TRANSFORMING CLASSROOM DISCOURSE THROUGH DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT IN COLOMBIA

Marisela Restrepo Ruiz, Liliana Álvarez Ruiz, Ligia Martínez Bula, Mónica Herazo Chamorro, Aura E. Ganem Luna

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study examines the impact of Dynamic Assessment (DA) on teachers' practices in a sixth-grade classroom at Institución Educativa la Normal Superior in Montería, Colombia, focusing on language use, duration, and challenges in group contexts.

Theoretical Framework: The study uses educational psychology principles to analyze Dynamic Assessment, focusing on sociocultural theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), constructivism, and dialogical assessment. It emphasizes collaborative interactions, active engagement, and feedback for student learning. The study aims to examine Dynamic Assessment's effectiveness in promoting student development and learning, based on these theoretical perspectives.

Design Methodology Approach: The study uses a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of Dynamic Assessment (DA) on teachers' practices. It uses a longitudinal design, spanning three stages before, during, and after DA implementation. Data is collected through observations, video recordings, and interviews. The study adheres to ethical guidelines and uses triangulation to enhance validity. While limitations exist, the study aims to contribute to existing literature on assessment and instructional methodologies.

Findings: The study found significant changes in teachers' practices following the implementation of Dynamic Assessment (DA). Teachers used more scaffolding and prompting strategies, adapted their language to students' needs, and fostered a more interactive learning environment. Interaction duration increased significantly, allowing for more in-depth discussions. Teachers reported increased confidence in using DA strategies and emphasized the importance of professional development. However, challenges like managing time constraints and balancing assessment with instructional goals remained.

Research, Practical and Social Implications: The study on Dynamic Assessment (DA) in education has significant practical and social implications. It suggests that DA can enhance teaching practices, improve student learning outcomes, promote equity and inclusion, and provide professional development opportunities. Policymakers should consider integrating DA principles into curriculum development and teacher training programs. Further research is needed.
needed to explore DA's long-term effects and its potential synergies with other pedagogical approaches. Collaboration between educators, researchers, and community stakeholders can foster more effective learning environments.

**Originality/Value:** The study explores the impact of Dynamic Assessment (DA) on teachers' practices in a Colombian sixth-grade classroom. It uses a mixed-methods approach, examining changes in discourse, interaction patterns, and instructional strategies before and after DA implementation. The research identifies challenges and offers practical implications for educators, emphasizing scaffolding techniques and personalized feedback. It contributes to educational theory and practice by expanding understanding of DA's influence on teaching practices.

**Keywords:** dynamic assessment, instruction, interaction, teachers’ discourse.

**Received:** 11/27/2023
**Accepted:** 02/19/2024
**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v12i2.1582

**TRANSFORMANDO O DISCURSO EM SALA DE AULA ATRAVÉS DA AVALIAÇÃO DINÂMICA NA COLÔMBIA**

**RESUMO**

**Finalidade:** O estudo examina o impacto da Avaliação Dinâmica (DA) sobre as práticas dos professores em uma sala de aula do sexto ano na Institución Educativa la Normal Superior em Montería, Colômbia, com foco no uso da língua, duração e desafios em contextos de grupo.

**Estrutura Teórica:** O estudo utiliza princípios de psicologia educacional para analisar a Avaliação Dinâmica, com foco na teoria sociocultural, Zona de Desenvolvimento Proximal (ZPD), construtivismo e avaliação dialógica. Enfatiza as interações colaborativas, o envolvimento ativo e o feedback para a aprendizagem do aluno. O estudo tem como objetivo examinar a eficácia da Avaliação Dinâmica na promoção do desenvolvimento e aprendizagem do aluno, com base nessas perspetivas teóricas.

**Abordagem metodológica de design:** O estudo utiliza uma abordagem de métodos mistos para investigar o impacto da Avaliação Dinâmica (DA) nas práticas dos professores. Ele usa um design longitudinal, abrangendo três estágios antes, durante e após a implementação da DA. Os dados são coletados através de observações, gravações de vídeo e entrevistas. O estudo adere a orientações éticas e utiliza a triangulação para aumentar a validade. Embora existam limitações, o estudo tem como objetivo contribuir com a literatura existente sobre metodologias de avaliação e instrução.

**Conclusões:** O estudo encontrou mudanças significativas nas práticas dos professores após a implementação da Avaliação Dinâmica (DA). Os professores utilizaram mais andaimes e estratégias de incitação, adaptaram a sua língua às necessidades dos alunos e promoveram um ambiente de aprendizagem mais interativo. A duração da interação aumentou significativamente, permitindo discussões mais aprofundadas. Os professores relataram maior confiança no uso de estratégias de DA e enfatizaram a importância do desenvolvimento profissional. No entanto, desafios como gerenciar restrições de tempo e equilibrar a avaliação com metas instrucionais permaneceram.

**Pesquisa, Implicações Práticas e Sociais:** O estudo sobre Avaliação Dinâmica (DA) na educação tem implicações práticas e sociais significativas. Sugere que a DA pode melhorar as práticas de ensino, melhorar os resultados de aprendizagem dos estudantes, promover a equidade e a inclusão e proporcionar oportunidades de desenvolvimento profissional. Os legisladores devem considerar a integração dos princípios da DA no desenvolvimento curricular e nos programas de formação de professores. É necessária mais investigação para explorar os efeitos a longo prazo.
da DA e as suas potenciais sinergias com outras abordagens pedagógicas. A colaboração entre educadores, pesquisadores e partes interessadas da comunidade pode promover ambientes de aprendizagem mais eficazes.

**Originalidade/Valor:** O estudo explora o impacto da Avaliação Dinâmica (DA) nas práticas dos professores em uma sala de aula do sexto ano da Colômbia. Ele usa uma abordagem de métodos mistos, examinando mudanças no discurso, padrões de interação e estratégias instrucionais antes e depois da implementação da DA. A pesquisa identifica desafios e oferece implicações práticas para os educadores, enfatizando técnicas de andaimes e feedback personalizado. Contribui para a teoria e prática educacional, expandindo a compreensão da influência da DA nas práticas de ensino.

