

University of New Mexico

UNM Digital Repository

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies
ETDs

Education ETDs

Fall 12-16-2022

EFL Teachers' Understandings of the Role of Assessment in Second Language Learning

Evelyn Almeida

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_llss_etds



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Almeida, Evelyn. "EFL Teachers' Understandings of the Role of Assessment in Second Language Learning." (2022). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_llss_etds/144

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Education ETDs at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Evelyn Almeida

Candidate

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Carlos Lopez Leiva, Chairperson

Dr. Rebecca Blum-Martinez, (co-chair)

Dr. Holbrook Mahn

Dr. Hazel Acosta

**EFL Teachers' Understandings of the Role of Assessment in Second
Language Learning**

By

EVELYN ALMEIDA

B. A., Linguistics Applied to English Language, Escuela Politécnica del Ejército, 2007

M.A, Educational Management and Leadership, Universidad Técnica Particular de
Loja, 2012

M. A., Linguistics and Didactics of Foreign Language Teaching, Universidad Central
del Ecuador, 2015

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

The University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico

December, 2022

DEDICATION

*Esta disertación es
dedicada a mi querida abuela, Mariana García,
padres, Luisa García, Fernando Almeida,
y a mis hermanos, Fernando Darío Almeida y Jonathan Almeida
que siempre han sido fuente de inspiración y aliento
para continuar mis estudios superiores.
A mi querido esposo, Jorge Erazo,
y mis amados hijos, Antonella, Emilia y Jorge Fernando Erazo,
quienes siempre han estado junto a mí y
han sido mi motor para
terminar mis estudios*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to offer my sincere thanks to all the people who supported me in any way from the first moment, I stepped on the UNM campus. First, I want to thank my supervisor and academic advisor, Dr. Rebecca Blum-Martinez, for her guidance and unconditional support throughout these years of studies.

I could not leave aside all the committee members, Dr. Holbrook Mahn, who always supported me when needed. Dr. Carlos Lopez Leiva for his valuable advice, and Dr. Hazel Acosta for taking the time to share this journey with me.

I also want to thank my professors along the way Dr. Pisarn Chamcharatsri, Dr. Ruth Trinidad Galván (+), Dr. Grandon Goertz and Dr. Diego Cajas, for your support.

**EFL Teachers' Understandings of the Role of Assessment in Second
Language Learning**

By

Evelyn Almeida

B. A., Linguistics Applied to English Language, Escuela Politécnica del Ejército, 2007

M.A, Educational Management and Leadership, Universidad Técnica Particular de
Loja, 2012

M. A., Linguistics and Didactics of Foreign Language Teaching, Universidad Central
del Ecuador, 2015

Ph.D., Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, University of New Mexico, 2022

ABSTRACT

Given the important role of assessment in the process of Second Language Learning (SLL) and framed within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), this study aims to analyze: (1) how EFL teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in SLL can be improved, (2) how effective dynamic assessment is in their teaching practices, (3) how EFL teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment, and (4) what strategies can help them understand these concepts. These four points are studied within the context of English classes at a Language Institute in Quito, Ecuador. This project's contribution brings Dynamic Assessment as an innovative and interactive way of assessing learning and teaching. DA can be used as a support to blend what is currently being used in the different schools and institutes, objective assessment with DA.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Teaching, Learning, Dynamic Assessment, Zone of Proximal Development, Mediation, Ecuador

TABLE OF CONTENT

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTSiv

ABSTRACT v

TABLE OF CONTENTvi

LIST OF FIGURES.....xii

LIST OF TABLES xiii

CHAPTER 1..... 1

INTRODUCTION..... 1

 Background of the Study..... 2

 Statement of the Problem..... 7

 Research questions 13

 Sub-questions: 14

 Purpose of the Study 14

 Significance of the Study 15

 Research Design Overview 17

 Limitations of the Study..... 19

 Definitions of Key Terminology 19

CHAPTER 2..... 1

REVIEW OF LITERATURE 1

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Second Language Learning.....	1
Theories explaining SLL.....	1
Sociocultural Theory and Zone of Proximal Development as the Theoretical Framework	6
Mediation in Sociocultural Theory	7
Zone of Proximal Development	9
Conceptual Development	10
Teachers' Understanding	13
Zone of Proximal Teacher Development	14
Understanding the Role of assessment in Second Language Learning.....	15
Assessment to Ensure Authentic Performance	16
Assessment to Provide Ongoing Feedback.....	18
Assessment to Improve Students Understanding.....	20
Dynamic Assessment	23
Using DA in the Construction of ZPTD	33
Self-Assistance Phase.....	34
Expert-Assistance Phase	35
Internalization Phase	35
Recursion phase	36
CHAPTER 3.....	38
METHODOLOGY.....	38
Qualitative Research	38

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Action Research	39
Stage 1. Exploration	41
Stage 2. Action	42
Overview of Information Needed	44
Contextual Information	44
Population and Sample.....	45
Method of Data Collection.....	46
Stage 1. Exploration.....	47
Stage 2. Action	53
Method of Analysis of Data	57
Coding Process.....	60
Issues of Trustworthiness	63
Triangulation	64
Member checking.....	65
Prolonged Engagement	65
Peer Debriefing	66
My Positionality	66
CHAPTER FOUR.....	68
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	68
My Action Research Model	68
Findings of Demographic Information.....	70

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Participants' Demographic Information.....	70
Language and studies background of the participants	72
Teaching Experience	74
Research Findings	78
Research Question A.....	79
Theme 1. Grammar and vocabulary as the main focus in teaching	80
Theme 2. Little importance to assessment	82
Theme 3. Contradictory views of syllabus.....	85
Theme 4. Teachers' role in the process of learning	88
Summary	89
Stage 2: Action Part I.....	90
Session 1.....	91
Session 2.....	92
Session 3.....	93
Session 4.....	93
Session 5.....	96
Research Question B.....	97
Theme one: Knowing students.....	98
Theme two: Classroom Management.....	102
Summary	105
Stage2: Part II.....	106

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Session 6.....	107
Session 7.....	109
Session 8.....	109
Session 9.....	110
Research Question C.....	111
Theme one: Purposive Assessment.....	111
Theme two: Students Active Participation.....	114
Summary	116
Research Question D.....	117
Theme one: Focused dialogues as conceptual mediator	118
Theme two: Written reflections for internalization of concepts.	119
Theme three: Teacher positive attitudes and self-improvement	121
Summary	124
CHAPTER 5.....	126
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	126
5.1. Limitations	127
5.2 Discussion of the Findings	128
Current Teaching and Assessment Process (Addresses Research Question A).....	129
Teacher's understanding of the Dynamic Assessment (Addresses Research Question B).....	132
Effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices (Addressing Question C).....	134

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Strategies that helped teachers understand the concepts of Dynamic Assessment (Addressing Question D)	136
5.3 Implications.....	139
5.4 Areas for Further Research	141
Appendix A. In-Depth Survey	143
Appendix B. Class Observation Check List.....	144
Appendix C. testCheck List	145
Appendix D. Vocabulary pools.....	146
Appendix E. Regulatory Scale	147
Appendix E. Reflection Paper.....	148
Appendix F. Initial Coding Part 1	149
Appendix G. Class Activities.....	151
Appendix H. Results of Thematic Content Analysis	152
Appendix I. Approval from the UNM OIRB	155
Appendix J. Inform Consent 1	157
Appendix K. Inform Consent 2.....	157
REFERENCES.....	161

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Development..... 12

Figure 2. Conceptualization of Teachers' Understandings 14

Figure 3. Sample of Grammatical Structures 22

Figure 4. Gibbons' Four Zone of Teaching and Learning 30

Figure 5. Teachers' Professional Development Process 34

Figure 6. Action Research Process..... 41

Figure 7. Participants teaching experience..... 75

Figure 8. Participants' perceptions of their education 77

Figure 9. Course syllabus..... 88

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Questions for an Action Research Study.40

Table 2. Action Research Project Stages and Sites.....44

Table 3. Action Research Project Data Collection.....47

Table 4. Participants' Demographic Information.....49

Table 5. Class Observation Check List50

Table 6. Test Check list.....52

Table 7. Method of Data Analysis.57

Table 8. Data triangulation chart.....58

Table 9. Demographic information coding sheet.....61

Table 10. Timetable of the Action Research Study63

Table 11. My Action Research Model70

Table 12. Age range of participants71

Table 13. Year of experience of participants at university Level71

Table 14. Gender of participants.....72

Table 15. Language background73

Table 16. Participants' studies73

Table 17. Participants' degree.....74

Table 18. Overarching Themes Question 1.....80

Table 19. Other assessments in addition to the final tests.....83

Table 20. Vocabulary Pool 1.....95

Table 21. Overarching themes Question B98

Table 22. Research Project Part 2106

Table 23. Vocabulary Pool 2.....108

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Table 24. Overarching themes Question C 111

Table 25. Overarching themes Question D 117

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an important part of the English learning and teaching process because it is a component of the “teachers’ decision-making, their students’ self/reflection, and the long-term instructional operation” (Plakans & Gebril, 2015, p. 2). Assessment is crucial in the students’ improvement of the English language because it offers a collection and analysis of information that help teachers measure the effectiveness of their teaching and the knowledge acquired by their students in class. Assessment is about helping students become aware of their own learning and empower them to improve their performance while teachers create learning opportunities (Jones C. A., 2005).

Assessment is a powerful instrument of language learning, and not only the end point of instruction. Assessments can be used by both the teacher and the students to track learning needs and to revise class content. Given the important role of assessment in the whole process of Second Language Learning (SLL), I want to study teachers’ understandings of the concept of language assessment and specifically dynamic assessment in their classrooms and how dynamic assessment is used. The knowledge that teachers have about assessment guides their teaching and the students’ learning of the target language. Framed within Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), this study aimed to analyze: (1) how EFL tenured teachers’ understanding of the role of assessment in SLL can be improved, (2) how effective dynamic assessment is in EFL tenured teachers’ teaching practices, (3) how EFL tenured teachers’ assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment, and (4) what strategies can help teachers understand the concepts of assessment/dynamic assessment. These four points will be studied within the context of English classes at a Language Institute in Quito, Ecuador. To do so, teachers will need to

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

better understand the concept of assessment, and in particular, dynamic assessment (DA), which conceptualizes teaching and assessment as an integrated activity through which a teacher actively engages with learners and provides them with the support and guidance needed to advance their learning (Poehner M. E., 2007) (2009) (2011); (Lantolf & Poehner, Dynamic assessment of L2 development: Bringing the past into the future, 2004) (2011). The introductory chapter provides the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose, and the limitations of the study.

Background of the Study

I am interested in understanding EFL tenured teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in SLL at the Centro de Idiomas (Language Center) at the Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE) and how to help teachers gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment and teaching/learning. As a foreign language learner and a teacher, three main factors influence the selection of my research topic: personal, institutional, and scholarly factors associated with foreign language assessment. As an English-learning student, I realized that the types of assessment that each of my English teachers used were not accurately assessing my English language abilities. In fact, I did not understand the purpose of some of the assessments and felt that they did not help me develop my English language skills. Most of the assessments I took were summative at the end of the semester to pass or fail the class. Some of these assessments were either too easy or too difficult and consequently demotivated me. Additionally, not long ago, I had to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL test) as a part of my application to attend the University of New Mexico. The stress, frustration, and agony I went through before, during, and after the test is something that I would not want my students to go through. Contrary to what I have felt and experienced, the purpose of any test is to improve learning, and measure progress and

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

performance (Nusche, 2008) and not to punish test-takers for answering incorrectly (at least that is how I felt after the TOEFL experience). According to TOEFL Research Inside (ETS, 2020) the purpose of the test is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English and to gauge if they will be able to undertake university studies in English. However, to me, the real purpose of the test is to deny students the opportunity to improve the English throughout their learning process. This is how I feel. I realized that most of the summative assessments I had taken at the end of English courses were not aligned with the principles of SLL such as students' personal characteristics, conditions, contexts, and sociocultural factors (Lightbown & Spada, 2017) and therefore, did not help me improve my English language skills.

There are many standardized tests used all around the world designed to measure students' English proficiency. These standardized test scores can be compared to the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR). Even though these tests claim to assess students' proficiency in the target language, and they claim to be very objective, they do not reflect the cultural background component of a student's native language, they do not consider the intellectual capacity of the learner, or and they do not account for what he or she is capable of doing with assistance. Standardized tests only measure the unassisted ability of the student at a certain point in learning program, and these tests do not measure what the student can do with help. If two students are assessed to be at the same level according to what they can do unassisted, but the second student can achieve more than the first student when given support, this insight shows to the teacher the further potential that the second student has concerning proximal development and the need for differentiating instruction. The situation in which this type of information is developed never happens when standardized tests are administrated.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

As a teacher, I have seen how my students struggle with their English language assessments. Several components of these assessments are particularly problematic: cultural references, background knowledge, and local information (Agar, 2006).

The cultural references to the United States and England confuse students. Solano-Flores and Trumbull (2003) highlight the inconsistencies between assessment of English language learners and their cultural references. Solano-Flores and Trumbull also mentioned that “existing approaches to testing ELLs did not ensure equitable and valid outcomes because they overlook the complex nature of language and its relationship to culture” (As cited in Shohamy, 2006, p. 196). Additionally, Kim and Zabelina (2015) stated that standardized tests aim to measure intelligence and general knowledge and that it is possible that these tests can create a bias against minority groups, such as those based on gender, race, community status, and persons with different language backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and culture.

Additionally, in my practice, I have witnessed how helpless teachers sometimes feel because they do not have the power to change the evaluation system and the assessment process. Frequently, teachers do not have the authority, the means or enough understanding and training to develop an accurate learning assessment that actually helps students and teachers in the teaching-learning process.

The second factor influencing my research topic concerns the institutional and governmental aspect of the UCE. The priority of language centers at public universities in Ecuador is to offer to the students' foreign language instruction so that they can reach the required B2¹ level according with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages requirement. The Ecuadorian Secretary of Higher Education, Science and

¹ B2 Level. The independent user of the language, can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization, can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party, and can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Technology, SENEY (Secretaria de Educacion Superior, Ciencia y Tecnologia), which is the governing body of all universities in Ecuador, states that university students have to reach a B1 level of proficiency in a foreign language. Even though the Common European Framework focuses on communicative aspects, the problem is the way the universities are applying the test. As a consequence, most language classes concentrate their efforts on passing the proficiency test, rather than emphasizing more communicative aspects of language.

English is a foreign language in Ecuador, and the importance of English in school and work has become more relevant. As Education First (EF) Ecuador mentioned (2019), English is not only important for professional development, but also English skills are extremely important at a national level, because they are indicators of levels of economic competition of a country and its future business opportunities, prosperity, and innovation. Students in Ecuador feel the necessity to learn English not only for passing language assessments so that they can graduate from college; but also, as an opportunity to apply for better job positions, to enter scholarship programs, to travel, and to make friends outside Ecuador.

Apart from my personal experience as a teacher and as a student with a foreign language assessment, the third reason for conducting this study deals with my studies. In previous research for my master's thesis, I analyzed the learning assessments used by the three public universities of Quito, Ecuador. I found that there is a difference in the proficiency levels of the students from each of the three language centers. After analyzing the different ways certain teachers from the Continuing Education Center of the Escuela Politécnica Nacional (CEC), the Language Center of the Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas (ESPE), and the Language Center of Universidad Central assess their students, I observed differences in assessment processes. Some of these assessments were not aligned with SLL

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

principles. For instance, one of the language centers mentioned above administers the final exam with a mock standardized test; however, the students had not taken a similar test during their learning process. Most of the students were not familiar with the vocabulary, the grammar in use, the expressions, or the structure of the test. In another center, each teacher had their own way of assessing their students, and so some used standardized tests, others used their colleagues' assessments, and other teachers did the assessments themselves. In conclusion, this research resulted in greater questions about teachers' understandings of the concept of language assessment and dynamic assessment in SLL (Almeida, Castillo, & Rosero, 2021).

Past research in other learning settings on teachers' understandings and conceptions of assessment reaffirmed teachers' failure to incorporate assessment (Gu, 2016); (Xu & Liu, 2009) and specifically dynamic assessment in the process of SLL (Poehner M. E., Group dynamic assessment: Mediation for the L2 classroom, 2009). Poehner (2009) specifically mentioned the "bifurcation between assessment and instruction concerns teachers' lack of familiarity with the theory and principles underlying assessment practices" (p. 4).

In the ESL/EFL context, research shows that the most common forms of assessment are: observation of free oral communication, use of tests developed by teachers, and essays on a given topic (Oscarson & Apelgren, 2011). Additionally, grammar and non-linguistic factors such as motivation, students' attitudes, and working habits were also ranked by teachers as some of the most important criteria for assessment and self-assessment, with peer-assessments and portfolios among the least used (Oscarson & Apelgren, 2011).

Feedback is an ongoing process that helps teachers to improve the process of learning a new language. Feedback can provide information about the students' performance, how well they acquired knowledge, and from then, the teacher can work on strategies to improve the learning and teaching experience. Feedback either from the teacher or a peer can be

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

considered as a kind of assessment. In written feedback a teacher typically will either correct or indicate a problem in the students' writing. Orally, teachers may correct the student at the moment they are speaking. Teachers can use these moments to note students' difficulties and students in turn can begin to become conscious of their errors and their own learning.

Teachers can also wait until the end of the session to offer feedback to the whole group.

Unfortunately, from personal experience and from experiences from my colleagues there is little space for feedback. This may be because there is not enough time or because teachers do not consider feedback to be very important in the process of learning. Teachers tend to correct students' mistakes using explicit correction as a type of feedback rather than to self- or peer-feedback (Lira-Gonzales, 2012).

Additionally, in the study done by Al-Basheera, et al. (2015), most of the teachers did not work on "assessing students' previous knowledge, identifying strengths and weaknesses of students' performance, and providing suitable feedback to tackle students' areas of weakness which may increase their academic performance" (p. 492) and most of the teachers did not develop students' self-assessment skills. Additional studies will be discussed in detail below. This brief summary reflects teachers' reliance on traditional methodology for learning English and focuses very little on the role of language assessment in teaching and learning, which means that their understanding of SSL assessment is limited.

Statement of the Problem

In the field of assessment, there is limited information regarding teachers' knowledge and understanding of the role of assessment and dynamic assessment in EFL learning contexts. Norris (2006) established that between 1984 and 2002 only between 4 and 8 percent of research articles focused on college foreign language assessment and the majority focused on test-based assessments. Moreover, Brown and Hirschfeld (2008) found that there is little

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

published research about how teachers conceive of assessment. Most of the limited number of research studies on assessment have failed to study teachers' understandings of the concept of assessment or dynamic assessment in SLL and as Norris (2006) mentioned have failed to explore in-depth the essential relationship between assessment and curriculum and instruction, and its potential consequences both negative and positive on teaching and learning. Koloi-Keaikitse and Marchant (2013) state that there are two aspects to understanding assessment: knowledge of how assessment is related to teaching, and knowledge about assessment processes. Research shows that there is lack of understanding of the purposes of assessment, its benefits, and alternative strategies, leading to confusion about what should be assessed and how to assess the results (Al-Basheera, et al., 2015; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Gu, 2016; Xu & Liu, 2009).

Teachers' misperception about what needs to be assessed and how to assess students leads to an inadequate measure of their students' achievements (Gu, 2016). One of the outcomes of teachers' self-examination in the Cohen and Fass' (2001) study showed that even though teachers wanted to implement an oral component of assessments in their classes in order to adopt a more communicative style of teaching, they lacked the knowledge with which to do. Another example of the lack of knowledge and confusion about the types of assessments and assessment processes is discussed in the study done by (Al-Basheer, Ashraah, & Alsmadi, 2015). The study revealed that there was a confusion among most of the teachers concerning the meaning of authentic assessment and the meaning of alternative assessment strategies. Finally, Xu and Liu's (2009) study suggests that the teachers' practices in assessment and the limited understanding of such practices are in need of further research.

Research informs us that teachers agree on the role of assessment in two ways. First, assessments inform teachers of student progress, learning objectives, and the effectiveness of their instruction (Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013; Mussawy, 2009). Second, assessments

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

prepare students for standardized examinations, make them accountable for their learning, motivate students, and to determine student grades (Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013).

Also, Sahinkarakas' (2012) analysis of metaphors suggested that teachers believe that assessment is a formative tool, a summative tool, a process that is agitating, and an indicator of self-efficacy. The gap between teachers' beliefs, intentions, and their actual teaching effects are significant. As stated in roles (1) and (2), assessment is seen as a tool to check the students' proficiency and grades to advise teachers and what they taught correctly. Some teachers do not consider assessment an essential part of SLL. As Wiggins (1998) mentioned, "we focus on teaching students to pass simplistic, often multiple-choice tests composed of "items" that neither assess what we value nor provide useful feedback about how to teach and how to learn" (p. 7).

Additionally, there is a disconnection between the roles of assessment and the entire learning process. One of the reasons is because of teachers' lack of understanding of the role of assessment in the learning process. For example, formative assessments (assessments that teachers use as checkpoints to evaluate the learning and check the progress of students) can be beneficial in documenting students learning. Xu and Liu (2009) acknowledge the fact that it is challenging to analyze teacher knowledge, practice, and professional development in a formative assessment, which "is not well understood by teachers and is weak in practice" (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 20). Commonly teachers assess students with traditional methods (Gu, 2016; Mussawy, 2009) such as a written test that is isolated from the curriculum.

Additionally, Gu (2016) states that EFL teachers lack a clear conceptualization of method and assessment. This lack of understanding points to teachers' misperception about what needs to be assessed and the tools to assess students, which leads to an inadequate measure of their students' achievements. One of the outcomes of teachers' self-examination in Cohen and Fass' (2001) study showed that even though teachers wanted to implement

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

assessments to adopt a more communicative style of teaching, they lacked the knowledge with which to do it. Another example of this lack of knowledge and assessment processes is emphasized in the study done by Al-Basheera, et al. (2015). The study revealed that there was confusion among most of the teachers concerning the meaning of authentic assessment and the meaning of alternative assessment strategies. Finally, Xu and Liu's (2009) study suggests that teacher practices in assessment and the limited understanding of such practices require further research.

In terms of SLL, teachers commonly rely on grammar tests and grammar tasks and use the Presentation-Practice-Production model and contrastive analysis methodology (Oscarson & Apelgren, 2011). Research that exemplifies the practice of teachers using more traditional methods includes a study done by Cohen and Fass (2001). In their analysis, assessment group researchers found that teachers use parameters such as pronunciation and grammatical accuracy when assessing students' oral abilities, instead of using more communicative aspects of oral production. Additionally, the teachers used traditional methods of assessment, such as written exams, and they admitted that they were not aware of the particularities of authentic assessment (Al-Basheer, Ashraah, & Alsmadi, 2015).

Teacher training and professional development have been critical factors in the role of assessment in SLL. According to Mussawy's (2009) research, there is no national or standard methodology for assessment in educational institutions. In fact, assessment approaches are hardly taught to either pre-service or in-service teachers during the training period. In this same context, Gu (2016) also suggests that the teachers' lack of understanding of different aspects of assessment are a consequence of poor teaching instruction at the college and institutional level. Teachers felt that they did not receive adequate training, such as workshops or courses related to knowledge of concepts linked to assessment and measurement skills necessary to provide them with the capacity to apply what they learned.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Therefore, they have to rely on their own experiences, and are feeling unprepared, uncomfortable, and doubtful when assessing students (Cohen & Fass, 2001; Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013; Mussawy, 2009; Remesal, 2011). As an example of this lack of teacher training, Xu and Liu (2009) pointed out that in China, college EFL teachers receive little formative assessment training in their pre-service bachelor's or master's degree programs and no assessment training after graduation.

In addition to the teachers' limited knowledge of new trends in assessment, how assessments obtained in school should be incorporated into SLL, and insufficient professional development courses in assessment methods, there are other limitations such as the lack of resources for material development (Gu, 2016) and large numbers of students in each classroom (Al-Basheer, Ashraah, & Alsmadi, 2015). Unfortunately, some of the obstacles presented in this study are similar across different settings. For instance, large classes and limited resources are common problems in Ecuadorian settings. As an EFL teacher myself, I have seen how the lack of appropriate educational, language, and technological tools (e.g., computers, CD and DVD players, books, accessible classrooms) restrict the proper learning settings of the English class. Additionally, teachers do not incorporate the sociocultural component when assessing students. In fact, Starky and Osler (2001) found out that teacher assessments focused on language features such as error correction and not on the sociocultural learning objectives of the course. Therefore, the question arises: What is Ecuadorian EFL teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in the process of learning the target language?

In the Ecuadorian context, unfortunately there is almost no literature related to the university EFL teachers' understanding of the role of assessment and second/foreign language learning. Additionally, Mejia (2016) EFL teachers agreed that English language teaching has not improved over the years. According to the teachers, the way of teaching has

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

remained almost the same over the years, and because of that fact that Ecuador does not invest enough in projects to improve the level of teachers in relation to their language proficiency (p. 44).

Additional facts regarding assessment and language learning in Ecuador show the scope of the problem. According to Mejia (2016) Ecuadorian teachers do not fully understand the internal processes of acquiring the second language. Additionally, he stated that teachers are not sure that they can assess all the skills of the English language. There is also evidence about language assessment at the university level (Almeida, Castillo, & Rosero, 2021). For instance, at UCE, there is no uniform system to evaluate students' English learning. Teachers rely on the quizzes in the books they use, or they borrow tests from each other that have been developed without considering the curriculum they have followed. This is because they do not have the necessary knowledge and experience in working with assessments. It is important to clarify that in recent years this situation is changing. There is a more homogeneous system to assess students' learning. There are mid-term and end-of-semester exams, while for other evaluations the teacher has the freedom to develop their own assessments.

At ESPE, there is an evaluation system. One unit per week is covered which has an oral and written evaluation. The unit tests are developed based on the information taught. However, the final exam is usually a standardized test, which has few connections to the topics and structures studied in class. In the case of ESPE, (Almeida, Castillo, & Rosero, 2021) there is an evaluation commission that assigns teachers the task to develop unit tests and final exams a month before the beginning of the semester. This commission is responsible for correcting, analyzing, and reproducing the new exams that the teachers developed. However, teachers mentioned that there is little help from the commission to

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

create the exams, and they do not know if what they have written was correct or not because there is no feedback.

Finally, at CEC there is an evaluation system which is very well defined. Grades are weighted according to the degree of complexity of the exam. There is an academic coordinator and a team who are teachers and teacher- trainers who experts in English as a foreign language. Some of the team members are book authors and editors and have experience in teaching abroad. The academic coordination team develops the tests. They introduce all the tests developed in each cycle in a computer system so they can have attest bank. This computer system is used exclusively by the center. The academic team uses the system for evaluations, assistance, and monitoring students and the teachers. The majority of the assessments are related to the topics, grammar structures, and vocabulary taught in the classes. In this case there are experts in assessment who are part of the academic coordination team of the center who develop the different tests. This team also supervises the evaluation administrated by the teachers in each of their classes.

From the information obtained from my previous research, I can conclude that there are teachers who have little knowledge about the assessment process and this lack of knowledge is affects the quality of the assessments they create. Therefore, it is necessary to discover what teachers' understandings are about the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment in teaching and learning.

Research questions

Thus, the present study aimed to answer the following overarching question:
How do EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment and how can their understandings be improved?

Sub-questions:

- a. How do EFL tenured teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment?
- b. Do EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of Dynamic Assessment deepen through mediation? And if so, How?
- c. How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers teaching practices?
- d. What strategies can help teachers understand the concepts of assessment and dynamic assessment?

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyze EFL tenured teachers' understandings of the role of assessment in their classes at El Centro de Idiomas at Universidad Central del Ecuador and to help teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment /DA and teaching/learning through focused, collegial dialogues. Through this action research study teachers and I have developed strategies and raised awareness of the importance of a dynamic assessment, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and mediation in their students' learning process. In order to fully appreciate teachers' understanding and their practices it is also important to study the contextual variables such as the particular uses of English in the Ecuadorian context, teachers' understanding of the concept of assessment/DA, the learning conditions and the specific domains of English that are taught, the institutional policies on assessments, and the purposes of those assessments.

I want to focus on the teachers' understandings because as Elbaz (1983) stated:

In the practical context it is the teacher, not the learning theorist, who is the final authority on learning; the teacher, not the sociologist, who is the final authority on the social development of [learners]; the teacher, not the scientist, who is the final authority on the science [students] learn (p. 17).

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Thus, how the teachers conceive assessment will impact their teaching practices and ultimately the students' learning of the target language.

The aim of language assessment is to promote language learning, to develop communication in real-life and authentic tasks, and to provide students with the opportunities for feedback, and self and peer-assessment (Plakans & Gebril, 2018; Nusche, 2013; Wiggins, 1998). Unfortunately, the current role of assessment in SLL is seen as an isolated entity, which has little relationship to language learning and interaction. Therefore, with the present study I aim to fill the gap in literature by studying EFL teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in the process of second language learning. Additionally, I want to highlight the importance of assessment as integral rather than peripheral to the areas of EFL, ESL learning, and education because assessment should be an integral component in teacher preparation and professional development, the development of assessment policies, and assessment practices in teaching and learning and ultimately in educational outcomes (Noris, 2006; Nusche, 2013).

Significance of the Study

The study of EFL tenured teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in the process of second language learning and in the field of foreign language education will provide EFL and ESL pre-service, in-service teachers, instructors, students, university authorities, and professionals in the field with insights regarding the concept of assessment/DA in the process of second language learning. One of the biggest roles of assessment stated by Plakans and Gebril (2015) is that assessment should be an integral part of the teachers' decision-making, their students' self-reflection, and the long-term instructional operations. However, the literature establishes that assessment is usually seen as standardized - mandated testing. Other views of assessment are to offer students' scores only,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

and as Norris (2006) mentions there are others that consider assessment a “necessary evil for motivating students to study and learn” (p. 167). Instead, Blanchard (2009) sees “productive assessment” as a mediated tool to offer learners the opportunity to understand how to judge what they can achieve, take their learning farther, become self-confident, and trust in their own learning abilities. Assessment is not only a way to check the students’ progress but is also a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process. In this sense, Blanchard (2009) states that “assessment interprets the evidence. How it is done has a powerful effect on learners and how they feel about learning” (p. 94).

EFL teachers in Ecuador need to have an understanding of the theories of acquiring English language to make their classes more accessible to the learners including opportunities for language input and output, a positive classroom environment, and positive classroom interactions. Additionally, Fillmore and Snow (2018) establish that teachers need to be aware of the “theoretical and practical knowledge about how second language acquisition proceeds and the factors that affect it” (p. 33).

The present study provides evidence of the assessment practices and their involvement in the whole process of language teaching and learning in the Ecuadorean context. As Norris (2006) mentions, teachers need assessments to help them make decision about individual learners, and the educational route that makes the most sense for them to take, including the selection of classes or programs that best match their needs. Lastly, the present study designed a syllabus for a professional development course as a pedagogical implication. The course includes the ways teachers can incorporate language assessment as a meditating tool for learning in their EFL classes.

Research Design Overview

The methodological approach used in this research project is action research because this methodological approach is the one that aligns with the purpose of this investigation. I chose action research because I want to make a change in my own working setting at Centro the Idiomas from Universidad Central del Ecuador. The purpose of this action research project is to enable teachers to become the architects of their own professional development and through that process to continue to reinvent themselves, particularly as it relates to assessment/dynamic assessment. Action research is also called practitioner research, teacher research, or teacher-researcher. This approach has a “systematic, collaborative, and democratic orientation” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 51) design to improve teaching and learning. Teachers work together, design, implement, and reflect on a project that eventually changes their practice to improve their teaching and their students' learning. The main purpose of choosing action research methodology for this study is because it gives teachers the opportunity to be more reflexive about their own practice as it relates to assessment. Additionally, the primary goals of this methodology are: “action, training, and decision making” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016, p. 242).

The study and analyses of the data focuses on three EFL tenured teachers who will be anonymous and whose identity will be protected. However, I collected primary information from the 12 tenured teachers that work at Centro de Idiomas. There are 18 tenured English teachers in el Centro de Idiomas. They were asked to the offer to participate in this research project.

Three teachers of 12 tenured English teachers from the Centro de Idiomas were chosen based on the information obtained from: (1) an in-depth survey on EFL teachers' understanding of assessment, and (2) class observations. The criteria used for the selection was the following:

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

1. Teachers who attempt to use materials other than the textbook in their classes.
2. Teachers who use other assessment instruments other than the final tests at the end of the course.
3. Teachers who show interest in participating in the study and are willing to learn more about assessment.

The study entailed two stages. The first stage of the action research project was the reflection stage, which involved the 12 (twelve) teachers and included in-depth surveys, class observations, and the analysis of the documents. The second stage was the action stage, which involved 3 (three) teachers and focused dialogues and class observations.

In the second phase of the analysis, I worked with the three English teachers through focused dialogues and observations. These included nine group dialogues with teachers to discuss aspects of assessment and DA. These dialogues helped teachers deepen their own understanding of assessment and DA in SLL through questions and comments with me as the teacher-researcher whose role was that of expert about DA. After each meeting the teachers had to apply DA strategies in their classes. I also made eight class observations of each teacher to see if and how the teachers implemented DA in their classrooms after the sessions. I also scheduled four follow-up observation meetings with them for the class. A final meeting entailed a written reflection by the three teachers about the extent of how the dialogues and implementation helped them deepen their concept of assessment. In these focused dialogues and observations, teachers worked collaboratively to formulate strategies that helped them generate knowledge about DA and facilitate their design of lesson plans involving DA to work with their students.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations and validity threats that this study encountered based on the research questions, methods and instruments of data collection, and analysis of data. Teachers took more time than was expected to answer the survey questions and the semi-structured interview. Teachers wanted to meet more times for focused dialogues. However, time constraints proved useful because it offered intensive involvement and participation that offered the researcher rich data (as cited in Maxwell, 2013, p. 126).

