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ENHANCING ORAL EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH TASK-BASED
LEARNING AND DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

DOCTORAL THESIS

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For my parents, M^a Elena (in memoriam) and Eduardo.

And for Nacho, Blanca and Arancha.

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Abbreviations

ACFS	The Application of Cognitive Functions Scale
A-S Unit	Analysis of Speech Unit
CAF	Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency measures
CANAL-F	Cognitive Ability for the Acquisition of Language–Foreign
CECL	Centre for English Corpus Linguistics at UCL
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment.
CIA	Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
CMB	Cognitive Modifiability Battery
DA	Dynamic assessment
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as lingua franca
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
ESP	English for specific purposes
ETSIE	Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería de Edificación
FCE	First Certificate in English
FonF	Focus on form
FonFs	Focus on forms
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LRE	Language-related episode
MCA	Metacognitive awareness
MLA	Metalinguistic awareness
MLK	Metalinguistic knowledge
PET	Preliminary English Test
SLA	Second language acquisition
TBLT	Task-based language teaching and learning

TL	Target language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TREACLE	Teaching Resource Extraction from an Annotated Corpus of Learner English
UCL	Université Catholique in Louvain, Belgium
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
UG	Universal grammar
UAM	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
UPM	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
UPV	Universitat Politècnica de València
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Abstract

This thesis reports on a case study which investigated the potential of Dynamic Assessment within the framework of Task-Based Teaching and Learning as a pedagogical approach aiming to improve oral performance in an English as a foreign language context. At the core of the pedagogical procedure was the enhancement of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness. The study involved undergraduates (N = 30) at lower intermediate level of proficiency studying English for academic and professional purposes at Universitat Politècnica de València. Drawing on sociocultural theory constructs, a nine-week pedagogical treatment based on Dynamic Assessment principles was designed and implemented to pursue the following aims: (a) to investigate how metalinguistic awareness is evidenced through Dynamic Assessment; (b) to assess the value of this pedagogical approach in relation to the participants' oral performance; and (c) to investigate the participants' thoughts and perceptions regarding various aspects of Dynamic Assessment.

Based on a pre-post test research design, the results suggest that there was overall improvement in the participants' oral performance although there were differences across measures. The statistical analyses are discussed in the light of Dynamic Assessment as an approach to second language development. The thesis provides an analysis of the metalinguistic dimension which was an integral aspect of the Dynamic Assessment procedure; the participants focused on a wide range of morphosyntactic, lexical, and discourse features reflecting the students' emerging language capacities. Finally, the rich data gathered through a variety of

instruments, i.e., tests, transcripts of videotaped oral performance, interviews, and questionnaires, allowed us to gain valuable insights into the participants' thoughts and perceptions regarding Dynamic Assessment. We conclude the dissertation with a discussion of the feasibility of implementing individual and group DA in a foreign language context and some pedagogical implications of our findings.

Resumen

Esta tesis describe un estudio de caso diseñado con el objeto de investigar la aplicabilidad de la Evaluación Dinámica en el marco de un enfoque de Aprendizaje Basado en Tareas con el objeto de mejorar la producción oral en el contexto de la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera. Dicho enfoque pedagógico se orienta a la mejora de la conciencia metalingüística y metacognitiva. En el estudio participaron 30 alumnos con un nivel intermedio bajo de inglés que estudiaban inglés profesional y académico en la Universitat Politècnica de València. Tomando como referencia los principios básicos de la teoría sociocultural se diseñó un tratamiento pedagógico con una duración de nueve semanas basado en los principios de la Evaluación Dinámica con los siguientes objetivos: (a) investigar la forma de evidenciar la conciencia metalingüística mediante actividades de Evaluación Dinámica; (b) evaluar el valor de este enfoque pedagógico con relación a la mejora en la producción oral de los participantes; e (c) investigar las percepciones de los participantes con relación a diversos aspectos de la Evaluación Dinámica.

Partiendo de un diseño basado en una medición pre y post tratamiento, los resultados sugieren que hubo mejora en general en la producción oral de los participantes, si bien se observaron diferencias entre las distintas mediciones. Los análisis estadísticos se examinan bajo el prisma de la Evaluación Dinámica como enfoque de elección para el desarrollo de una segunda lengua. La tesis proporciona un análisis de la dimensión metalingüística que fue un aspecto integral del

procedimiento. Los participantes trabajaron una serie de aspectos morfosintácticos, léxicos y discursivos que reflejaban sus capacidades lingüísticas emergentes. Finalmente, la amplia variedad de datos recogidos mediante una serie de instrumentos, a saber, pruebas orales, transcripciones de la producción oral grabada en video, entrevistas, y cuestionarios, nos permitieron profundizar en las percepciones de los estudiantes con relación a la Evaluación Dinámica. La tesis concluye con una reflexión acerca de la viabilidad de dicho modelo de evaluación individual y grupal en la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera. Asimismo, se exploran algunas implicaciones pedagógicas derivadas de dicha investigación.

Resum

Aquesta tesi presenta un estudi de cas que va investigar el potencial de l'Avaluació Dinàmica dins del marc de l'Ensenyament i Aprenentatge per Tasques com aproximació pedagògica amb l'objectiu de millorar la producció oral en un context de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera. L'element central del procediment pedagògic era l'augment de la consciència metalingüística i metacognitiva. En l'estudi van participar estudiants universitaris (N=30) de nivell intermedi-baix d'anglès acadèmic i professional de la Universitat Politècnica de València. Fent ús de constructes de teories socioculturals, es va dissenyar i es va dur a terme un tractament pedagògic de nou setmanes basat en els principis de l'Avaluació Dinàmica per aconseguir els següents objectius: a) investigar com evidenciar la consciència metalingüística mitjançant l'Avaluació Dinàmica; b) avaluar el valor d'aquest enfocament pedagògic en relació amb la producció oral dels participants; i c) investigar les idees i la percepció dels participants sobre diversos aspectes de l'Avaluació Dinàmica.