**Palavras-chave:** avaliação dinâmica, instrução, interação, discurso do professor.

---

**TRANSFORMANDO EL DISCURSO DE AULA A TRAVÉS DE LA EVALUACIÓN DINÁMICA EN COLOMBIA**

**RESUMEN**

**Finalidad:** El estudio examina el impacto de la Evaluación Dinámica (AD) en las prácticas docentes en un aula de sexto grado de la Institución Educativa la Normal Superior de Montería, Colombia, centrándose en el uso del lenguaje, la duración y los desafíos en contextos grupales.

**Marco Teórico:** El estudio utiliza principios de la psicología educativa para analizar la Evaluación Dinámica, centrándose en la teoría sociocultural, la Zona de Desarrollo Proximal (ZPD), el constructivismo y la evaluación dialógica. Hace hincapié en las interacciones colaborativas, el compromiso activo y la retroalimentación para el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. El estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la efectividad de la Evaluación Dinámica en la promoción del desarrollo y aprendizaje de los estudiantes, con base en estas perspectivas teóricas.

**Enfoque metodológico de diseño:** El estudio utiliza un enfoque de métodos mixtos para investigar el impacto de la Evaluación Dinámica (DA) en las prácticas docentes. Utiliza un diseño longitudinal, que abarca tres etapas antes, durante y después de la implementación de DA. Los datos se recogen a través de observaciones, grabaciones de video y entrevistas. El estudio se adhiere a las directrices éticas y utiliza la triangulación para mejorar la validez. Si bien existen limitaciones, el estudio pretende contribuir a la literatura existente sobre metodologías de evaluación e instrucción.

**Hallazgos:** El estudio encontró cambios significativos en las prácticas docentes luego de la implementación de la Evaluación Dinâmica (DA). Los maestros utilizaron más andaimes y estrategias de promoción, adaptaron su idioma a las necesidades de los estudiantes y fomentaron un entorno de aprendizaje más interactivo. La duración de la interacción aumentó significativamente, lo que permitió discusiones más profundas. Los docentes informaron de una mayor confianza en el uso de las estrategias de desarrollo profesional y destacaron la importancia del desarrollo profesional. Sin embargo, seguían existiendo problemas como la gestión de las limitaciones de tiempo y el equilibrio entre la evaluación y los objetivos de instrucción.

**Investigación, implicaciones prácticas y sociales:** El estudio sobre la evaluación dinámica (DA) en educación tiene implicaciones prácticas y sociales significativas. Sugiere que el AD puede mejorar las prácticas de enseñanza, mejorar los resultados de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, promover la equidad y la inclusión, y proporcionar oportunidades de desarrollo profesional. Los responsables de las políticas deberían considerar la integración de los principios del ADN en el desarrollo curricular y en los programas de formación docente. Se necesitan más investigaciones para explorar los efectos a largo plazo del ADN y sus posibles sinergias con otros enfoques pedagógicos. La colaboración entre educadores, investigadores e interesados de la comunidad puede fomentar ambientes de aprendizaje más efectivos.
1 INTRODUCTION

The Assessment is an important part of teaching-learning process since it allows teachers to have a record of students’ progress. Harlen (2007) said that “…Assessment refers to the process of collecting evidence and making judgments related to outcomes, such as students’ achievements of particular goals of learning or teachers’ and others’ understandings…”(p.12). Assessment is also useful for teachers at the time of reflecting about the way in which their lessons are taking place. According to the progress of students teachers can determine whether their teaching methods are working or not, and based on that modifying their methodologies in order to make students learn more successfully. Feedback is one of the components of assessment, and it can influence widely on students’ learning process. The good or bad students’ development will depend on the way teachers assess them.

The educational assessment has evolved throughout the time and as a result of that evolution; there are two well-known types of assessment which are summative and formative. The former according to Poehner and Lantolf (2005) “evaluates performance at the end or at the beginning of a unit of study or a course or a program and it is often used for purposes of accountability, admission decisions, promotion and selection” (p. 250). In other words; summative assessment takes place when the learning process has been completed; furthermore it measures the level of success or proficiency that the learner obtained at the end of the instructional process.

Whereas formative assessment; according to Sadler, D. (1989) “is concerned with how judgments about the quality of students responses can be used to shape and improve the students’ competences by short- circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning” (p. 120). This quote means that formative assessment aims to identify the areas that may need improvement through teacher’s intervention. It also states that
F.A measures students’ progress but it can also assess the teachers’ progress as an instructor; this type of assessment is typically not graded.

The already mentioned types of assessment have advantages and disadvantages, and teachers choose one or the other depending on their lesson purposes. As well as assessment, education evolves every day and a result of this evolution is the current approach known as dynamic assessment (D.A). DA has its origins in the sociocultural learning theory of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, and more specifically on this concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). D.A proposes the union of instruction and assessment creating a new and unique approach whose purpose is helping students to succeed in performing new and more complex tasks for them, through the use of mediation that is continuously adjusted to match students’ ZPD.

Some investigations have been done on the field of education about DA. For instance, Anton (2009) focused on the potential of Dynamic Assessment for second language learning contexts, Davin (2013) aimed to explore the way in which a primary school teacher utilized the frameworks of dynamic assessment (DA) and the instructional conversation (IC) in a Spanish second language classroom. Again in 2014, Davin conducted the design and implementation of a Dynamic Assessment reading comprehension task for classroom use. In the same year DaSilva (2014) used a D.A approach to the development of academic writing for 7 year old immigrant English language learners. Tzuriel and Shamir (2002) also used the concept of DA to explore the effects of the computer assisted dynamic assessment on cognitive performance as compared to dynamic assessment with an examiner. What these five studies suggest is that even though dynamic assessment is a new approach that has not been widely applied, its basis and arguments are solid and the few research about it demonstrate that it is an approach that can be useful for second language education.