Because this study is an action research project, and the teacher-researcher was part of the project at the Centro de Idiomas, it was necessary to use member checking in every instrument of the investigation: survey, interviews, and observations. As Maxwell (2013) mentions, member checking is a valuable tool for assuring that there was no indication of bias in the planning. Additionally, using a semi-structured script, the teacher researcher allowed teachers to express their own feelings and understandings toward their teaching and assessment practices and at the same time the script gave the teacher-researcher the possibility to develop follow-up questions to go more in deep in their responses and obtain richer information.

The information gathered from this particular group of EFL teachers does not represent the EFL teachers' population, therefore the data obtained in this study cannot be generalized. It corresponds to a particular group of teachers in a specific context and time.

Definitions of Key Terminology

The definitions of the following terms are specific for this research study:

1. **AR:** Action research is a methodological approach usually carried out by teachers with the collaboration with their colleagues, which aims to identify a problem, take action, and make a change.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

2. **DA:** Dynamic Assessment is assessment for learning method rooted in the theories and research of Vygotsky, in which the main characteristic is mediation between a peer/teacher and a more capable peer/teacher.
3. **ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development is the space in which the learner/teacher is capable of a higher level of performance in the target language/assessment because there is support from a more capable peer/teacher.
4. **APZMII:** Based on ZPD, it is the affective proximal zone of meaningful intellectual imitation.
5. **SLL:** Second Language Learning is the learning of any other language besides the first or native language. This includes English as a Foreign Language (EFL).
6. **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language is the teaching of English in countries where the target language is not taught in school nor spoken in the community such as Ecuador.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Second Language Learning

Second Language Learning (SLL) has been a topic of interest for different fields such as applied linguistics, psychology, and education. For Mitchell and Myles (2019), second languages are “any other than the learner’s native language mother tongue” (p.5). Foreign languages (e.g. English language in Ecuador) may also be included, even though the context and circumstances from which they are learned may be different. In order to explain the role of assessment in SLL, I believe it is imperative to start by analyzing the different theories of SLL. The following sections will summarize the major contributions in the field of SLL. Additionally, I will explain in depth Sociocultural Theory as the theoretical framework of this study.

Theories explaining SLL

There is no doubt that SLA is a complex process. There are different theories that have tried to explain the way people learn a second language. Some theories such as Chomsky’s (1959) Language Acquisition Device, Skinner’s Verbal Behavior, Krashen’s (1985) Input Hypothesis, Long’s (1981) Interaction Hypothesis, Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, and Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) Sociocultural Theory and the Zone of Proximal Development, are going to be discussed in the following sections.

Behaviorism focuses on stimulus-response effect which was conceived in the 1940’s and 50’s, where language learning was seen as the formation of habits. Under this behaviorist perspective are various theories, and among them are: (1) Classical Conditioning Theory (Pavlov, 1902) that focuses on stimulus generalization, extinction, spontaneous recovery, and discrimination; (2) Connectivism Theory (Thorndike, 1932) that focuses on the Law of

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Effect, exercise, and readiness; (3) Stimulus-Response association through conditioning (Watson, 1930) based on experiments claiming that a person responds based on fears, phobias, and prejudices, and (4) Verbal Behavior (Skinner, 1957) which focuses on positive and negative reinforcement and imitation. Skinner's theory states that that learning progresses through an operant conditioning. In this sense, the child learns the language by trial and failure until he succeeds. Skinner (1957) states that apart from genetic endowment, behavior is determined entirely by "reinforcement." There could be a positive or a negative reinforcement which is also called stimulus. In the case of language learning, this behaviorist perspective assumed that the learner imitates the language they hear and practices these sounds and patterns until they become a habit and eventually, they use the language correctly (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). In Second/Foreign language learning the method based on this behaviorist theory is the audiolingual or army method in which the learner listens to the language patterns and repeats them (drills) focusing on memorizing rules and structures. However, this theory of reinforcement is strongly rejected because there is no mental process of learning the language from the parent because imitating, repeating, memorizing, and controlled drilling do not guarantee that the children will learn the target language. For instance, there are language structures that will be impossible to understand by just imitating the language. Finally, learners will be unable to repeat that the teachers say because they do not know the language structure.

These were the first studies of language acquisition and at that time behaviorist theories and methods for learning a second language were widely accepted. In the 1960's however, a more developmental view came into play. Within this perspective, Piaget (1936) developed the Cognitive Developmental Theory, based on schema, assimilation, accommodation, and cognitive abilities of the learner, and the stages of cognitive development. Relating this theory to language learning, Piaget believed that children's

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

cognitive development determines how they acquire language. For Piaget, language represents the knowledge children have acquired with the interaction with the environment (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Piaget establishes stages of child development: (1) Sensorimotor Stage from the ages 0 to 2 years old when the child begins to interact with the environment, and the child constructs schemes and has his first contact with the language; (2) Preoperational stage from 2 to 7 years old when the child begins to represent the world symbolically. At this stage the child starts school, and there is an important social change; (3) Concrete Operational Stage from ages 7 to 12 when the child learns language rules and starts using logical thinking; and (4) Formal Operational Stage from 12 years old to adulthood. However, Piaget's theory has some weaknesses, including "overestimating the ability of adolescence and underestimating infant's capacity". He also "neglected cultural and social interaction factors in the development of learner's cognition and thinking ability" (Babakr & Mohamedamin, 2019, p. 517).

As it was mentioned earlier, Skinner based his theory in behavior reinforcement, suggesting that children learn a language by imitating others. However, Chomsky (1959) criticized Skinner (1957), and argued that children have an innate capacity to acquire language. His theory proposed a cognitive code in the process of absorption. According to Stark (1998), Chomsky suggests that components of the mind, including language and other systems of knowledge, are mainly innately determined. In other words, it is not a matter of imitating the language around the learner. Still, there is an internal mental device that predisposes the individual to the acquisition of language, which is explained by the Universal Grammar theory defined by Chomsky (1986), "as an intricate and highly constrained structure consisting of various subsystems of principles" (p. 146). Chomsky thinks that there are constructions of the brain (Universal Grammar, or UG) that command interpretation and production of the speech. Chomsky believes that every child has a Language Acquisition

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Device (LAD), which is activated instinctively to produce and acquire language. Therefore, when children start speaking, they do not need any formal teaching of the language. There is an optimal learning age between 3 to 10 years for the child to obtain complete fluency of the language. If we tie this notion of Universal Grammar and LAD directly to language learning, Chomsky suggests that any child can learn a language because this internal mental device (LAD) will allow him to determine the grammar rules and patterns of the language and eventually master it. New evidence fails to support his theory of UG as noted by Ibbotson & Tomasello (2016) who state, “young children use various types of thinking that may not be specific to language at all — such as the ability to classify the world into categories (people or objects, for instance) and to understand the relations among things” (p. 1). Additionally, Chomsky did not specifically focus on second language learning and how learners who have passed the critical period can learn a second language. (Lightbown & Spada, 2021).

During the 1970's and 80's input was viewed as an essential component of language learning. Krashen's Monitor Model of second language acquisition was influenced by Chomsky's theory of first language acquisition. Krashen suggested, we “acquire” as we are exposed to the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Additionally, Krashen (1985) developed the Input Hypothesis ($i + 1$) arguing that in order to acquire a L2, the learner needs to be exposed to a comprehensible input (either written or spoken). Regarding second language directly, Krashen suggested that students “acquire” the language through a written or spoken language input and that is the only mechanism learners need to increase their linguistic competence. Krashen's Monitor Model was proposed in the 1970's and then expanded in the 80's. He proposed a total of five hypotheses. The first hypothesis is related to the acquisition and learning of a language, and it states that acquisition is a different process from learning. The Monitor Hypothesis indicates that language learning (conscious process) is produced with the help of a monitor or editor. For Krashen, the monitoring function is the

“practical result of the learned grammar,” which works as an editor or self-corrector before producing an utterance. On the other hand, the Natural Order Hypothesis considers that one acquires the language in a predictable order. In this sense, Krashen (1981) considers that “utterances are initiated by the acquired system – our fluency in production is based on the way we have “picked up” through active communication” (p. 2). The Input Hypothesis considers that the only way to receive comprehensible input of a second language is by the speakers of the language who must adjust their language use to the needs of the learner. The Affective Filter Hypothesis indicates that there are several “affective variables” that can influence language learners to acquire the target language. Some of these variables are motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and personality traits (Krashen S. D., 1986). However, many of the variables described by Krashen are not visible because they stay in a theoretical level only. In fact, the major controversy over Krashen’s Monitor Model is that his five hypotheses lack of empirical content, evidence, and explanatory power (Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987). These critiques led McLaughlin (1987) to present new notions for cognitive psychology emphasizing short-term memory, repetition, automatization, and long-term memory. Additionally, Swain (1985) disapproved of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis arguing that learners need input but also output to develop communicative abilities in the L2. Swain (1985) established that there are three functions of output to negotiate meaning when communicating: (1) the noticing function (similar to Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis) which is the prerequisite for language learning by forcing the learner to be attentive and look for expressions to make meaning; (2) the hypothesis-testing function when the student intends to use the language in different ways, a “trial run”, and (3) the metalinguistic function where the learners reflect on the language they use by using the language itself.

In addition to the output hypothesis there is also an L2 interaction perspective (Long, 1981), which established that learners are active participants in the learning process and that

this participation in conversation with native speakers is possible through the modification of the interaction.

All of these theories just described provide an explanation of how language is learned or acquired. Some theories have a behaviorist perspective and are focused on “structure-based approaches,” emphasizing “rules, memory, and imitation” and not on “communicating” language learning and teaching (Lightbown & Spada, 2017). Other theories such as the theory of Universal Grammar and LAD, have an innatist perspective and focus on the students’ cognitive ability and the amount of input from the environment without any “direct instruction”. However, “studies have shown that students may reach a point from which they fail to make further progress on some features of the second language unless they also have access to guided instruction” (Lightbown & Spada, 2021, p. 107). There are other theories which have an interactionist perspective including theories by Piaget that focuses on schema, assimilation, accommodations, and stages of cognitive development. Vygotsky also developed a Sociocultural Theory, and it has the principal ideas of social interaction, the zone of actual and proximal development, and conceptual development. I will explore this information in more detail in the next sections.

Sociocultural Theory and Zone of Proximal Development as the Theoretical Framework

Through a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky’s approach focuses not on the individual in isolation but on the sociocultural contexts and the individuals in a dialectic relationship. According to Vygotsky (1987) cognitive development arises as a result of social interaction. He acknowledged that in order to understand the inner mental processes of human beings, it is necessary to look at human beings in their sociocultural context. In support of Vygotsky’s ideas, Ellis and Shintani (2014) stated sociocultural theory,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

[D]raws on the work of Vygotsky in viewing learning as the [process] of mediated activity. Higher order language functions are seen as developing both in and out of social interaction. Learners progress from object- and other- regulation to self-regulation through interacting with others (p. 344).

Connecting Vygotsky's approach and language learning, Gibbons (2003) mentions that teachers and learners are active participants in the construction of language and that "meanings are constructed between rather than with individuals and are shaped by social activity in which they arise and the collaborative nature of the interaction" (p. 268). This notion fits into Vygotsky's internal thinking/language system because he viewed thinking and languaging as dynamic interrelated processes where meaning is the central unit that expresses both thinking and languaging. Additionally, Vygotsky explains that,

Word meaning is a unity of both processes (i.e., both thinking and speech) which cannot be further decomposed ...the word without meaning is not a word but an empty sound. Meaning is a necessary, constituting feature of the word itself. ... It is the word viewed from the inside. In psychological terms, however, word meaning is nothing other than a generalization, that is a concept... Thus, word meaning is also a phenomenon of thinking ... it is a unity of word and thought (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 244).

In this sense, Vygotsky strongly believed that there is a strong relationship between language and thinking processes. These two processes go hand in hand, where "each process shaping and being shaped by the other in an internal mental system that resulted from their unification" (Mahn, 2012, p. 2).

Mediation in Sociocultural Theory

Mediation is one of the central concepts of Sociocultural Theory. Lantolf's (2000) research (2000), based on Vygotsky's work, suggests mediation in second language learning

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

involves: (1) mediation by self (private speech); (2) mediation by other in social interactions (family gatherings, reunions, conventions, student-teacher interactions, conversational interactions); (3) mediation by artifacts (technology, books, videos). According to Vygotsky (1978), from all of these “symbolic signs,” language is the most powerful. In SLA settings, mediation occurs when there is a gap between the linguistic knowledge of the teacher and the student, in other words between the academic and everyday language (Vygotsky, 1978).

Mediation can be explicit or implicit (Poehner, 2007; Poehner 2009), depending on the students' needs and the ZPD. There is an external mediation when the teacher assists the students using hints, prompts, cues, or leading questions to promote thinking and development. There is also the internal mediation where the student internalizes and self-mediate the information acquired and is able to develop new cognitive functions and concepts, all of which are influenced by the social and cultural practices that are part of the student's environment. Mediation can also be implicit or explicit according to the student's Zone of Proximal Development. The teacher is the one who has to determine when and how to help the student and provide either more or less assistance for effective development. Mediation must be continual, systematic and co-regulated. If the learner is not able to respond to implicit mediation, the instructor should then offer them explicit mediation, and vice versa. If the student manages to solve the problem with only implicit motivation, then the student is closer to mastery, which means that he or she is gaining a more conceptual understanding of the second language. Lantolf and Poehner (2011) mentioned that prompts (any kind of stimuli teachers use to obtain students answers in the second language) are essential part of the mediation process. Prompts could be verbal, written or even visual such as flash cards, for example. They could be used at any moment of the learning process, where the teacher considers necessary for the student produce the target language. Prompts, as part of the mediation process, “should initially provide the opportunity for learners to maximize their

own agency to the degree possible by positioning the learner at every step to take over the performance and resolve the problematic circumstance” (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 28).

Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development is the process through which learners progress from their understanding of everyday concepts to academic concepts. Everyday concepts are related to those concepts that a child learns in their daily lives, and academic concepts are the ones that are learned in school. One of the characteristics of academic concepts is that they are consciously learned. Therefore, the learning of a second language is linked to academic concepts. In this context, Vygotsky (1987) stated, “The child learns his native language without conscious awareness or intention; he learns a foreign language with conscious awareness and intention” (p. 221).

Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). This process of moving from everyday concepts to academic concepts is mediated and guided by a teacher, a colleague, or any other person who stimulates the understating of a concept; it is a collaborative teaching/learning process that will be discussed in the following sections.

Vygotsky (1987) states that in looking at the relationship between academic and everyday concepts, there are two aspects to consider: (1) there is a higher level of conscious awareness of academic concepts than with everyday concepts, and (2) there is a progressive development of scientific thinking. Everyday concepts provide the foundation for the academic concepts and are then transformed by them (Mahn, Personal Communication, 2016). In order to develop academic concepts, learners need to be consciously aware that they

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

are learning something. For example, in learning a new language in school, students are consciously aware that they are learning a new language, in contrast to the way that they learned their first language without conscious awareness. ESL and EFL students, when learning English, are developing their understanding of academic concepts, which “begins in the domain of conscious awareness and volition. It grows downward into the domain of the concrete, into the domain of personal experience” (Vygotsky L. S., *Problems of general psychology*. In *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*, 1987, p. 220). Students learning a second or foreign language are aware that they are learning a new language. For them this new language may be interpreted as their academic concepts. Additionally, “academic concepts restructure and raise everyday concepts to a higher level, forming their zone of proximal development” (p. 220). In order for teachers to help students move forward in their conceptual understanding of the second language, teachers need to identify what the students’ actual zone of development is and based on that, align their teaching strategies with their students individual learning characteristics so that their lessons have the most impact on learning.

Conceptual Development

In order to understand the connection between Vygotsky’s ideas, Conceptual Development, Zone of Proximal Development, and Dynamic Assessment, I am proposing a model based on the studies by Lantolf and Poehner (2004)(2004), Mahn (2015), and Poehner, (2007) which has the aim of helping teachers understand students’ concept developmental process and guide teachers in the process of dynamic assessment (Figure 1.5). The aim of ESL/EFL teachers is to stimulate complex thinking in students in a new language and to help them navigate from everyday concepts to academic concepts, which in this case means the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

development of the English language. ZPD focuses on a dynamic mental development of the student.

ZPD involves two aspects: *Obuchenie*, which refers to the simultaneous process of teaching and learning the content, and *Vospitanie*², which entails nurturing, upbringing and education involving a more personal mentoring. These two terms merge together and form a *Sensitive Imitation* which is another decisive factor in the process of Conceptual Development (CD) in the students' ZPD. Vygotsky talks about "sensitive imitation", which involves rational thinking that eventually promotes students' independent growth. This sensitive imitation is also called meaningful or intellectual imitation. It involves a mental process which "involves a complex interplay of social and individual processes that include transmission, construction, transaction, and transformation" (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002, p. 37). In this sense, the concept of ZPD is transformed into an "affective proximal zone of meaningful, intellectual imitation"³.

The ZPD is the foundation of Dynamic Assessment (DA), which proposes the "conviction that independent performance is insufficient to fully understand abilities and that valuable insights into development are gained when mediation is offered as the performance begins to break down" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 15). In this context, mediation is a key element in the co-construction of concepts between students and teachers, and among students (Group-Dynamic Assessment). To support this claim, Gibbons (2003) states, "meanings are constructed between rather than with individuals and are shaped by social activity in which they arise and the collaborative nature of the interaction" (p. 268).

² The construction of this concept in relation to the ZPD took place in the Applied Vygotsky Seminar 2017, College of Education, the University of New Mexico

³ Term developed in the Applied Vygotsky Seminar 2017 College of Education, University of New Mexico

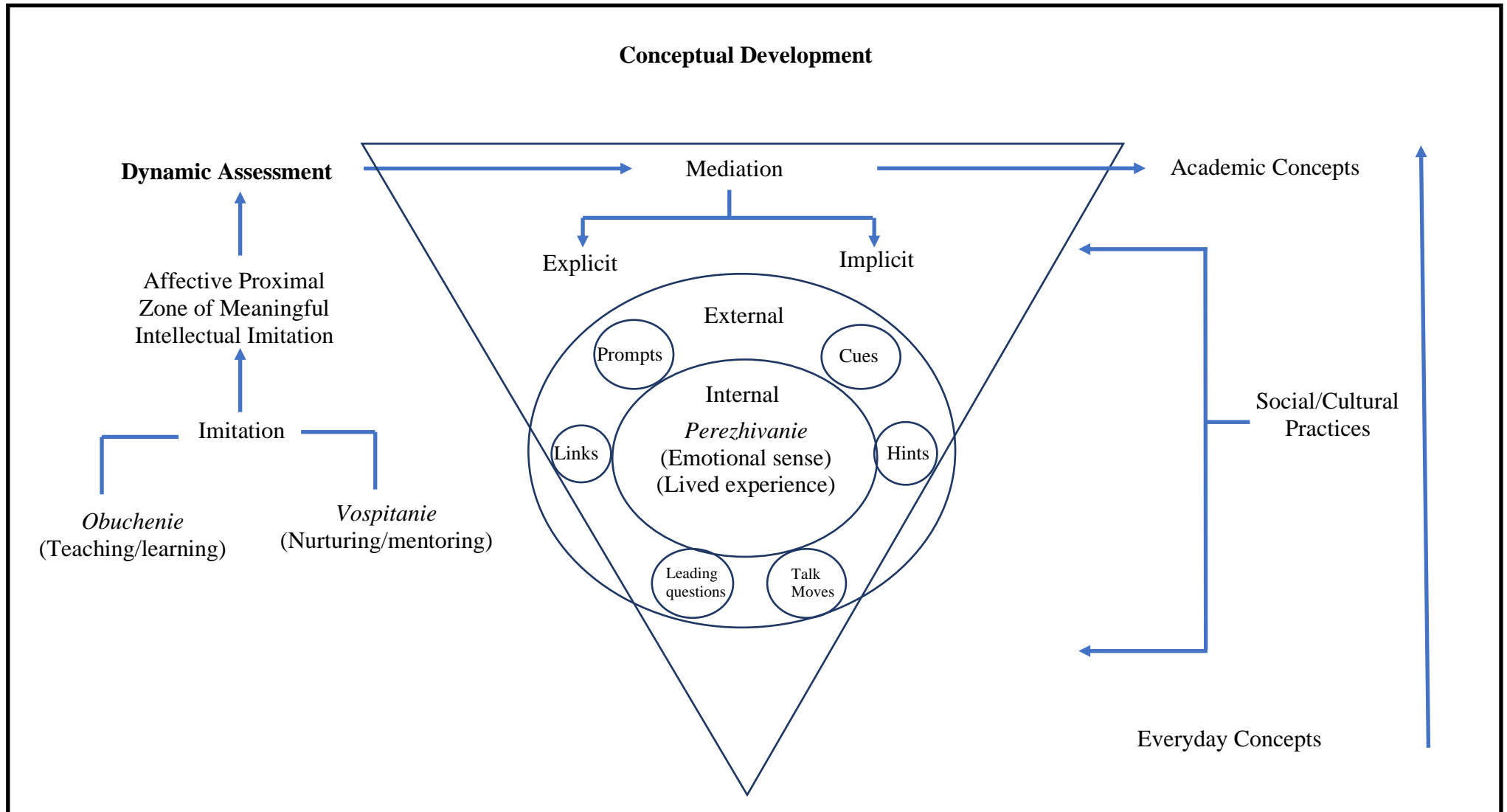


Figure 1. Conceptual Development

So far, we have seen crucial elements in the development of second language learning. Even though Vygotsky's ideas are about children, these some ideas can be applied to adults and specifically in this study as Teachers' Understanding, Zone of Proximal Teacher Development, Dynamic Assessment in the constructions of the Zone of Proximal Teacher Development as is presented in the next section.

Teachers' Understanding

Here, it is imperative to highlight the differences between knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is the accumulation of information that one has received through instruction only, and understanding is the thinking process that includes using that information and applying it to real experiences. In other words, understanding involves knowledge, but knowledge does not necessarily imply understanding. In other words, Teachers may have the knowledge of assessment tools, methods, and (Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013) strategies; however, they may not have an understanding of them, which involves the actual use of that knowledge in the classroom.

Teachers gain understanding of the world through a dynamic process that involves teachers' school backgrounds; beliefs (Bullock, 2011; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Gao, 2014; Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013; Lira-Gonzales, 2012; Xu & Liu, 2009); conceptions (Brown, et al., 2011; Oscarson & Apelgren, 2011; Remesal, 2011); viewpoints (East, 2014); previous knowledge (Xu & Liu, 2009); awareness (Al-Basheera, et al., ,2015); and Perezhivanie (Mahn, 2003; 2012; Vygotsky, 1994) All these components directly affect teachers' attitudes (Ataç,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
 2012; Brown, et al., 2011; Lira-Gonzales, 2012); decisions, behaviors, and practices (Gao, 2014;
 Koloi-Keaikitse & Marchant, 2013; Lira-Gonzales, 2012; Xu & Liu, 2009).

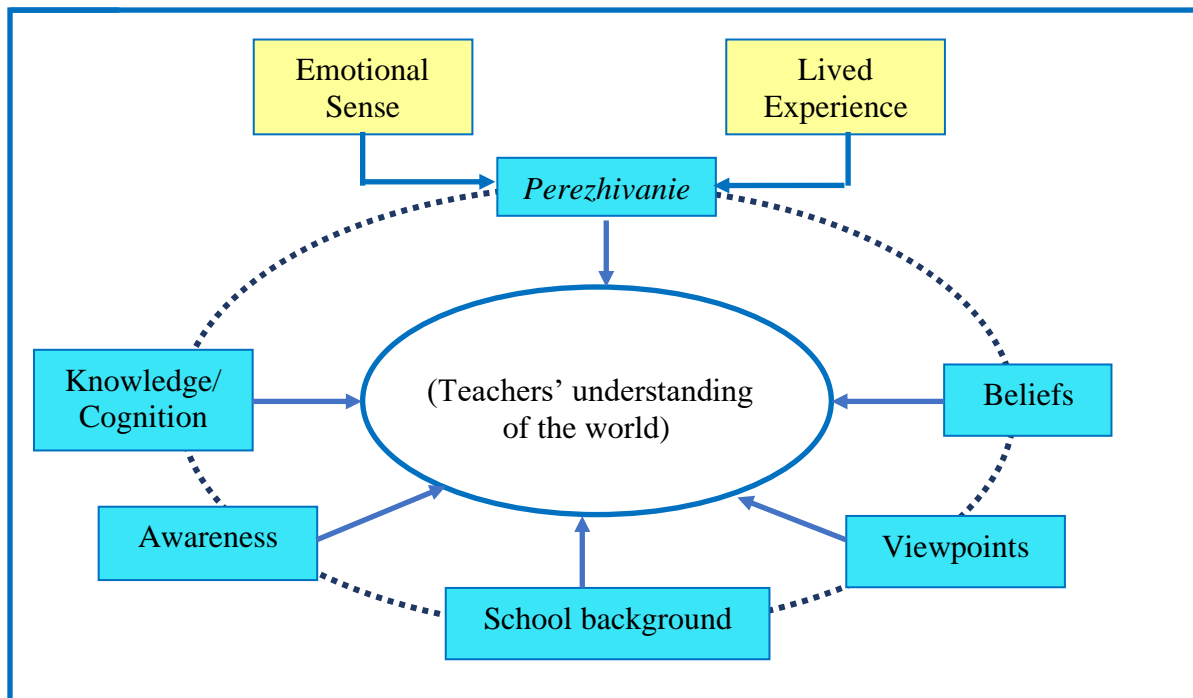


Figure 2. Conceptualization of Teachers' Understandings

Zone of Proximal Teacher Development

Based on Warford (2011) the Zone of Proximal Teacher Development (ZPTD) can be defined as the distance between what teachers can do on their own without assistance and a proximal level they might attain through strategically mediated assistance from more capable others (p. 254). Teachers, as well as students, go through the process of gaining conceptual understanding. In this sense, the everyday concepts and academic concepts may be different for each teacher depending on his or her previous knowledge, beliefs and conceptions, environment, and school background which involves instruction, training, social interaction, and age level development. Warford (2011) mentions that for teachers, everyday concepts are the ones that

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

come from their day-to-day experiences and the academic concepts originate in formal schooling transformed into professional development. Warford (2011) specifies that “There must be a blending, a dialogue created between spontaneous and scientific concepts in order for substantive development to occur” (p. 253). In this context, mediation and imitation will be helpful in studying teacher’s growing understanding. Jones, Rua and Carter (1998) state that the mediation between mentor and novice teachers has a positive impact for both because “not only did the less experienced teachers learn from, the more experienced one but the expert also learned from the novice” (p. 982). Additionally, Achinstein and Villar (2002) indicate that the mediation between mentor teacher and new teacher help them both because “the two are involved in co-construction of knowledge, co-exploration, problem-solving and critique of their work” (p. 18).

Understanding the Role of assessment in Second Language Learning

The purpose of assessment in L2 learning is to promote language learning, communication in real-life and authentic tasks, and to provide students with opportunities for feedback, including self and peer-assessment. Using assessment ESL/EFL teachers can analyze the learning gaps and needs of the students to make corrections to the teaching-learning process in order to improve learning. In the Guidelines for the Assessment of English Language Learners of Educational Testing Services (Pitoniak, et al., 2009), assessment is the key to improving educational opportunities for language-minority groups. According to Blanchard (2009), a “productive assessment” offers learners the opportunity to understand how to judge what they can achieve, take their learning farther, become self-confident, and trusting in their own learning abilities.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Norris (2006) states that there are two main roles of assessment in advanced FL education: (1) to help researchers understand foreign language learning within educational settings and (2) to help teachers in educative functions of assessment. In his own words:

[A]ssessment must meet the demands of rigorous educational research by operationalizing consistent and replicable measures that provide for valid interpretations about variables of interest ... If assessment cannot meet this demand—and it probably does not at this time—research on instructional effectiveness in advanced FL education, as well as in other L2 domains, will fail to advance our knowledge about teaching/learning of languages” (p. 175).

Assessment must be centered in learning (educative assessment) because an assessment is designed to help improve learning in second and foreign language contexts. Assessment focuses on learning, “it is no longer separated from instruction; it is a major, essential, and integrated part of teaching and learning” (Wiggins, 1998, p. 8). With these notions in mind, in the following sections I will explore three main roles of assessment: (1) to ensure authentic performance; (2) to provide ongoing feedback; and (3) to promote learning and teaching as priority roles to promote SLL. Additionally, I will analyze the current role of assessment in SLL.

Assessment to Ensure Authentic Performance

One of the roles of assessment is to ensure authentic performance in the second language. In this sense, the aim of assessment is to evaluate the student’s success or performance of the target language using activities and tasks that respond to the classroom goals, student’s needs, and real-life situations. According to Wiggins (1998), authentic tasks “supply valid direction, intellectual coherence, and motivation for the day-in and day-out work” (p. 21) of developing the language skills necessary to communicate in the second or foreign language. In this context,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Aksu (2012) states that authentic assessment uses various ways of assessment to echo students' learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities. Authentic performance in assessment aims to engage students in problem solving using real and creative ways. Based on Wiggins (1998) research, in order for assessment to ensure authentic performance in SLL, the tasks should: (1) be realistic; (2) require judgment and innovation; (3) ask the students to "communicate in the second language"; (4) replicate or simulate the contexts in which English is used; (5) assess students' ability to use English efficiently and effectively to negotiate meaning; and (6) allow appropriate opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, and get feedback on their performance in English.

For assessment to promote authentic performance in SLL students, there are techniques and instruments that can be applied. The assessment instruments are tools to help teachers answer the questions: what is being assessed, how is it being assessed, and with what purpose? The most common techniques for assessing ESL/EFL students include observation of classroom activities, interrogation through interviews or surveys, resolution of problems or situations of everyday life in a foreign language, and questionnaires. Brown & Hudson (1998) mentioned the importance of including checklists, journals, logs, videotapes and audiotapes, self-evaluations, and teacher observations, as well as portfolios, conferences, diaries, self-assessments, and peer assessments as an essential part of the student assessment.

One of the ways in which assessment ensures authentic performance is by integrating the language skills in the assessment, because in the real world, skills are regularly integrated. Plakans and Gebiril (2015) mention integrated assessment referring to tasks that combine more than one language skill to simulate how the authentic language is used. They also suggested that even though teaching and assessing language skills separately have dominated SLL, alternative

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

positions supporting skills integration (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Swaki, Quinlan, & Lee, 2013; Cummin, 2014) have come into play. In fact, Plakans and Gebril (2015) produce examples of students' comments about the benefits of written integrated assessment:

“I prefer writing with reading because they make the answer much easier and provide us with information.” “This is a useful method for getting information. It happens that students sometimes do not have the background knowledge on a specific topic about which they are writing, and they are required to write reading-based writing. It will help them get information they also read to reflect on the topic” (p. 75).

In SLL there are several techniques that use integrated assessment, for instance, when students have to develop annotated bibliographies, summaries or reactions of readings, connections of theory and data, reports, study cases, or class projects. Content-Based Learning (CBL) and task-based Learning (TBL) come into play when integrating skills into foreign language learning and assessing. TBL focuses on meaningful communication in the target language through the development of a specific task. When Ellis and Shintani (2014) defined a task, they mentioned that it should be meaningful, that there is a need to convey information, that students should use their own resources, and that the outcome is not the use of language, but is used to complete the task. TBL focuses on communication to develop linguistic and interaction performance in an authentic manner.

Assessment to Provide Ongoing Feedback

Another role of assessment in SLL is to provide ongoing feedback. As Wiggins (1998) states, once students, teachers, and administrators realize “how achievement of excellence depends not only on the quality of the tasks that students undertake but also on the quality of the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

feedback they get, we will better marshal the energy and resources needed to honor this vision” (p. 8). According to Gavriel (2013), feedback is an ongoing process, and the goal is to help students be aware of the current knowledge or skill level, to know, to understand and to recognize their learning, and to understand how they can improve their current level. In other words, feedback aims to develop a student’s responsibility for their own learning.

Lira-Gonzales (2012) considers that the most important point in giving feedback is that students have the opportunity to reflect on the quality of their work compared to stated goals or criteria. Additionally, student self-assessment has the power to develop more reflective, aware, responsible, and more independent learners in order to increase learning and achievement. One of the ways in which language teachers can help students in this process is by modeling, providing information on the target language in two-way dialogues (Gavriel, 2013). Wiggins (1998) believes that an “ongoing assessment for understanding with authentic tasks, and useful feedback that helps students to self-assess and self-adjust will radically change our view of what teaching itself involves” (p. xiii). Useful feedback must be interactive, rich and clear in response, and accurate in assessment and self-correction.