Basat en un disseny d'investigació pre-post, els resultats suggereixen que, encara que hi va haver diferències en les medicions, hi hagué una millora global en la producció oral dels participants. Les dades s'han analitzat des de la perspectiva de l'Avaluació Dinàmica com a mètode per a apropar-se al desenvolupament d'una segona llengua. La tesi proporciona una anàlisi de la dimensió metalingüística que va ser un aspecte integral del procediment de l'Avaluació Dinàmica; els participants es van centrar en una gran varietat d'aspectes morfosintàctics, lèxics i discursius que reflecteixen les capacitats lingüístiques emergents dels estudiants.

Per últim, la gran quantitat de dades arreplegades mitjançant una varietat d'instruments (tests, transcripcions de produccions orals gravades, entrevistes i qüestionaris), ens van permetre adquirir informació valuosa sobre les idees i percepcions dels participants respecte de l'Avaluació Dinàmica. La dissertació conclou amb la discussió de la viabilitat d'implementar l'Avaluació Dinàmica individual i grupal en un context d'aprenentatge d'una llengua estrangera i amb algunes implicacions pedagògiques de les nostres troballes.

Introduction

The development of oral proficiency in a second language has been widely researched. The present study draws on second language acquisition (SLA) research and sociocultural theory to inform a mixed-method empirical study to confirm claims that a task-based design relying on metalinguistic and metacognitive support through Dynamic Assessment (DA) is effective in promoting the development of second language oral proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL).

The impetus for the investigation was our belief, based on years of teaching in a foreign language context, that there is still need for further research into additional and alternative ways to assist learners in overcoming the difficulties many of them experience as they attempt to develop their language skills in contexts marked by the absence of an authentic anglophone environment in which to use the language.

In order to improve performance in speaking, acquisition needs to take place. The learner needs to acquire the linguistic forms and structures, the lexical input, and the functional, pragmatic and strategic skills that he or she will then use with a communicative purpose in a particular setting and social environment. In a first language, this process takes place naturally and, although instructional support is also provided, the process of acquiring a native language benefits from access to multiple sources of target language data in authentic communicative situations, repeated opportunities for practice and, crucially, feedback from other speakers, which enables the language user to constantly refine and adjust their expression. In a foreign language context, pedagogical interventions are required to make up for learners' limited exposure to language in authentic contexts. These

constraints apply to the context in which the present study was carried out. In this research, the participants are in their third year of undergraduate study at the School of Building Engineering (ETSIE – Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería de Edificación) of the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV - Universitat Politècnica de València). An additional challenge arises from the fact that the subjects in this study, adult undergraduate students in a technical university, do not form a homogeneous group, a frequent occurrence in the context of these classes. Particularly in the area of speaking, significant differences are to be found, depending on the different opportunities for practice each learner may have had, their language learning experience outside the classroom, their language ability, and the fact that these students have already been through diverse educational experiences and backgrounds, as is always the case with adult learners.

The study sets out to acknowledge these differences and to integrate the individual and the collective needs within the framework of a carefully designed syllabus informed by research on Task-Based Teaching and Learning and Dynamic Assessment understood from an interactionist perspective as a pedagogical approach which aims at actively mediating development while assessing learners and responding to their individual and/or collective needs. What is essential about this pedagogical practice is to keep in mind that at its core lies “the intersection of the individual and the collective, mediated by cultural tools” (Lund, 2008).

The oral language curriculum in the Spanish educational system has undergone important changes in recent years. Just as English has gained prominence around the world as a lingua franca, it increasingly permeates Spanish society and culture. Learners are more aware than ever that they need to be fluent in English if they wish to gain access to information and to communicate effectively

with people around the world. Students in English classrooms often comment that they would like to be able to speak English, among other things, so that they can travel to other countries, talk to people, do business and, to put it briefly, to be able to reach the global community. They know that they will stand a better chance of making themselves understood in a foreign country if they can speak some English. Likewise, they are aware that they will not be competitive in an increasingly knowledge-based society without a good command of English, as it is now the international language of business and commerce and also the language of science and technology. This means that countless business transactions, meetings, conferences, scholarly presentations and many other related activities taking place worldwide are conducted in English and participants are expected to display a good command of the spoken language.

Some of the problems Spanish students experience when they attempt to speak are derived from the limited oral input many of them received in their primary and secondary education, and the few opportunities they had to speak English for meaningful communication, both in and outside the classroom. We bring here a lucid analysis found in a teacher's forum of the British Council's online page. It is written by a native English teacher working in Spain and we believe it vividly illustrates what the situation has been until recently in this country regarding the teaching and learning of English:

(In Spain) Children are taught English all through their school years, but only very few come out with a real (spoken and written) B1 level, which is the aim of the Ministry of Education here. Most have to join extracurricular classes in other language schools or the British Council to notch this up to B2 or even C1. Of course, we're talking non-

bilingual schools here.

The reason behind this is sometimes the lack of exposure to authentic input in schools, the overemphasis on grammar and writing at the expense of speaking, listening or vocabulary and the resulting lack of motivation. Learners are sometimes faced with language which is above their actual level of competence and very little is done to remedy this situation as assessment is very much test-based.

This teacher goes on to offer his own advice as to what could be done to help students achieve success in the language, and hints at key factors negatively affecting the teaching and learning of English in Spain.

Input and oral practice to automatise this knowledge is paramount, and this sometimes conflicts with classroom management difficulties and lack of training opportunities for school teachers.

(Spoken English, British Council TeachingEnglish forum, 2011)

Things are beginning to change, as the educational authorities battle to bridge the gap by increasing the number of contact hours and re-orienting the way foreign languages are taught, notably, by introducing language programmes starting in primary education in which English is taught through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches, i.e., those that involve using the language as a medium of instruction, or a combination of a content and language focus (See Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010 for a review). It is hoped that such efforts will soon bear fruit and that the overall level of English, particularly spoken English, will rise for every student in university classrooms in Spain.