Despite the considerable amount of researches on Dynamic assessment in classrooms, in the educational field we still know little about whether and how DA can transform classroom discourse when teachers have to interact with the whole group of students in a classroom. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of DA to transform teachers’ discourse emphasizing more specifically on the changes and challenges that may emerge from DA implementation. (Nordin, M. N., 2023)

As we will explain in more detail later, our analysis revealed that Margarita modified the way to correct her students’ mistakes increasing the amount of discourse
moves and changing the way to use reformulation request. In addition to changes in her discourse, Margarita faced four main challenges related to (1) engaging the whole class while mediating one student, which she overcame successfully through the use of group work; (2) calibrating mediation to learners’ differing needs, in which we found a constraint since she used calibrated mediation sometimes, but some other she did not; (3) tracking individual students’ learning process, which we believe she did not overcome since there was no evidence of formal tracking as is required by DA, and (4) making sure that the progress made by students transcended. (Qingyan, G., 2023)

The current paper is divided into six chapters. The first one concerns the theoretical framework on which the study is based. Here we will explain key concepts of this research such as: Dynamic Assessment, mediation, Zone of Proximal Development, tracking, transcendence, interventionist and interactionist DA. The second chapter is related to the literature review. Here you will find some of the most known studies related to dynamic assessment. The third chapter refers to the methodology of the study, here it is explained in detail what is the type of study used for the current research, the questions of the study and their purpose, the context and participants, the data collection procedures, and the way in which the data was analyzed. The fourth chapter has to do with the findings in which we detail the more relevant results of our research. In the fifth chapter, findings are interpreted and related to previous researches. In the last chapter, we present the conclusions we could picked out from our research

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to describe the most relevant concepts concerning dynamic assessment and a little view of the literature about this topic. The first section of this chapter defines key concepts of the research such as dynamic assessment, mediation, zone of proximal development (ZPD), transcendence, tracking and an example of DA is also provided. The second section is concerned with the literature review as such.

Regarding the conceptual framework, Dynamic Assessment (DA) is the dialectical unity of instruction and assessment (Poehner and Lantolf, 2010, p.312). That is to say the use of interactionist tools for helping the student to reach a meaningful development of his/her abilities. D.A argues that for having a complete picture of a person´s capability, it is necessary to have information about the person´s performance with assistance from another person. Dynamic assessment seeks to teach while assessing,
it involves the teacher and the student in a unified process to reach meaningful learning. That being said, there are other significant concepts that contribute to the complete understanding of what dynamic assessment is; such as mediation. “Knowledge is constructed through interaction between a person and the environment as humans use symbolic tools to mediate their own environment and the environment of others” (Kozulin, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978; as cited in Davin et al., 2014, p. 3). This quote suggests that mediation is the process through which people connect to the world, since as Vygotsky’s (1978) writings argue our relation to the world is not direct but mediated, since human beings development is always social. It means that every single activity people do needs the intervention of symbolic artifacts to take place. The same process occurs in the learning development in which the language is the tool used to make the learning take place.

Dynamic assessment comes directly from the Zone of Proximal Development concept (ZPD), term used by the first time by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in his sociocultural theory of learning. He defines 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” (Vygotsky 1978: 86, italics in original; as cited in Lantolf and Poehner, 2011, p. 25). In this way a person can have a big or a small Zone of Proximal Development depending on how much mediation requires for performing a task.

The following transcription was taken from a study carried out by Aljaafreh and Lantolf in 1994 focused on the use of English tenses, articles, prepositions, and modal verbs by three adult ESL learners:

In excerpts (1) and (2) taken from two different students, the dyads focus on use of the article ‘the’ with ‘United States’
The example above in excerpt 1 is clearly dynamic assessment; the student is having a difficulty with articles and he did not provide an article but a pronoun (8), the teacher reminded him that he had to use an article and made a pause, since the student did not answer, the teacher gave him examples (9) and continued mediating until the student realized his mistake. Each intervention of the teacher is mediation. In excerpt 2, another student had the same problem but he needed less mediation than the first one; in this way the first student’s ZPD is bigger than the second one’s.

Finally but equal important, there are other two essential concepts we have to define in order to understand completely how DA works; such as: transcendence, which according to Poehner & Lantolf (2013) is “the process of tracking learner development as it unfolds not only with regard to control of tasks included in an assessment but also more complex and difficult tasks that build on those included in the original instrument”.

In other words, transcendence is the possibility of observing whether the knowledge or mediation provided by the teacher was successfully learnt or not.

The other important key concept of DA is tracking. Poehner (2007) says:

“tracking development involves careful attention to changes regarding the types of problems learners encounter, the mediation they require to overcome these problems, their responsiveness to mediation, and their efforts to gain greater” (p. 334). In sum, tracking is the way by which teachers record students’ performance.

2.1 APPRAACHES TO DYANMIC ASSESSMENT

Dynamic assessment is a process that can be applied taking into account two different approaches, which are scripted and non-scripted which differ one of the other depending of some aspects. The former refers to a pre-established set of hints that let students advance step by step in a test, which also looks for quantifying scores that lead to the reach of a pre-specified achievement, the hints are used depending on the performance of students (how big is their ZPD); and the latter refers to a mediation that is not pre-established but is adjusted depending on learner’s responsiveness.

According to Lantolf and Poehner (2011):

“Our interventionist (scripted) approach might use reminders, hints, and leading questions that are weighted differently depending upon their level of explicitness. For example, a reminder such as, “Remember to check your spelling” might be worth 3 points because it is a general form of advice; whereas a hint like, “Think about the rules we learned for words that are spelled with e and i” might be valued at 5 points because it is much more specific”. (p.50)

This quote reflects clearly what scripted D.A is, mediation through the use of a set of clues in order to help students to complete a task, but also to calculate a score for students.

Lantolf and Poehner (2011) also states:

“Proponents of interactionist (non-scripted) DA understand mediation to be emergent that is, an ongoing negotiation between the mediator and the learner, with each participant free to act and react as the situation demands. The precise forms of mediation are not determined before the assessment but instead emerge from dialoguing between the mediator and the learner”.(p.49)

Taking into account the last quote, non-scriptive approach refers to the specific interaction between the teacher and the student, in which mediation depends on the dialoguing, and it is supposed to take place from implicitness to explicitness depending
on learner’s responsiveness. It differs from scripted D.A only for the no pre-establishment of hints.