There are different types of feedback; however, any effective feedback should be integrated into the course and should not merely be a reflection of the course content (Harris & McCann, 1994). In the field of EFL, corrective feedback is a useful tool to improve students’ language skills. According to Ellis and Shintani (2014), “corrective feedback (CF) takes the form of responses to learner utterances that contain an error” (p. 249). Corrective feedback is one of the options for improving accuracy. There are different strategies to develop corrective feedback, such as questioning the learner, direct indication, requesting clarification, requesting repetition, echoing, using gesture, modeling, recasting, and discussing the error. Recasts “involve the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

teacher's implicit provision of a correct reformulation of all or part of a student's ill-formed utterance" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 46). By using recast, an EFL teacher is able to correct grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation mistakes as the students speak. However, this can be done only when it is considered necessary, trying not to affect the students' confidence in speaking English. The recast has to be casual by rephrasing the word, words, or phrases correctly, and as Scrivener (2005) states, "if the objective is accuracy, then immediate correction is likely to be useful; if the aim is fluency, then lengthy, immediate correction that diverts from the flow of speaking is less appropriate" (as cited in Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p.251).

Additionally, Black and Wiliam (1998) state that it is essential to have a communication of assessment criteria between teachers and learners, provide high quality feedback (both oral and written), and provide opportunities for self- and peer-assessment. Similarly, Gavriel (2013) believes that feedback, learning objectives and outcomes, peer and self-assessment, and questioning are necessary key components in trainer-trainee interactions to promote assessment for learning.

Assessment to Improve Students Understanding

The third role of assessment in SLL is to promote teaching and learning, helping students improve their understanding. As Wiggins (1998) mentions,

Assessment must take authentic work and use of feedback more central to the learning process - whether we are talking about the learning of students, teachers, or administrators, in other words, student self-adjustment must become central to teaching, learning and assessing" (p. 21).

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

From a Vygotskyian perspective, in order to gain understanding, students have to think in concepts. Usually, education is about knowledge production and not understanding. In this sense, Wiggins (1998) points out that there is usually confusion between subject-matter knowledge and subject-matter understanding in assessment. Tests of knowledge are simple and straightforward and involve unthinking reproduction of the textbook (p. 73). However, another type of assessment (dynamic assessment) involves an understanding of the use of English in real-life contexts. For students to gain understanding, teachers need to know where the students are in their concept development and to build a bridge for understanding of the second or foreign language (Mahn, Vygotsky Seminar, 2017). Vygotsky (1987) also describes that “when the concept is not torn from the concretely perceived situation, it guides the adolescent’s thinking easily and faultlessly. The application of experience to entirely different domains, the process of transferring concepts, presents much greater difficulties” (p. 161). In this sense, students will gain understanding only if they are able to take a concept of SLL and apply it in different contexts. In second language assessments, there are concrete examples of students having knowledge of a particular aspect of the language but not the understanding (application of the knowledge) of it. ESL and EFL students know how to formulate the different tenses of the English language. Students know the structure of verb tenses including simple present, present continuous, and the future indicated by the phrase going to (Figure 2.3), and they demonstrate this when teachers administrate grammar focus tests such as multiple choice or true and false, for instance. However, whenever they have to use the verb in clear conversations (in other types of assessments), they do not use it correctly or they do not use the verb. This occurs because they know the structure, but they do not understand the concept of it.

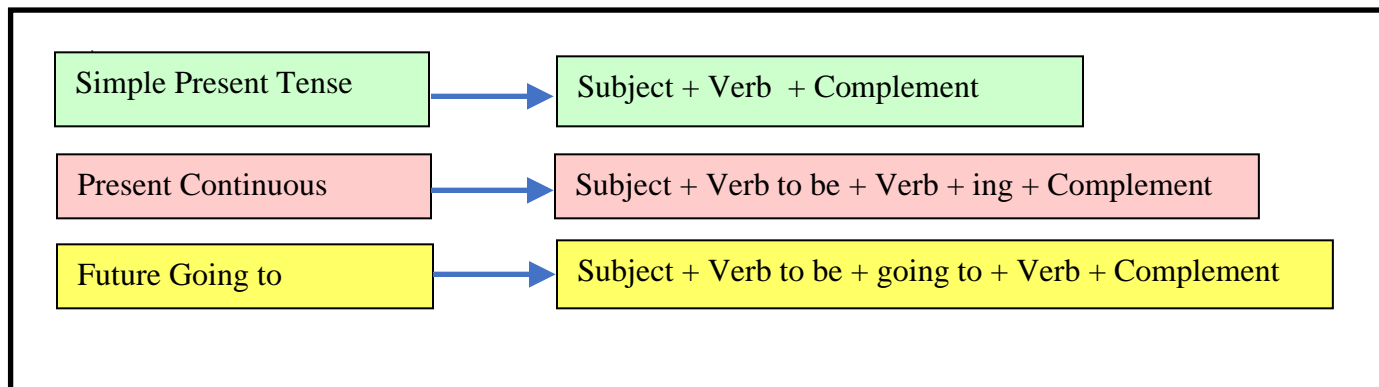


Figure 3. Sample of Grammatical Structures

In order to have evidence that students have an understanding of the subject matter, in this case English, Wiggins (1998) provides specific criteria. He states that a student who understands: (1) demonstrates sophisticated explanatory and interpretive power and insight; (2) demonstrates that they can apply knowledge in context and has know-how; (3) demonstrates ability to take perspectives; (4) demonstrates empathy, and (5) reveals self-knowledge.

After identifying the roles of assessment in second language learning, we are going to discuss Dynamic Assessment, a type of assessment that is based on mediation and ZPD and connects the three major roles of assessment presented in the previous sections. Dynamic Assessment ensures authentic performance, provides ongoing feedback, and improves students' understanding. We are going to talk about in more detail about Dynamic Assessment in the next sections.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Dynamic Assessment

In theory, the purpose of assessment is to analyze the gaps and needs of the students to make corrections to improve learning instead of a way to discipline or castigate students for not having a certain level of English or meeting a set of imposed standards. This unintended use of assessments to judge and punish negatively affects students' self-esteem and it is counterproductive to accomplishing learning goals. In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), teachers need to be aware of their students' conceptual development for two primary reasons: to help them progress in their ZPD and to adequately assess their language understanding and therefore their English production.

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is neither an assessment instrument nor a method of assessing but a framework for conceptualizing teaching and assessment as an integrated activity of understanding learner abilities by actively supporting their development (Poehner M. E., 2008). DA is based on Vygotsky's (1987) proposal of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which underscores the developmental importance of providing appropriate support to learners to help them stretch beyond their independent performance. Dynamic Assessment is "a procedure for simultaneously assessing and promoting development that takes into account the individual's (or group's) zone of proximal development (ZPD)" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004, p. 50). DA takes the concept of mediation from ZPD as a foundation to explain the dialectical nature of assessment. In other words, mediation involves the dialectical unit of theory and practice. "Practice sets the tasks and serves as the supreme judge of theory, as its truth criterion. It dictates how to construct the concepts and how to formulate the laws" (Vygotsky L. S., 2004, p. 304). In the case of SLL, teachers' use of mediation through prompts, clues, leading questions, and other types of stimuli during the evaluation are decisive to understand students' potential for proximal conceptual

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

development. For instance, ESL/EFL teachers' mediation during the assessment has been shown to be crucial in the development of students' future performance in the target language. Lantolf and Poehner (2011) provide an example when they emphasize the necessity of the teacher's mediation by "providing a set of prompts designed to encourage learners to actively engage with the relevant features of the language" (p. 28). In this case, the teacher understood the importance of providing support to the student to work through difficulties and to "maximize their own agency" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p. 28).

Additionally, assessment should focus not only on the present, but also on the future potential of students' capacity because "determining the actual level of development not only does not cover the whole picture of development, but very frequently encompasses only an insignificant part of it" (Vygotsky L. S., 1998, p. 200).

As a form of assessment, standardized tests do not reflect the essence of Vygotsky's ZPD. Standardized exams as commonly administered do not reveal a real mediation between the student and the teacher and do not demonstrate the cognitive capacity of the student, but rather present a false image of what the student supposedly knows at a certain moment of his or her development. Lidz and Gindis (2003) agree when they say that "traditional standardized assessment follows the child's cognitive performance to the point of 'failure' in independent functioning, whereas DA in the Vygotskian tradition leads the child to the point of achievement of success in joint or shared activity" (p. 103). Hence, DA always occurs in collaboration between the student and teacher, and between assessment and instruction because they are "dialectically integrated" (Poehner M. E., 2007) to actively promote conceptual development. Mediation can reveal other aspects of the students' learning abilities that a static assessment cannot such as "individual's abilities, the causes of poor performance, and specific ways of

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL supporting development”, and but “only to provide scores” (Poehner, 2008, p. 6). Static assessments measure all learners as if they were one, while DA focuses on the capabilities that are still developing in each individual and fosters the proximal development.

Lantolf and Poehner (2004) present two approaches of DA: Interventionist (see; Laughon, 1990; Güthke & Beckmann, 2000; Kozulin & Garb, 2002) and Interactionist (see Atón, 2003, Feuerstein, et al., 1985; Gibbons, 2003; Gibbons, 2015; Karpov & Gindis, 2000). Interventionist DA is concerned with offering the student fast and specific support in order to complete a given task. Examples of this are illustrated in ESL/EFL learning assessments using true/false questions, correcting students' spelling mistakes, where teachers intervene offering students “standardized hits” (Poehner, 2008) in order to help them score higher in their evaluation, which can be easier to compare and to make predictions about the future. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) also state that “interventionist DA is related to quantifying the amount of help required for a learner to quickly and efficiently reach a pre-specified end point” (p. 54). There are different procedures cited by Poehner (2008) that explain in detail the use of interventionist DA in learning. Budoff's Learning Potential Measurement for instance, focused on standardized mediation and the use of pretest and posttest scores, identifying high scores students who performed good in their pretest, gainers who show improvement after mediation and training, and non-gainers who perform poorly on the pre- and post- tests. Guthke, Heinrich, and Caruso (1986) used vague hints such as, “That's not correct”, for different incorrect attempts students make in a LLT Language aptitude assessment. If the student does not answer correctly on the third attempt, the mediator gives a more explicit hint, and finally if the student does not provide a correct answer, the teacher offers the correct answer with a specific explanation. The researchers also included the score and a profile of the students. Carslon and Weidl (1992)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

focused on standardized verbalization prompts such as “Try to think aloud”, “Tell me what you see and what are you thinking” in their Testing the Limits procedures. In SLA, Poehner (2009) mentions Kozulin and Grab’s (2002) work. They used interventionist DA for reading comprehension with a pretest and posttest. The mediation focused on comprehension skills and vocabulary and grammar structures. They develop a Learning Potential Score that provide only one score, which was the difference between the score of the pretest and the posttest. In sort, mediators in the interactionist DA provide hints, prompts, and leading questions in a specific order from implicit to a more explicit explanation, which has the aim is to “maximize the assessment’s objectivity” and it is “define in traditional psychometric terms” (Poehner, 2008).

On the other hand, interactionist DA does not focus on speed learning, but rather on meaningful learning, helping the students move from one ZPD to a higher level and enhancing their conceptual development. For instance, Feuerstein, Rand, and Rynders (1988) captured the essence of the Vygotsky ZPD when they mentioned the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). Feuerstein and his colleagues believed that if a student goes through a MLE, he will benefit more from the “direct exposure to learning” (p. 58). This MLE is shown when the mediator (teacher or a more capable peer) guides the student through interactions. There are 11 aspects of MLEs proposed by Feuerstein at al., (1988).

1. Intentionality and reciprocity
2. Transcendence
3. Mediation of meaning
4. Mediation of feelings of competence
5. Mediated regulation and control of behavior
6. Mediated sharing behavior

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

7. Mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation
8. Mediation of goal seeking, goal setting, goal planning, and achieving behavior
9. Mediation of challenge: The search for novelty and complexity
10. Mediation of an awareness of the human being as a changing entity
11. Mediation of an optimistic alternative

Regarding interactionist L2 DA, Poehner (2009) presents several examples. Anton's (2003) study in L2 Spanish program. In this study two students had to narrate a story. The examiner asked questions about the narration and commented on the use of past tenses of the verbs that were used incorrectly. The interaction (dialogue) helped students realized the mistake and had the opportunity to re-narrate the story appropriately. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) offer a regulatory scale -implicit (strategy) for explicit- for DA interactions for ESL learners (p. 471):

0. Tutor asks the learner to read, find the errors, and correct them independently, prior to the tutorial
1. Construction of a "collaborative frame" prompted by the presence of the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.
2. Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error by the learner or the tutor.
3. Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a segment (e.g., sentence, clause, line)-
"Is there anything wrong in this sentence?"
4. Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognizing the error.
5. Tutor narrows down the location of the error (e.g., Tutor repeats or points to the specific segment which contains the error).

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

6. Tutor indicates the nature of the error, but does not identify the error (e.g., "There is something wrong with the tense marking here").
7. The tutor indicates the error ("You can't use the auxiliary here").
8. Tutor rejects learner's unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.
9. Tutor provides clues to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g., "It is not really past but something that is still going on").
10. Tutor provides the correct form.
11. Tutor provides some explanation for the use of the correct form.
12. Tutor provides examples of the correct pattern when other forms of help fail to produce an appropriate responsive action.

In SLA, DA has evolved as part of the dynamic between teachers and students in the classroom. The interaction between them promotes conceptual development. As Lantolf & Poehner (2011) state, "assessment and instruction exist in a dialectical relation as the provision of mediation attuned to the ZPD allows for the identification of emergent abilities and at the same time supports their development" (p. 3). By this logic, teachers who work as mediators should provide assistance that will help the student internalize the concept under discussion. Gibbons (2003) also mentions the importance of mediation to help students in their ZPD gain conceptual understanding: "through this mediation, students' contributions to the discourse are progressively transformed across a mode continuum into the specialist discourse of the school curriculum" (p. 247).

DA seems to be an ongoing "development-centered" (Poehner, 2007) approach of collaboration to help learners improve their performance in the developing language, where instructional activities and assessment activities merge into one and vary according to each

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

student's developmental process (Poehner, 2009). In this context, the role of the teacher is decisive in the mediation process between learner and teacher. As Gibbons (2003) mentions, "both teachers and learners are active participants in the construction of language and curriculum knowledge" (p. 247). Gibbons (2003) offers an excellent example of how to move from everyday concepts to academic concepts with the mediation of the teacher. In her article, students start to use technical expressions such as 'repel' and 'attract' after using it with the guidance of the instructor. In the same way, ESL/EFL students can develop an understanding of academic concepts (concepts in their second or foreign language) with the adequate guidance of the teacher.

Teachers can incorporate DA and mediation in their everyday teaching practices. As the Gibbons (2015) diagram adapted from Mariani (1997) indicates, using mediation illustrates the four zones of teaching and learning. The stages of teaching and learning are: the comfort zone, the boredom zone, the frustration/anxiety zone, and the learning/engagement zone (illustrated in Figure 4.4). The author states that when teachers identify these stages during instruction, students benefit because "it relates scaffolding to the degree of intellectual challenge of the task that the student is carrying out" (p. 17). In this context, teachers will be able to offer students challenging tasks suited for their level of progress (ZPD). The challenge section reflects the amount of challenge that is put on the students, while the support section reflects the assistance that the teacher is offering to the student in their conceptual development.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

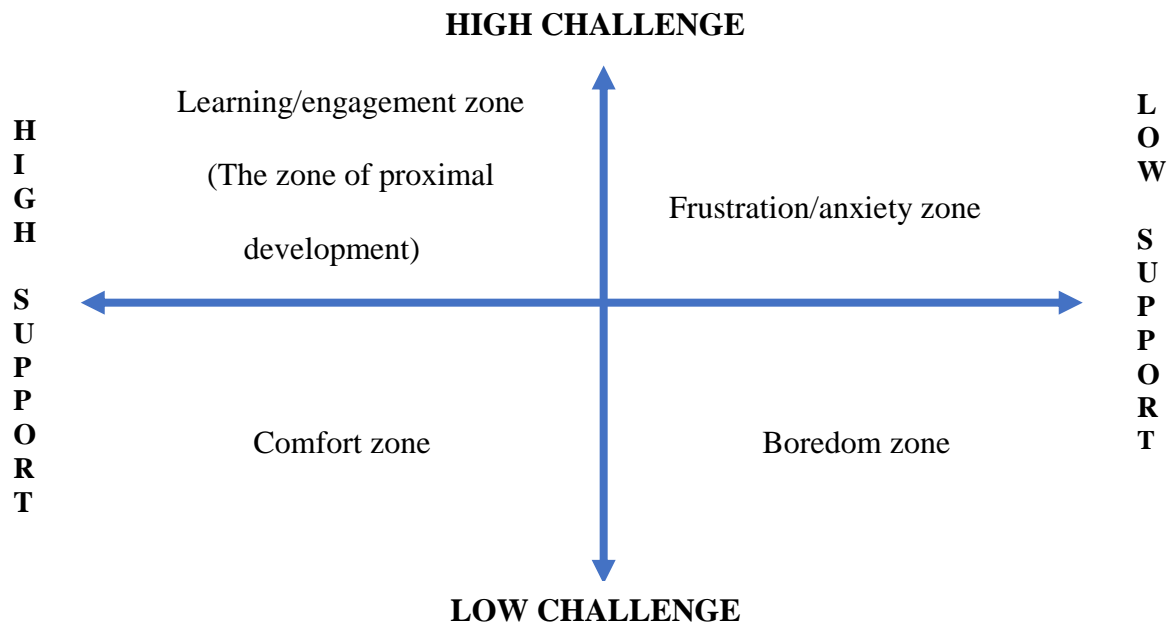


Figure 4. Gibbons' Four Zone of Teaching and Learning (2015)

In order to promote DA in assessment and instruction, the activities must reflect a challenge for the students. The tasks proposed by the teacher should be in the learning zone where the component of engagement and cognitive demand are taking place for students. Otherwise, teachers risk underestimating students' progress and deny the opportunity for students' development. However, teachers should not over-challenge their students either; instead, teachers must find a window of moderate challenge. Gibbons (2015) discusses that studies have shown that when students are guided into high-challenge/high-support space, it will balance and diminish gaps in learners' development and also improve their achievement (Gibbons 2008; Walqui 2007).

Since the role of the teacher is to promote interaction through mediation, teachers have to pay attention to and reflect on the students' previous knowledge, personal experiences, cultural references, and first language. From that point teachers guide and assist students to promote their own conceptual development that takes place in each student's ZPD. Mediated language learning

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

is promoted by signaling to learners how to reformulate, and how to re-contextualize personal knowledge. Teachers also use local equivalence to enrich students' linguistic and non/linguistic skills employing recasting⁴, echo questions, asking for clarification, and self-repair (Gibbons, 2003).

Poehner (2007; 2009) relates the idea of Group DA (G-DA) as a form of mediation in EFL/ESL classrooms. Poehner (2007) states, "Group DA represents perhaps an even greater break from the preoccupation with the autonomous individual that underlies most accepted assessment practices because comparisons among individuals cease to make sense and the dynamics of learners' cooperative activity becomes more relevant" (p. 338). To promote G-DA through group activities, Gibbons (2015) as well as Ellis and Shintani (2014) provide teacher strategies to be used in group mediation to foster students' development. Gibbons (2015) states that a well-designed and well-run group promotes opportunities for learning and improves second language development. When learners are involved in G-DA in which collaborative teamwork is needed, learners have more opportunities to interact and the amount of language use increases, as students move from one ZPD to another. Additionally, group activities enable teachers to explore and promote the individual's and group's ZPD and at the same time support the conceptual development of each student.

In promoting G-DA in the classroom, Gibbons (2015) uses collaborative groups as tools for learning "because asking questions, exchanging information, and solving problems are restated, and meanings are refined" (p. 50). Ellis & Shintani (2014) mentioned, "group-work is a means of increasing students' participation and self-reliance in the classroom" (p.22) because

⁴ Recasting has its own the definition. Lyster and Ranta (1997) stated, "Recasts involve the teacher's implicit provision of a correct reformulation of all or part of a student's ill-formed utterance" (p.46). However, the essence of this learning strategy is mediation and helping students realize their errors so that eventually concept development in students will be increased.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

there are more opportunities for language practice, there is a range of language functions, and learners are engaged in self-and-other corrections. Most importantly, students negotiate meaning among and between one another. Gibbons (2015) specifies that activities presented to the students have to offer a real need to talk and must have meaningful purpose. Activities need to have information gaps to be challenging, engaging and motivating for all the students. Finally, the interactive group work has to be cognitively demanding for students. Gibbons (2015) offers some examples of these activities such as donut circles, hot seat, talking points, progressive brainstorming, opinion chains, problem-solving, picture sequencing, barrier games, and mind maps. This mode continuum is a framework presented by Gibbons (2015). It aims to develop all language skills which "describes the different order of discourse observed in the classroom as the learners were assisted in moving from registers expressing their firsthand experience in oral language to those expressing academic knowledge in writing" (Gibbons, 2003, p.250). It has four stages: 1) doing an experiment; 2) introducing key vocabulary; 3) teacher-guided reporting; and 4) journal writing. These are examples of initial use of G-DA which "[engages] the group in an activity that no individual is able to complete independently, but for which all members require mediation, albeit at different levels and different quantity" (Poehner, 2009, p. 477).

In this section, the researcher has discussed the development of ZPD and CD in ESL/EFL contexts, and how the understanding of these concepts helps teachers better assess students from a sociocultural perspective. Additionally, DA has been presented as a tool to co-construct students' ZPD and to promote CD. In order to reach higher levels of CD in ESL/EFL students, teachers have to identify students' ZPD and from there assess them using a dynamic approach. On this premise, standardized assessment does not evaluate learners dialectically; instead, these types of assessments underestimate students' progress. As a result, standardized assessments lack

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
any insight into the student's' future development. Therefore, what I am proposing here is a reconceptualization of the relationship between students, teachers, and assessment through Vygotsky's concept of ZPD and Dynamic Assessment to foster conceptual development in SLA.

Using DA in the Construction of ZPTD

According to Warford (2011), "a Vygotskian approach to teacher development sees the education of teachers as situated learning. A socially situated view of teacher cognition traces the movement of pedagogical knowledge from the inter- to the intramental plane." (p. 252). School backgrounds, beliefs, *Perezhivanie* (emotional sense & lived experiences), and previous knowledge play a significant role in the development of the teachers' ZPD in the reconstruction of everyday concepts to academic concepts. As already seen, the development of scientific concepts initiates from an external source and then conscious awareness comes about from concrete and personal experiences. Consequently, the development of spontaneous concepts starts in the tangible and empirical and moves to higher concepts towards conscious awareness and volition (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 220). The space between these two processes is the distance between the zone of proximal and actual development.

Teachers' professional development programs that incorporate ZPTD (Figure 2.5) require the following phases: (1) **self-assistance**; (2) **expert-assistance**; (3) **internalization**; and (4) **recursion** (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Warford, 2011). All of these stages are accompanied by the use of DA as mediator strategy.



Figure 5. Teachers' Professional Development Process (Based on Warford, 2011)

Self-Assistance Phase

According to Warford (2011) because of the strong influence of prior learning experiences that teachers have had in professional development programs, the ZPTD requires that teachers reflect on their prior experiences and assumptions. Lempert-Shepell (1995) also mentions the importance of self-reflection, “the teacher must be given an opportunity to construct his or her own frame of reference and professional action in a situation of cultural self-determination” (p. 439). This stage includes strategies such as group and pair discussions, sharing autobiographies, follow-up questions (Warford, 2011).

In the particular case of teachers,' prior knowledge of assessment and exposure to the new concept of DA will place each teacher in different zones of development. Teachers have both a zone of proximal development for the specific concept of assessment (DA) and that of their actual level of development. Therefore, teachers will need various types of guidance and assistance from the research expert on DA. Hedegaard (2003) corroborates the importance of

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
personal experience in creating the zones of proximal development. She emphasizes the importance of "understand[ing] how the dialectic relationship between the abstract and concrete aspects of a conceptual system can be combined with personal experience to become part of a person's conceptual understanding" (as cited by Mahn, 2015, p. 253).

Expert-Assistance Phase

In the second phase of teacher-assistance, teachers need the help of an expert in the field. Teachers "need to experience live and videotaped, as well as field-based demonstrations of how innovative teaching practices are carried out in actual classrooms; this has the added advantage of reducing the sense of division between the academy and field" (Warford, 2011, p. 254). Some of the strategies are discussions with experts and colleagues, leading questions and follow-up discussion, and written reflections as writing is an important tool for developing higher-order concepts (Vygotsky, 1987).

Internalization Phase

During the third phase the internalization grows, as teachers demonstrate their pedagogical understanding and conceptual development. Here the zone of imitation plays a significant role in teachers' conceptual development. In this sense, teachers can intellectually imitate the use of DA in SLL classes. Vygotsky states that imitation of the thinking process, not mechanical imitation, is an unconscious process through repetition, and then the concept is internalized and becomes conscious. In the specific case of teachers' understanding of assessment, this process allows teachers to become consciously aware of the role of DA in SLL.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Collegial dialogues and discussions between experts and teachers can provide teachers the opportunity to imitate the intellectual process that together with the cultural values develop their conceptual understanding of DA in the teaching/learning process. As it was mentioned before, this intellectual imitation is a mental process that “involves a complex interplay of social and individual processes that include transmission, construction, transaction, and transformation” (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012, p. 37). This intellectual imitation is visualized through discussions and partners' dialogues.

Recursion phase

Stage four, which is called recursion, as described by Warford (2011) is that teachers are “prepar[ed] to confront the dichotomy of theory and practice in all its intensity” (p. 255). For Vygotsky, recursion is the process of retracing the prior steps of the ZPD, and it represents an essential, final stage of concept development (Warford, 2011). In this stage strategies such as discussions among colleagues and experts, sharing experiences, follow-up questions, post-observation dialogues, and written reflections are fundamental to promote to teachers the concept of development in which the teacher can control and systematize, internalize, and construct concepts as they pertain to assessment and DA. Finally, regarding teacher training and development, Warford (2011) states that:

[A]cademic and field-based coursework must be guided by the conviction that teacher knowledge is inherently situated and mediated (not transmitted) within an emergent and dynamic interaction between a multiplicity of roles, goals, and motives; consequently, the curriculum should center on establishing and promoting ongoing inner dialogues between prior experiences of teaching, the theoretical canon, and local practices. The narrative of teacher socialization, from a Vygotskian perspective, is a tale in which the text is heavily

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

nanced by pretext (apprenticeship of observation) and context (area schools); consequently, the authoritative teacher educator strives to attune to this dynamic process (p. 257).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this chapter are to help the reader better understand the details of the present study and to provide the rationale for using qualitative research as paradigm and action research as the methodological approach for this study. Action research is an inquiry that is done by and with the EFL teachers from the Centro de Idiomas of the Universidad Central de Ecuador.

The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL teachers' understandings of the role of assessment in SLL and at the same time to help them deepen their understanding of assessment/DA and the process of teaching and learning through focused, collegial dialogues between the researcher and three selected teachers. The overarching question is: How do EFL teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment, and how can their understandings be improved? The sub-questions are: (1) How do EFL teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment? (2) Do EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment deepen through mediation? And if so, how are the understandings changed? (3) How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices? and (4) What strategies can help teachers understand the concepts of assessment and dynamic assessment?

Qualitative Research

I have chosen to use qualitative research because this methodology generally adheres to a constructivist view of the world (Kielmann, Cataldo, & Seeley, 2012). Additionally, qualitative research offers a legitimate methodology to examine how people make sense of their own

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
concrete real-life experiences (Cropley, 2019). In this research study, I wanted to gain information about and understanding of how EFL teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment and how their understandings can be improved through action research.

Action Research

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016)(2016) state that “Action research encompasses a set of consciously collaborative and democratic strategies for generating knowledge and designing action in which trained experts in social research and other stakeholders work together” (p. 52). In this sense, action research methodology is appropriate for the present study because the teacher-researcher role was that of a trained expert in the field of dynamic assessment. Additionally, the participants (the researcher and the teachers) worked collaboratively to gain a more in-depth understanding of the use of DA in their classes. Action research helped answer the research questions of the present study, which was how EFL teachers' assessment practices reflect their individual understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment and how their understanding can be improved in el Centro de Idiomas.

Additionally, this action research study provided an in-depth view of deepening understandings through focused, collegial dialogues between the researcher and the three selected teachers. In this action research study, the teacher-researcher had the opportunity as the more knowledgeable expert on DA to help teachers deepen their understandings of the relationships between assessment and the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, this action research examined teachers' implementation of strategies to use DA in their classrooms as they learned more about DA.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Young and Hren (2017) mentioned five aspects necessary to apply a qualitative approach, and I have considered that these aspects applicable to the present study because:

1. There is little information about EFL Ecuadorian teachers' understanding and practices about assessment,
2. By using a qualitative method, I want to make sense of a complex situation,
3. With this study, I want to learn from participants (teachers) about their experiences (beliefs, motivations, opinion, practices, etc.),
4. I want to construct a theory from data, and
5. I want to understand EFL Ecuadorian teachers understanding and practices about assessment profoundly and in detail.

The following information (Table 3.1) answers the questions necessary to conduct an action research study. I have adapted the table developed by Mills (2000).

Questions that are needed to be answered in an Action Research Study	
Who?	Conducted by and with teachers
Where?	Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Central del Ecuador
How?	Using qualitative methods (focused dialogues, observations, in-depth surveys) to describe how EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/ dynamic assessment and how can their understandings be improved.
Why?	To take action and effect a positive educational change in the Centro de Idiomas. To improve teachers' understanding and practices of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment in the teaching/learning process

Table 1. Questions for an Action Research Study. Adapted from Mills (2000)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Additionally, there are two stages in this study based on Smith and Rebolledo (2018) for an action research study. I developed a figure, so the whole process of this research study is more apparent.

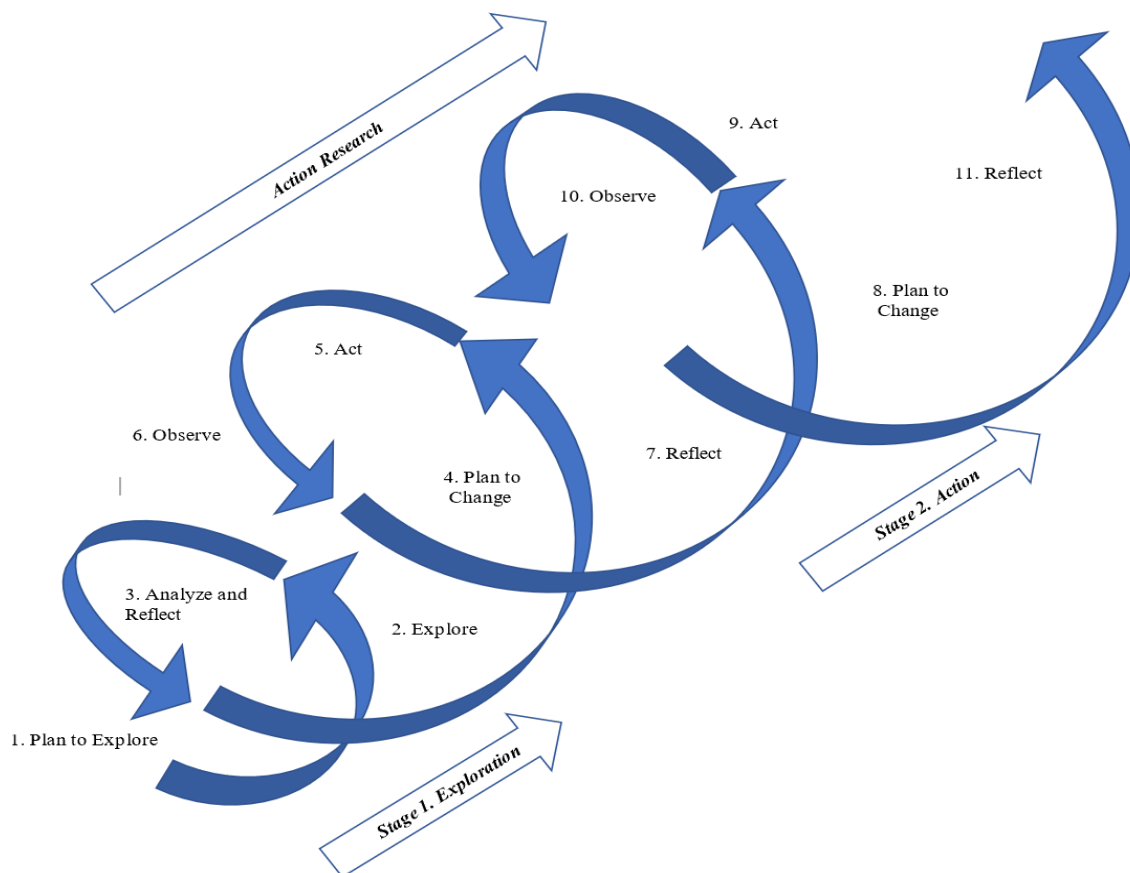


Figure 6. Action Research Process

Stage 1. Exploration

In the first stage, I developed the questions for the in-depth survey, the observation, and the analysis of the documents (Plan to Explore). Even though the action research study will focus on three EFL tenured teachers, it is imperative to mention that there are a total of 18 full-time tenured English teachers in el Centro de Idiomas. They were asked to participate in the research; 12 teachers agreed to participate in this research project. 12 teachers completed a survey

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL consisting of questions related to assessment, teaching, and learning English as a Second Language. For each teacher, I visited one of their classes to observe the role of assessment. The participation in this observation stage took a total of 2 hours per teacher. I searched for any documentation from the institution, the center, and the government related to the English language and assessment (Explore). Finally, I analyzed the information that was obtained and decided who the three teachers would be who would continue working with me for the next stage (Analyze and reflect). The three teachers were chosen based on the information obtained from: (1) an in-depth survey on EFL teachers' understanding of assessment, and (2) class observations. The criteria used for the selection was the following: teachers who attempt to use materials other than the textbook in their classes; teachers who use other types of assessment instruments other than the final tests at the end of the course; and teachers who show interest in participating in the study and are willing to learn more about assessment.