Another issue brought up by the teacher in the forum relates to what is described as a lack of training opportunities for teachers. In an analysis of the situation of English language teaching in tertiary education in Spain, Perry (2007),

highlights what we believe to be one reason behind this deficiency. It concerns the traditional focus that Spanish Higher Education establishments have placed on disseminating knowledge, rather than on teaching skills and knowing-how-to-do something. According to Perry, language departments in Spain have tended to offer courses “*about* the language and *about* the culture and peoples using the language, rather than general or specific communicative skills in the language itself” (p. 28). It is hardly surprising, then, that faced with the challenge of preparing students for real communication in their academic and professional activity, teachers have often missed the point. Watts and García-Carbonell (1999), express themselves along similar lines when they affirm that Spain has leaned towards the conventional side of methodology, which encourages “memorizing a great amount of information, neatly and artificially divided into different subjects or disciplines” and the ability to show success in examinations (p. 524).

The increasing demand for more effective and coordinated teaching practices at the tertiary level across Europe has been channelled through a series of reforms brought about under the framework of the Bologna Process (1998-present), of which Spain is one of the signatory members. The overarching aim of this large-scale effort has been the creation of the European Higher Education Area based on international cooperation and academic exchange. It involves a structural re-organisation of Higher Education aimed at enabling flexible student-centered learning itineraries and a focus on lifelong learning. One of its goals has been the development of easily readable and comparable grades with a view to facilitating student mobility across Europe and beyond. The European Credit Transfer System

(ECTS) is the basic tool that determines the student workload, preferably specified in terms of learning outcomes and competences to be acquired.

A project carried out by the DISCYT research group at Madrid Polytechnic University (UPM) has produced a bank of linguistic learning outcomes expressed in “can do” descriptors for future engineers that aims to reflect the new teaching and learning approaches and takes into account the specific academic and professional English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs of engineering students. In particular, the development of communication skills has been identified in the course of this research as an essential goal in the new knowledge-based society, “as society not only realizes the importance of knowledge but also the importance of proper knowledge-sharing and distribution” (Pierce & Duran, 2008, p. 59). In the contemporary workplace, it is no longer enough to be competent in one’s own technical field. An engineer must be able to communicate effectively with their peers, supervisors, technical personnel and users. Hence, students need to be taught discipline-related as well as interpersonal communication skills.

As Pierce and Durán (p. 61) note, an outcomes-based curriculum emphasises the learner’s achievement rather than the teacher’s intentions. This represents a fundamental shift away from the traditional teacher-centered approaches to one that places the students at the core of the learning process and supports them in pursuing their own paths of development.

Research questions

To achieve the aim of promoting a more active engagement of learners in their own development, metalinguistic awareness is explored in the present study as an aid to the development of learners’ speaking skills within a task-based pedagogical design and Dynamic Assessment. In order to examine these dimensions, as well as

to investigate the pedagogical value of the procedure and the students' thoughts about it, a set of descriptive as well as objective measures is proposed. To this end, the following research questions are addressed:

RQ1: How is metalinguistic awareness evidenced in Dynamic Assessment?

RQ2: What is the effect of Dynamic Assessment on the participants' oral performance?

RQ3: What are participants' perceptions of Dynamic Assessment as implemented in this study?

As regards speaking, we hypothesize that by engaging in a task-based pedagogical design focused on meaningful communicative oral activity followed by Dynamic Assessment, learners will develop a better understanding of what represents effective speaking in a foreign language, which will positively affect their interlanguage development.

Firstly, this thesis hypothesizes that undergraduate engineering students of English as a Foreign Language who engage in reflective exercises on their performance after communicative oral activity will show metalinguistic awareness through discerning and repairing their errors as well as identifying their accomplishments. Secondly, the effect of a cycle of tasks and reflection through Dynamic Assessment will result in improved oral performance. Thirdly, the students under study will perceive the task-based pedagogy and Dynamic Assessment strategies to be positive for learning English as a Foreign Language.

The remainder of the thesis is organised into five chapters plus this Introduction, in which we have so far briefly summarized the rationale for the thesis and will now present an overview of its contents. Chapter One provides the

theoretical basis for this research, which is set within the framework of Second Language Acquisition and a socio-constructivist approach to language learning and teaching, as described in Section 1. Section 2 focuses on the processes and representations that emerge as a second language (L2) is being developed. Intra- and extra-linguistic factors are also dealt with. In Section 3 we elaborate on aspects of second language learning, with attention to task-based teaching and sociocultural theory as it applies to pedagogy. Section 4 addresses second language assessment, seen first in its standardized applications (e.g., official examinations) and then from the perspective of its contribution to the processes of ongoing L2 acquisition and learning in the language classroom. Chapter Two deals with the skill of speaking. The criterial features of talk are described, as well as the various approaches to spoken language pedagogy and assessment. Chapter Three provides a full description of the context, the participants, the tasks, and the data collection and data analysis procedures carried out in this research. Chapter Four presents the results obtained and a discussion based on our interpretations on the basis of the assumptions made at the outset. In Chapter Five, the conclusions follow with proposals for future research. Finally, detailed Bibliography and Appendices sections are provided.

1. Second Language Teaching and Learning

A question most teachers have probably asked themselves at some point is whether their students will learn what they teach in their classes. Unfortunately, there is no measuring rod that can determine exactly what students will learn out of the content and the skills targeted by teachers in their courses. A learner's intentions, motivation and abilities, and the specific context in which a class takes place, among other things, will differentially affect the processes through which he or she acquires a second language. Drawing on mainstream Second Language Acquisition and sociocultural theory, this chapter summarizes the main arguments that seek to explain these phenomena, as they constitute the theoretical background to the pedagogical design described in this thesis.

1.1 Theories of second language acquisition

Over the course of the past forty years, the field of Second Language Acquisition has evolved as a discipline that aims to elucidate the processes learners go through as they attempt to acquire a language that is not their own, both in naturalistic and instructed contexts. In this section we will be focusing on these processes, particularly as regards the teaching and learning of English in a foreign language context. The present overview focuses, on the one hand, on L2 acquisition from the psycholinguistic perspective, and on the sociocultural theory of mind on the other. The former approach presents "a computational view of language acquisition" (Ellis, 2003, p. 113) with two distinct models for linguistic development:

- a. The connectionist models, which rely on general cognition to explain how the individual brain, in the absence of a dedicated area for language, engages in associative processes that lead to the development of a structured linguistic system.