Non-scripted D.A is divided at the same time into “sandwich” and “cake” approaches. The “sandwich” approach relies basically on a pretest-intervention/training-posttest, which is helpful at the time of classifying students by scores, since after the application of the post-test, the trainer can determine the development of students by comparing the pre-test and the post-test. The “cake” format refers to giving immediate feedback after each item in the performance; it makes easier for students to realize their mistakes immediately and correct it.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have reported the use of dynamic assessment in second language education making emphasis in the all four main skills. For example, in a study Antón (2009) focused on the potential of Dynamic Assessment for second language learning contexts. The participants were Third-grade Spanish language majors who took a five-part diagnostic test in which two sections, writing and speaking, were conducted taking into account dynamic assessment procedures. The final results showed that Dynamic Assessment allows for a deeper and richer description of learners ‘actual and emergent abilities, which enables programs to devise individualized instructional plans attuned to learners’ needs.

Another similar study related to speaking skill is Davin’s (2013), which was focused on exploring the way in which a primary school teacher utilized the frameworks of dynamic assessment (DA) and the instructional conversation (IC) in a Spanish second language classroom. The study involved students from a primary school. The teacher used prompts and questions in cumulative DA with students since she considered it was better for her. For analyzing the data, transcriptions of the lessons were used, which at the end showed that eleven interactions took place without mediation, while thirteen of them required pre-scripted prompts for mediation by the teacher using cumulative DA, and only five interactions were developed following IC framework. The final results as well as Antón’s (2009) showed that Dynamic Assessment allows for a deeper and richer description of learners ‘actual and emergent abilities, which enables programs to devise individualized instructional plans attuned to learners’ needs. It can be also said that these
two frameworks can complement each other when used in the same classroom developing in this way a better learning process.

On the other hand, Dynamic assessment has been used not only in researches concerning speaking abilities, but at writing and reading as well. For instance, Davin (2014) examined the design and implementation of a Dynamic Assessment reading comprehension task for classroom use. It took place with second language learners where the teacher used pre-scripted mediation prompts which were assigned numerical values to give 4 scores to each student. This paper concluded that this task should be used as a learning tool in L2 classrooms and also gave recommendations for scoring procedures.

Related to reading skill as well, Kozulin and Garb (2002) conducted a research that aimed to explore the practicability of Dynamic Assessment implementation in curriculum-based areas as English. It was applied a pre-test, a mediating learning phase and a post-test to a group of 23 academically at risk students who had failed to pass the high school English exam. The results of the study demonstrated that in fact DA permits to establish the students’ learning potential and this information can help teachers to design specific instructional strategies that fit all students’ special learning needs.

In a similar study, DaSilva (2014) investigated a DA approach to the development of academic writing for 7 year old immigrant English language learners. Iterative cycles of DA were applied to improve writing abilities in relationship with the development of metalinguistic awareness in native and target languages, to two third-grade ELLs with the assistance of their teacher. The findings of this research said that, DA is useful for teachers at the time of recognizing and accessing the ELLs zone of proximal development and also to increase metalinguistic awareness of students.

Studies on DA in relation to listening skill have been also carried out, for instance Ableeva (2010) investigated whether the implementation of DA approaches contributes to the improvement of listening comprehension ability of university French as a second language students and compared the results to a traditional listening comprehension test. At the end of the study and similar to previous research findings, Ableeva indicated that DA allows the establishment of the actual learners’ listening ability as well as a diagnostic of the potential level of their listening development.

Apart from that, but important to illustrate that Dynamic assessment is possible in different situations. It is the study of Tzuriel and Shamir (2002) which focused on the effects of the computer assisted dynamic assessment on cognitive performance as
compared to dynamic assessment with an examiner. For this research, two groups of 30 kindergarten children were observed; one of them took a test using the Think-in-Order program (CA), a multimedia program designed especially for this study based on the Children’s Seriational Thinking Modifiability, and the other one took a CSTM test with the assistance of an examiner (OE). The findings showed that mediation offered by CA was more effective than that of OE. However, it is possible to think of a mixture of both (CA) and (OE), to obtain a meaningful result.

What these seven studies suggest is that even though dynamic assessment is a new approach that has not been widely applied, its basis and arguments are solids and the few researches about it demonstrate that it is an approach that can be useful for second language education.

4 METHODOLOGY

For this research, the method implemented was the case study, specifically the action case study. According to Duff (1990) “… case study may involve more than one subject… it may be based on particular groups (e.g. groups dynamics within a classroom); organizations or events…” This quote explains in a general way, how a case study may be developed, it can be carried out with various subjects, also taking into account different perspectives as interaction, discipline, students or teachers discourse and so on. Furthermore, it can be developed in different places by different researchers at the same time.

In sum, it was an action case study because the sample or the environment in which the research took place was observed and also intervened and the results before, during, and after intervention were part of the analysis of the data. A case study as such is merely descriptive, it means that every detail, situation or event which results relevant for a research, must be fully described; and for the purpose of this specific study it was quite necessary to detail the happenings during it. What made this case study different from a conventional one, which is as already mentioned the rich description of a phenomena taking place, was the action component. This action component suggests the intervention of the researchers in the phenomena, changing it radically or not. The intervention in this study consisted of training teachers on dynamic assessment’s approaches in order to observe the emergence of possible changes in their discourse as
they started adopting DA. The analysis of the description of these changes or non-changes is what determined the results of the study.

A case study as any other research method is determined by a question or various questions. This specific research addresses two questions:

- **In what ways does teacher’s discourse change during DA implementation?**
- **What challenges do in-service teachers face when adopting DA in their discourse practices?**

When a teacher tries to implement new strategies for teaching many different situations can emerge and many changes have to be faced. That is what the questions mentioned before look for, to discover and show up all the changes that imply applying a new approach in the classroom. According to sociocultural theory, a person is different from another one because each one is the result of different experiences at different contexts; and any time a person faces a situation of any nature, he is going to change his own nature. That is what the first question tried to get, the way in which teachers’ discourse changed, influenced by the new external component they included in their everyday teaching practice. Another aspect to take into account at the time of implementing new approaches is the emergence of some difficulties, what we better call challenges that teachers have to overcome in order to keep on the process. The second question sought all those obstacles that teachers found in the way.