Stage 2. Action

In this second stage, I developed guidelines to work with the three selected teachers in the focused dialogues regarding assessment and DA in SLL (Plan to Change). With the help of the three English teachers, we worked with focused dialogues, observations, and reflection sessions.

The focused dialogues were group discussions with teachers to discuss aspects of assessment and DA (Act). We had a total of nine (9) focused dialogues, and each session lasted one hour. After each meeting, the teachers had to apply DA strategies in their classes. I made a total of eight (8) class observations of the three teachers (3 hours for teacher Karen, 3 hours for teacher Karol, and two hours for teacher Mary) to see if and how the teachers implemented DA in their classrooms after the sessions (Observe). (Teacher names have been changed to assure

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

confidentiality.) I also scheduled four (4) follow-up observation meetings 2 teachers (teachers Karol and Karen) per their request after their classes to verify information obtained from the observations. A final meeting entailed a written reflection by the three teachers about the extent of dialogues and the implementation helped them deepen their concept of assessment. (Reflect).

For the present action research study, the following activities took place in the following sites.

Steps	Site
<i>Stage 1. Exploration</i>	
Step 1. Twelve In-depth Surveys	On-line through their e-mails
Step 2. Twelve Class Observations; one observation of each teacher	Classrooms at Centro de Idiomas-Universidad Central del Ecuador
Step 3. Analysis of Documents	Centro de Idiomas and online: Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Reglamento Instituto Académico de Idiomas, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, and Reglamento de Régimen Académico. Tests and quizzes
<i>Stage 2. Action</i>	
Step 4. Planning for change	Office Centro de Idomas- Universidad Central del Ecuador
Step 5. Five Focused dialogues with three teachers (see appendix XX for agenda)	Outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca general)
Step 6. Three Observations and 2 follow-up observations with three teachers	Classrooms at Centro de Idiomas-Universidad Central del Ecuador
Step 7. Reflections with the three teachers	Outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca general)
Step 8. Planning for modifications requested by the teachers	Office Centro de Idomas- Universidad Central del Ecuador
Step 9. Four focused dialogues with three teachers (see appendix XX for agenda)	Outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca general)
Step 10. Five Observations in total (two	Classrooms at Centro de Idiomas-Universidad Central

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

observation with two teachers and one with one) 2 follow-up observations per request of two teachers	del Ecuador
Step 11. Final written reflections of one hour	Outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca general)

Table 2. Action Research Project Stages and Sites

Overview of Information Needed

Contextual Information

In the Ecuadorian context, the priority of language centers at public universities is to offer the students foreign language instruction to increase their foreign language proficiency. For instance, Article 44 of the Higher Education Act of Ecuador, says that "... It is the responsibility of the institutions of the Ecuadorian National System of Higher Education to provide the means for those who graduate from any study fields ... Also to pass and obtain a *proficiency in a foreign language*".

The Centro Universitario de Idiomas (CUI) of UCE Idiomas is located between Universitaria and America Avenue in Quito, Ecuador. Its objective is to grant the certificate of proficiency with international standards to students who meet all language requirements. Accreditation and proficiency of a second language are the sole responsibility of the Language Centre, as approved by the Honorable University Council at its meeting on June 15, 2010, and written in the "*General Guidelines for the approval of the Second Language.*" El Centro offers instruction in different languages, English, Italian, French, Korean, and Kichua. English is the most popular language, with more than 80% of the students registered in English programs.

Currently, at Centro de Idiomas, (now it is called Instituto Académico de Idiomas), students have to pass only four of eight levels obtain their proficiency certificate of English.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

There are various reasons for the establishment of the requirement of passing only four levels. One reason is because there are not enough teachers to work with a large student body of 40,000 from all the various faculties of the university. Another reason is that there is political pressure from the FEUE (Federacion de Estudiantes Universitarios) to reduce the number of levels to boost graduation rates.

Population and Sample

This empirical study focused on an action research study of a group of three English teachers from El Centro de Idiomas from UCE. The sample was purposefully chosen. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2016), purposeful sampling is “choosing subjects, places, and other dimensions of the research site to include in your research to enlarge your analysis or to test particular emerging themes and working hypothesis” (p. 274). There are 18 tenured English teachers at the Centro de Idiomas. All of them were invited to participate in this research study, but only 12 of 18 wished to be part of the first stage of the research. For the second stage of the action research from the 12 teachers, I selected 3 to conduct research with, based on the information obtained from: (1) an in-depth survey on the EFL teachers' understanding of assessment, and (2) class observations. The criteria used for the selection was the following:

1. Teachers who attempt to use materials other than the textbook in their classes.
2. Teachers who use other types of assessment instruments other than the final tests at the end of the course.
3. Teachers who show interest in participating in the study and are willing to learn more about assessment.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Method of Data Collection

The following section will describe in more detail the instruments of data collection that were used in the present study. I used a variety instruments to collect information in order to gain an understanding how EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflect their understandings of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment. I evaluated how their understandings could be improved through our focused, collegial dialogues, through class observations, and through in-depth surveys, and analyses of documents (e.g., Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Reglamento Instituto Académico de Idiomas, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, and Reglamento de Régimen Académico, Unit tests and quizzes).

All these methods of data collection allowed for triangulation to corroborate the evidence and data, obtaining rich and accurate information about the questions under investigation.

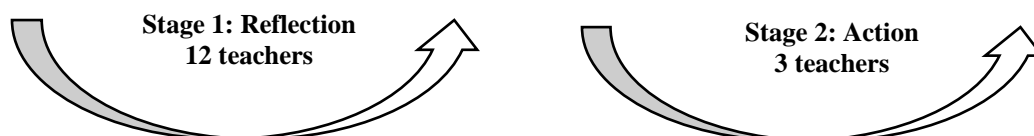
In order to have a clearer idea of how this action research project was conducted and the methods of data collection were used, I developed a condensed summary of this information (Figure. 3.2), which shows the two stages: (1) reflection, and (2) action, and the different steps in each stage. It is necessary to clarify that in stage 2 "Action", I went through the process twice because it was essential to make some changes in the strategies used to accomplish our objective, which was to help teachers deepen their understanding of dynamic assessment and reflect this understanding into their classes.

Action Research Project Data Collection					
Stage 1: Reflection			Stage 2: Action		
Plan to	1. Questionnaire 2. Observation notes 3. Observation Checklist	Plan to Change	1. Plan Focused Dialogues 2.	Plan to Change	1. Plan Focused Dialogues based on the previous analysis

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Explore					
Explore	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In-depth survey 2. Class observations 3. Governmental and institutional Documents 	Act	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focused Dialogues 	Act	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focused Dialogues
Analyze and Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of surveys 2. Analysis of observations 3. Analysis of documents 	Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class Observations 2. Follow-up questions 	Observe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class Observations 2. Follow-up questions
		Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of focused dialogues 2. Analysis of observations 3. Reflect what can be improved 	Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of focused dialogues 2. Analysis of observations 3. Reflect (Written reflections)

Table 3. Action Research Project Data Collection



Stage 1. Exploration

The objective of the Exploration Stage was to have a clearer idea of the situation of Centro de Idiomas concerning the teachers, their practices, and assessment processes. In other words, in this stage, I conducted an overview of the teachers, and evaluated the role of assessment in the EFL classes in the Centro de Idiomas through the in-depth survey, class observations, and analyses of artifacts (documents), such as the Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Reglamento Instituto Académico de Idiomas, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, and Reglamento de Régimen Académico. Additionally, as the end product of this stage, I chose the focal teachers who continued with the research project.

Step 1. In-depth Surveys. In order to choose the teachers for the present study, I developed and distributed a detailed electronic survey to obtain the teachers' demographic

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

information as well as insights on the teachers' understanding of assessment. I Asked all the teachers to complete the in-depth survey (See Appendix A) in a week. However, it took three weeks for the teachers to give the survey back to me. It was a voluntary survey; therefore, if the teachers did not feel comfortable answering it, they did not have to do it. Some of the demographic information requested was: (1) age, (2) teachers' years of teaching experience at a university level, (3) gender, (4) language background, (5) university of graduation, and (6) degree. The following chart 3.2 represents the demographic information for this study.

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Code	Pseudonym	Age	Years experience university	Gender	Language Background	University	Degree
1	Juan	42	18	male	Spanish	UTPL	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
2	Karol	40	15	female	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
3	John	37	9	male	Spanish	--	--
4	Mary	47	12	female	Spanish	PUCE	Bachelor in Linguistics applied to teaching foreign languages
5	Ronny	35	11	male	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
6	Pedro	48	11	male	Spanish	UTPL	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
7	Joaquin	34	2	male	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English and Italian
8	Kate	41	4	female	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
9	Carlos	38	12	male	Spanish & Kichwa	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English, French and Spanish
10	Becky	61	35	female	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English and French

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

11	Jaime	50	15	male	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
12	Karen	37	9	female	Spanish	UCE	Bachelor in Education in Teaching English
N=12							

Table 4. Participants' Demographic Information

As part of the in-depth survey teachers had to answer the following questions:

1. Do you give any type of assessment in addition to the final tests?
2. What do you think the final grade of the students represents?
3. Explain how you develop the syllabus for the course?
4. Do you consider any policies (Governmental, UCE, Centro de Idiomas, etc.) when developing your syllabus?
5. What additional material, besides the textbook, do you use in class?
6. When did you start working as an English teacher? How was your experience?
7. Do you have any English teaching or learning experience outside Ecuador?
8. What is your role in the process of Second Language Learning?
9. What is the role of assessment in Second Language Learning?
10. What is the relationship between teaching and assessment?
11. What theories do you use in the assessment process?

Step 2. Class observations. As part of the first stage *Exploration*, I conducted class observations of the 12 teachers. The purpose of these class observations was to have an on-site view of the teachers' practices, to observe the role that assessment played in their classes, and to analyze the learning environment in general. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), "Observation is a central and fundamental method in qualitative inquiry and is used to discover and explain complex interactions in natural social settings" (p. 155). In this sense, the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

observations in the present study were a useful instrument because they offered me the opportunity to observe and record the teachers' behaviors, practices, processes, and interactions with students in their natural setting (classroom). Also, I used field notes and memos to have an appropriate system for data generation and analysis to have a better understanding of the teachers and their practices, and to be able to choose the focal teachers. For this phase, I observed the 12 tenured EFL teachers one time. Some of the information I focused on for during the observations was:

1. Teachers who use different kinds of assessment,
2. Teachers who are willing to participate in the research, and
3. Teachers who seem more accessible to adapt to other kinds of assessments.

The following table indicates the check list, I used in these classes' observations:

No.	Parameters	Strong	Apparent	Not Displayed
		3	2	1
1	Teacher uses different kinds of assessment tools			
2	Teacher uses different materials in addition to the textbook			
3	Teacher's role is that of a facilitator			
4	Teacher provides feedback to students			
5	Teacher connects the teaching activities with the assessment			
6	Assessments reflects the content level			
7	Assessments reflects the objectives of the course			
8	There is a personalized teaching to students who need it			
9	Teacher is willing to participate in the research			
10	Teacher seems to be accessible to adapt other kinds of assessments			

Table 5. Class Observation Check List

Observation Notes:

Step. 3. Analysis of Document (artifacts). Regarding documents, also called artifacts, Yin (2009) states that physical or cultural artifacts can be technological devices, a tool or instrument, a work of art, or some other physical evidence including documents. For this action research study, I analyzed artifacts such as exams, tests, rubrics, and quizzes used in the process of assessing English language learning to generate data. Additionally, I analyzed the institutional and governmental documents: Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, Reglamento de Régimen Académico, tests and exams used for learning assessment by teachers. These documents gave me a better view of the constraints under which the teachers are working; how the teachers are assessing students, what parameters teachers are looking for, their objectives, their grading system, among other factors. As Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) indicate the “analysis of documents is potentially rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants” (p. 157), I wanted to portray teachers’ understandings of the role of assessment in SLL through class, institution, and official documentation. During the analysis of the artifacts, I was looking to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Centro de Idiomas guidelines regarding curricula and assessment?
2. Do assessments reflect course objectives and content levels?
3. Is the assessment related to the instruction?

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

4. What materials do the teachers use to assess students?

Test Check list

Code:

Type of assessment:

Skill assessed:

No.	Parameters	Yes	No	Observations
1	Is it challenging?			
2	Is it concrete?			
3	Is enough time given?			
4	Does it offer examples, prompts?			
5	Is it authentic?			
6	Is there only one correct answer (Key)			
7	Does it have a rubric or rating scale?			
8	Are there cultural appropriate test items			

Questions for teachers about the test

1	What is the purpose of the test?	
2	Who developed it?	
3	Who administrated it?	
4	Was it a pilot?	
5	Was it validated	
4	Was there a reliability analysis?	
6	Was feedback offered?	
7	Students' self-assessment	
8	Peer-assessment	

Table 6. Test Check list

Notes:

Stage 2. Action

In this second stage of the research study, three teachers and I, as the teacher-researcher, were involved. There were two methods of data collection and analysis: focused dialogues, class observations, and a final written reflection about the whole process.

Step 4. Focused dialogues. These dialogues helped teachers deepen their own understanding of assessment and DA in SLL through questions and comments with the teacher-researcher whose role was that of an expert on the subject of DA. These three teachers taught the same level of students A2.1⁵, according to the CERF. They teach these classes two hours a day from Monday to Friday, and so, it means that the students receive 10 hours of English per week.

The focused dialogues were done off-campus and in Spanish because I dialogued about some profound concepts that might be more accessible to the teachers if the discussion was done in Spanish. A tape recorder was used to record these dialogues. Later, I marked passages of the recording so that they could be accessed easily. These recordings were listened to several times, marking passages that were particularly relevant to what was being studied, mainly the

⁵ The student can understand enough to be able to meet the needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated. He or she can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

discussions about what is the nature of the interaction in the APZMII and how does it deepen teachers' conceptual understanding of assessment. I then transcribed just those passages that were marked instead of the entire dialogue.

These focused dialogues are a two-way interaction where both the teacher-researcher and the teachers-participants had opportunities to talk. The conversations were relatively informal, so teachers felt comfortable expressing their opinions and feelings. Also, the dialogues were flexible and fluid. That is to say that I could develop follow-up questions from the teachers' answers. In this sense I want to emphasize the nature of the co-construction of knowledge in qualitative research between the researcher and the participants by saying that "meanings and understanding are created in an interview, which is effectively a co-production, involving researcher and interviewees" (Mason, 2002, p. 63). I conducted 9 (nine) focused dialogues with the three teachers. Each meeting was one-hour long.

The focused dialogues centered on the following themes:

1. Dynamic Assessment (DA)
2. Mediation
3. Zone of Proximal Development
4. Affective Proximal Zone of Meaningful Intellectual Imitation
5. Interventionist DA
6. Interactionist DA
7. Zones of Teaching and Learning
8. Group Dynamic Assessment
9. Implementing DA in the classroom

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

During the focused dialogues, I tried to help teachers move from the everyday concepts to their academic concepts through mediation based on: (1) **self-assistance**; (2) **expert-assistance**; (3) **internalization**; and (4) **recursion** (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Warford, 2011). All of these stages were accompanied by the use of DA as a mediator strategy.

1. **Self-assistance.** I used these group discussions to have teachers share autobiographies, and information regarding their teaching lives, motivations, goals, problems, and possible solutions. Considering the fact that teachers have both a zone of proximal development for the specific concept of assessment (DA) and that of their actual level of development, teachers would need various types of guidance and assistance from the research expert on DA.
2. **Expert-assistance.** We had discussions with me as the expert in this case and the teachers. I conducted leading questions and follow-up discussions. Additionally, but not required, teachers developed small written reflections as writing is a crucial tool for developing higher-order concepts (Vygotsky, 1986).
3. **Internalization.** With internalization or conceptualization of assessment the DA grows. Focused dialogues and discussions between me as the expert and the teachers provided them the opportunity to imitate the process, and develop their conceptual understanding of DA in the teaching and learning process.
4. **Recursion.** In the recurrence process, teachers were “prepar[ed] to confront the dichotomy of theory and practice in all its intensity” (p. 255). Therefore, strategies such as discussion among colleagues and experts, sharing experiences, follow-up questions, post-observation dialogues, and written reflections were the key to verify

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

that the teacher understood the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment and that they use these concepts in their practices.

Step. 5. Observations. These observations were done after each focused dialogue. I made eight class observations in total with each of the three teachers in which they implemented the strategies discussed in the previous focused conversations. With teachers Karol and Karen, I had three observations each and with teacher Mary two because she mentioned she did not have enough time to cover the rest of the class material and decided to schedule two observations. Additionally, I scheduled follow-up meetings regarding the observations of the class sessions. Since teachers regularly teach two-hour classes, 4 (four) observations were made of the first hour of class, and 4 (four) observations were made of the second hour of class. During these observations, I took careful field notes.

Step 6. Final written reflection. The last meeting entailed a written reflection by the three teachers about if and how the dialogues and the implementation helped them deepen their concept of assessment, and especially the concept of dynamic assessment in their classes. Additionally, teachers, if they wanted, could develop written reflections after each topic that we had spoken about in the focused dialogues.

Step7. Teacher-Researcher Memos. Additionally, from the written reflections of teachers, observation memos, focused dialogues, observations, and during the analysis of data, I produced reflective and analytic memos as written records for the analysis.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Method of Analysis of Data

In this action research study, I analyzed the data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one of the most common data analyses in qualitative research, especially in anthropology and education, which involves a higher level of description of the data to understand it in context (Bloomberg, & Volpe, 2018; Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Joffe & Yardley, 2004; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Thematic analysis is a combination of approaches such as narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and grounded theory analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These authors also developed six steps to follow to establish a thematic analysis, which I used in this study:

Steps	Description
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribe, read though the data, and make notes
2. Generating initial codes.	First Cycle Codes Second Cycle Codes
3. Searching for themes.	Sort codes into themes and collection of relevant data extract in the themes
4. Reviewing themes.	Develop a code system by breaking down themes into subthemes and leave out less relevant themes
5. Defining and naming themes.	Develop thematic maps to represent themes, subthemes and links between them.
6. Producing the report.	Presentation of the results

Table 7. Method of Data Analysis. Adapted from Bloomberg and Volpe (2018, pp. 421-422)

As a strategy for the analysis of data, I used data triangulation to obtain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in SLL and their teaching practices at el Centro de Idiomas. The data that I used for the triangulation were in-depth surveys, class observations, focused dialogues, analysis of artifacts (documents), and final reflections from teachers. This triangulation strengthened this action research study and helped

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

the teacher-researcher conduct the research in a proper way. In this sense, I want to emphasize the importance of triangulation,

Triangulation refers to combining different sorts of data on the background of the theoretical perspectives, which are applied to the data... At the same time, triangulation should allow a principal surplus of knowledge. For example, triangulation should produce knowledge on different levels, which means insights that go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus contribute to promoting quality in research. (Flick, 2014, p. 184).

I can say then that data triangulation is not just a method to validity, but rather a form of in-depth and exhaustive analysis of the evidence. In this action research study, triangulation was supported by more than a single source of evidence (surveys, dialogues, class observations, artifacts, and reflections). By doing this analysis, I was able to determine how EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflected their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment and how their understandings could be improved.

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Triangulated Findings
Theme 1				
Theme 2				
Theme 3				
Theme 4				
Theme ... N				
Central Themes				CORE THEMES

Table 8. Data triangulation chart

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

In this study I used this data triangulation chart (Table 3.7) to help me visualize better the connections found with the different teachers. Then it was clearer to me to continue working this the themes. Additionally, I also used questions and follow-up questions as an analytic strategy in every stage of the analysis because they enhance the discovery of new insights regarding the action research. Well-constructed questions helped me to probe and develop provisional answers and to become acquainted with the data. In addition, I used constant comparisons as an analytic strategy as well. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), *Making Constant Comparisons* refers to the “act of taking one piece of datum and examining it against another piece of datum both within and between documents” (p. 93). In this sense, I determined if the two data were similar or different. If the data were similar, it was grouped under a thematic label. Comparisons helped me grasp the understanding of assessment for teachers, as well as suggesting further questions after the analysis of documents, surveys, focused dialogues, and class observations. Additionally, comparisons helped me examine my assumptions, biases, and perspectives as well as those of the teachers being studied.

Additionally, I used memos, charts, and diagrams as analytic tools that reflected the thinking process of the teacher-researcher during analyses. Memos worked as written records of the analysis. I also used diagrams to help me organize the data. I kept a record of the concepts and relationships between the concepts and integrated my ideas in a more systematic and organized way. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) state, “Doing diagrams force researchers to think about the data in *lean ways* that is, to reduce data down to their essence” (p. 123). In this sense, I used diagrams because they helped me picture the entire process in a more condensed way and helped me communicate ideas in other ways. In the next section, I will talk about the different methods and levels of coding used in this action research study.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Coding Process

For the present study I did two cycles of coding and different coding methods. In this section, it is essential to establish that as part of the thematic analysis, I used *manifest* data, which is the data that is directly observed, and *latent* data, which was the implicit content of data. I used two coding methods. I used *descriptive coding*, which assigns labels to summarized data in a word or short phrase. Additionally, I used *attribute coding*, which identifies basic descriptive information (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018). I used attribute coding for the demographics of the participants. After the teachers completed the in-depth survey, I started collecting the information in a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet and created the following chart about the teachers' demographic information. This information includes: (1) age, (2) teachers' years of teaching experience at a university level university, (3) gender, (4) language background, (5) university of graduation, and (6) degree.

The following Table 3.7 was used to organize the demographic information of all the participants. I provided a participant code to all the teachers and a pseudonym to protect their identity and also their information such as age, years of experience, gender, language background, university, and degree. This information helped me the analysis of the first research question and gave me a context and background of the different teachers.

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Code	Pseudonym	Age	Years experience university	Gender	Language Background	University	Degree
1							
2							
3							

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

N=12							
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 9. Demographic information coding sheet

I started my initial coding process by creating a preliminary list using *deductive coding* (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018), which came from the conceptual framework. After reading through the data completely, I started to create codes that emerged from the data collection. This process is called by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018) as *inductive coding*. For the first cycle of coding, I used manual coding, and then I used Atlas.ti software to continue with the coding process. ATLAS.ti is a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software that facilitates the research coding, annotations, and visualize the preliminary data, and helps the researcher form connections and relationships within the data.

Finally, the following chart represents the timetable of the present action research study.

Activities	Dates	Duration (weeks)
Stage I: Reflection		
IRB approval	January-March 2018	12 weeks
Gaining entry	1st week of April 2018	1 week
Recruiting potential participants	2nd -4th weeks of April 2018	3 weeks
Invitation to selected participants and consent from singing	1st week of May 2018	1 week
Data collection Phase I (In-depth surveys)	2nd-4th weeks of May 2018	3 weeks
Data collection Phase I (observations)	June-July 2018	8 weeks
Data collection Phase I (documents)	August 2018	4 weeks
Data analysis Phase I	September-October 2018	8 weeks
Peer Debrief	1st-3rd weeks of November 2018	3 weeks
Member check	3rd-4th weeks of November 2018 1st week of December 2018	3 weeks
Reflection Phase I	2nd-4th weeks of December 2018	3 weeks
Stage II: Action		
Planning Phase II	1st-2nd weeks of January 2019	1 week

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Data collection Phase II Focused Dialogues	3rd week of January 2019 3rd week of February 2019 3rd week of March 2019 3rd week of April 2019 4th week of May 2019	5 weeks
Data collection (Observations)	4th week of January 2019 1st-2nd week of February 2019 1st-2nd weeks of March 2019 4th week of March 2019 1st-2nd weeks of April 2019 4th week of April 2019	9 weeks
Data analysis Phase II and Reflection	1st-4th weeks of June 2019 1st-2nd weeks of July 2019	6 weeks
Planning for Modifications Phase II	3rd-4th weeks of July 2019	2 weeks
Data collection Phase II Focused Dialogues	1st week of August 2019 1st week of September 2019 1st week of October 2019 1st week of November 2019	4 weeks
Data collection (Observations)	2nd-4th weeks of August 2019 2nd-4th weeks of September 2019 2nd-4th weeks of October 2019	9 weeks
Data Analysis Phase II	December 2019-January 2020	9 weeks
Peer Debrief	1st-3rd weeks of February 2020	4 weeks
Member check	4th week of February 2020 1st-2nd weeks of March 2020	4 weeks
Writing Phase Chapter 1, 2 and 3	1st-4th weeks of April 2020 1st-4th weeks of May 2020 1st-4th weeks of June 2020	12 weeks
Due to to illness, I was not able to continue until November 2020		
Advisor Draft revision	1st-3rd weeks of January 2021	3 weeks
Corrections	1st-4th weeks of February 2021 1st-4th weeks of March 2021 1st-4 th weeks of April	12 weeks
Writing Phase Chapter 4	1st-4th weeks of May 2021 1st-4th weeks of June 2021 1st-4th weeks of July 2021 1st-4th weeks of August 2021	16 weeks

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Peer Debrief	1st-4th weeks of August 2021 1st-4th weeks of September 2021	8 weeks
Modifications Chapter 4	1st-4th weeks of October 2021 1st-4th weeks of November 2021	8 weeks
Advisor Draft revision	1st-3rd weeks of January 2022	3 weeks
Corrections Chapter 4	1st-4th weeks of February 2022 1st-4th weeks of March 2022 1st-4th weeks of April 2022	12 weeks
Writing Results and Conclusions	1st-4th weeks of May 2022 1st-4th weeks of June 2022 1st-4th weeks of July 2022	12 weeks
Advisor and committee members Draft revision	1st-2nd weeks of August 2022	2 weeks
Corrections	3rd week of August 2022	1 week
Final Writing	4th week of August 2022	1 week

Table 10. Timetable of the Action Research Study

Issues of Trustworthiness

Although this study had no greater than minimal risk for the teachers, I employed various safeguards to protect the teachers' confidentiality and prevent them from any possible harm. First, I obtained informed consent forms. With this written consent, the teachers voluntarily accepted being participants for this study. Also, if the teachers felt uncomfortable talking about their beliefs, understandings, or practices of assessment in SLL, and the way they assess their students, they could stop at any moment, and I could reschedule the interview. Fortunately, this situation did not happen. The teachers who wanted to participate continued with the entire process.

In order to protect the participants' confidentiality, I used pseudonyms. The in-depth surveys for the twelve teachers were on-line, and they were sent to them by my personal e-mail account. All teachers were observed once so that the twelve teachers could not deduce who the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

focal teachers were. Once the three focal teachers were chosen, they were advised to maintain confidentiality with their colleagues for their own protection. I scheduled the eight observations of the three focal teachers at different times (when possible), to protect the focal teachers' confidentiality. The focused dialogues took place outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca general). Furthermore, I, as the teacher-researcher, was the only person who had access to the information provided by the teachers, which was handled both in paper and electronically.

The following procedure was part of the safeguards to ensure the protection and rights of the participants:

- Paper records were locked in a secure file cabinet in the Centro de Idiomas office until the investigation was done.
- Electronic files of the interviews were stored and protected with a password.
- Identifiers were stored separately from consent forms, as well as study data.
- For identifiable data, a coding process was used to store data without identifiers, and the link stored separately from all other research records.
- After the research was done, all the documentation and files were deleted, and physical evidence shredded and destroyed.

Additionally, to address the issue of trustworthiness, I constructed validity using multiple strategies such as triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing.

Triangulation

One of the strategies I used is triangulation to increase the validity and credibility of the research study (Maxwell, 2013; Glesne, 2015; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2018). I triangulated

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

the data from the in-depth surveys, class observation, analyses of documents, transcripts from focused dialogues, and the memos generated from this analysis. If there were discrepancies or there was a lack of clarity in some of the information provided in the surveys, the focused dialogues, the class observations, or the analysis of documents, I had a follow-up in-person interview with the teachers to clarify the information.

Member checking

In this process, the researcher returns to the participants to corroborate the findings. This member checking strategy, as Maxwell (2013) mentions, is a valuable tool for assuring that there was no indication of bias in the planning. For this research, I did three sessions of member checking. The first one was completed after the surveys and the first-class observations. I presented the twelve teachers my findings and notes. The teachers corroborated my analysis and gave me additional information. The second session was completed after the focused dialogues and the class observations of the three participating teachers. They agreed with my interpretations of the information I presented to them. Finally, the last session was conducted after the last class observations and focused dialogues. Again, none of the teachers refuted my interpretations of the data.

Prolonged Engagement

During the data collection, I spent extra time with the participants to achieve a complete picture of the situation. I gave participants time to think and to respond to the questions in the focused dialogues. Taking into consideration Becker and Geer's (1957) claim that intensive involvement and participation offers the researcher richer data (as cited in Maxwell, 2013, p.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

126), I offered teachers all the time they needed to answer all the questions. Using a semi-structured script, I allowed teachers to express their own feelings and understandings toward their teaching and assessment practices. This structure also gave me the possibility to develop follow-up questions to go more in-depth in their responses and obtain richer information.

Peer Debriefing

I used a peer debriefing strategy to minimize the potential bias since I am the teacher-researcher and I am also a teacher from el Centro de Idiomas. In other words, peer debriefing allowed the discussion of my analysis and decisions with an expert colleague and, at the same time, increase the quality of the research study. The peer debriefer was carefully selected because this person had to be an expert in the field of foreign language learning and teaching, and most importantly, this expert had to be familiar with the Ecuadorian context. And as I had mentioned on several occasions; there are not many experts in the field in my context. In the first peer debriefing, I reported the first analysis of Phase I: in-depth surveys, class observations of the 12 teachers, and the study of documents. After looking at the information I provided, my peer debriefer and I had two sessions in which we talked about the necessity of having a different observation checklist for the class observations for the second phase. We also discussed the various categories I used. In the second session, we went over the data analysis and planned strategies to continue with the last set of data collection by the action research study.

My Positionality

Because of the nature of action research, the researcher can be an outsider and an insider at different stages of the research which may sometimes be confusing (Herr & Anderson,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

2014). In my case, I am Ecuadorian, and I am also a second language learner and teacher. I lived the experiences of learning English as a second language. Additionally, I am also a language teacher at the institute. I was also working collaboratively with the participants. Under these circumstances, I am an insider. On the other hand, I left Ecuador to pursue my doctoral studies, so I was not working at the institute for about two years; and therefore, I am also an outsider. For these reasons, I was worried about my rapport with my participants; however, I used peer debriefing and member checking strategies to minimize the potential bias.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL teachers' understandings of the role of assessment in SLL and, at the same time, to help them deepen their understanding of assessment/DA and the process of teaching and learning through focused, collegial dialogues between the researcher and three selected teachers.

The overarching question was: How did EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment, and how their understandings improved. The sub-questions were:

- a. How did EFL tenured teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment?
- b. Did EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of Dynamic Assessment deepen through mediation and how?
- c. How effective was dynamic assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices?
- d. What strategies helped teachers understand the concepts of assessment and dynamic assessment?

My Action Research Model

I present my action research model that consisted of two stages. Stage 1 is the "Reflection" phase and included the 12 teachers. On this stage, I used in-depth-surveys, class observations, analysis of documents (e.g., Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Reglamento Instituto Académico de Idiomas (UCE, 2018), Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (Asamblea Constituyente, Gobierno del Ecuador, 2010), and Reglamento de Régimen

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Académico (CES, 2013), unit tests and quizzes), and researcher's notes. This first stage was done to answer the first research question, which aimed to determine how EFL tenured teachers understood the process of teaching and assessment. In the second stage, "Action", I used focused dialogues, class observations, and researcher's notes. This second stage was developed twice. Because of the nature of action research, it was necessary to make some changes to improve the action research plan. The following table 4.1. represents the action research model I developed for this investigation.

Overarching Question:	
How do EFL teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment and how can their understandings be improved?	
Stage 1: Reflection	
Research Question A	How do EFL teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment?
Plan to Explore	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire 2. Observation notes 3. Observation Checklist
Explore	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In-depth survey 2. Class observations (Governmental and institutional Documents)
Analyze and Reflect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Analysis of surveys 5. Analysis of observations 6. Analysis of documents

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Stage 2: Action			
Part 1		Part 2	
Research Question B	Do EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of Dynamic Assessment deepen through mediation? And if so, How?	Research Question C	How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers teaching practices?
		Research Question D	What strategies can help teachers' understand the concepts of assessment and dynamic assessment?
Plan to Change	1. Plan Focused Dialogues	Plan to Change	1. Plan Focused Dialogues based of the previous reflection
Act	2. Focused Dialogues	Act	2. Focused Dialogues
Observe	3. Class Observations 4. Follow-up questions	Observe	3. Class Observations 4. Follow-up questions
Reflect	5. Analysis of focused dialogues 6. Analysis of observations 7. Reflect what can be improved	Reflect	5. Analysis of focused dialogues 6. Analysis of observations 7. Reflect (written reflection)

Table 11. My Action Research Model

Findings of Demographic Information

Participants' Demographic Information

To analyze teachers' practices and understand of their teaching approaches, the roles and specific characteristics of each teacher played an important role. These characteristics include their years of experience, exposure to the target language, culture, language background, among others. As stated by Afshar, Rahimi, Ghonchehpour, and Saedpanah (2015) and Borg (2006) language teachers' characteristics could not be separated from their teaching practices. In this sense, the first section shows the demographic information of the 12 participants obtained from

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

the survey regarding their personal and professional background and teaching experience.

