perspective warmly adopts the mediator-learner interaction and

overlooks predetermined endpoints (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). Moreover, the mediator focuses on the quality as well as the quantity of mediation.

It is worth mentioning that Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) use the sandwich and cake formats referring to the interventionist and interactionist approaches respectively. In the sandwich format, the learner's improvement is assessed by comparing his/her performance between the pre-test and the post-test which can be assumed as the result of mediation. But, the cake format depends on the mediation during the assessment. In fact, in the interactionist approach, the mediators help the learners to be problem solvers by providing the feedbacks that satisfy their need while they are assessed, not through a set of hints, feedbacks, and prompts in advances.

DA and its criticism

Setting out to overcome the instruction-testing dualistic view as well as the inadequacy of conventional tests in post-modernistic view of teaching, DA emerges as an innovative system of assessment within the constructivist paradigm (Ajideh, Farrokhi, and Nourdad, 2012; Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2002). However, it has attracted a certain number of criticisms. As to the good face of DA, the apostles of DA put greater values on prognosis rather than diagnosis. For instance, Luria (1961 as cited in Poehner, 2008) lauds DA for its function as a predictive value of the learner's performance when it is mediated via dialectic interaction between the learner and the examiner. That is why DA is sometimes termed as "assessment by teaching" (Newman, 1989 as cited in Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi, 2011). He also claims that traditional tests do not close the problems as they don't assist learners' process of learning. In a similar vein, Vygotsky, "the founder father of DA" insists that assessment should account for the source of problems with which the learners are struggling. It should also deal with the strategies they need to solve the problems while they are moving forward in their developmental process of learning. Of course, assessment, in this sense, goes beyond the learners' present capabilities (Poehner, 2008). Scholars such as Murphy (2008) also appreciate DA for nurturing the inventor learner in a constructivist community. They believe that in this humanistic atmosphere the power is disseminated equally. Thus, one of the main merits of DA which justifies its implication is its fairness.

Overall, DA has received warm welcome from a number of thinkers and theoreticians (Vygotsky 1978; Feuerstein, Rand, and Rynders, 1988), practitioners (Haywood and Lidz, 2006) and researchers in the second language learning arena (Alavi, Kaivanpanah, and Shabani, 2011; Birjandi and Daftarifard, 2011; Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Pishghadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood, 2011; Teo, 2012). A number of DA practitioners, adopting Feuerstein's (1988) and Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, assert that the effective mediation is the key component in ZPD routes. Haywood and Lidz (2007), mentioning the appealing face of DA, contend that "we should find routes to move the learner to the next level of development" (p. 41).

On the other hand, the researchers challenge the negative face of DA by questioning the concept of ZPD. The critics (e.g. Chaikling, 2003 as cited in Poehner, 2008; Valsiner and Van der, 1993 as cited in Poehner, 2008) argue that Vygotsky (1978) initially deals with the ZPD in the context of intelligence testing and later he expands it to the relationship of education and the cognitive development. Indeed, they do not credit the genesis of the ZPD in Vygotsky's theory because "Vygotsky himself was of two minds on the subject" (Poehner, 2008, p. 34).

The other main demerit of DA lies in the concept of "modifiability" which is thought to be a fundamental value in DA and the learner's ZPD (Kozulin and Garb, 2002). Modifiability in DA is viewed as the changeability of the examinee's task during the assessment which is the indicator of the person's potential learning ability in future. In other words, it is defined as the extent to which the mediation assists the examinee's task to be modified (modifiability) and this assisted task is transferred to the other context (stability). The critics on modifiability argue that DA embraces the controversial issues of stability and modifiability simultaneously. Indeed, the stability of the modified behaviour appears to be a crucial factor in determining the learner's future (Poehner and Lantolf, 2005).

The critical thinkers such as Poehner (2008) also challenge divergent interpretations of modifiability. They particularly attack the interventionist model in which modifiability is gained as the difference between pretests and posttests. The result of the change between the two phases is assumed as a consequence of the intervention. They question the legitimacy of DA by arguing that it violates the goal of DA which underlines assistance during assessment. As it is implied, the proponents of the intervention approach yield nothing beyond the pretest treatment posttest method which is typical of psychometric tests. Moreover, what they compute is simply the learners' present development which displays nothing about their potential level in the ZPD. They ignore the dynamics of collaboration in the mediator-learner interaction which is at the heart of DA. Accordingly, this quantitative approach to DA lacks the construct validity since the assessor does not

assist the examinees at the time of assessment-instruction process. Indeed, he/she is merely equipped with pre-established sequences of questions (mediations) during teaching disregarding the learners' need in their ZPD.