In regards the context and participants, this research was part of a larger study that investigates the potential of dynamic assessment to transform teachers’ discourse in six different settings, three public schools in Colombia and three foreign language classrooms in The United States. This research took place in La Institucion Educativa Normal Superior; located at Street 36 on the left side of Sinú River in Montería, Colombia. It is within neighborhoods whose social economical status are between 1 and 2. The school is located next to Universidad del Sinú. The traffic on this street is difficult. There are too many cars and motorcycles. However, there is not a pedestrian bridge. The school is surrounded by commercial locals such as restaurants, pubs, cafés, etc. Concerning to the inside’s part of the school, it can be said that it is big enough for the quantity of students; actually, some areas of the school were being rebuilt, by the time this study was taking place, to improve the spaces. The school is divided into two sections, one for the primary cycle and another one for the secondary cycle. It is important to mention that this school
offers a complementary cycle in which students are trained to become teachers. The cycle however, is not mandatory. It is just an option for students after they finish the mandatory grades. Concerning to physical facilities, school has a playground, a big auditorium, chemistry labs, an equipped library, several canteens, and many bathrooms around the whole school. About the English area specifically, the school provides teachers with media devices such as speakers for each one, video beam and a set of tablets that students can use to work with digital online materials.

By the time of the study the school provided 8 hours of English and also a book, *American Adventures*, since this is a pilot school for bilingualism program. Apart from that, as already mentioned, it provides teachers with enough technological devices to facilitate the students’ learning process. Seven English teachers work for the school, who annually design a “plan de area” for each grade. This plan includes the grammatical focus of units that students have to study during the whole year depending on their English level.

Participants of this research belonged to a mixed sixth grade classroom with 42 students, between twelve and fourteen years of age, whose parents worked as taxi drivers, building auxiliaries, walking sellers and independent beginner sellers. These students were able to ask and answer short questions about familiar issues, and ask for specific information about certain situations. They were also able to describe people, animals, places, and objects. Therefore, it can be said that they were between low and intermediate level.

Since this research is focused on the changes that may occur in the teachers’ discourse, it is necessary to include the information concerning the teacher. This teacher has an undergraduate degree in English from Universidad de Cordoba and currently she is getting a master in Education at the same University. Apart from that, she also has a diploma in Teaching methodology and a course in Academic writing.

Regarding the data collection procedures, several data collection procedures were taken into account for collecting the information from the school La Normal Superior such as observation, which will be audio and video recorded, stimulated recall and interviews.

As noted in the introduction; in this research study; we used observation which according to Seliger and Shohamy(1989) is “a procedure used to collect data in qualitative research” (p,162). That being said, we used non-participant one, which is the type of
observation in which the observer does not take part of the process. It was used before the training, in order to see how the teacher corrected her students’ mistakes within a normal class; during the training, to see how the teacher used Dynamic Assessment to assess them; and after the training to see whether her discourse changed when assessing her students through the use of dynamic assessment. Furthermore, as mentioned before, these observations were audio and video recorded to make sure that the whole interaction could be transcribed.

Another procedure we used to collect data is the stimulated recall which is “A technique in which the researcher records and transcribe part of a lesson and then gets the teacher (and where possible, the learners) to comment on what was happening at the time that the observed teaching and learning took place” (Nunan, 1998, in Brown and Rogers, 2002 p, 94). In other words, this procedure was used as a stimulus in order to help the teacher to remember certain parts of the recordings or the transcriptions taken from her classes; stimulated recall were applied after each observation.

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of observation consisted of video recording teachers´ lessons before, during, and after the training process. At the end of the study, we got three lessons observed. The first thing done after the observation process was identifying the specific moments in which the teacher corrected students´ mistakes. Here we analyzed whether the teacher gives implicit or explicit answers, which methods the teacher used to implement Dynamic Assessment when correcting mistakes, and what were the students´ responses towards the new approach. The next step was transcribing those moments for later coding into categories depending on the most common patterns in the observation, such as how many times the teacher applied dynamic assessment, the number of given prompts, and the mistakes the teacher emphasized on the most.

The stimulated recall was applied and transcribed after each observation with the purpose of knowing the teacher´s perception about the methods she used to apply dynamic assessment for correcting students´ mistakes. Using the selected moments from videos and transcriptions, the teacher reflected on what she did and what she could have done for making students´ learning process more successful. It was found from this information and using the constant comparison method, that according to Goetz and Lecompton (1981) “combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social
incidents observed” (p. 58, as cited in Dye. et al., 2000), the most challenging situations the teacher faced in her daily practice when adopting dynamic assessment.

5 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study taking into account the two research questions. First, the chapter illustrates the changes in teachers’ discourse that took place as a result of the implementation of dynamic assessment. Second, we will describe the challenges that teacher Margarita faced when applying dynamic assessment in the classroom. Finally, we will summarize the findings at the end of this chapter.

5.1 CHANGES

This section illustrates the changes in the teacher’s discourse that took place as a result of the implementation of dynamic assessment. Two main changes occurred: the teacher started using more discourse moves and she also increased the use of request for reformulation.

5.1.1 The increase of discourse moves

After analyzing the transcripts we found that Margarita’s discourse changed in terms of the use of prompts to mediate students’ mistakes; as we can see in the table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Move</th>
<th>Pre-DA Average%</th>
<th>DA Average%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reformulation</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformulation Request</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-Question</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplification</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification Request</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Check</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Evaluation</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting Peer for Support</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: prepared by Author (2024)
The first thing we can appreciate in the table is that Margarita increased, after the training, the amount of discourse moves she used to correct her students’ mistakes. In pre DA, she only used reformulation, reformulation request and negative evaluation, whereas after the training she started to use other prompts, including Meta-Question, exemplification, clarification request, confirmation check and Inviting peer for supporting. The following example from the pre-DA lesson shows how Margarita corrected students’ mistakes before the training.

Source: Prepared by the Author

From this transcript we can see that Margarita reacted to a student’s mistake with a reformulation. Whereas in the second stage, DA1, she used additional discourse moves.
It is evident that this episode is longer than the first one since the teacher used more discourse moves. In this example, Margarita did not use reformulation. Instead, she used request for reformulation (turns 3, 6, 8, 11 and 14), meta-question (turn 5), invitation to peer (turn 16) and confirmation check (turn 18) to correct students’ mistakes. To summarize, we can argue that as a result of her use of DA, Margarita learnt how to use other prompts to correct students’ mistakes.