Background information about participants was re-covered from Questions 1-10 in the survey (Tables 4.2 -4.7).

Regarding the participants' age (Table 4.2), 50% of the participants are between 31 and 40 years old and 41.67% are between 41 and 50 years old. Their age was also related to their years of experience at university (Table 4.3) level. 41.67% of the teachers have between 10 and 14 years of experience. According to what they expressed; this information was essential to note because teachers' years of experience significantly affected their perception of performing well in their classes. Their answers corroborated what Hoy and Spero (2005) mentioned regarding teachers' experiences being a powerful influence on teachers' efficacy development during the early days of teaching.

Age Range	Number	Percent age
31-40	6	50.00
41-50	5	41.67
51-60	0	0.00
61-70	1	8.33
Total	12	100.00

Table 12. Age range of participants

Years of Experience University level	Number	Percentage
0-4 years	2	16.67
5-9 years	2	16.67
10-14 years	5	41.67
15-19 years	2	16.67
20-24 years	0	0.00
25 + years	1	8.33
Total	12	100.00

Table 13. Year of experience of participants at university Level

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Concerning the participants' gender identification (Table 4.4), 58.33% of the teachers were male, and 41.67% of the teachers were female. Even though, this information indicated that there was almost an equal number of male and female English teachers at the Centro de Idiomas, this did not mean that they had similar characteristics because they belonged to various groups. In fact, there were other aspects of their background in which they had more similarities. For instance, their place of residence, 91.67% lived in Quito, Distrito Metropolitano, 75% of the participants considered themselves mestizos, and for 91.67% of the participants, Spanish was their language background. Similarly to Norton and Pavlenko's (2004) position, it is not necessarily correct to "assume that all women – or all men – have a lot in common with each other just because of their biological makeup or elusive 'social roles', nor [to] assume that gender is always relevant to understanding of language [teaching and] learning outcomes" (p. 2).

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	7	58,33
Female	5	41,67
Total	12	100,00

Table 14. Gender of participants

Language and studies background of the participants

Regarding their language background (table 4.5), contrary to Borg's (2006) teachers, the participants of the present study do not feel that not being a native speaker of English is a major concern. They manifested that opinion stating that being a non-native speaker and being able to learn the language as a non-native speaker gives them extra methodological tools and experience as FLL to teach English to their students.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Language Background	Number	Percentage
Spanish	11	91,67
Kichwa & Spanish	1	8,33
Total	12	100,00

Table 15. Language background

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 are related to the university in which teachers obtained their education degree. In this matter, 66.67 % of the teachers coincidentally graduated from Universidad Central, and the same percentage received their degree in teaching English. According to their responses, they feel comfortable and proud of working at their *Alma Mater*, the university that gave them their education. There are 16.67% of the English teachers who studied at Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja and another 8.33% who studied at Universidad Pontificia Católica del Ecuador. Regarding education levels, 16.67% graduated with degrees in teaching English & French, 8.33% in teaching English and Italian, and 8.33% in Linguistics. Finally, some teachers also mentioned an important fact. The degree from Universidad Central del Ecuador which accounts for 66.67 % of the teachers, is in teaching English for high school level students and not university programs, and yet they are teaching at the university level.

University of Studies	Number	Percentage
UCE	8	66,67
UTPL	2	16,67
UPC	1	8,33
Does not say	1	8,33
Total	12	100,00

Table 16. Participants' studies

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Degree	Number	Percentage
English	8	66,67
English & French	2	16,67
English & Italian	1	8,33
Linguistics	1	8,33
Total	12	100,00

Table 17. Participants' degree

Teaching Experience

The question about teaching experience, in particular, elicited some interesting responses as the teachers had various initial teaching experiences. Some began in private schools, others in public schools, and others in language institutes. However, most of the teachers began their careers teaching English to children in kindergarten and elementary schools. Some of the teachers started teaching before finishing their college studies, and therefore, they did not have enough experience in the field. Some teachers had positive teaching experiences because they could share teaching experiences with other preservice teachers. Other had negative experiences because for them, it was hard to teach and to be in front of students (Figure 4.1).

Four out of the twelve teachers started working at the age of 21. Some mentioned that they felt frightened and frustrated because it was their first-time teaching, and they did not have the experience that they felt they needed. One teacher said, *"I was very young, and nobody wanted to hire me because of my lack of experience, so I was given kindergarten students"* (Karol, survey). Another teacher stated that,

I was very young when I started working as an English teacher at "Quito" high school, I was only 21. It was really frightening, and I didn't know much about the teaching-learning process since I was in the first year of my career at UCE. (Ronny, survey)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

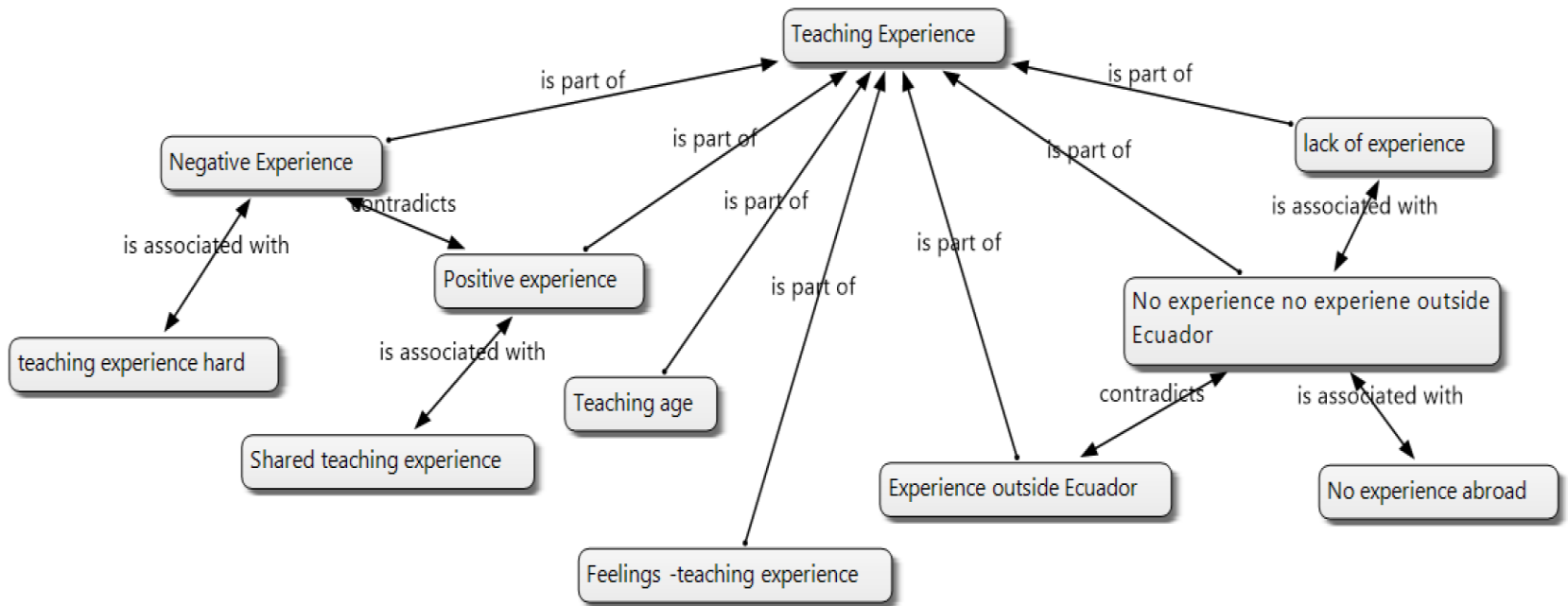


Figure 7. Participants teaching experience

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

These feelings of anxiety and frustration may be because they began their teaching practices at a very early stage in the program of studies. Additionally, most of the teachers in their teaching programs felt that they did not have enough training in different areas such as classroom management, English, assessment, among other subjects (Figure 4.2). One teacher mentioned:

The experience was really disappointing, because I didn't have enough command of the English language and the speaking skills, as well as the listening. It was really hard to communicate appropriately. After a while, I noticed I had learned a lot of grammar, but my vocabulary was limited and the productive skills weren't developed in the way they should be, because my teachers weren't accustomed to speaking English and most English classes were done in Spanish. (Becky, survey)

These findings can be corroborated with the information obtained by Gu (2016) in his study. Gu (2016) indicates that the lack of comprehension by teachers of various aspects of assessment is a result of inadequate college and institutional teaching instruction. Therefore, teachers felt that they had not undergone sufficient instruction, such as seminars or knowledge-based courses on topics related to assessment skills.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

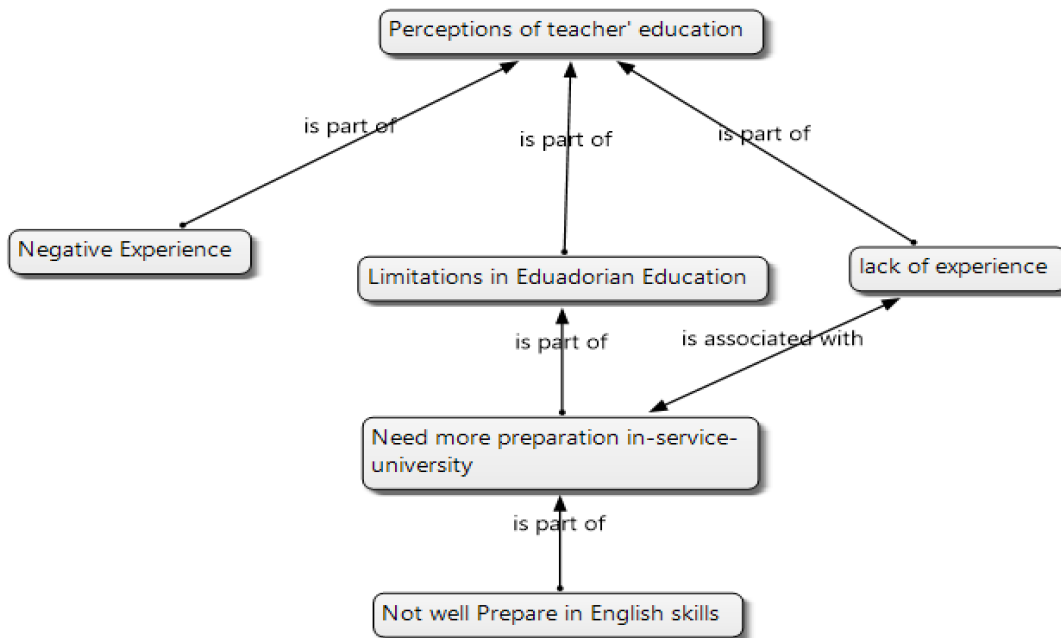


Figure 8. Participants' perceptions of their education

Combining these experiences with classroom practice, they learned to be more creative, energetic, patient, and flexible in their classes. This led to the impression that teaching English to their students is a nice, enriching, satisfactory and challenging experience.

Regarding Evaluating the teachers' teaching or learning experience outside Ecuador, four teachers do not have any experience in English teaching or learning outside Ecuador. They believe this is one of their weaknesses. One teacher has learning and teaching experience abroad in French and Chinese, but not in English. Three teachers have traveled abroad to attend the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages TESOL Convention. Even though this convention is for just a few days, the teachers feel that it was a great experience, because they had the chance to meet teachers worldwide, share experiences, develop ideas to solve teaching

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

problems, and create networking. For instance, one teacher that traveled to the US to study for three months and mentioned the differences that Ecuador and the United States have, *“Through this valuable experience, I could contrast not only the enormous cultural differences that we have, but also the huge limitations that Ecuadorian education has at all levels”*. (John, survey). Finally, three teachers have traveled abroad for one and two years. They studied in the United States and England. During this period, they received training in two main aspects, English proficiency, and methodology.

Research Findings

This action research has two stages. The overarching question focused on how EFL teachers' assessment practices reflected their understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment and how their understandings could be improved. Stage one answered question A, which was how EFL teachers understood the process of teaching and assessment. This first stage was a reflection phase and involved the 12 teachers and included one in-depth survey to all the participants, one class observation per participant, an analysis of documents (e.g., institutional, and governmental documents, and assessment materials), and researcher's notes. The second stage evaluated if EFL teachers' understandings of Dynamic Assessment deepen through mediation and how, how effective dynamic assessment was in EFL teachers' teaching practices, and what strategies can help teachers understand assessment and dynamic assessment concepts. This second stage involved three teachers from the original 12. This stage included focused dialogues, class observations, and written reflections. The followings sections are the results of the data analysis presented with the corresponding with the research questions.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Research Question A.

In order to understand how EFL teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment, I analyzed the information obtained from the in-depth survey, the class observations from the 12 teachers from Centro de Idiomas, institutional documents including Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, and Reglamento de Régimen Académico, and the tests and exams that the teachers used for learning assessment. There were eleven questions in this survey regarding teaching practices, methodology, assessment, materials, and teachers' background experience teaching English. After analysis of the data from the different sources, four critical themes were obtained: (1) Grammar and vocabulary as the main focus in teaching, (2) Little importance to assessment, (3) Contradictory views of the syllabus, and (4) Teachers' role in the process of learning.

How do EFL teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment?

Overarching Theme	Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes/Descriptor
EFL teachers understanding of the process of teaching and assessment	Grammar and vocabulary as the main focus in teaching	Reinforce Grammar	Reinforce the grammar points
			Review the grammatical structures
			Grammar activities in class
			Clarify grammar and vocabulary in class
		Instructional material to teach grammar	Grammar books as a priority
			Extra grammar activities in class and as homework
			Handouts containing extra grammar exercises
			Videos to revise the grammar
			Web sites with grammar exercises.
	Revision of Vocabulary	Increase their vocabulary	
		Videos to revise vocabulary	
		Doesn't always represent what students know	
		Does not reflect the level of communication achievement	
Little importance to assessment	Scores Perception		

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

	Contradictory views of syllabus	Weak Knowledge of assessment	The final grade is just a number.
			Lucky break or the result of cheating
			A minimum grade that allows students to take the coming level
			Chance to improve
			Assessment was a weak point in the curriculum
		Inexistence assessment	Not familiar with Dynamic Assessment
			Teachers are not aware of the different types of assessments
			No assessment in classes
			No feedback after assessment
			Teacher do not have a syllabus
	Knowledge of existing Syllabus	Teachers do not develop de syllabus	
		Syllabus is given in the textbook	
		Syllabus is the key to develop the course	
		Syllabus should be developed for students	
		Syllabus should be based on the CEFR	
	Teachers' role in the process of learning	Syllabus components	Part of governmental policies
			Teacher as facilitator
			Teacher as a motivator
			Teacher fosters self-construction of knowledge
			Teacher as provider of knowledge and resources
		Teacher as provider good environment	

Table 18. Overarching Themes Question 1

Theme 1. Grammar and vocabulary as the main focus in teaching

From the data, teachers reported that grammar and vocabulary were their focus in teaching. Even though the teachers use different teaching practices and methodologies, the predominance of activities and classes are related to reinforcing grammatical points and vocabulary words. To support grammar and vocabulary teaching Azam (2014)(2014) specifically states that “Grammar and vocabulary are the soul of any language” (p. 62). She emphasizes that even though they are complex processes, they are essential in learning a new language and mandatory for a teacher to teach.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Teachers used additional instructional materials to teach grammatical structures in their English classes. They use worksheets, photocopies, and handouts. Additionally, they use online resources, such as WhatsApp and Facebook. They also use literature books, CEF books, and short stories. For instance, one of the teachers mentioned,

I use handouts containing extra grammar exercises that reinforce the grammar points studied in class. I also give students extra readings according to their level to increase their vocabulary and review the grammatical structures. Also, I provide them guided practice for writing. Concerning listening, I don't use any extra material due to the lack of time. (Pedro, follow-up observation)

Additionally, there are some teachers that put into practice new vocabulary and listening activities and only few teachers that focus on speaking activities. One teacher stated that,

I usually work with websites that consist of real English conversation or grammar exercises. I also help them improve their listening skills by sending some links of videos where interesting activities have to be developed. (Karen, survey)

Regarding methodology, it was difficult to observe a specific methodology in the teachers' classes. One teacher mentioned that he uses the 3 Ps, Presentation, Practice, and Production. Other teachers expressed that they use the Kolb Cycle, Active techniques + ARC (Authentic, Restrictive, Clarification). Finally, some teachers mentioned that they use constructivism and cooperative learning. However, during the observations, the teachers follow the textbook instructions to deliver the class. One teacher mentioned,

I based my teaching on the constructivism theory. Consequently, I use performance-based assessment a lot. I like students to get involved in the actual doing of a task. For example, illustrating stories, role-playing situations, preparing a new product, or a

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

commercial are all good ideas to provide the students with reality-based situations where they have the genuine need to use the language. From my point of view, the presentation of any of these projects together with a well- thought rubric could easily substitute the traditional pen-and-paper standardized tests, which not always lead to reliable results.
(Kate, survey)

In short, some teachers indeed focused on the grammar and vocabulary points and based their extra activities on these grammar structures and vocabulary. Some teachers expressed that they use a platform and online resources; unfortunately, only one teacher used the laboratory and online resources to play a game during the class observations.

Theme 2. Little importance to assessment

Regarding assessment, teachers reported that some use different assessment practices; however, the data also shows that teachers give little importance to assessment practices. As mentioned before, teachers lack awareness of the aims of evaluation, its drawbacks, and alternative methods, leading to uncertainty over what to evaluate and how to evaluate (Al-Basheera, et al., 2015; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Gu, 2016; Xu & Liu, 2009).

One of the survey questions was concerned about the types of assessments the teachers administrated and the final tests (Table 7). Coincidentally, 91.67% of the participants mentioned that they did other types of evaluation besides the final tests. Their answers varied. Most teachers used written quizzes, oral lessons, presentations, written tasks, worksheets, and achievement tests to evaluate students' performance in the target language.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Assessments	Number	Percentage
Yes	11	91.67
No	1	8.33
Total	12	100.00

Table 19. Other assessments in addition to the final tests

However, during class observations and the follow-up conversations, no assessment practices were reported. In fact, it was difficult to observe oral activities as part of the assessment practices. In general, all the teachers administer summative tests to students in every unit to assess the students' progress in a particular unit. Additionally, students took a mid-term and a final exam. Some of the tasks used are selected-response, such as true-false, matching, and multiple-choice. A few teachers used formative assessments even though they were not aware of what they are. In other words, teachers used worksheets, interactive activities, and role plays to assess students.

Regarding the final grade and what it represents, the final grade for the teachers was a systematic collection and review of students' learning processes and evidence of the students' competencies acquired in class. However, some teachers considered that the final grade did not always reflect the students' English level achieved in the learning process. Some teachers believed that the grade did not represent what the students know. To some teachers the grade was just a number that could be a result of cheating. At the Universidad Central, as in some other universities in Ecuador, English classes are mandatory. Therefore, teachers perceive that by finishing the English level, students can achieve their academic goals which do not necessarily include learning English.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Concerning the role of assessment in second language learning, teachers manifested the idea that assessment is a way to integrate the students' skills to have significant and life-long acquisition skills so that they can handle any situation they may face. In other words, students should have meaningful learning experiences. However, assessments are used to make students pass or fail a level, especially the summative assessments at the end of the course. Teachers also reported that assessment was a weak point in the curriculum, that they are not aware of many of the different types of assessments, and they did not know about dynamic assessment. There is general knowledge of the importance of assessment, which needs to be deepened. One teacher stated,

I consider assessment was a weak point in the curriculum of my formation as an English teacher. There was lots of attention to teaching methodology, linguistics, and so on, but I think there was a lack of attention to assessment as a complement of the whole teaching process. (John, follow-up observation)

Another teacher also mentioned that,

In my opinion, it is crucial to have tools that can show us if students are progressing in their learning process or not. But it is not easy to design accurate assessment instruments to measure learning outcomes. It is not often an easy task for me to identify all my learners' needs and document their progress and determine how I am doing as a teacher. It is also important to mention that our students can not apply what they learn to real-life situations. (Pedro, survey)

The excerpts showed that even though teachers believe that assessment is necessary, their practices show that they do not use, or do not know how to assess students properly. Assessment was vital in learning because it could help teachers determine whether the course goals were met.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

It also gives feedback to teachers to make decisions regarding the learning process and instructional needs. However, in actual practice, teachers did not use assessment for a good purpose (meaning that the assessment could offer additional information to help students in their learning process), either because they do not know how, or because they are required to use standardized tests instead. Teachers' confusion about what, why, and how to assess students often show a misinterpretation of the results (Gu, 2016). In fact, data that was reported showed that there is nonexistent assessment or feedback in their teaching practices.

Theme 3. Contradictory views of syllabus

The syllabus describes the knowledge to be acquired by the student, the student's abilities that will be developed so they can apply them, and the learning values, which will have been reinforced in the student learning process. According to Parkes and Harris (2002), "syllabi serve three major roles: the syllabus as a contract, the syllabus as a permanent record, and the syllabus as a learning tool" (p.55). Additionally, Tokatlı and Keşli (2009) state that the "course syllabi provide valuable information which enables meaningful communication between the students and the instructors" (p.1491). In the analysis, teachers reported contradictory views of the syllabus. On the one hand, there is no knowledge of the existing syllabus. On the other hand, they identify the syllabus components as an essential aspect of the curriculum and their classes. Teachers confessed that they do not have a syllabus and do not develop the syllabus either.

They also reported that they believed that the syllabus was given in the textbook. Teachers also stated that there are specific components of the syllabus that are important in its development. They asserted that the syllabus is the key component to develop the course, and that it should be developed for the students to improve their language abilities. Some teachers

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

also believe that the syllabus should be based on standard parameters with the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) and governmental policies.

However, they do not know which components are relevant and how to incorporate them in the syllabus.

To go into more detail about the information described by the teachers, one of the survey questions asked teachers to explain how they develop the course's syllabus. Two of the twelve teachers emphasize that they have not had a syllabus since October 2017. Some other teachers use the syllabus given by the coursebook, which is Top Notch from Pearson. Each text level has its own syllabus. According to the teachers, the syllabus components are course procedures, content, assessment, and bibliography. Other teachers use the Common European Framework methodology, assessment, resources, goals, and competency units to develop their syllabus. According to the teachers, the syllabus is essential because they tell the students in advance the dates for mid-term, finals, particular project deadlines, etc., and so they know what to expect from the course.

The syllabus should be designed based on legal policies. The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) in article 26 recognizes every person's right to be educated. Additionally, the Régimen del Buen Vivir, in article 350, establishes that the Sistema de Educación Superior has the goals of education an academic and professional formation. The Sistema de Educación Superior should adopt a scientific and humanistic vision emphasizing scientific investigation, innovation, promotion, development and diffusion of knowledge and culture to contribute to solving the problems of our country according to the National Development Plan. The Ley de Educación Superior also states that students have to acquire a foreign language to graduate from

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

the University. It also mentions in article 103 that the Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (CEAACES) will evaluate all the degrees and programs.

Most universities set their own policies according to what is established on the law, “LOES, Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior,” and some other regulations like “Reglamento de Régimen Académico,” which regulates the level of sufficiency for undergraduate students, who are required to achieve the B1/2 level of The Common European Framework.

Overall, teachers reported that there are contradictory views of the syllabus because they did not participate in the development of the syllabus, but they also indicate the importance of it in the development to their classes. Teachers believe that to develop the syllabus, they must think about the regulations concerning the textbook students will use, the amount of time they must cover the contents, the evaluation procedure, etc. Unfortunately, these processes have not been clearly established. Therefore, they find themselves learning what to do along the way. One teacher mentioned literally, *“I do not write my own syllabus. I rather get it from the coordinators and to be honest I almost never look at it”* (Kate, survey), showing little to no interest and motivation in using the syllabus.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

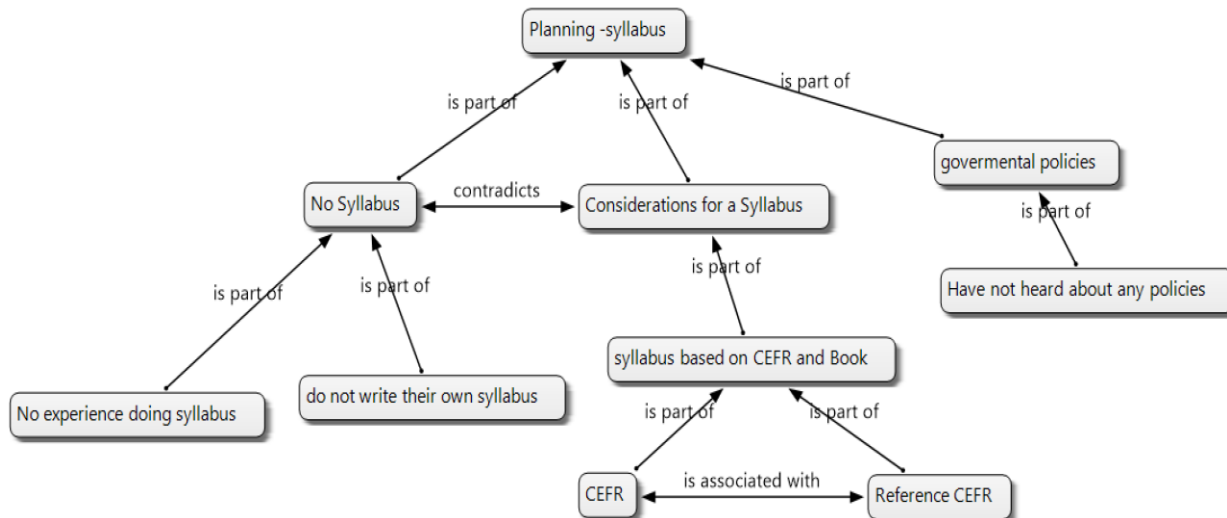


Figure 9. Course syllabus

Theme 4. Teachers' role in the process of learning

Teachers reported how they see their role in the process of learning. According to Villamil (2000), teachers perceived themselves as leaders, providers of knowledge, agents of change, and nurturers. In this sense, teachers identified their roles as facilitators and motivators in the students' process of learning English. They believed that their role is to provide knowledge, resources, and an excellent environment to facilitate students' performance. In fact, teachers believe they are "facilitators" and a "guide" for students since they try to monitor the activities students perform, so they feel motivated to learn the new grammar and vocabulary especially. They try to set appropriate learning environments to make students feel more comfortable and expressive communicating in the target language. Teachers think that their role is essential in developing students' language skills because they can create meaningful self-reflection and critical thinking contexts. One teacher emphasized the importance of the teacher's role when he said that "*Second language educators must foster self-constructed knowledge employing challenging activities and friendly debates*" (Carlos, follow-up observation).

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Teachers identify themselves as language learning facilitators. They try to be empathetic with students' linguistic development and encourage them to interact with other students. They believe that they do whatever is in their hands and know to help students develop their English skills. One teacher stated,

I believe that I am a guide in the process of Second Language Learning because students have to be active participants in their own learning. I am there to organize the contents, provide them with extra material, and have them do the activities and work that they are going to be evaluated on. (Ronny, survey)

Summary

To summarize, the first question I wanted to answer was how EFL teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment. Four themes were developed from the data. (1) The first theme was that grammar and vocabulary played an essential role in teachers' practices. They focus their classes on reinforcing grammar points and on instructional material, such as grammar books, worksheets, handouts, and videos, to teach grammar. They also reinforce vocabulary. (2) The second theme that was developed was that teachers showed little knowledge of assessment. There was no assessment or feedback in their practices. Additionally, teachers showed a weak knowledge about the assessment and the different alternatives for assessment, including dynamic assessment. Finally, their perception of the assessment scores varied. Teachers believed that the final grade does not always represent what the students know; in other words, student scores do not reflect the level of communication achievement. Sometimes, it was believed, the students' grade is the result of cheating or good luck. Finally, a minimum grade is required for students to pass to the next level and eventually graduate. (3) Contradictory views of the syllabus are the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

third theme. Even though teachers believe that the syllabus is essential, they do not know the existing syllabus. Finally, (4) teacher' role in the process of learning. Teachers believed their role is imperative in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers believed they are facilitators and motivators. Additionally, they provide a good environment, knowledge, and resources to foster students' self-construction of knowledge.

Stage 2: Action Part I

For this second stage, three of the 12 teachers were chosen to participate. This action stage has two parts. In the first part, the first question I wanted to answer was if the EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of Dynamic Assessment deepen through mediation? And if so, how? How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices? Furthermore, the second part aimed to identify the strategies that can help teachers understand assessment and dynamic assessment concepts. To answer these two questions, I conducted focused dialogues, class observations, and written reflections. For the schedule for the meetings, I had to ask permission to the Director of the Language Instituto to give us the time and the space to work with the teachers. The Director and the English coordinator offered us a specific schedule to meet during one period of class. The topics viewed in the sessions were presented to the teachers in our first meeting, and I asked them if there were any suggestions about the topics. I wanted to emphasize the importance of Dynamic Assessment and they wanted to know and review ESL theories first. Therefore, I reorganized the topics to meet their requirements. As we will see on the next sessions, I organized the sessions according with the information teachers required.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

For the first part of this second stage, I created five sessions that try to show a general idea of what I wanted from my colleagues' collaboration. The first session referred to an introduction about what action research is and a determination of how familiar they are with this topic; I also shared some theories about second language, and we talked about their expectations along the process. The second session emphasized self- reflection about the group discussion and how effective discussions were for the purpose of the study, and this session also added information about Vygotsky's (1987) concept of ZPD in Second Language Learning. The third session provided some general information about what dynamic assessment is and its connections with Vygotsky's concepts in the development of EFL. As a result, we agreed on the importance of mediation in the process of assessment. In the fourth session, I provided information about the relationship between assessment and the improvement in teaching and learning, as well as giving a further explanation of types and goals of dynamic assessment, and I finished with a written reflection. Finally in session 5, teachers described their classes in their current situations, and how they can adapt dynamic assessment in classes. We discussed what type of dynamic assessment is used, either interventionist or interactionist methods, and what type of skills the teachers focused on during the development of the activity to enhance the writing skills. We ended with a possible first draft based on the information discussed about dynamic assessment.

Session 1

Session 1 was held with the three teachers. First, I welcomed them and thanked them for participating in the second part of my research project. I told them that I know it is difficult to offer additional time to work on extra activities besides the ones assigned to them. They

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

mentioned that they are very sure that these sessions will help them, and help their students improve their language skills.

Then, I introduced them to the research study and asked the teachers what some of their expectations about our sessions were. One of the teachers mentioned that they wanted to do research. They have not done any type of research and they would like to learn more about it. Other teacher said that she would like to improve her assessment practices and know more about other types of assessment. With all this information, I presented some slides about the importance of doing research in class and what action research is. I also explained the parts of an action research project. I believed this was important to mention because they are part of this action research project. In this first session we also talked and remembered the different theories of second language learning. During this session, teachers recalled when they were studying to become teachers and remembered how difficult it was for them to know all the learning theories.

Session 2

We gathered in the meeting room at the Centro de Idiomas for our session two. We talked about the importance of self- reflection, meaning to take time to deepen into our thoughts and emotions, a way of learning from experiences. We also shared ideas about the importance of written reflections. The teachers who participated in this study considered that written reflections were very useful and convenient to check relevant aspects they had seen during the students' performance in the assigned task. By using these reflections, the teachers could see similarities and differences in students' task understandings and be able to give positive feedback. We also talked about the role of the teacher in the process of learning. Teachers nowadays must be facilitators and guides to students, offering tools so that students can become more autonomous.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Session 3

Our session number three emphasized the connections between Vygotsky's concepts and Dynamic Assessment in the development of EFL. Before showing some slides about assessment I asked the three teachers if they were familiar with types of assessment. They were hesitant to respond but did mention that they have used many types of assessment, but they did not know their names exactly. I explained information about assessment tools, and then we talked about Vygotsky and his approach in language learning. The teachers and I discussed the ways in which assessment improves teaching and learning. At this time, we talked about how the Centro de Idiomas applies the different assessments, and we all agreed that it is necessary to rebuild the evaluation system. We also talked about how the summative assessment is conceived by some teachers. Summative assessment provides a grade, but formative assessment helps teachers realize how much a student has progressed along the learning level. In this sense, teachers agreed that their role should be as a motivator and a model so students feel eager to learn and interact in class.

Session 4

In this session the three teachers described their current situations in their classes. They were given an A2.2 level which according to the CEFR means that students can understand sentences and frequently used expression related to areas of most immediate relevance, and they can also communicate in simple routine tasks requiring a simple and directed exchange of information on family and routine matters. We also talked about the importance of knowing our students. Their weaknesses and strengths could help the teachers plan classwork in a realistic

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

way based on the students' needs. Teachers also discussed that it is sometimes difficult to know the level of the students because some students are false beginners, and some are true beginners. According to Swift (2017), a student who is a true beginner, is the one who is starting to learn a language from scratch. In other words, students have never studied English before. On the other hand, false beginners are the one who have some knowledge of the language probably because they have learned it years before. With this information in mind, one idea that teachers thought was useful was to mix weak and strong students. In this way, they can help each other focusing on Vygotsky's (1987) ZPD, in which a more capable peer can help the other peers.