As to the interactionist DA, although it seems the most comprehensive model of DA, the critical voices doubt its practicality, in particular, when a large number of students are involved. They challenge this model by asking: "how to provide the adequate mediations?" Feuerstein's (1988) MLE, inspired by Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, gives close attention to the mediation or the indirect interaction with the environment. He elucidates this concept by stating that learning occurs when a more competent peer enters into a relationship with the child and interprets him/her. However, the main flaw lies in the effective and adequate mediations. The fact is that the mediator-examiner must be so qualified at providing appropriate mediations that they can co-construct a ZPD successfully. He/she needs the skill to be attuned to learners' current ability and at the same time to assist them by providing the mediations which can satisfy their need and foster their development (Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi, 2011; Haywood and Lidz, 2006). Moreover, those who are critical of alternative methods of assessment argue that it is time-consuming for the teacher to provide an adequate feedback to a large number of learners. For instance, Cizek (2000) states: "perhaps the peskiest pocket of resistance in the assessment revolution is the inadequate preparation of teachers and administrators in the fundamentals of educational assessment" (as cited in Tsagari, 2004, p. 12).

There is a harsh criticism against the methodological aspects of DA. Certain features of DA such as standardisation and validation have been critically questioned by educational measurement and testing specialists (Guthke, Beckmann, and Dobat, 1997). They attack the essence of DA, "modifiability", which is a source of threat to the test reliability. Indeed, the modifiability embraces any change of the learner's behaviour during assessment; on the other hand, the reliability estimates the consistency of the testee's scores. So, the modifiability itself is a source of errors which affects the consequence of the test. In this sense, the test is devoid of the test reliability and validity (Bachman, 1990). Similarly, its generalisability is questionable, since the unreliable tests should not be replicated. Overall, according to the critics, DA researchers have unnoticed the validation process of tests. In fact, the disciples of DA interactionists such as Feuerstein and his fascinated followers sacrifice standardisation for depicting emergent dynamic abilities.

Still some researchers, due to the deviation from the origin of DA, (Leung and Mohan, 2004) among the others, conceive of DA as a sort of formative assessment (FA). Although both FA and DA capitalise on assisting the learners for required tasks, they are different in the purpose and method of assisting. While in DA modifiability is a goal which is the anticipation of the learners' capacity to do the task independently via their present ability; in FA, the mediated task seems to play a scaffolding role via providing feedback for teaching. Thus, the former highlights transferring assisted performance to the other unassisted contexts; the latter merely concerns examinees' current knowledge. Moreover, DA assessment is not simply formative; it may function as both formative and summative. The scholars credit DA by stating that "it unveils facts about learners' developmental status that other standardised assessments would otherwise fail to reveal" (Bavali, Yamini, and Sadighi, 2011, p. 900). It has the potential to reveal the hidden aspects of learning. Hence, DA is definitely beyond a formative assessment.

The other major misinterpretation of DA is when it is termed as "an ongoing evaluation" or "a continual evaluation" by some researchers (e.g. Yunian and Ness, 1999 as cited in Bavali et al., 2011). This wrong interpretation appears to be affected by Piaget's cognitive developmental psychology underpinning a step-wise evaluation. This conceptualisation discards the significant role of Vygotskian socio-cognitive developmental process which is the essence of DA. As to the term 'dynamic,' some critics prefer 'learning assessment' to 'dynamic assessment' since some tests are vividly static (e.g. the motion picture test) but may be referred to dynamic. According to Snow (1990), conceptualisation of "learning assessment" would be better than the term dynamic in contrast with "static" (as cited in (Guthke, Beckmann, and Dobat, 1997).

As discussed, critics pose a certain challenge to DA by arguing several issues over the epistemology, methodology, and practicality of the DA culture. On the other hand, thinkers who look at it more optimistically try to mitigate the contentions against DA. They object to the issue of standardisation and validation on philosophical grounds, contending that DA arises from a different paradigm. Indeed, the legitimacy of each system is to be judged in terms of its goal. It is unjustifiable, as Poehner (2008) discusses, to evaluate DA by the same criteria used for the psychometric tests which are incongruent with Vygotsky's theory of mind. More significantly, the decisions for the use of any assessment must rely on the consequences or washback. Winke (2011), citing Messick's (1980, 1989) perspective, claims that "tests should be more than just statistically valid. They should be fair, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate" (p. 632). Since DA is grounded in the humanistic, process-oriented paradigm which is divergent from the behaviouristic, product-oriented psychometric tests, its merits and demerits must be voiced in terms

of certain qualities in order to satisfy the developmental process of learning. Hence, DA particularly the interactionist approach is of legitimacy because it gains a wealth of information for fulfilling its purpose that is promoting learner development; put it differently, the learning process gets superiority over the product.