5.1.2 Changes in Margarita’s use of Reformulation Request

It is common that before training on DA teachers overuse the most explicit prompts to correct students’ mistakes; what is uncommon is that after DA training teachers continue overusing those prompts. It happened to Margarita in this study. For instance, she started using reformulation request in many different ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Move</th>
<th>Pre-Da</th>
<th>DA1</th>
<th>DA2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reformulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformulation Request</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-Question</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplification</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification Request</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Check</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting Peer for Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: prepared by Author (2024)

As shown in Table 2, in pre-DA Margarita used reformulation request once, whereas after DA training she used this discourse prompt in all interaction episodes. This
is an abnormality since this move is one of the most implicit ones in the mediation cline. It evidenced the fact that Margarita was not calibrating the mediation, as we can see in the next episode from the pre DA stage.

**Episode 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>[house]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>(La profesora señaló su oído con las manos indicando no haber entendido)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the Author

In this example Margarita’s first and unique prompt was a reformulation request. It was normal since in this stage she had not received any training on DA strategies. However, after DA training she continued using reformulation request as her default discourse move, as shown in the following transcript from DA 2 in which the focus was presenting a recipe.

**Episode 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Are you going to add… tangerines, are you going to add tangerines? Are you going to peel tangerines?? You are going to peel it? You are going to add it? You are going to wash it? What are you going to do? You are going to add? You are going to peel? Or you are going to cut? What are you going to do? (gestos con las manos, indicando las acciones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>You are going to add? You are going to slice? You are going to cut?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Slice tangerine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>You are going to?… slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Slice tangerine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the Author

Based on the episode just seen we can say; that Margarita used reformulation request three times in different ways. In turn 7 she gave many choices supported by gestures, in turn 9 she reduced the number of choices and did not give any support, and in turn 11 she just indicated to the student the word she wanted to hear, which was tangerine. There are three prompts located in the same category but used differently. That is why after DA training Margarita used more reformulation requests than before. In addition to the changes, Margarita presented on her discourse when applying DA; there are, also some challenges she faced throughout its application.
5.1.3 Challenges

Throughout this section we will describe the challenges that Margarita faced when applying dynamic assessment in the classroom; As we said before, our research revealed that Margarita faced 4 main challenges to apply dynamic assessment successfully; which are: Engaging all learners simultaneously while providing mediation to individuals, Calibrating mediation to learners’ differing needs, Tracking individual students’ learning in the classroom and Making sure that the progress made by one student in the class transcends.

5.1.3.1 Engaging all Learners Simultaneously while Providing Mediation to Individuals

Our data analysis revealed that Margarita had trouble engaging all learners simultaneously while she provided mediation to one single student. During the training session on DA, Margarita literally expressed her fear concerning the amount of students she had in her classroom, arguing that it would jeopardize the successful implementation of dynamic assessment. The following transcript, taken from the researcher’s journal and reflection log, shows how Margarita felt towards the use of DA.

“La docente siente preocupación sobre el número de estudiantes con los que cuenta en su grupo para realizar el trabajo de evaluación dinámica, argumentado que es difícil realizar impacto con la totalidad del grupo debido al tiempo que se necesitaría para atender necesidades individuales”

What this transcript shows is Margarita’s concern about how to implement D.A. in her classroom. Specifically, she notes that although her interest is to help the whole class using DA, this would be impossible to do taking into account the amount of students and time she has to spend assisting each single student.

As the study was taking place, we noted that Margarita’s concern was just a personal fear, since in fact in her classes there were no difficulties related to students’ engagement. For example, in the following transcript from the first DA class after the training session, it is evidenced the way in which she involved all students in the interaction. The activity in this class consisted of picking out a piece of paper with a written food name from a bag, going in front of the class, saying the word aloud and whether the food was countable or uncountable.
Episode 1. Rice or [rice]?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>S1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In turn number 3 Margarita provided the first prompt and the student did not get the answer, but the important fact in this episode is turn number 5, in which another student, different from the one who was being mediated, provided a prompt. The exercise of picking up the piece of paper had been done previously in the same class, since various students participated. Margarita’s role had been to ask students to say the word aloud and whether that word was countable or uncountable. That is why student 2 already knew what the following question in turn 5 was. In spite of the fact that the prompt was not appropriate for the pronunciation mistake student 1 presented, it proved that other students were engaged in the activity, otherwise student 2 would not have known what the more logical following question was. Another good example of engagement is turn number 14 and 16 in which Margarita asked for group collaboration and actually the group did it, wrongly by first time in turn number 15, but in turn number 17 they did it well. In sum, Margarita was mediating student 1 all the time, but the rest of the students were participating and benefiting as well.

In the example above one thing is clear, more than one student is engaged in the mediation cline. In spite of Margarita’s starting concern about the amount of students she had, it was not a problem to her. It was just a fear. She could overcome this challenge through the use of group activities, or activities that involve the majority of students. In the first example it was not a group activity as such, but she invited the rest of students to participate by asking them to help their partners, and it worked out.
5.1.3.2 Celebring Mediation To Learners’ Different Needs

Another challenge Margarita faced was how to calibrate her mediation to match the different needs of her students. The following transcript from the first stimulated recall is a clear example of how the teacher implicitly talked about it.

“Yo repito, modelo… y hago que repitan, hasta que comprendan que están cometiendo un error porque siento que les da seguridad, pues ellos van a sentir ay sí! Lo dije mal y van a darse cuenta por sí mismos que están cometiendo un error porque si yo estoy todo el tiempo encima del error a ellos les va a dar temor”

Margarita’s words reveal that she used reformulation as her default correction move, regardless of the student she was helping, or type of mistake she was mediating. It shows what Margarita usually did to correct students’ mistakes, the use of modeling or recasting what the students said. Since she was interested in their spontaneous intentions to produce meaning more than accuracy, she believed that correcting students’ mistakes directly could produce in the students a reluctant attitude to participate because correction could make them feel embarrassed. This is shown in the following transcript before the DA training.