- b. The nativist models, which claim that the human brain has a dedicated mental module equipped with a linguistic set of principles and parameters which are activated by the user for generating novel utterances.

The second theoretical perspective of our study stems from the sociocultural theory of mind to account for the processes involved in the development of human cognition in relation to learning in general and to second language acquisition in particular. In this view, language arises out of an ongoing process of cognitive restructuring which is culturally mediated.

Despite their different points of departure, both psycholinguistic and sociocultural approaches offer valuable insights into second language teaching and learning (Ellis, 2003, 2009b).

1.1.1 Psycholinguistic approaches

Psycholinguistics is concerned with the activity that underlies language processing and development. There is an ongoing debate between the nativist approaches to language acquisition, which assume the existence of innate universal language properties, and those which view general cognitive processing as the source of language development. Both approaches are discussed below in the light of findings from experimental research.

One strand of research into second language acquisition looks at the mental processes involved in acquiring a second language. Over the past five decades, the emphasis has shifted from the initial behaviourist explanations based on Skinner's account (1957), claiming that language learning is the result of habit formation and the reinforcement of successful responses to situational stimuli, to models that rely on cognitive processing as emerging in the individual brain. Within connectionist

accounts of language acquisition, these processes are seen to take place naturally without conscious operation. Regularly occurring forms become fixed patterns as a result of frequency and salience (Gass, 1997; N. Ellis, 2002), and the processes of attention, conscious awareness, monitoring, as well as practice, help to strengthen the patterns and forms and bring about language development. In connectionist models like N. Ellis', a dynamic system of interconnected language exemplars and patterns is seen to emerge out of exposure and use of the language.

In contrast to the theories described above, nativist approaches to language acquisition are devoid of references to general cognition as the source of language development, that is, the idea that language ability grows out of computation performed by generic neural networks as the individual interacts with the environment. The strongest view takes the Chomskyan position that humans are equipped with a mental language faculty that reflects an innate ability to learn languages. Its initial state is known as Universal Grammar (UG). Chomsky (1965) referred to this underlying structure of language as *competence*, while he saw *performance* as the production of actual utterances, or the language in use. Under this paradigm, language is conceived as a system of innate principles (i.e. abstract rules or grammars) combined with a certain number of parameters (markers) that vary across languages (1981). The notions of structure dependence and subadjacency refer to principles believed to occur across languages. An example of the latter would be the head directionality parameter, or the position (head-initial/head-final) of heads in phrases observable in different languages, which is claimed to be acquired by the child early on and functions as a combinatorial pattern or rule that enables him or her to generalise the arrangement of head and

complements to novel utterances. Parameters provide an account of variation across languages. In language universals theory, features that are less marked in a language are learned earlier than those that are marked. To borrow an explanation from Pica:

Surface features that are commonly found across languages, are perceptually salient in a language, and are transparent in their encoding of meaning or function are considered ‘unmarked’. Those that are rare or difficult to perceive and to relate to meaning or function are considered ‘marked’. (2005, p. 269)

White, adhering to the nativist theory of language universals, reports problems for speakers when a first language (L1) universal parameter is activated that is not present in the second language (L2). Her findings from an empirical study (1985) on the *pro-drop* null subject parameter of Universal Grammar can be interpreted in light of this theory. It is characterized by missing subjects and other properties that cluster with it, such as free subject-verb inversion, and *that*-trace effects (i.e., the fact that a subject cannot be extracted in English when it follows *that*; e.g., “Who did she say that *saw?”). In a study comparing L1 Spanish and L1 French learners of English, White found this parameter to be operative in native speakers of Spanish. In this study, a group of native Spanish and French speakers were given a grammaticality judgement test on a number of English sentences. The results showed that the Spanish speakers accepted many ungrammatical sentences containing these features while the French-speaking controls did not. With increasing levels of proficiency improvement was found, thus suggesting that the learners were able to reset their L1 parameters for the marked English L2 setting.

1.1.2 Sociocultural approaches

In this section we consider one strand within the social interactional approaches to the study of SLA from the wider perspective of learning and educational psychology.

The sociocultural paradigm of mind builds on the principles first originated in Vygotsky (1978, 1987), and later developed by Leontiev (1981), Wertsch (1985), Lantolf and Appel (1994), Lantolf (2000a) and others. It is rooted in principles pointing at socio-cognitive interaction as the source of learning and development. It proposes that an individual's apprehension of the world is mediated by symbolic tools acquired through social interaction in the course of education and learning.

Central constructs in Vygotskian theory are those of *mediation* and the existence of *psychological tools*, "those symbolic artifacts -signs, symbols, texts, formulae, graphic organizers- that when internalized help individuals master their own natural psychological functions of perception, memory, attention, and so on." (Kozulin, 2003, p. 15). Language use, organization, and structure are the primary means of mediation. It is through this mediation that individuals become agents of their own learning.

According to sociocultural theory, mental development can be studied through the analysis of *private speech* (Vygotsky, 1987; Luria, 1982; Saville-Troike, 1988). Saville-Troike has articulated the following categories of private speech patterns: repetition of another's utterances, recall and practice, creation of novel forms, expansion and substitution practice, and rehearsal for interpersonal communication. Lantolf sees private speech as being derived from social speech,

and as the precursor of inner speech. This transition, from without to within the cognitive system of the speaker results in *internalization*, a notion developed by Vygotsky (1978, p. 56), who identified a series of transformations whereby an external activity is first reconstructed and begins to occur internally. An interpersonal process is thus transformed into an intrapersonal one through a series of developmental events.