Concluding remarks

To overcome the problems inherent in the educational system particularly the testing culture, the critical voices attack the psychometric or the static test for its over-reliance on standardisation and normalisation (Grigorenko and Sternberg, 1998 as cited in Teo, 2012). Indeed, this regime undermines the ethical values, power equity, individual differences, and fairness (McNamara, 2000; McNamara and Roever, 2006). More technically, the consequential validity by Messick (1989) seems to be victimised in the validation process of the test. According to Fulcher and Davidson (2007), tests must be useful to both the society and individuals, but this test does not close the problems of ELT and fails to interpret the students' attitudes, interests, and values (Barootchi and Keshavarz, 2002). Besides, these traditional tests are assumed to measure the examinees' ability but the scores indicate how well they are trained for the test (Alderson and Wall, 1993 as cited in Tsagari 2004). In this regard, a postmodern view on education acknowledges a new generation of assessment which is conceptualised as DA (e.g. Lidz, 1978 as cited in Birjandi and Sarem 2012; Kozulin and Garb 2002). According to Poehner (2008), the epistemology and genesis of DA deal with the unification of instruction and assessment which is a severe threat to standardised tests. This novel orientation of assessment culture springs from Vygotsky's ZPD in the socio-cultural theory and Feuerstein's MLE. It offers learners external forms of mediation in order to scaffold them to perform beyond their current level of ability (Vygotsky, 1989 as cited in Poehner, 2009). What is perhaps remarkable is the key component of modifiability during the dialectic interaction between the assessor and the learner. Indeed, modifiability is an indicator of the learner's potential capacity in the future. More directly, it indicates to what extent the learner's behaviour is changeable via the mediated tasks during the assessment and transferred to their future ability. The apostles of DA claim that the superiority of prognosis over diagnosis, the mastery of consequential validity over accuracy, and the priority of fairness to asymmetric power can be fostered through the implementation of DA in diverse disciplines and settings.

Nevertheless, the critics challenge DA from certain facets. For instance, they question the simultaneity of modifiability and stability, the interventionist approach to DA, and even the legitimacy of DA itself (Kozulin and Garb, 2002; Poehner and Lantolf, 2005). They also criticise the validation of this innovative system of assessment. Poehner (2008), delving into the historical-dialectic-monist process of DA, believes that it is unfair and unjustifiable to evaluate DA (guided by an alternative epistemological paradigm) in terms of the criteria in the traditional tests. The assumption behind this system is that knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration between the assessor and the students. So, the focus is on the learning process rather than the product, since it is the product-based test which necessarily appreciates validity, reliability, and generalisability.

The fact is that, in the age of accountability and popularity of constructivist strategies of teaching, non-dynamic tests are still prevalent in the education system of Iran particularly in the second language learning arena. This study may provide the information concerning how to bridge the gap between assessment and instruction in order to collect the authentic data. It may also yield some suggestions and implications regarding the thorny issues of ELT. Adequate training and teacher education concerning mediational strategies would seem to be demanding. Teachers might know how to offer mediations meeting each individual's cognitive and emotional need. Moreover, assessment literacy is suggested to be a pivotal content area of professional development for prospective teachers. Assessment literate teachers could focus on the treatment validity and localised assessment. They could also interpret evidence of learners' attitude, interest, and values. As Vygotsky (1998) states, "interpretation of children rather than their measurement is required in the assessment process" (as cited in Poehner, 2008, p. 204). Also, these teachers become familiar with merits and demerits of different systems of assessment and, if possible, they can utilise the eclectic method in their assessment. In this sense, the product- and process-based approach might be assumed as a complementary orientation and can be reconceptualised to overcome the negative faces of each system.

As to implications, DA can be implemented in the educational setting where the constructivist teaching fosters students' creativity, exploration and inquiry. With the teacher's mediation, they can invent their own version of reality via diverse strategies. So, we can implement DA to assess the individual differences where the educational system puts high value on the strategy-based instruction. Mediational strategies might also be used in translation classes (the oral and written translation) for assessment. Teachers would provide mediations arranged from implicit to explicit during the test to assess the students' potential ability. The strategies are based on the learners' needs in order to assess the process of translation. Teachers might also

conduct and evaluate conversation classes via certain questions in order to help learners move forward in their ZPD paths. Furthermore, this socio-cultural based assessment could serve as a solution for cultural insensitivity found in traditional testing. More specifically, it could be fruitful in assessing learners with disadvantages and disabilities (Luria, 1961 as cited in Birjandi and Sarem, 2012). The other implication of DA might be for bilingual and multilingual learners as minority groups. So it can be an attempt to scaffold those who need assistance. In a similar vein, researchers are suggested to offer strategies for providing mediations in order to improve learners' potential ability.

It is worth mentioning that, while the dynamic assessment might have multifaceted contributions to the second language learning process, we cannot abandon the testing culture capturing learners' actual knowledge as the product. Since different products over certain times might partially, not totally, indicate the learner's process. In fact, it is premature to gain definitive conclusions concerning the single method of assessment (either the product or process) as a panacea for ELT in Iran. Put it differently, multiperspectivism appears more justifiable in EFL classrooms. In brief, this paper might give educators pause to reflect carefully and critically on the concept of DA and may encourage them to conduct empirical research concerning the effect of DA on facets of the second language learning in different cultures for improvability of educational assessment.

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