Episode 2  What would you like to tell me?
1  T  What would you like to tell me?
2  S1  [noun]
3  T  Noun

Source Prepared by the Author

The student made a pronunciation mistake and her reaction was a reformulation: she just said the word again, but correctly. However, after being trained on dynamic assessment, Margarita showed an advance in overcoming this challenge. Following we will see an example of how Margarita dealt with this challenge in her classroom. In this lesson students presented a recipe, explaining step by step the procedure.

Episode 3. What are you going to do?
1  T  Let’s do it step by step because I haven’t been able to understand. So what is number one? Number one, what is number one? Peel? Cut? Chop? Slice? What is what you are going to do? ((Margarita used gestures to represent the verbs))
2  SS  (Students said yes with their heads when listened to cut)
3  T  So you are going to cut? So, number one is? you are going to… cut, or you are going to slice, or you are going to wash?
4  S1  Cut
Are you going to Chop or you are going to cut? (she uses gestures))

Cut, cut fruit

You are going to cut the fruit.

The teacher was trying to help the student to construct step number one of the recipe, but the student seemed to be confused about the appropriate term, then Margarita started providing mediation. In turn number one, she used many options and gestures and it seems that gave a possible result on students since they showed with gestures they understood, then, in turn number 3, she reduced the options to make it easier or more explicit and it served to student 1 who said “cut” what was the correct answer.

This one is a clear example of how Margarita used calibrated mediation depending on students’ needs; in this case, the student did not need a lot of mediation. However, in the same class another situation took place, and this time Margarita’s mediation was not calibrated at all.

Episode 4 Tangerines

ok, you cut, you cut the apple, good. That’s number 1. You cut the apple. What is number 2?

I xxx mandarin, I xxx

I don’t understand. What is number 2?

I xxx mandarine xxx

Are you going to add… tangerines, are you going to add tangerines? Are you going to peel tangerines?? You are going to peel it? You are going to add it? You are going to wash it? What are you going to do? You are going to add? You are going to peel? Or you are going to cut? What are you going to do?

No response

In this transcript Margarita did not adjust the mediation to the learner’s needs. As we can observe in turn 7, the first prompt she used was giving choices to the student, which seems too explicit for being the first move in a DA sequence. Apart from that, the prompt in turn 7 is too long and provides too much information for S2, probably making him to feel confused and thus not to answer. Margarita used the same prompt as in the previous example, and maybe this student needed more, or a different one. The mediation
did not work because it was not appropriate. There was no correct graduation in this episode.

In sum, our analysis revealed that Margarita went through ups and downs in the process of overcoming this challenge. Unfortunately, she dropped out of the study before we could do the final observation and thus it was not possible to confirm whether she had overcome this challenge. However, all this suggests that teachers’ transformation of their discourse through DA is not a linear process in which the way they talk to students changes after a short training. We will return to this in more detail in the discussion section of this study.

5.1.3.3 Tracking Individual Students’ Learning in the Classroom

As we explained in the conceptual framework, tracking is an essential component of dynamic assessment. Through tracking, the teacher collects information about students evolving ability by way of taking notes or filling out a form. The importance of tracking notwithstanding, we found no evidence that Margarita tracked her students’ progress at the time that she provided mediation to them. It seems to us that Margarita was focused instead on helping students to reach meaningful learning. The evidence of this challenge was found in the second and third stimulated recall sessions.

• **Researcher:** has escrito cosas?

  **Margarita:** sí, yo estoy escribiendo, pero no me han dado nada…

• **Researcher:** ¿éso lo escribiste en la rúbrica?

  **Margarita:** no, de D.A no, sólo hice pues de la clase como tal.

  “ellos siempre piensan que tú estás tomando una nota; si pero que ellos se sientan más tranquilos porque cuando hay la presión de una posible nota al final del período hay el nervio de que la profe me va a poner un cero”.

Based on the quote is possible to affirm that Margarita’s target was making students feel comfortable when participating to reach meaningful learning instead of tracking students’ progress, since she considered that grading students’ performance on the spot could interfere with their natural learning process. In other words, for Margarita, grading students may not be advisable if the class objective was to make students produce language. Consequently, it is possible to affirm that this challenge was not overcome.
5.1.3.4 Making Sure that the Progress made by one Student in the Class Transcends.

As explained in the theoretical framework, “transcendence” is an essential part of dynamic assessment, since it is the possibility to make sure that the mediation given in the classroom is meaningful and will be remembered through the time. Making that students’ learning transcends was Margarita’s highest priority as well as a challenge. How can a teacher know whether what she mediates today is going to be successfully used by students tomorrow? Indeed, this was one of Margarita’s biggest concerns. She was worried about how meaningful the mediation would be for students. As she noted in the training sessions: “La docente insiste en la importancia de mostrar la forma como el proceso de evaluación dinámica realizada en una clase tiene influencia en la siguiente clase en los estudiantes.”

Margarita’s teaching objective was always making students feel comfortable with the language, so that they could use it successfully in the future. That is why she was worried about how meaningful would be the mediation for students. Such important was that issue for her that in D.A classes we could observe moments in which she wanted to verify whether students could remember specific things from previous episodes in which she provided mediation. The next episode shows an example. This episode precedes the one in which the teacher was mediating one student to get the correct pronunciation of “rice”. After agreeing with the class that the correct pronunciation of “rice” was “r(ai)s”; the next step was discussing whether that word was countable or uncountable.

Episode 5. Countable or uncountable?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Ok. so, its’ countable or uncountable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>countable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>It’s countable or uncountable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>countable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Shhhhhh. Is it..Can you count it?, you can say one rice two rice three rice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>si. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>S1:</td>
<td>(( dice no, moviendo la cabeza))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>No?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>So, countable or uncountable?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this transcript, from turn number 4 to 12 the focus was on determining if rice was countable or uncountable, but in turn number 13 Margarita went back to the pronunciation of rice, to check if students got it or not. As explained before; this challenge was not a challenge as such, it was only a Margarita’s concern about the implementation of DA since she believed that the only way for it to be successful, was that the progress made by students transcended through time.

Based on what was just shown in the previous section we can conclude that the implementation of a new approach such as dynamic assessment involves certain changes on teachers’ discourse. In Margarita’s case for instance, she modified the way to correct her students’ mistakes increasing the amount of discourse moves and changing the way to use reformulation request.