Another key construct in Vygotsky's theory and also for this study is the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*. Vygotsky oriented his research to child development, i.e., to “the dynamic relations between the child and his or her particular environment or culture” (Roberts, 2011 p. 47). These assumptions were later generalised in educational theory to include all stages of mental development in the learning process. The ZPD was defined by Vygotsky as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as developed through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Vygotsky argued that effective instruction should simultaneously identify and target the ZPD. The underlying assumption, as it applies to learning in general, is that, in order to be able to operate independently, learners need external support in dealing with more advanced concepts and processes. This assistance, also referred to as *scaffolding* (Lantolf, 1994, 2000; Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Frawley, 1997; Van Lier, 2000), is provided by more competent others and by mediational tools and artifacts that enable the learner to acquire higher psychological functions. From a socioculturally-based approach learners are seen as agents who regulate

their brain. Studies adapting this framework to L2 acquisition have been carried out by Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995) and Lantolf (2000a, 2003).

For Vygotsky, an accurate assessment of ability requires considering both *actual* and *potential* development. Self-regulation, or what the individual can do independently, represents the essence of actual development while potential development is what is beyond the independent capabilities of the individual as evident during mediated performance. In contrast to processing models of cognition, such as Krashen's, "Vygotsky's theory rejects the notion of the autonomous individual ... as well as the assumption that cognition is something that goes on exclusively, and invisibly, inside the head" (in Lantolf 2005, p. 337). It is interesting to observe, however, as Lantolf (2003, p. 366) insightfully notes, how in the process of internalization learners are active in determining which aspects of the language to focus on, paying attention to those properties of the language that are within their ZPDs. Lantolf acknowledges the ability of adult learners to employ metalinguistic comments in their private speech, but he also views this form of conscious awareness as potentially limiting their ability to use the language freely and spontaneously. Experimental research on the trade-off effect of focusing attention on one area of language, which we deal with later on, appears to support this view.

Within an instructional context, learners engage in collaboration to jointly advance their L2. As Kowal and Swain (1997, cited in Roberts, 2011, p. 296) have pointed out, learners are able to go beyond their present capacities by "externalising" (i.e. exploring collectively) their interlanguage and offering each other feedback, thus contributing to the processes of hypothesis formation and

interlanguage development. We should not ignore the fact that language learners, more so adult foreign language learners approaching oral tasks, such as those targeted in this study, operate at different levels of interlanguage processing, a fact that makes efforts to bring out these differences all the more necessary if teachers are to attend to the needs of each and every student.

1.2 Second language acquisition processes and development

To begin with, a clarification of the term *acquisition* needs to be made as, when calling into play the concept of L2 acquisition, we need to bear in mind that this is not a clear-cut notion referring exclusively to the final attainment of a language form or structure or to the ultimate acquisition of an L2. There are varying degrees to acquisition and different contexts of acquisition. A learner may have acquired the ability to express his or her ideas effectively in English but may have problems with pronunciation; or they may be very fluent in conversation but not so when the situation demands their ability to engage in formal communication. Furthermore, acquisition of a particular form may be in place at one point but then lost as time passes (a process known as backsliding).

Gass and Selinker (2008) draw on the notion of *emergence* to account for the processes involved in developing a second language:

researchers use a variety of criteria to determine when acquisition has taken place. However, one should not lose track of the important and perhaps more interesting factor of emergence. It is not just the point at which something is acquired that is of interest (unless one is comparing the point of acquisition of different forms), but it is also important to consider the stages that a learner goes through in acquiring a particular form. (pp. 81-82)

1.2.1 Second language systems and sequences

Regarding the impact of L2 acquisition on both teaching and learning, the two most significant findings in SLA suggest that acquisition in a second language is highly systematic and that it is also highly variable (in Myles, 2000). In this section we review relevant studies investigating the processes involved in developing a second language, with particular attention to these two lines of enquiry.

The first suggestions that second-language learner attempts at learning the language were distinct from first language acquisition processes were made by Corder (1967, 1981; in Tarone, 2006, p. 748). Corder claimed that learners develop their own linguistic system based on a universal built-in syllabus that guides their development and pointed to a transitional competence that had to be studied longitudinally. Selinker (1972) later introduced the concept of *interlanguage (IL)*, which he defined as the separate linguistic system evidenced when adult second-language learners attempt to express meaning in the language they are in the process of learning. Interlanguages are systematic and follow rules and patterns that change over the course of L2 development. They encompass not just phonology, morphology, and syntax, but also the lexical, pragmatic, and discourse levels. In his seminal study, Selinker also drew attention to the problem of *fossilisation*, or the process whereby IL development ceases, as an attempt to account for the observation that the majority of second language learners fail to attain native-speaker target-language competence (in Han and Selinker, 2005, p. 456).

Cross-linguistic influence (Sharwood Smith, 1983; Sharwood Smith & Kellerman, 1986), or *transfer* from prior knowledge of L1 to L2 is one of the key

processes involved in interlanguage development, but many other aspects, intrinsic and external to the L2 also demand attention.

A considerable amount of research has tried to establish the existence of a natural order of L2 acquisition (Bailey, Madden & Krashen, 1974). This developmental route has been found to be largely independent of both the L1 and the context of learning. One such line of research argues for the existence of a morpheme accuracy order. A number of studies, based on previous empirical research by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974), identified the following average order as being:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. progressive <i>-ing</i> | 6. past irregular |
| 2. noun plural <i>-s</i> | 7. past regular |
| 3. copula | 8. 3 rd person singular |
| 4. article | 9. noun possessive <i>-s</i> |
| 5. progressive auxiliary | |

(in Pica, 2005, p. 266-267)

Nevertheless, Pica notes the variability that can be found within the order as, for example, accuracy for the progressive *-ing* was found to be somewhat higher than that for noun plural *-s* for some learners, while copula seemed to be supplied more accurately than article or progressive auxiliary by other learners, regardless of the L1, the age, whether or not formal instruction was involved in the study, or whether spoken or written samples were used. Another illustrative case, also brought to our attention by Pica (p. 267), reports studies by Zobl (1980, 1982) involving the sequence of appearance of negative particles in English. It has been established that all learners in general go through the same stage of acquisition whereby a negative particle, usually *no* or *not*, is first placed in front of the item it negates, as in *no like* and *I no like*. However, Zobl observed that learners whose

languages exhibit this grammatical pattern, such as Spanish or Italian, usually remain longer in this phase than those whose L1 does not encode negation in this way. Similar interpretations have been provided from a nativist perspective, as we saw on page 16.