In this session, teachers also decided that they were going to focus on writing, specifically on how to create a good paragraph since students have problems writing simple paragraphs when they were assessed. Teachers mentioned the importance of writing in learning English and how difficult sometimes it is to help students. Then we talked about how Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural perspective can help their students in the sense that this perspective could become the basic scaffolding in teaching writing and performing collaborative work in writing lessons (Nurfaidah, 2018). This was the first agreement that we had. We were going to focus on writing. After working on the different types of dynamic assessments: interventionist and interactionist and focusing once more on the Vygotsky (1987) construction of development, teachers decided that they wanted to work with the interactionist dynamic assessment because it focuses more on the interaction between teacher and students as well as between students. In this way interactionist DA would help the students move from one ZPD to a higher zone and enhance their conceptual development.

With these two variables in mind: (1) writing and (2) interactionist dynamic assessment, the teachers and I started developing strategies that could help us improve students' writing

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

skills. Teachers liked the idea of using the strategy called vocabulary pool from the Blass and Gordon (2010) book *Writers at Work: From Sentence to Paragraph Student's Book*. The authors develop a vocabulary pool to work with the students step by step.

- a) The first step was for teachers to develop a vocabulary pool with the necessary concepts for work in class. The students had to check what concepts knew. If they do not know the concept the teacher had to explain it.
- b) The second step is a freewriting activity. Students started writing anything they want. It is a way to help teachers to get an idea of the students' writing abilities. As Blass and Gordon (2010) mentioned, Freewriting is called "free" because the person writes without thinking about the grammar rules, spelling, or punctuation.
- c) In the next step students had to exchange their pieces of writing and offer feedback.
- d) The final step was to collect the pieces of writing from the students. In this stage teachers had to analyze the writings and the feedback offered by the students.

Vocabulary Pool 1

Parts of Speech		Parts of a paragraph		Sentence Parts		Writing Terms		Mechanics	
Noun		Main idea		Subject		Freewrite		Punctuation	
Verb		Supporting idea 1		Object		First draft		Capital letter	
Adjective		Supporting idea 2		Connecting word		Second draft		Comma	
Preposition		Supporting idea 3				Revise		Period	
		Concluding idea				Edit		Spelling	

Table 20. Vocabulary Pool 1

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Session 5

The subject of this session was reflection. We discussed 'what went right and what went wrong' with the students and the planning. Also talked about the how the teaching effort could be improved for the next classes, considering that it is a process that will take several classes. Initially all teachers agreed that is crucial to give proper instructions since some of the students did not know how to proceed in the feedback stage. Additionally, students were not accustomed to the procedures of freewriting because they had always been given a topic to write about. Another consensus that we reached was to work with group dynamic assessment. In this sense, students are working collaboratively based on the Vygotsky ZPD theory in which the more knowledgeable peers support the other learner's writing development. Teachers also agreed with the idea of the importance of monitoring the activities and providing meaningful feedback to the students during the whole writing process. Time constraints were also an issue in the classes, considering the fact that teachers had also to cover the content assigned by the coordinator (follow the book activities). Therefore, teachers for the next classes had to take more time for the writing activities and work in collaborative groups.

Summary

Through these first sessions, it was possible to analyze the teachers' process for understanding the concepts under discussion. They shared their learning experiences about assessment and the process of action research. The way of familiarizing themselves with the concepts was through conversations, group discussions, and answering and asking questions among the three teachers. Additionally, teachers sought the help of an expert to understand better the concepts of DA. Teachers also imitated the process done by the teacher expert in the focused groups. They were able to replicate the strategies of DA and the phases of action research with their own students,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

repeating and internalizing the process so it becomes conscious. That allowed them to feel confident in their practice and improve their teaching and learning process. They were able to create spaces to talk about the concepts learned. In other words, they became experts in the field and gained conceptual development.

Research Question B.

In order to answer the research question related to EFL teachers' understandings of the concept of Dynamic Assessment, I used thematic content analysis. Two important themes emerged from the data, the sessions, the observations, and the reflections from the teachers: 1. Knowing students, and 2. Classroom Management. After identifying the descriptors, and sub-themes. I analyzed the remainder of the data and started to develop the themes and overarching themes. I also asked my peer to review the findings and themes that came up with analyzing the data.

Do teachers understand of the concept of Dynamic Assessment? How?

Overarching Theme	Theme	Sub-Themes	Indicators
Teachers understanding of the concept of Dynamic Assessment	Knowing students	Teachers' familiarity with their students	Identification of students ZPDs
			Identification of weak and strong students
			Identification of students' mental development
		Understanding of students	Student as a person with different skills
			Student with their own potential
			Students' intellectual capacity
	Students' language background		
	Classroom Management	Teacher's role	Teacher constant monitors
			Teacher uses different strategies
			Teacher as a motivator
			Teacher as a model
		Class Development	Teachers promotes interaction
			Students center approach
			Realistic planning
Mediation is the key			
		Students work together and learn	

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

			Students support from peers and teacher
--	--	--	---

Table 21. Overarching themes Question B

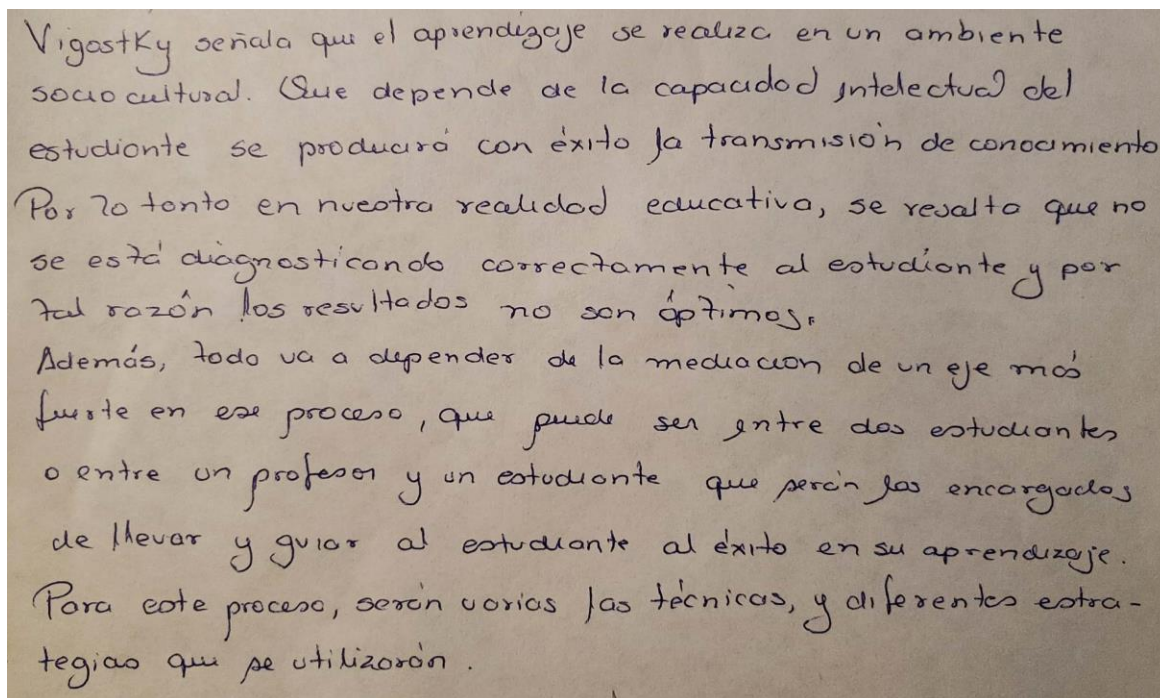
Theme one: Knowing students

In order to reflect teachers' understanding of the concept of assessment and dynamic assessment and how their understandings could be improved, we used focused, collegial dialogues between me as the teacher-researcher and the three selected teachers. I also used class observations and written reflections from the teachers. I collected reflections recorded on paper, and audios from the sessions as well as the observation check lists, which were kept secure in my cabinet and laptop.

For the data analysis I used the thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2018). I became familiarized with the data by transcribing, reading through the data, and making notes. Then, I generated the initial coding. For the first cycle coding, I used manual coding, and then I used Atlas.ti to continue with the coding process. In the Atlas.ti program, I used *manifest* data, which is the data that is directly observed and *latent*, which was the implicit content of data. I used different coding methods. I used *descriptive coding*, which assigns labels to summarized data in a word or short phrase. I started my initial coding process by creating a preliminary list using *deductive coding*. After reading through the data completely, I started to create codes that emerged from the data collection employing *inductive coding*. The next task was to search for themes by sorting the codes into themes and extracting the relevant information. After that, I reviewed the themes by creating down themes into sub-themes and leaving out the less relevant ones. Finally, I defined and named the themes by creating a chart which linked the codes/descriptors, sub-themes, themes, and overarching themes.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

The first theme that emerged from the data was the importance of knowing the students. This theme included two main aspects: knowing students and classroom management. Teachers want to know their students, and so teachers described critical factors that include familiarity with the students, identifying students' ZPDs, identifying weak and strong students, and identifying students' mental development. During the first five sessions that were completed with the teachers, we discussed the connections between Vygotsky's (1987) concepts and dynamic assessment in the development of English as a foreign language. Additionally, in developing students' language skills, the identification of students, different skills, language backgrounds, and intellectual capacity provided the teacher with enough background knowledge to develop a more realistic class plan to support students. In fact, during one of these encounters, one of the teachers stated that,



Vigostky señala que el aprendizaje se realiza en un ambiente sociocultural. Que depende de la capacidad intelectual del estudiante se producirá con éxito la transmisión de conocimiento. Por lo tanto en nuestra realidad educativa, se resalta que no se está diagnosticando correctamente al estudiante y por tal razón los resultados no son óptimos. Además, todo va a depender de la mediación de un eje más fuerte en ese proceso, que puede ser entre dos estudiantes o entre un profesor y un estudiante que serán los encargados de llevar y guiar al estudiante al éxito en su aprendizaje. Para este proceso, serán varias las técnicas, y diferentes estrategias que se utilizarán.

Translation to English

Vygotsky points out that learning takes place in a sociocultural environment, which depends on the intellectual capacity of the student and the support they have. From this,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

the transmission of knowledge will occur successfully, therefore in our educational reality it is highlighted that the student is not being correctly diagnosed and for this reason the results are not optimal. In addition, everything will depend on the mediation of a stronger axis in this process. This mediation can be between two students or between the teacher and a student who will be in charge of leading and guiding the student to the success of their learning. For this process to take place, we must use several techniques and different strategies to reach this goal. (Karen, encounter)

In the extract above, the teacher focuses on two essential aspects of ZPD (Vygostly, 1978). One of the realities of the Instituto Académico de Idiomas is that some students are not being placed at the correct level. This situation is due to the fact that the diagnostic tests are not accurate. This means that these students are in different ZPDs, and it is going to be difficult for them to develop the language skills required in that particular English level. The other aspect that the teacher emphasized is mediation as the central aspect of learning. This mediation can be done between peers or between students and teachers.

Teachers truly believe that the information provided in these sessions helped them see the importance of ZPD and to help students move forward in their development. One teacher mentioned that,

The most important part today was the ZPD we discussed. The importance of having a clear idea of the mental development of students. The diagnostic of the abilities and real knowledge of our students, once we have a clear idea, we can do a more realistic planning and help them move to a more advanced level. (Mary, Reflection)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Mary pointed out that correct planning is necessary once teachers have identified the students' intellectual level or ZPD, and this planning includes resources, instructions, continuous assessment, and feedback. This is the only way students can realize that they are capable of doing well in the different tasks and developing their language skills with a sense of confidence and empowerment.

Teachers also discussed that personalized instruction and assessment are essential for developing their students' language skills. In this sense, teachers found it extremely important to identify the weak and strong students. Additionally, they believe that knowing more about their students' language background is necessary to identify their particular needs, as seen in the following extract.

.... Teachers have to teach our students as individuals that have particular needs. Not all of them have the same knowledge but they can acquire the general idea of what the teacher needs from them in terms of learning... (Karol, session)

Teachers also asserted that not all students learn in the same way. Therefore, a very wise option to evaluate students is using DA since, as teachers, they must search for different forms of assessing and must apply different forms of assessing to determine the optimal method for each student in the process. Karol states that,

For my way of thinking, as its name indicates, the teaching process involves learning stages that must be evaluated according to the student's need first to achieve knowledge and, most importantly, the teacher must transmit the passion for learning in this case of a new language. Without motivation, there is no intention to learn. (Karol, session)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

The following extract emphasis students' individualities and potentials and teachers must see, identify, and exploit these qualities. Motivation again is a critical element in students' development.

Translation to English

I consider that evaluation is important because it is part of the teaching process because it is part of the teaching-learning process, but more than evaluation we must analyze the student as a person, as an entity that has non-measurable capacities in terms of evaluation, rather in a person who has a potential which the teacher must explore in all possible ways, that is the role of teacher, see all the potentials that the student has in order to achieve the expected learning. At this point, the teacher, acting as a mediator, also fulfills the role of motivator and role model for the good performance of the student.
(Karen, session)

Theme two: Classroom Management

The second theme that emerged from the data is classroom management. Teachers reported that in order for DA to work, the role of the teacher is significant. Teachers not only assess, but in DA, teachers are also guide and model for students, offering the help they need. Teachers constantly monitor students' work and motivate them to continue working and learning, and teachers promote interaction and offer feedback. Teachers used the Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) regulatory scale -implicit (strategy) to explicit- for DA interactions for ESL learners, which included:

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

0. Tutor asks the learner to read, find the errors, and correct them independently, prior to the tutorial.
1. Construction of a “collaborative frame” prompted by the presence of the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.
2. Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error by the learner or the tutor.
3. Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a segment (e.g., sentence, clause, line) stating, “Is there anything wrong in this sentence?”
4. Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognizing the error.
5. Tutor narrows down the location of the error (e.g., Tutor repeats or points to the specific segment which contains the error).
6. Tutor indicates the nature of the error, but does not identify the error (e.g., “There is something wrong with the tense marking here”).
7. The tutor indicates the error (“You can’t have an auxiliary here”).
8. Tutor rejects learner’s unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.
9. Tutor provides clues to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g., “It is not really past but something that is still going on”).
10. Tutor provides the correct form.
11. Tutor provides some explanation for the use of the correct form.
12. Tutor provides examples of the correct pattern when other forms of help fail to produce an appropriate responsive action.

As a result of the teachers’ discussions with me and as part of the study, they decided to initiate a writing process with the students. As mentioned in the section before. After starting the

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

process with the students, teachers reported that interaction was an essential element for students' language skills development. Teachers indicated that students did some drafts before submitting their final work, which was based on the recommendations and suggestions of their classmates and the teacher who identified errors in form and substance, but it was through conversations they could notice their errors and improve their work. In this way, the students were more aware of improving their writing and verifying the appropriate connectors, using appropriate verbs, organization, and coherence in their paragraphs. With the teacher's guidance, the students who had not yet reached a correct way of writing improved with the help of their classmates and with the teacher's personal help. When submitting their final papers, the students were able to identify, produce and generate new information and improve what they had already acquired.

...Students develop their knowledge taking advantage of the strengths of some students while they interact. Also, it is a way for lowering the affective filter, because students feel free to explore their abilities. DA promotes interaction and it is a great strategy when we have big classes. (Mary, encounter)

Teachers also identified class development as other crucial theme. They believed in DA and that the classes are student-centered, and that mediation is a central point in learning. Students work together and learn. Students received support from peers and teachers. The following extract is an example of how teachers worked with their students and developed realistic planning based on the students' needs.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Translation into English

It is concluded in the first instance that group activities were carried out in writing skills. It will work with levels A2.2 identifying the strongest students and each activity will vary the groups. The option is to help the student so that through a process and constant monitoring they can advance in their acquisition of knowledge. Gibbons offers several techniques and, together with several authors, states that it is important to know the background of the students to take into account the area in which they are located and to go from there. (Karen, written reflection)

Karen first identified her students as being either strong or weak based on their language background and skills. In this way, weak and strong students could help each other, based on the concept of ZPD Vygotsky (1987), which stated that learners reach an understanding with the help of a more capable peer. Additionally, Karen used other interactive and student-centered activities to promote learning.

Part of classroom management and class development are the techniques used by teachers to promote effective learning. Teachers used Group Dynamic Assessment (GDA) to develop interaction with students. As mentioned by Karen, *“This way of teaching helps large class management. Teachers apply this technique in order to group students so they can work better” (encounter)*. Teachers had different ways to form and organize groups in their classes. Finally, they monitored the classes and guided learners to reach the aim of the lessons.

Summary

To conclude, for the question related to teachers' understanding of dynamic assessment, two main themes came up. The first theme was the importance of knowing the students, which

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL included teachers' familiarity with their students so they could identify their ZPDs, students' weak and strong skills, and student backgrounds. Another sub-theme was the importance of understanding their students, which described each student individual with different skills, characteristics, and potential. The second theme involved classroom management. The two sub-themes were the teacher's role and class development, including the role as motivator and mediator, using a student-centered approach, with support from teachers and fellow students.

Stage2: Part II

For this second Part of this action research project, I wanted to answer the question related to the strategies that could help teachers understand the concepts of dynamic assessment. For this stage, I planned the focused dialogues based of the previous reflection (stage1, part 1), then we developed the meetings and planned the new changes for the classes, and finally teachers developed the classes according to plans. I observed the classes and asked some questions about the class. Finally in the reflection part, teachers had a final written reflection. Here are the activities done in the Part 2 of the research project.

Research Project Part 2	
Research Question C	How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers teaching practices?
Research Question D	What strategies can help teachers understand the concepts of assessment and dynamic assessment?
Plan to Change	8. Plan Focused Dialogues based of the previous reflection
Act	9. Focused Dialogues
Observe	10. Class Observations 11. Follow-up questions
Reflect	12. Analysis of focused dialogues 13. Analysis of observations 14. Reflect (written reflection)

Table 22 Research Project Part 2

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

As seen in the previous chart, we also had some focused dialogues or sessions. The information discussed in each of the sessions was crucial to continue working with the students in their writing development.

Session 6

In this session, teachers planned the work of the next steps of the writing development process. First, the teacher developed the conclusion that Vygotsky's (1987) concept of ZPD in Second Language Learning plays a very important role in students' learning processes because the more students could socialize with their peers about how the activity could be done, the more they would learn how to correctly perform the task. Therefore, they decided to plan the activities based on GDA based on the idea that teachers and learners are active participants in the construction of language and that meaning is constructed among the participants, which in this case would be the collaborating teachers and their students (Gibbons, 2003). Having said that, teachers planned to use a second vocabulary pool. The vocabulary pool was used to help students in their writing specific paragraph parts, with the aim of helping students write accurate paragraphs.

Vocabulary Pool 2

Introduction		Body		Conclusion	
Attention grabbing		Topic sentence 1 (first piece of supporting your thesis)		Restate the introduction	
Brief explanation for opening		Supporting idea 1 (provide example/evidence/quotation)		Summarize the topic sentence	
Thesis statement (Address the prompt)		Supporting idea 2 (explain the significance of example/evidence/quotation)			

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

		Topic sentence 2 (second piece of supporting your thesis)			
		Supporting idea 1 (provide example/evidence/quotation)			
		Supporting idea 2 (explain the significance of example/evidence/quotation)			

Table 23. Vocabulary Pool 2

Teachers also wanted to continue with the methodology used by Blass and Gordon (2010) from their book *Writers at Work: From Sentence to Paragraph Student's Book*. All of the following activities were done in groups.

- a) The first step was a vocabulary pool about the parts of a paragraph. Teachers explain the different parts of a paragraph using examples and developing a paragraph in class.
- b) The students were divided in smaller groups (3 participants). The aim was to have cooperative work and a follow -up process to see how effectively these groups of students worked.
- e) The third step was to develop their first written draft.
- f) In the next step students had to exchange their pieces of writing with other groups and offer feedback. Since they knew about English mechanics, spelling rules and the parts of the paragraph this project was easier to perform. Additionally, students could use the vocabulary pools 1 as a reference for the revision.
- g) One participant of each group had to move to the group that they gave feedback to and explain the information that was given.
- h) Then they had to do the second draft and include the comments and correct the mistakes; basically improve the writing.
- i) The next step was to focus on the mechanics students in the groups had to pay attention to, such as, capital letters, commas, periods, spelling, grammar mistakes.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- j) The final step was to write the final draft, which was the one that had to be handed to the teacher.

Session 7

This session was done after the first steps of the students' writing process. The teachers mentioned that they felt happy about the results so far. The three teachers also agreed on the fact that by applying a writing task about real life situations, students could produce authentic writings. This is because the writing task contained a realistic topic, students were requested to be innovative, and students were asked to communicate as peers in the second language. All these elements are characteristics of authentic performance as Wiggins (1998) mentioned.

They strongly believed that the guidance of the teacher was crucial because the writing prompt helps in this process and helps create a friendly environment where teachers as well as students could learn from each other and notice the compromises in each activity. Additionally, the three teachers mentioned that when they were using GD, students work more productively and effectively and in this way, they obtain a better understanding of their writing process.

Session 8

In this session students wrote their second draft. In this session, the teacher focused on Vygotsky's (1987) acknowledgement that to understand the inner mental processes of human beings, it is necessary to look at human beings in their sociocultural context. So according to this concept the teachers and I shared our experiences related about the way students performed the activity. Students who were working in smaller groups (3 per group) had the chance to socialize about what they had done based on the instructions given to them. The teachers mentioned that

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

their guidance was always there to see how the process went, understanding that teachers are facilitators and not simple spectators, and the result was that the student could be more confident in completing the task. Finally, teachers mentioned that meditation was always there explicitly or implicitly (Poehner, 2007; Poehner 2009) since teachers were able to assist students, and students had the chance to confirm or negate the assigned asked by means of internal mediation.

Session 9

In our last session together, we talked about their reflections about the whole process. They were very happy with students' final draft. They concluded that students achieved abilities to develop a good paragraph and that was the beginning of their writing experience. Teachers mentioned that students were also very pleased with their own results. They said that in the Institute, writing is one of the lowest English skills in students. Additionally, teachers saw the importance of providing effective feedback. The three teachers noticed how students could improve their current English level as well as avoiding common mistakes. Teachers also observed that most of the students wrote down on a kind of "diary" where they noted the times, and the mistakes that they had made, so they could correct those mistakes, and this means that students were aware of their improvement step by step. Finally, teachers had the time to write their final reflections about the process. Nurfaidah (2016) stated that one of the tasks of teachers is to reflect on what they have taught in class, and it is a way of being reflective teachers.

Summary

Reflection was an essential aspect of teachers' understanding of their own practice. In this way, teachers internalized the whole process they went through. Peer feedback was also crucial for teachers to improve and develop their understanding of DA. In the focused dialogues, teachers could share their thoughts, express their opinions, and ask and answer questions about the process they would develop with their students. Even though they all teach at the same level,

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
 their students and the context in which the classes are developed are different. Peer feedback was
 crucial in developing the conceptual understating of the whole process.

Research Question C.

Question C is related to how effective dynamic assessment in EFL teachers teaching
 practices. In this part of the study, teachers already used the strategies of DA in their classes with
 their students. This part of the study was conducted after the teachers used DA and GDA in their
 classes. Teachers reported two themes: 1. Purposive assessment and 2. Students active
 participation. Regarding the purposive assessment, two sub-themes that emerged were
 integration and student center. For the theme student active participation, two subthemes also
 appeared being cooperation and confidence as shown in Table 4.10.

How effective is dynamic assessment in EFL teachers teaching practices?

Overarching Theme	Theme	Sub-theme	Code/Descriptor
Effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment in EFL Teachers Teaching Practices	Purposive Assessment	Integration	DA combines instruction and assessment
			DA is not isolated
			DA is continuous
		Student Center	DA provides constant feedback
			DA provides constant monitoring
			DA provides clear instructions and goals
	Students Active Participation	Cooperation	GDA provides better learning
			GDA improves productive skills
			GDA promotes interaction
		Confidence	GDA promotes honesty
GDA enhances trust between peers			

Table 24. Overarching themes Question C

Theme one: Purposive Assessment

Teachers reported that dynamic assessment is effective in their practices because it offers
 a purposive assessment that includes integrating instruction and assessment. DA also provides

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

constant feedback and constant monitoring. In fact, Tabatabaei and Bakhtiarvand (2014)(2014) also stated that “In DA an examiner not only gives performance contingent feedback but also offers instruction in response to student failure to change or improve the student’s attainment” (p. 9).

One of the teachers reported that with the application of DA in her classes, she could join the instruction and the assessment, which was usually conducted separately. Assessment should integrate in learning (Wiggins, 1998). Having said this, in one of the activities to promote writing, students benefitted with constant monitoring and feedback. In this regard, Karen stated, *“This activity was done by giving clear instructions before the activities and offering effective feedback at the end. You could see the results when monitoring the class” (follow-up).*

Additionally, during the different dynamic assessment activities, it was evident that DA strategies allowed them to start capturing activities from their level of knowledge or domain area. In other words, it was evident that students were able to produce improved written paragraphs with a better vocabulary, connectors conjunctions, and corrected sentence structured. With the collaboration of the rest of their classmates, their writing improved notably. This shows that collaborative and teacher-guided activities facilitated students to carry out more complex activities in DA. Mary also mentioned some of the benefits of working with DA in class,

It is clear that Dynamic Assessment is very useful to help students feel at ease and deal with the learning process. Finding activities at the right ZPD of the students is necessary otherwise, we can frustrate or discourage our students. Also, teachers’ activities must be well planned and clear enough for the students. Therefore, the time we spend on giving instructions is not a waste of time; it is a must for teachers. (Mary, encounter)

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Furthermore, teachers informed students that as part of their dynamic assessment, students had the opportunity to redo their writings after getting feedback from their peers and their teacher. In other words, it is not an isolated, one-time evaluation. One of the characteristics of DA is that the assessment is continuous within a learning process and the goal is to help students understand and recognize where they are and how they can improve (Gavriel, 2013). Therefore, the quality of the task given to the students was important, but most important was the quality of feedback that was given (Wiggins, 1998). Karol mentioned that,

Translation into English

The most important thing that I have found in student group participation is improvement in the process. As students realize their mistakes as they become familiar with their peers, they had more confidence to carry out the assigned activity. (Karol, written reflection)

The extract is evidence that teachers believe that DA and GDA will help students develop their language skills because students can help each other. Additionally, students feel more comfortable talking with their peers and they can be honest indicating their weaknesses while correcting the mistakes. From this process, students became aware of their mistakes and were able to improve their assessment tasks. In the next extract Karol explained in detail how the process of DA helped students in a particular writing assessment, which was a continuing process to improve their writing skills. The students started with key vocabulary words, then creating a theme sentence, then supporting sentences and a conclusion. In this sense, Poehner (2007) states that when working with GDA “the dynamics of learners’ cooperative activity becomes more relevant” (p. 338) and this was proven in the teachers’ classes.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Translation into English

On the third day, they made their second draft based on their peers' recommendations and/or suggestions in the groups of three assigned. This time they were more aware of improving their writing and checking the appropriate connectors according to their paragraphs; With the teacher's assistance, students who had not yet reached a correct writing style were able to handle appropriate grammar and vocabulary in the order indicated. At the time of delivering their final paragraphs or the final product, the students were able to identify, produce and generate new information and improve the already acquired. (Karol, written reflection)

Teachers believed that with DA and GDA, students could learn how to perform the tasks appropriately. They recycled the information they already viewed, worked together, and realized that they were capable of doing good things, in this case of correcting their own wiring.

Theme two: Students Active Participation

The second theme that emerged from the data was that students participate actively in GDA. Students demonstrated cooperation and confidence. Teachers reported that GDA helped students improve their productive skills. GDA also promoted interaction. Students develop confidence when working in GDA because they could rely on their peers to ask and give feedback. When working collaboratively, students who were more knowledgeable about the writing process helped the other students. Nurfaidah (2018) mentions the importance of ZPD and collaborative writing and focuses on the importance of a shared knowledge that occurs when students work together, “The process of negotiating, constructing and reconstructing knowledge and new meaning takes place within a natural shared knowledge construction phase” (p.151).

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Teachers applied DA in a writing process to improve students' ability in writing using vocabulary pools to check students' previous knowledge. These vocabulary pools were developed by the teachers in one of the sessions based on an idea of Blass and Gordon (2010)(2010) mentioned before. Teachers wanted to help students develop their writing skills. The purpose of these vocabulary pools was to prepare students for writing and for letting the teachers know how much the students do know about the different parts of speech, parts of a paragraph, sentences parts, writing terms and mechanics

Based on this, teachers reinforced or retaught aspects that students forgot or did not remember. This activity gave teachers a starting point to plan according to the students' needs and requirements. Karol mentioned that *"When I noticed a student was struggling with any difficulty, I worked with him or her through the trouble to solve it or give some hints"* (written reflection).

GDA was an excellent strategy when teachers had big classes. Something that teachers emphasized was that working in groups, it was important to give clear and specific roles to each student so that they will have to perform a task so that in this way the activity is more productive. This way of teaching helps with large class management. Mary emphasized that,

It could be seen that throughout GDA, the students showed interest and desire to continue with the activities. When the students worked in groups, they did so in a relaxed way, without tension, and in a safe environment. This increases the students' motivation, demonstrating that group work contributes to a low affective filter, which is crucial for learning. (encounter)

Teachers believed that students learned from their peers' assistance because they had more confidence in asking questions, verifying information, and correcting friends from their age

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL group. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the teacher plays an important role when working with dynamic assessment activities, not only as a guide for the students but by also explaining the importance and benefits of this type of activity. Although, as the activities were developed, the students themselves confirmed the advantages of collaborative work in GDA.

Translation into English

When working in a group there seems to be a better way of learning since there is more trust between peers rather than the teacher. At the moment of having that confidence, the student seems to assimilate the knowledge regardless of whether the assimilation is 100% correct, since what matters most in the activities is the production of the ability that the student wishes to develop. Any group activity to be planned in advance since if activities are organized at a given time it tends to confuse their purpose and the end would not make sense and would be a waste of time. I consider that the basis of doing group activities is interacting with those around you and feeling that you are really assimilating knowledge. (Karen, written reflection)

In the previous extract, Karen also expressed the importance of peer trust to collaboratively promote learning among the students. Additionally, she spoke of the importance of good planning, monitoring, and constant feedback.

Summary

In question C, the overarching theme was the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices, promoted by a purposive assessment and students' active participation. DA promoted interaction between the instruction and the assessment. In this sense, learning assessment was not conceived as an isolated aspect of the process. In fact, DA

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
 assessment was a continuous process, which emphasized the students, offering them the
 opportunity to actively participate in their learning development.

Research Question D.

The final research question aimed to identify the strategies that can help teachers
 understand the concepts dynamic assessment. Four strategies emerged from the data: 1. Focused
 dialogues as conceptual mediator, 2. Written reflections to internalized concepts, and 3. Teacher
 positive attitudes.

What strategies can help teachers understand the concepts dynamic assessment?

Overarching theme	Themes	Sub-Themes	Descriptor
Strategies that can help teachers understand the concepts of dynamic assessment	Focused dialogues as conceptual mediator	Self-assistance and peer -assistance through focus dialogues	Increase teachers' confidence
			Arguments to support ideas
			Mutual feedback
			Cooperation
			Changing points of view
			Interaction
	Written reflections to internalized concepts	Internalization of concepts	Improve critical thinking
			Reflections of practices
			Self-reflection
			Repetition of strategies
			Teachers' motivation
			Teachers' willing to learn
	Teacher positive attitudes and self-improvement	Teachers' attitudes for learning about DA	Teachers' positive attitude
		Self-improvement	Professional development
Improvement of teaching practices			
High confidence and empowerment			

Table 25. Overarching themes Question D

Theme one: Focused dialogues as conceptual mediator

Teachers reported that focused dialogues helped them understand the concepts related to dynamic assessment. In fact, during the focused dialogues, they encountered self and peer assistance to understand and improve their practices in DA. We used these group discussions to share information regarding assessment types, teaching issues, DA, GDA, interactionist DA, and interventionist DA. Additionally, we discussed different strategies to apply with the students' problems they faced in their classrooms and possible solutions. In the beginning, teachers needed additional guidance related to DA, so in the focus groups, they could discuss the concepts they were not sure of. I conducted leading questions and follow-up discussions.

Teachers learned that the great advantage of sharing ideas in focus groups strengthens us as teachers despite having different levels to teach. The essential factor is that teachers could learn and assimilate knowledge in the long term to apply it in their future personal and professional lives. Karol believed that *"the focus groups were a valuable tool to carry out our future planning and to be able to find different ways of assessing our students"* (encounter).

Teachers also reported that with the meetings, they increased their confidence as teachers and as experts in DA because they could use convincing arguments to support their ideas. These lived experiences that we shared in the sessions in combination with both their previous and new experiences played a significant role in the development of their ZPD and in the reconstruction of everyday concepts to academic concepts. There was also mutual feedback between teachers and much interaction. This is considered a continuous process. They discussed strategies, shared experiences, developed follow-up questions, conducted post-observation dialogues, and wrote written reflections, which were the key to verify that the teacher understood the concept of

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

assessment/dynamic assessment and that they used these concepts in their practices. Karen stated that,

... the usual meetings that we used to hold let me know how important it is to work with experienced people since we had the chance to interchange ideas, thoughts, and comments that made our work easier and let us solve difficulties in the teaching-learning process. (Written reflection)

Additionally, teachers informed that they had the opportunity to express themselves naturally with the focused groups and talked about unanticipated topics or issues of interest beforehand. In the same way, by using this technique, they also had the opportunity to find more understandable and credible findings and share this information with the other teachers in the following encounters.