In addition to changes in her discourse, our analysis revealed various challenges for Margarita’s use of DA. For instance, she faced problems with (1) engaging the whole class while mediating one student, which she overcame successfully through the use of group work; (2) calibrating mediation to learners’ differing needs, in which we found a constraint since she used calibrated mediation sometimes, but some other she did not; (3) tracking individual students’ learning process, which we believe she did not overcome since there was no evidence of formal tracking as is required by DA, and (4) making sure that the progress made by students transcended; about the last challenge, we contend that it was Margarita’s concern about the implementation of DA since she believed that it would be successful only if she could observe students’ progress through time.
6 DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into two main sections based on our two research questions. The first one discusses the significance of the changes presented on teacher’s discourse, whereas the second interprets our analysis of the challenges Margarita faced when implementing DA.

According to Thoms (2012), the most common interaction patterns in classroom practice is the IRE (initiation - response -evaluation). This pattern consists of a teacher asking a question, the student responding to that question and finally the teacher evaluating that response. The IRF (initiation – response – feedback) follows the same structure except for the last turn, in which the teacher does not evaluate but provides feedback on students’ performance. In spite of being the most widely known interaction patterns, they have been criticized since they do not provide opportunities for students to express freely about different topics, since their answers are limited by the type of questions, generally closed questions that the teachers ask.

Responding to the little connection between sociocultural theory and the IRE-IRF patterns, Van Lier (1998) suggested a change in the third turn of the IRF pattern. The same suggestion was made by Nassaji and Wells (2000), who argued that giving students “non-evaluative feedback” instead of an evaluation as such would be more meaningful for them. The current study supports Nassaji and Wells’ findings, since dynamic assessment also suggests a modification in the third turn of IRF pattern, producing more meaningful dialogic interactions. In fact, the specific case of Margarita showed how each interactive episode between her and her students became longer, as she started implementing this approach.

Implementing a new teaching strategy leads teachers to change their discourse in the classroom. In fact, Margarita started using more varied discourse moves. She even “overused” one of them; reformulation request (RR), which according to Lyster and Ranta (2007) involves recasts and explicit correction. The “overuse” of this discourse move occurred because Margarita mediated students giving different prompts located into the RR discourse move; these prompts however, were given with different purposes and students responded in different ways to them. According to Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013), although reformulation category is considered implicit, research evidence has demonstrated that it can also lead students to self-correction as explicit utterances do. Literature on DA explains that there are two ways of approaching this, interactionist and
interventionist, in both cases using prompts that go from the implicit to the explicit, being the reformulation request one of the most implicit ones. Indeed, Margarita’s mediation to her students showed this sequence from implicitness to explicitness.

Lantolf and Poehner (2011) for example, conducted a research in which a primary school teacher implemented DA in her daily classroom routine, she prepared a set of prompts to mediate students and in the list provided it can be observed that at least the first four prompts are into a same category which is the most implicit one. Although these prompts were into the same category students reacted differently to each of them, leading them at the same time closer to the root of the mistakes they were making. Through Margarita’s case this study also shows the possibility of giving different connotations to prompts into the same category, producing different students’ responses to specific emergent language difficulties that lead them to a more meaningful learning. It supports at the same time previous findings on the potential of reformulation to lead students to better performance. Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada 2001; Sheen 2004, 2006; Ellis & Sheen 2006; Sato 2011).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this investigation was to investigate the potential of DA to transform teachers’ discourse practices and document the changes and challenges this transformation meant for classroom interaction with one teacher and various students (group context). In doing so, we observed, video/audio recorded and transcribed three Margarita’s lessons; before, during and after the training on DA.

The findings revealed that the implementation of a new approach such as dynamic assessment generated certain changes on teachers’ discourse as well as challenges teachers faced when implementing it. In Margarita’s case for instance, she changed the way to correct her students’ mistakes increasing the amount of discourse moves and changing the way to use reformulation request. Furthermore, she faced problems with (1) engaging the whole class while mediating one student, which she overcame successfully through the use of group work, (2) calibrating mediation to learners’ differing needs, (3) tracking individual students’ learning process, and (4) making sure that the progress made by students transcended.

Based on the findings the study revealed, we determined that in fact teachers discourse is influenced by the implementation of DA leading to the extension of
interaction episodes between teacher and students since the last turn in the traditional IRE pattern is modified, as previously suggested by Nassaji and Wells (2000). Dynamic assessment also provided teachers with different tools to deal with students’ language difficulties that involve differing types of DA, a rich variety of discourse moves that can be used in several ways depending on what the teacher wants to get from students and the possibility of helping less capable students to pass their exams.

Furthermore, we determined that the implementation of a new method or technique is usually a hard process and DA is not the exception, specifically the use of some of its approaches can make it more difficult. In this case for instance, Margarita’s use of interactionist DA jeopardized the tracking process. In fact, Margarita did not track her students’ performance during the whole study.

Despite the positive results we got in the study we also faced some limitations, for instance the insufficient amount of time required to do the 4 planned observations since Margarita dropped out before the study had finished. Another limitation we had to deal with was the impossibility to analyze the planners of the observed classes since Margarita did not provide them, which made the analysis process more complicated.

The most difficult issue for Margarita about DA was tracking, maybe because during the training process she was not provided with enough information on how to manage this process in group contexts. In fact, this study is an evidence of the observable lack of knowledge on how to track students. Accordingly, our research suggests that professional trainer programs that attend to train teachers on how to use DA should make more emphasis on the way tracking should be done, so that teachers could get a stronger basis at the time of implementing this approach.

Although with this study we provided initial insights on how to apply DA in group contexts, more research is required on this issue, especially when using interactionist DA and the way in which tracking progress could be carried out using this approach. Another relevant issue that could not be analyzed since Margarita dropped out before the study had finished was transcendence. It is needed a longer research in which students’ progress could be observed through time. This research as well as most of the known literature on DA is focused on oral interaction which is considered the most important ability in communication. However, it would be of great importance to make more research on the implementation of DA to improve reading or writing ability, since they are relevant to the final aim of communication as well.
REFERENCES