A relevant study of developmental sequences was carried out by Pienemann (Pienemann, Johnston, & Brindley, 1988; Pienemann, 1989) and led to his Teachability Hypothesis, according to which learners can accelerate their rate of L2 learning if presented with rules for constituent movement that correspond with their next stage of development. Pienemann and his colleagues (1988) report the following order of acquisition:

Structure	Example
1. Single words, formulae	How are you?
2. SVO, SVO?	*The tea is hot?
3. Adverb Preposing	*Yesterday I work
4. Do fronting	*Do he work?
5. Topicalisation	This I like
6. NEG + V (don't)	*He don't eat meat
7. Pseudo-inversion	Where is my purse?
8. Yes/No-inversion	*Have he seen it?
9. Particle shift	*He turn the radio on
10. V-'to'-V	We like to sing
11. 3rd-SG-s	She comes home
12. Do-2nd	They did not buy anything
13. Aux-2nd	Where has he seen you?
14. Adv-ly	They spoke gently
15. Q-tag	It's expensive, isn't it?

These features were seen to be acquired in five discrete stages that could be used in a speaking test to place a learner in an acquisitional level (Pienemann et al., 1988; cited in Fulcher, 2010, p. 78):

Stage 1: Single words and formulae

Stage 2: SVO, plural marking

Stage 3: Do fronting, topicalisation, adverb preposing, Neg+V

Stage 4: Pseudo-inversion, Yes/No-inversion

Stage 5: 3rd-SG-s, Aux-2nd, Do-2nd

More recently, Pienemann has developed the Processability Theory (1998, 2005), which provides a framework based on language processing accounts to explain the developmental sequences in L2 learning across languages. Romaine (2005) reports studies investigating the L2 processes of acquisition by learners of different languages. Findings appear to support little target language (TL) influence in the acquisition of major semantic domains, such as temporality (see Dietrich & Perdue, 1995). It appears that in the early stages learners create a system of communication based on lexical means rather than acquiring specific TL features, and it is not until later that they adopt more grammaticalized forms, with systematic morphological distinctions emerging rather late, if at all. This, Romaine (2005) goes on to assert, “suggests that acquisition is dictated not by the TL, but by constraints of the developing interlanguage system over time” (p. 319). Along similar lines, VanPatten (2007a, 2007b) has developed the Input Processing model, which aims to describe how L2 processing takes place, with attention directed first to meaning and then to form. All of these findings have obvious implications for the design and grading of grammar and communication activities.

In spite of the evidence pointing to the existence of developmental sequences in language acquisition, no strong causal claims can be made that will enable researchers to predict the sequence of acquisition in a given situation, as a range of variables play a part in these processes (see also the examples of learner variability in Pica above). Tarone (1983, 1988, 1990) and R. Ellis (1985) have proposed that L2 learners' linguistic knowledge is variable and probabilistic. Variability in use is seen as conditioned by input frequency and probabilistic knowledge, in agreement with N. Ellis' connectionist model (2002), and is based on the weighing of forms in the learner's mental grammars.

In a study of optionality in developing grammars of native speakers and English-speaking L2 learners of Hungarian, Papp (2000) presents evidence suggesting limited access to input and language processing opportunities, and a resulting lack of stability in the forms used by learners (even competent, end-state users) as reasons for developmental optionality, observing that "In the face of non-robust and parametrically ambiguous data, L2 learners are either found to fall back on L1 values or resort to general learning strategies, thus ultimately exhibiting divergent representations in end-state grammars" (p. 174).

1.2.2 Language-related aspects of second language acquisition

Strictly linguistic factors are studied as sources of variability. Systematic (rule-governed) and unsystematic (free) forms of variation have been reported by researchers (Romaine, 2005, p. 314), although this distinction remains controversial, as the lack of sufficient data or inadequate research methods may be the reason behind the lack of systematicity in a number of related studies.

Variation may be conditioned by internal linguistic factors such as the environment in which a sound occurs and grammatical constraints. In the area of morphological variation, Kiparsky (1972, cited in Romaine, p. 393) proposed the Distinctiveness Condition, which posits that there is a tendency for semantically relevant information to be retained in surface structure. In this analysis, the final /t/ of the noun “mist” would be more likely to be deleted than the final /t/ of the verbal form “missed”, which carries meaning, as its deletion would result in syncretism between the present (except for third person singular forms) and past tense forms. Likewise, a study by Dickerson (1975, also cited in Romaine, p. 325) on the variable phonology of ten Japanese learners of English reported that learners’ pronunciation of /z/ was most target-like before vowels and least target-like before interdental fricatives, affricates, and alveolar stops, showing that variation was sensitive to internal linguistic conditioning factors of the same type identified by sociolinguists in studies focusing on speakers using their own languages.

External language related factors are also invoked as sources of variability. One such factor is the amount of exposure to and practice of target language forms and usage that might enable the learner to develop hypotheses about the language (see Papp’s study of Hungarian learners in the previous section). Others which we will also describe include the relative time of acquisition and the learner’s language learning aptitude.

As to the influence of age of acquisition, those who argue for a “critical period” going from early childhood to puberty (Lenneberg, 1967), or a less rigid “sensitive” period (Long, 1990) for second language acquisition, attribute adults’

diminished processing capacity to maturational changes in the brain, as the ability to process language naturalistically decreases with age. The decrease in plasticity of the brain area associated with phonological encoding is particularly evident in adult L2 learners (see, for example, Oyama, 1976).