Theme two: Written reflections for internalization of concepts.

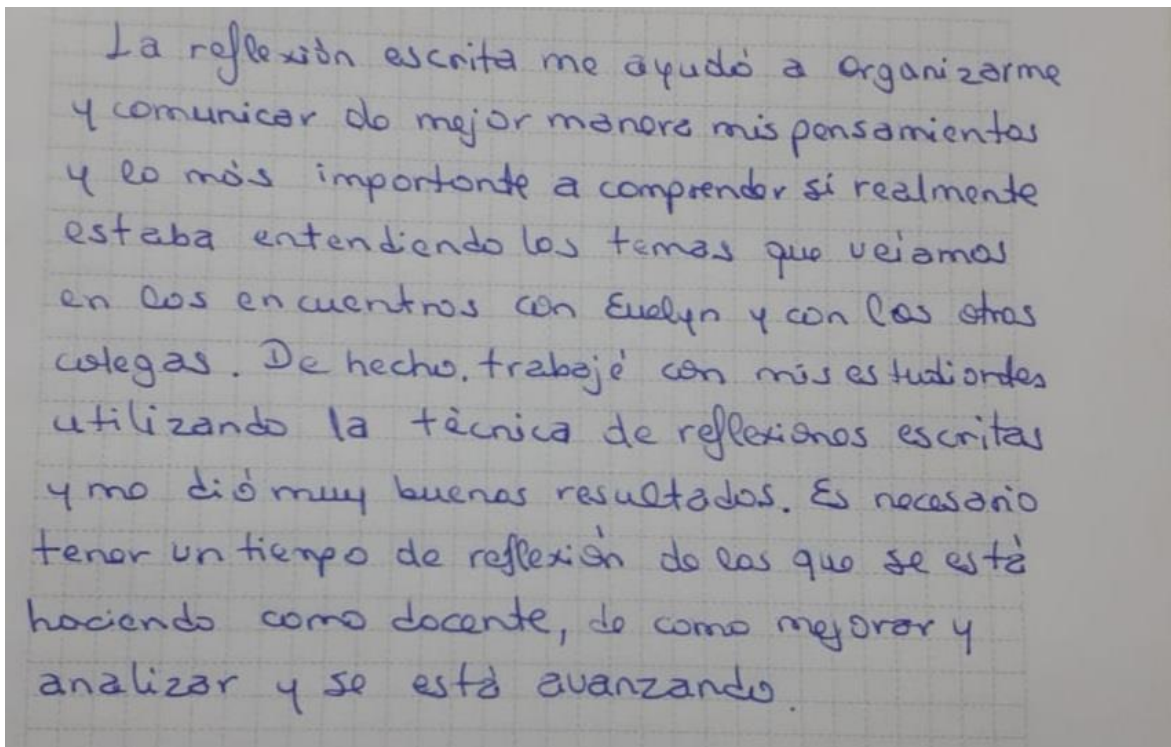
Teachers believed that written reflections were a very successful way to become aware of the benefits of DA and the reflections helped to develop strategies to use DA in their classes. When reflecting on the process, they began to be aware of their own progress, which motivated them to continue with the activities. With the use of written reflections, teachers could internalize and conceptualized DA. Along with discussions among colleagues and experts, sharing experiences, follow-up questions, post observation dialogues, written reflections are fundamental to promote concept development in which the teacher can control and systematize, internalize, and construct concepts (Warford, 2011).

They also reflected on their own practice and analyzed their improvement. Karol mentioned that *“the written reflections helped me internalize the importance of better learning*

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

and different ways of assessing my students, such as dynamic assessment and applying the new knowledge, and putting it into practice with my students” (Written reflection).

During the written reflections, teachers had the opportunity to review the information that they developed in the focused groups, and, in a written way, they added new ideas and reinforced the knowledge they had. Reflections are a very important aspect of Vygotsky’s theory, considering that thought through the process of reflection teachers became consciously aware of their teaching practices, and how they could help their students in their writing processes.



Translation into English

The written reflection helped me organize myself, communicate better my thoughts, and, most importantly, understand if I really understood the issues that we saw

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

in the meetings with Evelyn and the other colleagues. In fact, I also worked with my students using written reflections and gave me very good results. It is necessary to have a time of reflection on what is being done as a teacher and improve and analyze, and progress is being made. (Karol, written reflection)

In the previous extract Karol mentioned the importance of written reflection in her development. She identified this as a strategy to internalize the concepts that were presented and discussed in the focused dialogues with her colleagues.

Giving teachers time to reflect on their knowledge was essential in their professional training since teachers were able to recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and problems and reflect on some strategies for improvement. This also helped me to determine if they could move forward on the issues or it was necessary to stop and reinforce previously discussed information or methods. Through reflection, the teachers were able to search for extra information to understand better what was being analyzed at a given moment. In other words, the written reflections helped the teachers and me to be able to modify and plan future encounters. Written reflections are necessary in the process of understanding because as Vygotsky (1987) stated, there is a strong relationship between the language and thinking processes.

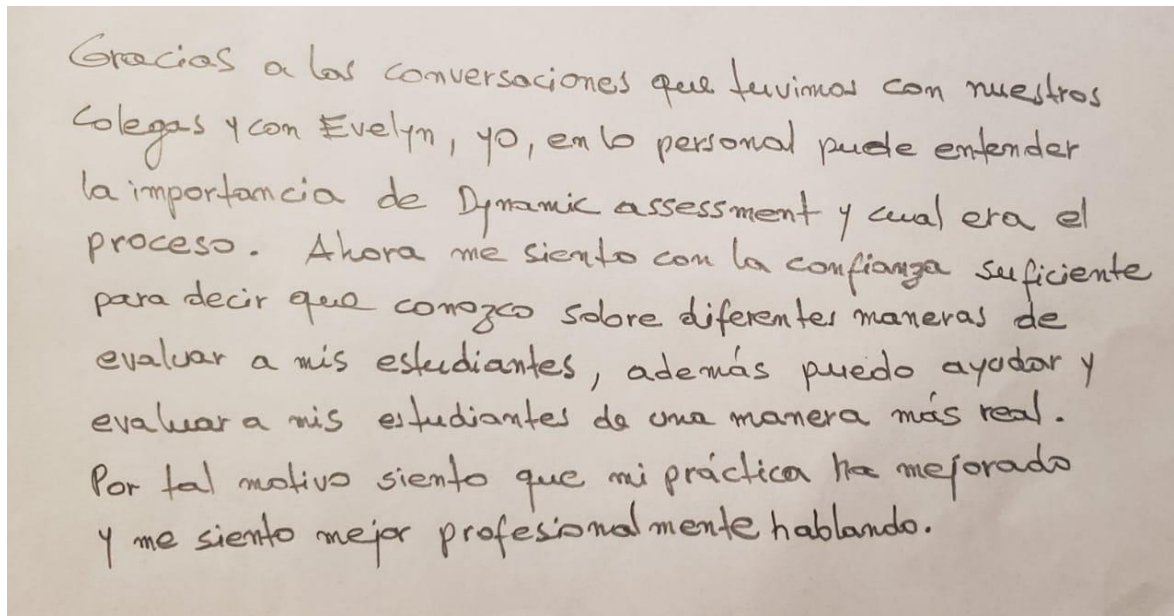
Theme three: Teacher positive attitudes and self-improvement

Teachers' positive attitudes are an important factor for their professional development. Teachers reported that first, they had good attitudes for learning about DA and about other strategies to assess students within the instructional classes. Teachers felt motivated and were willing to learn, and these attitudes helped them as a group. They mentioned that having these sessions was a way to escape of the routine and helped them in their development as teachers.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Therefore, they believed that these sessions helped them develop a sense of self-improvement.

Teachers felt more confident about various concepts such as DA, GDA, interventionist methods, interactionist methods, etc. In this sense, Mary stated that,



Translation into English

Thanks to the conversations we had with our colleagues and Evelyn, I personally understood the importance of Dynamic assessment and what the process was. Now I feel confident enough to say that I know about different ways to assess my students more realistically. For this reason, I feel that my practice has improved, and I feel better professionally speaking. (Mary, written reflection)

In the previous extract, Mary explained her feeling of pride and confidence after the whole process. She believed that now she is ready in a professional way to talk about assessment, DA, and Mary is sure that she can assess her students' learning in a better way.

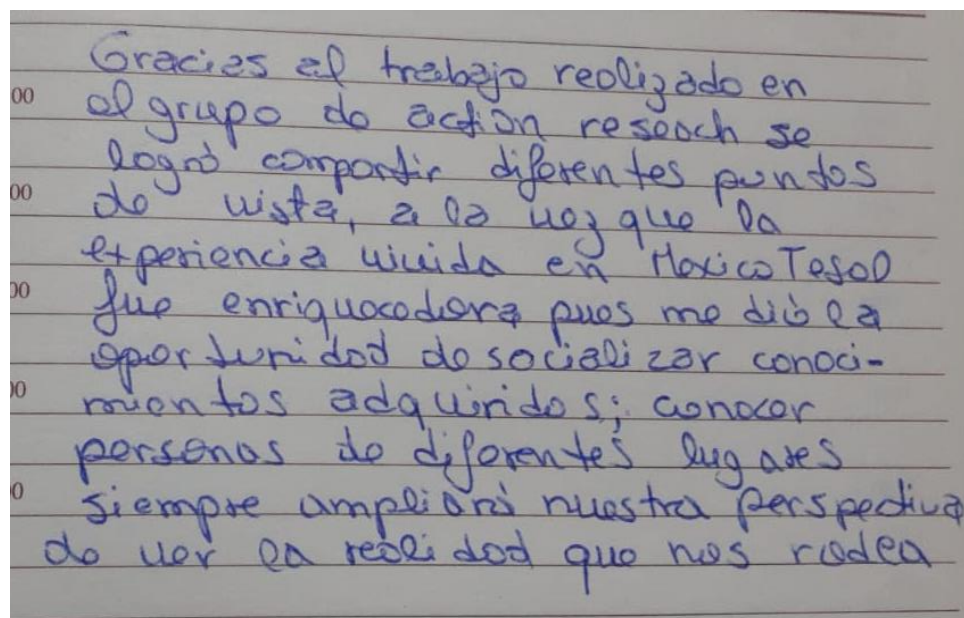
EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Additionally, the enthusiasm of the teachers to improve practice and understanding was evident.

This was an indicator that motivation plays a fundamental role in learning. Teachers motivated each other during the process, gave advice, and positively accepted the creation of extra activities other than those already planned, and this was done for the benefit of their students.

Two of the teachers that worked in this action research project had the opportunity to travel to a TESOL congress, where they had the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned.

Karol explained how useful the work we did together in this project was.



Translation into English

Thanks to the work carried out in the action research group; it was possible to share different points of view. Also, the experience in Mexico Tesol was enriching because it

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

allowed me to socialize the knowledge acquired. Meeting people from different places will always broaden our perspective of seeing the reality that surrounds us. (Karol, written reflection)

Summary

This qualitative study was conducted to provide an in-depth explanation of how EFL tenured teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment and how their understanding can be improved. The following results were summarized from the data analysis:

The first research question sought to ascertain if EFL teachers understanding the process of teaching and assessment. The data showed that grammar and vocabulary were the focus in teachers' practices. Additionally, teachers reported little importance to assessment, and they showed that they had contradictory views on the role of the syllabus. There was no knowledge of the existing syllabus, but some teachers understood and agreed on the importance of a syllabus for their classes. Finally, teachers reported the importance of the role of teachers in the learning process.

The second question asked if and how teachers deepened their understanding of the concept of DA. In this sense, the analysis showed that teacher deepen their understanding of DA by knowing their students, becoming familiarized with them, and developing appropriate classroom management. Teachers also identified their role as motivators, models, and facilitators.

The third question was how practical dynamic assessment was developed in the EFL teachers teaching practices. Teachers reported that DA fomented purposive assessment practices

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

where instruction and assessment are integrated and a student-centered approach. Additionally, DA promoted students' active participation, increasing their cooperation and confidence.

Finally, the last research question aimed to examine the strategies to help teachers understand assessment and dynamic assessment concepts. The results showed that the focused dialogues act as conceptual mediators. Another strategy that helped teachers understand DA was the written reflections. Finally, teachers' attitudes also help students deepen their understanding because teachers demonstrated an improvement in their teaching practices. Another important aspect to teachers' learning was the opportunity to actually practice what they were learning and then reflect on that practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Because of the limited information regarding teachers' knowledge and understanding of assessment in EFL learning contexts, this project, through action research and framed within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), aimed to analyze how the EFL tenured teachers' understanding of the role of assessment in SLL can be improved. Additionally, this project analyzed the effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment in teaching practices and how teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concepts of assessment and Dynamic Assessment. Finally, this research identified specific strategies that can help EFL teachers understand the concepts of assessment and Dynamic Assessment.

Additionally, this action research study provided an in-depth view of teachers' understandings through focused, collegial dialogues between the researcher and the three selected teachers. In this study, the teacher-researcher had the opportunity as the more knowledgeable expert on Dynamic Assessment to help teachers become aware of the importance of assessment, mediation, and group assessment in teaching.

To do that, this research was developed into two stages. The first stage aimed to explore the knowledge and practices and assessment processes of 12 teachers from the language institute. For this stage I used an in-depth survey, observations of the classes, and an analysis of the documents such as tests, and official documents obtained from the university and the government that pertain to the English language and assessment.

The second stage was developed with three teachers who were chosen to continue the process and were willing to work on it. This stage aimed to analyze how teachers understand the concept of dynamic assessment and how effective it is in their teaching practices. Additionally, I

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

wanted to analyze specific strategies that can help teachers improve their teaching practices. In this stage, and with the help of the three English teachers, we worked with focused dialogues, observations, and reflection sessions. A final meeting entailed a written reflection by the three teachers participating in stage two, how the dialogues and implementation practices helped them deepen their concept of Dynamic Assessment and how it helped them in their classes and with their students.

5.1. Limitations

For this action research project, I encountered some limitations:

1. The information gathered from this research project, particularly from the three EFL teacher groups, does not represent the entire EFL teacher population; therefore, the data obtained in this study cannot be generalized. It corresponds to a particular group of teachers in a specific context and time.
2. Initially I planned to work with 18 tenured teachers in the first stage, and in the second stage I planned to work with five teachers. However, because it was a voluntary study for the first stage, only 12 teachers participated, and for the second stage only three teachers wanted to continue.
3. One of the main constraints I had during the completion of this project was that the Covid 19 affected the country's educational system. As a result of the pandemic, one of the problems I had to deal with was the closure of classes at the language institute, and teachers had to continue with the English classes online. Data collection was completed to the time of closure, but the classroom closures interfered with subsequent data collection.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

4. Substantial amounts of literature exist that describe various assessment types and the role of assessment in second language learning. However, I found very little information regarding the connection between Vygotsky's concepts and how teachers employ Vygotskian methods in their reflections and practices.
5. Teachers took more time than was expected to answer the survey questions in the first stage. In the second stage, there were time limitations for teachers to work with their students because they had to complete the activities required in the course. However, we accomplished the goals in the time provided.
6. Originally, I had planned to use a case study, but it was necessary to change the methodology. However, action research felt more suitable to accomplish the study objectives. Before making changes, I consulted with my advisor and my peer debriefer, who agreed on the change.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

In this section, I will discuss the different findings and at the same time, I will address the questions presented at the beginning of my research, which are how EFL tenured teachers understand the process of teaching and assessment, how effective dynamic assessment is in EFL teaching practices, and how these teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of the concept of assessment/dynamic assessment. Finally, I aimed to identify what strategies can help teachers understand the concepts of assessment/dynamic assessment.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Current Teaching and Assessment Process (Addresses Research Question A)

In order to understand how teachers manage themselves in their classrooms concerning fundamental aspects of the English language teaching, it was necessary to carry out an in-depth survey, observations, and document analysis. For this purpose, the data analysis was focused on aspects such as the methodology used, the creation and use of the syllabus as a fundamental guide to the teaching process, the evaluation system, and the creation of assessment instruments. At this stage of the analysis, demographic aspects of the participants were also considered, such as age, gender, teaching experience, and language background. In this sense, significant findings were highlighted. For example, 50% of the participants were between 31 and 40 years old, and 41.67% were between 41 and 50 years old. Their age was also related to their years of experience at the university level and 41.67% of the teachers had between 10 and 14 years of experience.

This, in turn, is also related to the fact that most English teachers focus on grammar, vocabulary, and activities to reinforce these language components. They left aside the communicational part of the language. There is a direct connection between their teaching experience and their classroom activities. This may be because teachers perpetuate the way they themselves learned the English language. That is, if the teachers learned the English language in a program that did not stress communicative methods, and instead stressed methodologies such as grammar translation, then teachers retain this method in their own teaching practices, leaving aside the communicational part, which is fundamental for the development of language.

Another critical point to consider is that the experiences the English professors had when they were students subsequently affected their teaching practices since teachers reported that

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

they had many inconveniences when they began their careers as teachers. The teachers commented that they did not have enough interaction or pre-professional practice and felt frustrated, worried, and anxious at the time of their first classes. They also believed they did not have sufficient preparation in methodology, evaluation, and didactics and they did not feel satisfied with developing their language skills. The fact that few teachers had the opportunity to learn or practice the language outside their classrooms, such as internships, English language courses, or master's degree programs abroad, meant that their best efforts were their classrooms, where they focused on aspects such as grammar and vocabulary which they had learned when they themselves were students, and subsequently passed on in their own classes.

The first question also addresses aspects related to evaluating students' knowledge. The results report that even though teachers know the benefits and the need to carry out adequate evaluations to know the level of progress of their students, and so they can determine if the methodological techniques carried out in their classes are adequate or need improvement, teachers do not carry out a thorough, organized, and progressive evaluation process. It should be noted that the institute is making changes in this regard, partly due to this investigation's findings.

One of the factors that contributes to the assessment problems is that there is no training focused on this topic. For this reason, teachers do not know the types of evaluations that can be carried out and the strategies that can be used. In addition, teachers carry out specific evaluations that do not have clear objectives that allow monitoring of student development or and do not provide information to improve the teaching process. For this reason, establishing a planned, systematic evaluation with a defined purpose was of the utmost importance.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

One of the survey questions asked if teachers carry out another type of evaluation other than those provided in the guidebook, and most teachers answered yes. However, in practice, it was found that most evaluations were based on the guidebook text. In addition, once a guidebook evaluation was completed, no feedback was provided so that the students could identify their shortcomings, and there was no opportunity to retake the test.

Feedback plays a significant role in developing students' skills; unfortunately, it is not reflected in most of the activities of teachers. Most of the evaluations are summative, which reflects or gives a grade. However, although the teachers agree that this evaluation does not reflect the student's actual knowledge, it remains a fundamental part of the center's teaching process. This situation can also occur because it is one of the institute's requirements, and there is very little that the teacher can do. Administrative management should consider restructuring the entire educational organization if they want to make substantial changes to the assessment processes.

Another weak point evidenced in the first research stage was that teachers know very little about syllabus development and its true importance and how it is directly linked to how classes are developed. The syllabus is the core part of planning and organizing the course. However, it is shocking that some teachers do not know what its components are or that they have never created a syllabus in school. After analyzing this topic in more depth and asking why teachers are not so involved in syllabus development, it was found that one of the explanations for this problem is that the syllabus is made by the language facilitator and not by the teachers.

Another discovery is that the syllabus would be the same for all teachers teaching the same level, whether it is 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, or 2.1. A reason that was identified why some teachers do not develop the syllabus was that some do not know what the syllabus is; therefore, the question

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

remains how they develop their classes. Many of them do it empirically, following the activities in the textbook which really should be just a guide for the teacher.

Although there are some improvement aspects, most teachers consider their role vital in English language learning. They agree that the teacher must not be the center of attention in the class or in the learning process because of the current pandemic circumstances. Instead, students are active participants in their own learning. Therefore, the role of the teacher is facilitator, guide, and complement for the student to develop their skills. We will look at this aspect in more depth later.

Teacher's understanding of the Dynamic Assessment (Addresses Research Question B)

To develop this question, a second phase of the research was carried out with three teachers from the institute who agreed to participate. These three teachers were identified after a selection process and their predisposition and willingness to work and learn more about Dynamic Evaluation had been determined. These three teaching colleagues continued the action research process. Focus groups were held, where issues related to learning theories, types of evaluation, and finally, Dynamic Assessment were addressed. This process of knowledge acquired through our meetings was reflected in their classrooms. The analysis showed that these teachers understand the Dynamic Assessment as a process in which students' knowledge and classroom management were the central issues.

The research results indicated that the teachers understood the importance of identifying the ZPD of the students. Employing ZPD, it will be possible to give the students the activities appropriate to their level of knowledge. Identifying students with higher and lower language levels was also possible. In this way, students can be grouped so that they can help each other

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

and that the student with the most significant knowledge of the language is the one who can support the others, as mentioned by Vygotsky as the most capable peer.

Regarding the ZPD, Teachers have understood the concept of *Obuchenie*, which refers to teaching and learning. In this sense, teaching and learning cannot be separated. It is a process that is joint with assessment and must be seen as a whole. *Obuchenie* then shows this unity. Considering teachers' *Obuchenie*. It was seen in this project that teachers are teaching, but also, they are learning. Furthermore, that is crucial for their understanding of their ZPD. They can advance in their own teaching and, at the same time, understand their students' ZPD.

The other concept of ZPD seen in the research is *Vospitanie* which is the concept of caring and mentoring, which is essential in every aspect of a person's life. And in particular in teaching at all levels. Teachers have reflected on *Vospitanie* by making a human connection with their students in second-language classrooms.

Another fundamental point concluded from the research is that the second phase teachers consider and analyze students' different learning styles, potential, intellectual capacity, and language background. Something very interesting that the sessions with the teachers revealed was that, in some cases, the students were learning English as their third language since their mother tongue was Kiwcha. For this reason, these students they had other types of difficulties when studying English. Identifying these needs inherent to each student can help the teacher plan their classes and reinforce what they have learned with a better approach.

Thus, the role of the teacher is of vital importance in the process of teaching the English language. Teachers believe that classroom management must be considered in order to help students in their teaching process. Thus, the teacher must be a language facilitator, and a model for the student. Teachers believe that there is a need for constant monitoring of the activities

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL carried out in class. In addition, it is necessary to promote interaction between them so that environments of familiarity and trust are created, and in this way, students feel more comfortable sharing and communicating in the language.

It was concluded that managing the class and its development is essential in improving the students' language skills. It was possible to determine that the teachers participating in this research believe that the student-centered approach is the most appropriate methodology for students to learn the language in a more dynamically and interactively manner. As is known, the characteristics of student-centered learning are based on the discovery of knowledge by themselves. This learning includes the development of skills such as thinking, making decisions, solving problems, and working in groups, among others.

Another relevant point that was considered is to carry out realistic planning based on the needs of the students. Once their strengths and weaknesses have been identified, the class must be planned on that basis to enhance their strengths and improve their weaknesses. Additionally, it was determined that the planning must be significant for the students, in which engaging activities are developed, allowing them to work and learn together. In this way, students help each other. Here meditation is key to students' cognitive development since strategies are sought to find enough knowledge to improve the language.

Effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment in EFL teachers' teaching practices (Addressing Question C).

As evidenced, Dynamic Assessment is a process whose central axis is the use of mediation to develop students' knowledge of the English language. The dynamic assessment focuses on Vygotsky's concept of ZPD. The investigation results indicated two aspects to

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

consider about the purpose of the evaluation. Teachers think that the evaluation should have integration and a student-centered component. In other words, it must be a positive assessment. Speaking of integration, DA has the characteristic of combining instruction and assessment. They are not considered separate aspects of the language learning process. Furthermore, DA is characterized as continuous because learning is gradual and takes place in stages. For this reason, the evaluation process for students must be ongoing.

Concerning the student-centered assessment, the results indicate that teachers think there must be a continuous feedback component for the students within the assessment process. In this way, the students will create awareness of the mistakes made and why they are being corrected. This will favorably help students improve their command of the language. In addition, teachers think that constant monitoring is necessary for the assessment process. The evaluation should not be isolated in which the student is left alone. On the contrary, this is where teachers should monitor and provide the necessary support so that students see their mistakes and improve. Another point to consider is that the teachers indicate that before the evaluation, exact instructions must be presented to the students so they will know precisely what they must do.

Additionally, teachers must indicate to students the objective of the evaluation. This will allow students and teachers to focus on the objective of the evaluation process and be much more productive.

Students participated in the evaluation process and the results showed that Dynamic Assessment provides a route to cooperation between students and teachers and promotes student confidence. It was determined that group DA primarily promotes better English language learning since there is a better connection and more dynamism in the workgroups, making students more comfortable communicating in English.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

In fact, this research work emphasized the development of students' writing through GDA, where students were able to perform different activities and tasks to improve their skills in an interactive way where each student had a role and specific tasks to develop in the group. GDA helps develop language skills, especially the productive ones such as speaking and writing. Finally, it was concluded that GDA promotes student confidence. The group activities promoted the students' honesty since they had the opportunity to write their essays and review them and help improve their classmates' work. This created trust between them and thus improved their self-confidence to produce writing, and on many occasions, to give oral presentations.

Strategies that helped teachers understand the concepts of Dynamic Assessment

(Addressing Question D)

One of the fundamental research questions strictly related to Vygotsky's ZPD theory is the one that sought to identify the strategies that helped teachers better understand the concepts related to Dynamic Assessment and how these were applied for the benefit of their students.

Three main themes were found:

The first finding was related to in-depth dialogues with teachers. These conversations helped as mediators of understanding. This way, the teachers could talk to each other and support each other so they could better understand the concepts being analyzed in the meetings. Therefore, these meetings resembled self-assistance and peer-assistance focused dialogues. When the teachers worked together on conceptualizing aspects of dynamic assessment and planned their classes based on the concepts developed in the talks, they increased their confidence in what they did because they became experts on the subject. This confidence is also mentioned by Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) when discussing the gift of confidence. The

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

teachers critically argued their ideas. There was cooperation and mutual feedback, as well as better interaction. They also had the opportunity to exchange points of view after interacting in the meetings, making sure their classes were planned in a way that used the key concepts of Dynamic Assessment to improve their students' learning.

Another strategy for teachers to better understand the concepts of assessment and Dynamic Assessment was the use of written reflections. Through these reflections, the teachers could internalize the concepts that were studied better because the written reflections helped improve the teachers' critical thinking development. Through the reflections, they were able to repeat and review the strategies that were used in class. They were able to analyze what worked and what should have been improved. The written reflections, without a doubt, are a recommended strategy since, employing these, teachers make sense of the concepts viewed and the activities that were done. This reflection process followed a recursive cycle in which teachers could repeat the activities and recycle strategies that performed the best for them.

The attitude of the teachers played a crucial role in developing their own understanding. Due to their positive attitude toward learning about dynamic assessment, the teachers could carry out activities together and better support their students in their classes. Both a constant motivation to learn and a desire to improve their practices were observed, as well as a positive attitude toward the changes they decided to make in their classes and the new strategies they developed. This attitude helped everyone feel comfortable, and there was a level of confidence to express their feelings about their classes, their students, and the elements they thought should be changed in the institute. There were also moments of total sincerity, in which they could express the fears and challenges they constantly face as people and professionals. In short, they created

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

not only an academic group but also a friendship group that they consider will last for a long time. They feel that they belong to something special and that it feels good.

Constructing the teachers' own ZPD was complex and included four different phases (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Warford, 2011). The teachers had a self-assistance phase where they were strongly influenced by their learning experiences about assessment and the information they obtained from their conversations, group discussions, and answers and questions among the three teachers. This allowed them to construct their own knowledge about DA. Initially, it was a bit difficult because the teachers wanted to focus on more objective assessments such as summative, diagnostic, or formative tests. Therefore, an intervention from the expert was essential.

In the second phase, with the expert assistance, they had help from me as the expert or more capable peer to talk about action research, assessment, and in particular, DA. Teachers had live experience regarding how to approach an action research project and develop strategies using DA in their class. They worked with me in the conversations, simulated that they were students learning something new, and I explained the process and did some exercises as the expert or teacher. So, they get familiarized with the activities they had to perform in their own classes.

Teachers demonstrated their pedagogical understanding of research and DA in the internalization phase. And how did they do it? Well, they imitated the activities I performed with them in our focused dialogues. In this way, teachers could intellectually imitate the use of DA and action research in their own classes. This imitation is done with repletion. Teachers unconsciously repeated the strategies. Then they internalized the process and became conscious.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

In the teachers' recursion phase. Teachers are prepared to work with the theory of what they have seen and practice in their own classes to be more knowledgeable teachers. This is the final step of concept development (Warford, 2011). Here teachers had the opportunity to discuss the information obtained from their classes with the other teachers and share experiences, ask questions to clarify concepts, and create other opportunities for reflections to control, systematize, internalize, and construct concepts. Finally, in this phase, teachers could help other teachers through training and professional development.

Finally, a sense of self-improvement was visualized. After the entire process, the teachers felt more professional in that they could speak with knowledge about the causes of concepts previously unknown to them. For example, the teachers can now explain theories of second language acquisition, ZPD, Dynamic Assessment, and sociocultural theory. Furthermore, most importantly, they can help other teachers so that they too can benefit from these topics of interest in learning a new language. In fact, the professors had the opportunity to share the knowledge they acquired in presentations, such as national and international congresses, conventions on TESOL, and in their own universities with their colleagues. These presentations gave the teachers a sense of empowerment and made them feel more confident with the knowledge acquired.

5.3 Implications

The results of this study have some implications.

1. Because Vygotsky's theory of proximal development emphasizes children's learning, this research provides insight into how the knowledge and use of ZPD can benefit foreign language learners and teachers and how the ZPD can be used in developing teachers' learning concepts.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

2. Mediation is one of the most critical aspects of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

Therefore, this research has made it possible to identify how mediation helps students develop their English language learning. On the other hand, mediation also supports teachers in strengthening their knowledge in the field of evaluation. Therefore, this research is a starting point for analyzing the development of teachers' knowledge through mediation.

3. Written comments were a strategy used by teachers to analyze what they had learned and how to improve their practice. This research also showed how written reflections can be used in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language by both students and teachers.
4. Dynamic Assessment is another type of assessment that uses mediation and Vygotsky's ZPD to help students improve their language understanding. Therefore, this research can be used as a model for teachers in performing this type of evaluation with their students and thus have more affirmative results and help their students better.
5. This research project is a contributing factor in the Ecuadorian context because we have seen that in Ecuador, the assessment process is very objective, using quizzes and examinations in every aspect of the teaching. Teachers usually rely on international examinations. Therefore, this project's contribution to the body of knowledge is bringing DA as an innovative and exciting way of assessing learning and teaching. DA can be used as a support to blend what is currently being used in the different schools and institutes: objective assessment with DA.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

6. Finally, this research can be replicated in different universities and context to provide a collective framework to better understand the use of Dynamic Assessment, mediation and ZPD for both EFL students and teachers.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Since there were some limitations, such as the time to carry out the research, and the interruptions of academic activities due to Covid 19, it is necessary to continue with the analysis process with a post-covid vision, where other variables could intervene, such as the use of technology and teacher training.

Another area of interest is that an investigation should be also carried out with the students since, in the present investigation, an analysis was carried out with teachers and how they achieved an understanding of specific concepts and how the teachers applied these concepts as teaching strategies. In this research, the perspective of the teacher was visualized. However, it would be imperative to know the students' perspectives.

Additionally, because this research was qualitative, the findings cannot be generalized for this research situation. For this reason, it is also recommended that quantitative or mixed-methods research could be conducted in another research effort

Without a doubt, assessment is a critical aspect of the teaching and learning process and should be given importance. This research has analyzed the use of Dynamic Assessment to improve teaching and learning. It has focused on enhancing teachers' understanding through action research, where teachers are the participants in their own learning and professionalism. Regarding Universidad Central and the Instituto Academico de Idiomas, through this action research, teachers-participants had the opportunity to self-reflect on their practices and cooperatively expand their assessment understanding. Teachers also gained confidence and

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL
empowerment that helped them create new spaces for other teachers from UCE and other
educational institutions to grow as well.



Appendix A

In-Depth Survey

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Residence – location:
4. Race:
5. Ethnicity/background:
6. Language background:
7. University and year of graduation:
8. Degree:
9. Years of teaching experience at a university level:
10. Years of experience in other educational institutions:
11. Do you give any type of assessment in addition to the final tests?
12. What do you think the final grade of the students represent?
13. Explain how you develop the syllabus of the course?
14. Do you consider any policies (Governmental, UCE, Centro de Idiomas, etc) to develop your syllabus? And if so develop?
15. What material in addition to the textbook (if any) do you use in class?
16. When did you start working as an English teacher? How was your experience?
17. Do you have any English teaching or learning experience outside Ecuador?
18. What is your role in the process of Second Language Learning?
19. What is the role of assessment in Second Language Learning?
20. What is the relationship between teaching and assessment?
21. What theories do you use in the assessment process?