In spite of L2 learning impairment, adults are still able to use general problem-solving abilities and analytical thinking as well as abstractions derived from their knowledge of how their own language works, which allows them to make up for their diminished processing capacity. Also, motivation and attitude towards the target language and the target language community (Gass & Selinker, 2008) may impact an adult's success or failure in learning a language. Differences attributable to age are also observable at the level of pragmatic performance. Gass and Selinker (p. 164) point out that adults are aware of the social reasons for using different language varieties, whereas this awareness is not yet fully developed in children, as they are still caught in the simultaneous development of linguistic and social awareness.

In addition to the age constraints, learners also bring their own language learning aptitude and language learning style, as we will see in the next section.

1.2.3 Extra-linguistic aspects of L2 acquisition

In this section we deal with external non-language related factors influencing L2 acquisition, which may have multiple origins, ranging from the type of setting, topic, planning time, attitudes and motivation, genre and communicative scenario, among others. The social context is a major source of variation.

It has long been acknowledged that L2 use varies greatly according to the learning context. This is assumed both in the connectionist and nativist paradigms.

The different domains (personal, educational, professional, etc.) and situations (location, time, physical conditions, etc.) under which communication takes place differentially affect performance. This, however, does not imply overlooking individual differences, as a study by Segalowitz and Freed (2004) investigating the role of context of learning in L2 acquisition, illustrates. This study compared native speakers of English receiving instruction in Spanish at a home university and in a study-abroad setting. The research focused on various indexes of oral performance gains, including gains in oral fluency. Interestingly, the results showed that, although the second group made greater gains in fluency, significant interaction effects were also identified, thus suggesting the existence of complex relationships between oral proficiency (here, the learners' initial oral abilities), cognitive abilities (e.g., speed and efficiency of L2 cognitive processing), and learning context (in this study, the foreign university and country). As the authors explain (p. 196), contexts differ in terms of what learning opportunities they present, while learners differ in terms of how ready they are linguistically and cognitively to seize the opportunities provided and to benefit from them once they do. The study underscored the importance of interpreting the different variables together rather than in isolation.

Social factors represent a fundamental source of variability of an extra-linguistic nature. The relationship between social context and second language use and acquisition is studied within the field of sociolinguistics. Research focusing on the social causes of IL variation goes back two decades (see Selinker and Douglas, 1985; Tarone, 1979, 1988, 2000; Tarone & Parrish, 1988; Firth & Wagner 1997; in Tarone, 2007).

An important insight from recent sociolinguistic research pointed out by Tarone (2007) concerns the interface between social context and the cognitive processing of a second language. Tarone reports a study by Bell (1984) showing that the cognitive processes of attention to language form can be understood in terms of a speaker's particular style, shaped as response to their audience. A different class, gender, or social network will prompt the speaker to accommodate to their addressee. In order to position themselves according to the varying degrees of formality required at any given situation, speakers draw on their understanding of socially-motivated linguistic varieties. Tarone (1979, 1983) situates these exchanges along a continuum between what she terms as a *vernacular* and a *superordinate* style in the use of the L2 grammatical systems, the former representing the style closest to the user's IL system, with less attention paid to the form of one's speech, and the latter characterized by the use of a more carefully monitored style, where the user interprets the social setting as demanding greater control of his or her speech. Similarly, Selinker and Douglas (1985) have suggested that adult L2 learners produce ILs with different linguistic characteristics when speaking in different situations according to an internally created discourse domain. An oral exam situation such as the one investigated in the present research work will, according to this view, generate a different type of discourse than a more informal classroom interaction would generate.

One of Tarone's (1988) claims with relevance for this study suggests that different attentional demands in the domains of speech or writing should be regarded as potential sources of variation in accuracy. A number of empirical studies have dealt with the impact of social contextual factors and the accuracy

demands of the situation on specific perceptual aspects, such as learners' noticing of corrective feedback on their errors and the processes of monitoring, feedback, and self-repair (Kormos, 1999; Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada, 2001; Lyster & Mori, 2006; in Tarone, 2007). As Tarone aptly summarizes (2007), social contextual changes such as shifts in interlocutor, task, or topic can explain particular phonological, morphological, and syntactic variables in a learner's IL and in the rate of acquisition, for example, as was observed in a longitudinal study of a 5 year-old Chinese boy learning English showing that the child's stages of acquisition of English questions were related to the different social settings in which he interacted, each new stage appearing almost in every case first at home with the researcher, then at school with peers, and finally at school interacting with the teacher.

An earlier empirical study in the area of phonological variation was conducted by Schmidt (1977) regarding the pronunciation of certain consonant sounds by speakers of different social classes. In the experiment, a group of university students and a working class group of speakers of Arabic were asked to pronounce the word "third". The results indicated that pronunciation of the English fricative consonant /θ/ differed according to group, with the more educated group pronouncing a higher percentage of the /θ/ variant, a prestige form in Egyptian Arabic. The less educated group, in turn, tended to use the /s/ and /t/ variants more (In Gass & Selinker, 2008, pp. 266-267).

Tarone (1985) suggests that morphological variability may also be affected by the level of formality required in a particular context. She observed that formal contexts, such as tests, may elicit more accurate morphology than narratives. By

contrast, Pienemann (1998) attributes these differences not to social interactional factors, but to the task itself, arguing that some tasks are more successful than others in eliciting particular structures.

Tarone (2007, p. 840) draws on Preston (2000, 2002), and Fasold and Preston (2006) to account for the co-existence of different grammars in the mind of the multilingual L2 learner that are explicitly related to social (for example, interlocutor), as well as the linguistic context and the relative time of acquisition.

Other sources of variability result from adopting L1 pragmatic conventions. To illustrate this, we will consider the question of politeness. Paltridge (2006, p. 78) maintains that politeness strategies are not the same across languages and cultures and can be a cause of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Takahashi and Beebe (1993) reported an experiment with two groups of students: 15 American L1 speakers, 15 Japanese ESL speakers of English, and 25 Japanese responding in Japanese in their own country. The exchanges involved corrections in status-unequal (teacher-student) situations where one knew the other had made a factual error. The study found that positive remarks were frequently used to soften face-threatening situations in English, but not so much by those speaking in Japanese. All groups used softeners and verbal indication, but the Japanese speakers in Japan did not use as many overt indications of correction as the others. The study suggested that Japanese paralinguistic means such as facial expression, tone of voice, or sighs are used by Japanese to convey those meanings and speakers are more overt in their consciousness of status, while Americans try to maintain, at least superficially, the appearance of an equal status.