Appendix B

Class Observation Check List

No.	Parameters	Strong	Apparent	Not Displayed
		3	2	1
1	Teacher uses different kinds of assessment tools			
2	Teacher uses different materials in addition to the textbook			
3	Teacher's role is that of a facilitator			
4	Teacher provides feedback to students			
5	Teacher connects the teaching activities with the assessment			
6	Assessments reflects the content level			
7	Assessments reflects the objectives of the course			
8	There is a personalized teaching to students who need it			
9	Teacher is willing to participate in the research			
10	Teacher seems to be accessible to adapt other kinds of assessments			

Observation Notes:

Appendix C

Test Check list

Code:

Type of assessment:

Skill assessed:

No.	Parameters	Yes	No	Observations
1	Is it challenging?			
2	Is it concrete?			
3	Is enough time given?			
4	Does it offer examples, prompts?			
5	Is it authentic?			
6	Is there only one correct answer (Key)			
7	Does it have a rubric or rating scale?			
8	Are there cultural appropriate test items			

Questions for teachers about the test

1	What is the purpose of the test?	
2	Who developed it?	
3	Who administrated it?	
4	Was it a pilot?	
5	Was it validated	
4	Was there a reliability analysis?	
6	Was feedback offered?	
7	Students' self-assessment	
8	Peer-assessment	

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Appendix D

Vocabulary Pool 1

Parts of Speech		Parts of a paragraph		Sentence Parts		Writing Terms		Mechanics	
Noun		Main idea		Subject		Freewrite		Punctuation	
Verb		Supporting idea 1		Object		First draft		Capital letter	
Adjective		Supporting idea 2		Connecting word		Second draft		Comma	
Preposition		Supporting idea 3				Revise		Period	
		Concluding idea				Edit		Spelling	

Vocabulary Pool 2

Introduction		Body		Conclusion	
Attention grabbing		Topic sentence 1 (first piece of supporting your thesis)		Restate the introduction	
Brief explanation for opening		Supporting idea 1 (provide example/evidence/quotation)		Summarize the topic sentence	
Thesis statement (Address the prompt)		Supporting idea 2 (explain the significance of example/evidence/quotation)			
		Topic sentence 2 (second piece of supporting your thesis)			
		Supporting idea 1 (provide example/evidence/quotation)			
		Supporting idea 2 (explain the significance of example/evidence/quotation)			

Appendix E

Regulatory scale -implicit (strategy) to explicit- for DA interactions for ESL learners

(Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994)

0. Tutor asks the learner to read, find the errors, and correct them independently, prior to the tutorial.
1. Construction of a “collaborative frame” prompted by the presence of the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.
2. Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error by the learner or the tutor.
3. Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a segment (e.g., sentence, clause, line) stating, “Is there anything wrong in this sentence?”
4. Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognizing the error.
5. Tutor narrows down the location of the error (e.g., Tutor repeats or points to the specific segment which contains the error).
6. Tutor indicates the nature of the error, but does not identify the error (e.g., “There is something wrong with the tense marking here”).
7. The tutor indicates the error (“You can’t have an auxiliary here”).
8. Tutor rejects learner’s unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.
9. Tutor provides clues to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g., “It is not really past but something that is still going on”).
10. Tutor provides the correct form.
11. Tutor provides some explanation for the use of the correct form.
12. Tutor provides examples of the correct pattern when other forms of help fail to produce an appropriate responsive action.

Appendix E

Reflection Paper

Date:

Level:

Number of students:

Class Description:

Guide questions

What did you do in your class?

Who were you working with and-or for?

Why did you do it?

What did you say or otherwise communicate?

Who did not speak or did not participate in class?

What else happened that might be important (e.g., equipment failure, wather-related issues, etc)

Examine

What did I learn?

How did I learn it?

Why does it matter?

What might/should be done in light of it?

Appendix F

Initial Coding Part 1

Code-Filter: All

HU: Action Research Project
 File: [C:\Users\Evelyn Almeida\Documents\Dissertation\Action Resear...\Action Research Project.hpr7]
 Edited by: Super
 Date/Time: 2020-05-21 18:47:17

- 4 1. Additional material
- 5 2. Assessment (what really happens)
- 5 3. Assessment Methodology
- 4. assessment and teaching are separate processes
- 5 5. assessment practices ★ ⑤
- 5 6. Assessment process
- 5 7. Assessment tasks
- 5 8. assessment types
- 9. CEFR
- 10. Certificate
- 11. Connection Between teaching and assessment
- 3 12. Considerations for a Syllabus
- 4 13. Constructivism theory
- 5 14. Diagnose and Assessment
- 3 15. do not write their own syllabus
- 1 16. Experience outside Ecuador
- 5 17. Feedback
- 1 18. Feelings -teaching experience
- 5 19. Final grade represent
- 5 20. Formative Assessment
- 3 21. governmental policies
- 3 22. Have not heard about any policies
- 4 23. I consider myself as a facilit..
- 5 24. International examination
- 5 25. It represents the achievement ..
- 1 26. lack of experience
- 4 27. Learning Tasks
- 4 28. Learning Theories
- 2 29. Limitations ????
- 5 30. Meaningful Assessment
- 1 31. Need more preparation in-service-university
- 1 2 32. Negative Experience
- 5 33. no additional assessments
- 1 34. No experience abroad
- 3 35. No experience doing syllabus
- 1 36. No experience no experience outside Ecuador
- 3 37. No Syllabus
- 2 38. Not well Prepare in English skills
- 2 39. Perception on thier education ★ ②
- 3 40. Planning -syllabus ★ ③
- 1 41. Positive experience
- 5 42. Purpose of assessment
- 3 43. Reference - CERF
- 5 44. Role of assessment
- 4 45. Role of the teacher

Teaching Experience ①

Pre-service ②
 Percepção da Aprendizagem

Planning-syllabus ③

Teachers' Methodology ④

Assessment Practices ⑤

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- 1 46. Shared teaching experience
- 5 47. Standardized test
- 4 48. Students needs - teachers perceptions
- 3 49. syllabus based on CEFR and Book
- 50. Teach Foreign Language not Second
- 4 51. Teacher as facilitator
- 4 52. Teacher as guide
- 4 53. Teacher Methodology * (4)
- 4 54. Teachers goals
- 5 55. Teachers perception of assessment
- 4 56. Teachers perceptions
- 57. Teachers perceptions of lack of time
- 1 58. teachign experience hard
- 1 59. Teaching age
- 5 60. Teaching approaches (5)
- 1 61. Teaching Experience * (1)
- 4 62. Teaching practices
- X 63. Use of Calendar to plan

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Appendix G

Class Activities

workshops				1					1
worksheets/photocopies/ / handouts/lists	1	1	1	1			1		5
own material				1					1
Reading/ literature books/CEF books/Short stories	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7
Grammar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
online resources/WhatsApp, facebook	1	1	1			1			4
pair and group work				1					1
Power Point Presentations/ Slides	1			1					2
Videos	1			1					2
Posters	1			1					2
vocabulary	1	1	1			1			4
Writing	1			1					2
Flashcards				1					1
charts	1			1					2
movies				1					1
music				1					1
Platforms	1			1					2
dictionaries				1					1
listening	1	1	1			1			4
CEF exams				1					1
speaking/ pronunciation/conversation	1	1				1			3
realia				1					1

Appendix H

Results of Thematic Content Analysis

Overarching Theme	Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes/Descriptor
EFL teachers understanding of the process of teaching and assessment	Grammar and vocabulary as the main focus in teaching	Reinforce Grammar	Reinforce the grammar points
			Review the grammatical structures
			Grammar activities in class
			Clarify grammar and vocabulary in class
			Grammar books as a priority
		Instructional material to teach grammar	Extra grammar activities in class and as homework
			Handouts containing extra grammar exercises
			Videos to revise the grammar
			Web sites with grammar exercises.
			Increase their vocabulary
		Revision of Vocabulary	Videos to revise vocabulary
			Doesn't always represent what students know
			Does not reflect the level of communication achievement
			The final grade is just a number.
			Lucky break or the result of cheating
	Little importance to assessment	Scores Perception	A minimum grade that allows students to take the coming level
			Chance to improve
			Assessment was a weak point in the curriculum
			Not familiar with Dynamic Assessment
			Teachers are not aware of the different types of assessments
		Weak Knowledge of assessment	No assessment in classes
			No feedback after assessment
			Teacher do not have a syllabus
			Teachers do not develop de syllabus
			Syllabus is given in the textbook
	Contradictory views of syllabus	Knowledge of existing Syllabus	Syllabus is the key to develop the course
			Syllabus should be developed for students
			Syllabus should be based on the CEFR
			Part of governmental policies
			Teacher as facilitator
Syllabus components		Teacher as a motivator	
		Teacher fosters self-construction of knowledge	
		Teacher as provider of knowledge and resources	
		Teacher as provider good environment	
		Teachers' role in the process of learning	

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Overarching Theme	Theme	Sub-Themes	Indicators
Teachers understanding of the concept of Dynamic Assessment	Knowing students	Teachers' familiarity with their students	Identification of students ZPDs
			Identification of weak and strong students
			Identification of students' mental development
		Understanding of students	Student as a person with different skills
			Student with their own potential
			Students' intellectual capacity
	Classroom Management	Teacher's role	Students' language background
			Teacher constant monitors
			Teacher uses different strategies
			Teacher as a motivator
		Class Development	Teacher as a model
			Teachers promotes interaction
			Students center approach
			Realistic planning
Class Development	Mediation is the key		
	Students work together and learn		
	Students support from peers and teacher		

Overarching Theme	Theme	Sub-theme	Code/Descriptor
Effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment in EFL Teachers Teaching Practices	Purposive Assessment	Integration	DA combines instruction and assessment
			DA is not isolated
			DA is continuous
		Student Center	DA provides constant feedback
			DA provides constant monitoring
	Students Active Participation	Cooperation	DA provides clear instructions and goals
			GDA provides better learning
			GDA improves productive skills
		Confidence	GDA promotes interaction
			GDA promotes honesty
	GDA enhances trust between peers		

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Overarching theme	Themes	Sub-Themes	Descriptor		
Strategies that can help teachers understand the concepts of dynamic assessment	Focused dialogues as conceptual mediator	Self-assistance and peer -assistance through focus dialogues	Increase teachers' confidence		
			Arguments to support ideas		
			Mutual feedback		
			Cooperation		
			Changing points of view		
			Interaction		
	Written reflections to internalized concepts	Internalization of concepts	Improve critical thinking		
			Reflections of practices		
			Self-reflection		
			Repetition of strategies		
			Teachers' motivation		
			Teachers' willing to learn		
			Teachers' positive attitude		
			Teacher positive attitudes and self improvement	Teachers' attitudes for learning about DA	Professional development
					Improvement of teaching practices
High confidence and empowerment					
Teacher positive attitudes and self improvement	Self-improvement				

Appendix I

Approval from the UNM OIRB



DATE: January 16, 2018

REFERENCE #: 24817

PROJECT ID & TITLE: [1108730-1] EFL Tenured Teachers' Understandings of the Role of Assessment in Second Language Learning

PI OF RECORD: Rebecca Blum-Martinez, Ph.D.

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

BOARD DECISION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 16, 2018

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exempt category # 1, 2, 7

- DOCUMENTS:
- Advertisement - Mail Script (UPDATED: 12/15/2017)
 - Application Form - Project Information (UPDATED: 12/18/2017)
 - Consent Form - Consent form (UPDATED: 12/15/2017)
 - Consent Form - Consent Focused Dialogues (UPDATED: 12/14/2017)
 - CV/Resume - CV Blum-Martinez (UPDATED: 12/15/2017)
 - Data Collection - Project Instruments-Survey.doc (UPDATED: 01/15/2018)
 - Other - Project Instruments-DialoguesGuide.doc (UPDATED: 01/16/2018)
 - Other - Project_Team Form.doc (UPDATED: 01/15/2018)
 - Other - LOS Institute Academico De Idiomas (UPDATED: 12/15/2017)
 - Other - Scientific Review (UPDATED: 12/14/2017)
 - Protocol - Protocol (UPDATED: 12/15/2017)
 - Training/Certification - CITI Blum-Martinez (UPDATED: 01/4/2018)
 - Training/Certification - CITI Almeida (UPDATED: 12/14/2017)

Thank you for your New Project submission. The UNM IRB has determined that this project is EXEMPT from IRB oversight according to federal regulations. Because it has been granted exemption, this research project is not subject to continuing review. It is the responsibility of the researcher(s) to conduct this project in an ethical manner.

If Informed Consent is being obtained, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this project. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project for IRB review and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

The Office of the IRB can be contacted through: mail at MSC02 1665, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; phone at 505.277.2644; email at irbmaincampus@unm.edu; or in-person at 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. You can also visit the OIRB website at irb.unm.edu.

Appendix J

Inform Consent



Teachers Understanding of the Role of Assessment in Second Language Learning

Consent to Participate in Research

Purpose of the study: You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Rebecca Blum-Martinez, the Principal Investigator, and Evelyn Almeida (a Ph.D. candidate), from the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies Department. The purpose of this study is to analyze EFL tenured teachers' understandings of the role of assessment in their classes at Instituto Académico de Idiomas at Universidad Central del Ecuador and to help teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment /DA and teaching/learning through focused, collegial dialogues. You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a tenured English teacher Instituto Académico de Idiomas at Universidad Central del Ecuador.

This form will explain what to expect when joining the research, as well as the possible risks and benefits of participation. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study researchers.

What you will do in the study: In the first stage of the study you will complete a survey consisting of questions related to assessment, teaching, and learning English as a Second Language. In the second stage the researcher will enter one of your classes to observe the role of assessment in your classes. Participation in this study will take a total of 2 hours over a period of one time.

Risks: Although this study has no greater than minimal risk for the participants the researcher will employ various safeguards to protect the teachers' confidentiality and prevent them from any possible harm. The investigator will use an informed consent, with this written consent the teachers voluntarily accept being participants for this study.

Benefits: There is not a direct benefit for the participants.

Confidentiality of your information: In order to protect the participant confidentiality, the researcher will use pseudonyms. The interviews will take place in the participants' private offices or private rooms at Instituto Académico de Idiomas or another place inside the university. Furthermore, the researcher will be the only one who will have access to the information provided by the participants, which will be handled electronically.

Payment: you will not be paid for participating in this study.

Right to withdraw from the study: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Rebecca Blum-Martinez, Hokona Hall 248, University of New Mexico, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. (505) 277-4972. rebeccab@unm.edu Or you can contact the student researcher Evelyn Almeida 0992094468 evalmeida@uce.edu.ec in Ecuador.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team to obtain information or offer input or if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: <http://irb.unm.edu/>

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Adult Participant Signature of Adult Participant Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Research Team Member Signature of Research Team Member Date

Appendix K

Inform Consent



Teachers Understanding of the Role of Assessment in Second Language Learning

Consent to Participate in Research (Focused Dialogue & Class Observation)

Purpose of the study: You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Rebecca Blum-Martinez, the Principal Investigator, and Evelyn Almeida (a Ph.D. candidate), from the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies Department. The purpose of this study is to analyze EFL tenured teachers' understandings of the role of assessment in their classes at El Centro de Idiomas at Universidad Central del Ecuador and to help teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between assessment /DA and teaching/learning through focused, collegial dialogues. You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a tenured English teacher at the Centro de Idiomas at Universidad Central del Ecuador.

This form will explain what to expect when joining the research, as well as the possible risks and benefits of participation. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study researchers.

What you will do in the study: You will participate in focused dialogues regarding assessment/DA in SLL. Additionally, the researcher will schedule follow-up observations of each teacher's class for the class session in which they will implement the assessment. Since teachers regularly teach two-hour classes, 4 observations will be made of the first hour of class, and 4 observations will be made of the second hour of class. Participation in this study will take a total of 8 hours over a period of 8 times for the class observations and 8 hours over a period of 8 times for the focused dialogues.

Risks: Although this study has no greater than minimal risk for the participants the researcher will employ various safeguards to protect the teachers' confidentiality and prevent them from any possible harm. The investigator will use an informed consent, with this written consent the teachers voluntarily accept being participants for this study.

Benefits: There is not a direct benefit for the participants.

Confidentiality of your information: In order to protect the participant confidentiality, the researcher will use pseudonyms. The focus dialogues (3 teachers) will take place outside the Centro de Idiomas at the Centro de Información Integral (Biblioteca General). The class observations will be done in the classrooms at the Centro de Idiomas. Furthermore, the researcher will be the only one who will have access to the information provided by the participants, which will be handled electronically.

Payment: you will not be paid for participating in this study.

Right to withdraw from the study: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Rebecca Blum-Martinez, Hokona Hall 248, University of New Mexico, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. (505) 277-4972. rebeccab@unm.edu

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team to obtain information or offer input or if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: <http://irb.unm.edu/>

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Adult Participant Signature of Adult Participant Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Research Team Member Signature of Research Team Member Date

REFERENCES

- Achinstein, B., & Villar, A. (2002). "Politics of the mentoring process for novices: Negotiating professional relationships and new teacher learning." , .. *Annual conference of the American Educational Research Association*. New Orleans, LA.
- Afshar, H. S., Rahimi, A., Ghonchehpour, A., & Saedpanah, E. (2015). The Impact of Teaching Experience on Iranian EFL Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and their Perception of English Teacher Distinctive Characteristics. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 714-719.
- Agar, M. (2006). Culture: Can you take it anywhere? *Invited lecture presented at the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education*. 5, pp. 1-16. Santa Barbara: University of California at Santa Barbara.
- Aksu Atac, B. (2012). Foreign language teachers' attitude toward authentic assessment in language teaching. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 8(2), 7-19.
- Al-Basheer, A., Ashraah, M., & Alsmadi, R. (2015). Arabic Language teachers and Islamic Education teachers' awareness of authentic assessment in Jordan. *Teacher Development*, 19(4), 483-495.
- Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *The modern language journal*, 78(4), 465-483.
- Almeida, E., Castillo, D., & Rosero, A. (2021). "Prácticas de evaluación de algunos centros de idiomas en universidades públicas del Ecuador y resultados de competencia estudiantil. *Literatura y lingüística*, 44, 241-262.
- Antón, M. (2009). Dynamic assessment of advanced second language learners. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(3), 576-598.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Asamblea Constituyente, Gobierno del Ecuador. (2010). Ley orgánica de educación superior.

Quito, Ecuador: Registro Oficial.

Asamblea, C. (2008). Constitución de la República del Ecuador.

Azam, A. (2014). Teaching grammar and vocabulary. *ournal of Advances in Linguistics*, 2(1), 61-79.

Babakr, Z., & Mohamedamin, P. K. (2019). Piaget's cognitive developmental theory: Critical review. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 2(3), 517-524. doi:10.31014/aior.1993.02.03.84

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: principles, policy & practice*, 5(1), 7-74.

Blanchard, J. (2009). *Teaching, Learning And Assessment*. Glasgow: McGraw-Hill Education.

Blass, L., & Gordon, D. (2010). *Writers at Work: From Sentence to Paragraph Student's Book*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2016). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end* (3rd ed.). California: SAGE Plublicaitons, Inc.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2016). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Borg, S. (2006). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language teaching research*, 10(1), 3-31.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Brown, G. T., & Hirschfeld, G. H. (2008). Students' conceptions of assessment: Links to outcomes. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 15(1), 3-17.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- Brown, J. D., & Hudson, T. (1998). The alternatives in language assessment. *TESOL quarterly*, 32(4), 653-675.
- Budoff, M., & Friedman, M. (1964). Learning potential as an assessment approach to the adolescent mentally retarded. *Journal of consulting psychology*, 28(5), 434.
- Bullock, D. (2011). Learner Self-Assessment: An Investigation into Teachers' Beliefs. *ELT Journal*, 65(2), 114-125.
- Burnard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K. F., Treasure, E. T., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Analysing and presenting qualitative data. *British dental journal*, 204(8), 429-432.
- CACES. (n.d.). Modelo de evaluación institucional para los institutos superiores técnicos y tecnológicos en proceso de acreditación. Quito, Ecuador: Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior.
- CES, C. d. (2013). Reglamento de régimen académico. Quito, Ecuador. Retrieved from [http://www.ces.gob.ec/doc/regimen_academico/proyecto% 20de% 20reglamento% 20de% 20rgimen% 20acadmico% 20para% 20segundo% 20debate. pdf](http://www.ces.gob.ec/doc/regimen_academico/proyecto%20de%20reglamento%20de%20rgimen%20acadmico%20para%20segundo%20debate.pdf)
- Chernow, B., Carlson, R. W., & Rackow, E. C. (1992). Giants of critical care: A tribute to Max Harry Weil, MD, PhD. *Critical Care Medicine*, 20(7), 915-916.
- Chomsky, N. (1959). On certain formal properties of grammars. *Information and control*, 2(2), 137-167.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin, and use*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Chomsky, N. (1995). Language and nature. *Mind*, 104.413, 1-61.
- Cohen, A. D., & Fass, L. (2001). *Oral Language Instruction: Teacher and Learner Beliefs and the Reality in EFL Classes at a Colombian University*. Maryland: ERIC.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Los Angeles: Sage publications.

Cropley, A. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: A practice-oriented introduction for students of psychology and education*. Riga, Latvia: Zinātne.

Cummins, J. (2014). Bilingualism Language Proficiency, and Metalinguistic Development. *Childhood bilingualism. Psychology Press*, 71-88.

East, M. (2014). Coming to terms with innovative high-stakes assessment practice: Teachers' viewpoints on assessment reform. *Language Testing*, 32(1), 101-120.

Elbaz, F. (1983). *Teacher thinking: a study of practical knowledge*. London: Croom Helm.

Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2013). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. London: Routledge.

ETS, E. T. (2020). *Validity Evidence Supporting the Interpretation and Use of TOEFL iBT*. Research INSIGHT.

Feuerstein, R., Hoffman, M. B., Rand, Y., Jensen, M. R., Tzuriel, D., & David, H. (1985). Learning to learn: Mediated learning experiences and instrumental enrichment. *Special Services in the Schools*, 49-82.

Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y., & Rynders, J. E. (1988). *Mediated learning experience." Don't accept me as I am*. Boston, MS: Springer.

Fillmore, L. W., & Snow, C. E. (2018). What Teachers Need To Know about Language. In C. T. Adger, C. E. Snow, & D. Christian, *Multilingual Matters* (Vol. 2, pp. 7-61). McHenry: ERIC Center for Applied Linguistics.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

First, E. (2019). *Índice del Dominio de Inglés de EF para Escuelas*. Retrieved from EF Ecuador.

Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development.

Educational Psychologist, 35(1), 39-50.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Gallimore, R., & Tharp, R. (1990). Teaching mind in society: Teaching, schooling, and literate

discourse. *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology, 175-205*.

Gao, Y. (2014). Language teacher beliefs and practices: A historical review. *Journal of English*

as an International Language, 9(2), 40-56.

Gavriel, J. (2013). Assessment for learning: A wider (classroom-researched) perspective is important for formative assessment and self-directed learning in general practice.

Education for Primary Care, 24(2), 93-96.

Gibbons, P. (2003). Mediating language learning: Teacher interactions with ESL students in a content-based classroom. *TESOL quarterly, 37*(2), 247-273.

Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning. Teaching English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Glesne, C. (2015). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford:

Longman.

Gregg, K. R. (1984). Krashen's monitor and Occam's razor. *Applied linguistics, 5*(2), 79-100.

Gu, X. (2016). Assessment of intercultural communicative competence in FL education: A

survey on EFL teachers' perception and practice in China. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 16*(2), 254-273.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Güthke, J., & Beckmann, J. F. (2000). *The learning test concept and its applications in practice.*"

Dynamic Assessment: prevailing models and applications. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Guthke, J., Heinrich, A., & Caruso, M. (1986). The diagnostic program of "syntactical rule and vocabulary acquisition"—A contribution to the psychodiagnosis of foreign language learning ability. *Human memory and cognitive capabilities. Mechanisms and performances*, 903-911.

Harris, M., & McCann, P. (1994). *Assessment: Handbooks for the English classroom.* Oxford: Heinemann Publishers.

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2014). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty.* Los Angeles CA: Sage publications.

Hobrook, M., & John-Steiner, V. (2002). The Gift of Confidence: A Vygotskian View of Emotions. In G. Wells, & G. E. Claxton, *Learning for life in the 21st century: Sociocultural perspectives on the future of education* (pp. 46-58). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Hoy, A. W., & Spero, R. B. (2005). Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and teacher education*, 21(4), 343-356.

Ibbotson, P., & Tomasello, M. (2016). Language in a new key. *Scientific American*, 315(5), 70-75.

Joffe, H., & Yardley, L. (2004). Content and thematic analysis. In D. F. Marks, & L. Yardley, *Research methods for clinical and health psychology* (pp. 56-68). London: Sage Publications.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Jones, C. A. (2005). *Assessment for learning*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

Jones, M. G., Rua, M. J., & Carter, G. (1998). Science teachers' conceptual growth within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching: The Official Journal of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching*, 35(9), 967-985.

Karpov, Y. V., & Gindis, B. (2000). Dynamic assessment of the level of internalization of elementary school children's problem-solving activity. *Dynamic assessment: Prevailing models and applications* *Dynamic assessment: Prevailing models and applications*, 133-154.

Kielmann, K., Cataldo, F., & Seeley, J. (2012). *Introduction to qualitative research methodology: a training manual*. United Kingdom: Department for International Development.

Kim, K. H., & Zabelina, D. (2015). Cultural bias in assessment: Can creativity assessment help? *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 6(2), 129-148.

Koloi-Keaikitse, S., & Marchant, G. J. (2013). Teacher Characteristics and Beliefs about Classroom Assessment in Botswana. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 6(1), 73-83.

Kozulin, A., & Garb, E. (2002). Dynamic assessment of EFL text comprehension. *School Psychology International*, 23(1), 112-127.

Krashen, S. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Harlow: Longman.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). Bilingual education and second language acquisition theory. *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework*, 51-79.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Krashen, S. D. (1986). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf, *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1-26). Oxford OX: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2004). Dynamic assessment of L2 development: Bringing the past into the future. *Journal of applied linguistics*, 1(1), 49-72.

Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2011). Dynamic assessment in the classroom: Vygotskian praxis for second language development. *Language teaching research*, 15(1), 11-33.

Laughon, P. (1990). The dynamic assessment of intelligence: A review of three approaches. *School psychology review*, 19(4), 459-470.

Lempert-Shepel, E. N. (1995). Teacher Self-Identification in Culture from Vygotsky's Developmental Perspective. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 26(4), 425-442.

Lidz, C. S., & Gindis, B. (2003). Dynamic assessment of the evolving cognitive functions in children. In A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, & V. M. Ageev, *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2017). *How languages are learned, Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford university press.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2021). *How Languages Are Learned* (5th ed.). Oxford university press.

Lira-Gonzales, M. L. (2012). *A Teacher's Formative Assessment Perceptions and Practices in Oral Intermediate English Courses at the Université de Montréal*. Canada: Université de Montréal.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction, and second- language acquisition. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences*, 379(1), 259-278.
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66.
- Mahn, H. (2003). Periods in child development: Vygotsky's perspective. *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context* , 119-137.
- Mahn, H. (2012). Vygotsky's analysis of children's meaning making processes. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1(2), 100-126.
- Mahn, H. (2015). Classroom Discourse and Interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development. In N. Markee, *The Handbook of classroom discourse and interaction* (pp. 250-264). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. doi:10.1002/9781118531242
- Mahn, H. (2017, may 16). Vygotsky Seminar. (E. Almeida, Interviewer)
- Mahn, H., & John-Steiner, V. (2002). The gift of confidence: A Vygotskian view of emotions. *Learning for life in the 21st century: Sociocultural perspectives on the future of education*, 46-58.
- Mahn, H., & John-Steiner, V. (2012). Vygotsky and sociocultural approaches to teaching and learning. In *Handbook of Psychology* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage publications.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Mejía Carpio, A. W. (2016, May). La evaluación del idioma inglés en el Ecuador MS thesis.

Ecuador: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Los Angeles CA: Sage publications,.

Mills, G. E. (2000). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2019). *Book Second Language Learning Theories* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

Mussawy, S. A. (2009). *Assessment practices: Student's and teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment*. Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Norris, J. M. (2006). Assessing advanced foreign language learning and learners. In H. Byrnes, H. Weger-Guntharp, & K. A. Sprang, *Educating for advanced foreign language capacities* (Vol. 90, pp. 167-187). Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press.

Norton, B., & Pavlenko, A. (2004). Gender and English language learners: Challenges and possibilities. *Gender and English language learners*, 1-12.

Nurfaidah, S. (2018). Vygotsky's legacy on teaching and learning writing as social process. *LANGKAWI: Journal of the Association for Arabic and English*, 4(2), 149-156.

Nusche, D. (2008). Assessment of learning outcomes in higher education: A comparative review of selected practices. *OECD Education Working Papers*, 15, 1-44.

Oscarson, M., & Apelgren, B. M. (2011). Mapping language teachers' conceptions of student assessment procedures in relation to grading: A two-stage empirical inquiry. *System*, 39(1), 2-16.

Parkes, J., & Harris, M. B. (2002). The purposes of a syllabus. *College teaching*, 50(2), 55-61.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- Piaget, J. (1936). *Origins of intelligence in the child*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Pitoniak, M., Young, J. W., Martiniello, M., King, T. C., Buteux, A., & Ginsburgh, M. (2009). *Guidelines for the Assessment of English Language Learners*. Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from ETS Office of Professional Standards Compliance's Fairness Series.
- Plakans, L., & Gebril, A. (2015). *Assessment myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Poehner, M. E. (2007). Beyond the test: L2 dynamic assessment and the transcendence of mediated learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(3), 323-340.
- Poehner, M. E. (2008). *Dynamic assessment: A Vygotskian approach to understanding and promoting L2 development* (Vol. 9). Pennsylvania: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Poehner, M. E. (2009). Group dynamic assessment: Mediation for the L2 classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(3), 471-491.
- Poehner, M. E. (2011). Validity and interaction in the ZPD: Interpreting learner development through L2 dynamic assessment. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 21(2), 244-263.
- Remesal, A. (2011). Primary and secondary teachers' conceptions of assessment: A qualitative study. *Teaching and teacher education*, 27(2), 472-482.
- Sahinkarakas, S. (2012). The role of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of language assessment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 1787-1792.
- Sawaki, Y., Quinlan, T., & Lee, Y.-W. (2013). Understanding learner strengths and weaknesses: Assessing performance on an integrated writing task. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 10(1), 73-95.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- Schmidt, R. W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied linguistics*, 11(2), 129-158.
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Skinner, B. F. (1957). The experimental analysis of behavior. *American scientist*, 45(4), 343-371.
- Smith, R., & Rebolledo, P. (2018). *A handbook for exploratory action research*. British Council.
- Solano-Flores, G., & Trumbull, E. (2003). Examining language in context: The need for new research and practice paradigms in the testing of English-language learners. *Educational Researcher*, 32(2), 3-13.
- Starkey, H., & Osler, A. (2001). Language learning and antiracism: Some pedagogical challenges. *The Curriculum Journal*, 12(3), 313-345.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. *Input in second language acquisition*, 15, 165-179.
- Swift, S. S. (2017). An ELT Glossary. Retrieved from <http://eltnotebook.blogspot.com/2012/01/an-elt-glossary-beginner-true-beginner.html>
- Tabatabaei, S., & Bakhtiarvand, M. (2014). Application of Dynamic Assessment in Second and Foreign Language Teaching. *International Journal for Teachers of English*, 4(3), 1-14.
- Thorndike, E. L. (1932). *The fundamentals of learning*. Teachers College Bureau of Publications.
- Tokatlı, A. M., & Keşli, Y. (2009). Syllabus: how much does it contribute to the effective communication with the students? *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1491-1494.
- UCE, U. C. (2018). Estatuto de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, Reglamento Instituto Académico de Idiomas. Quito, Ecuador.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

Vaismoradi, M., & Snelgrove, S. (2019). Theme in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3).

Villamil, O. S. (2000). Exploring ESL teachers' roles through metaphor analysis. *TESOL quarterly*, 34(2), 341-351.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1987). *The Collected Works of LS Vygotsky: Problems of General Psychology, Including the Volume Thinking and Speech*. (R. W. Rieber, & A. S. Carton, Eds.) Springer US.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Problems of general psychology*. In *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1994). The socialist alteration of man [Original work published 1930]. In R. Van der Veer, & J. Valsiner, *The Vygotsky reader* (pp. 175-184). Nueva Jersey: WileyBlackwell.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *The history of the development of higher mental functions*. In *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*. (Vol. 4). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1998). The problem of age. In R. W. Rieber, *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky*. Vol. 5. *Child Psychology*. New York: Plenum.

Vygotsky, L. S. (2004). The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology: a methodological investigation. In R. W. Rieber, & D. Robinson, *In The essential Vygotsky* (pp. 227-344). New York, NY: Kluwer/Plenum.

EFL TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SLL

- Walqui, A. (2007). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. In O. García, & C. Baker, *Bilingual Education: An Introductory Reader* (Vol. 61, pp. 202-218). Multilingual matters.
- Warford, M. K. (2011). The zone of proximal teacher development. *Teaching and teacher education, 27*(2), 252-258.
- Watson, J. B. (1930). *Behaviorism*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative Assessment. Designing Assessments To Inform and Improve Student Performance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Xu, Y., & Liu, Y. (2009). Teacher assessment knowledge and practice: A narrative inquiry of a Chinese college EFL teacher's experience. *Tesol Quarterly, 43*(3), 492-513.