In addition to social factors, which can be generalised to a group of people or to a context of use, individual characteristics may impact second language acquisition within an instructional context. Learning is influenced by the individuals' language learning aptitude and also by the strategies these deploy as they engage with the language.

In a review of studies leading to current views on L2, Skehan (2006, pp. 53-55) traces back the focus of research on language learning aptitude to studies that affirmed the existence of a specific talent for language learning. These gave rise to measurement methods such as the Modern Languages Aptitude Test battery, which, Skehan states, linked aptitude to instruction. On the other hand, more recent conceptualizations have brought about a reassessment of the concept and features of language aptitude, linking it to SLA processes (e.g. noticing, pattern identification, etc.). The CANAL-F (Cognitive Ability for the Acquisition of Language–Foreign) aptitude battery reflects this new approach. Other studies have linked aptitude to acquisitional contexts (e.g. implicit/explicit learning conditions; formal/informal settings, etc.).

The subject of language learning strategies has been an issue of some controversy, as in carrying out attempts to apprehend it, different categorisations have ensued (see, for instance, O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper & Russo, 1985; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Dorney and Skehan (2003) identified four main types: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. Oxford (1990) saw cognitive strategies as encompassing cognitive strategies and memory and added compensatory strategies, thus expanding the model to a total of six types of strategy. According to

Skehan (2006, p. 54) this appears to better reflect data. Gas and Selinker (2008) highlight one interesting area of research that links language learning strategies to the analysis of discursal strategies within particular discourse domains (p. 441).

Beyond the cognitive domain, a learner's affective style, involving aspects like emotion, feeling, and motivation, has also been shown to play a critical role in SLA. Affect is one area of which most teachers would agree they have basic intuitive experience, even in the absence of theoretical knowledge of issues dealt with in educational psychology. As a matter of fact, any professional activity that engages people in communication (teachers and learners, doctors and patients, etc.), should benefit from an understanding of how the affective dimension may positively or negatively affect the nature of the interaction and its end goals. Research on affect, however, goes a step further in claiming that this dimension is instrumental in the development of second language proficiency. Authors such as Arnold (1999) have also sought to explicate the interaction between affect and cognition and its influence on second language development. Arnold and Brown (1999), drawing on research carried out by Damasio (1994), which established the neurobiological connection between emotions and reasoning, assert the relevance of affective factors in L2 learning, arguing that these are not in opposition to the cognitive aspects; on the contrary, as "when both are used together, the learning process can be constructed on a firmer foundation" (p. I).

Krashen (1982) pointed to affect earlier within his general theory of second language acquisition. In his hypothesis of the Affective Filter, Krashen posited that a learner's affective responses effectively act to facilitate or impede language acquisition, and he considered motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety as variables

to be taken into account. According to Krashen, exposure to comprehensible input and the individual's affective filter are key predictors of levels of second language acquisition. This hypothesis explains how it is possible for a learner to come into contact with a great deal of comprehensible input, and still stop short of the level of the native speaker, fossilizing in the language acquisition process (Selinker, 1972). Krashen argues that the acquirer needs to be "open" to the input so that it can be internalised. The affective filter then acts as a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive. If a learner's attitudes are not optimal for L2 acquisition, they will seek less input and will show a strong affective filter; "even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition" (Krashen, 1982, p. 31). Krashen draws on this phenomenon as an explanation of why some learners succeed at language learning, while others do not.

Among the components of the affective dimension, motivation is one area that has been widely investigated in relation to its ability to mobilise or to frustrate attempts to acquire an L2. Williams and Burden (1997) define motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal" (p. 120). These authors argue that learners learn what is meaningful to them and in ways that are meaningful to them, and that they feel better if they are in control of what they are learning. Similarly, Bachman (1964) suggested that learners should be involved in the decision-making process as a way to boost their motivation to learn.

In addition to the importance of being able to feel in control of the learning process, the sheer value of language as an asset in itself is put forward by Williams and Burden (1997) when they claim that motivation to learn languages runs deeper than in other kinds of learning. As they put it:

There is no question that learning a foreign language is different to learning other subjects, mainly because of the social status of such a venture. Language, after all, belongs to a person's whole social being; it is a part of one's identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. (p. 115)

The authors position themselves within the social-constructivist framework, which we advocate and is one of the guiding principles of our research.

Regarding the issue of motivation in instructed L2 acquisition, research linking it to communication can also be found. The claim that communicative classes increase students' motivation was made by McNamara (1973, cited in Knibbeler, 1989). This position is made clear in his idea that "more pressing for most students than a general desire to be able to communicate at some future date is a specific desire to be able to communicate in some actual situation where what is being communicated is of vital concern to the persons involved" (pp. 64-65). Good communicative lessons tend to be successful in terms of student satisfaction. Learners' ability to immerse themselves in simulated scenarios in the classroom and to experience them as if they were real is something that teachers working with students at all levels, children to adults, can attest to. A number of research

studies have tried to establish a one-to-one relation between motivation and L2 development (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Gardner, 2001, among others).

As seen in Krashen's affective filter, other affective variables have been assumed to influence L2 acquisition, notably self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen understood that learners with a good level of self-confidence and good self-esteem, paired with low-level anxiety, tend to do better in language acquisition. Another related issue concerns learners' self-perceptions. Along this same line of enquiry, Tanaka (1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2008) has identified two broad dimensions of learner beliefs: beliefs about oneself as a language learner and beliefs about approaches to language learning. All of these can play a significant role in how learners approach an oral task such as the ones discussed in the present study. Teachers should ensure that learners develop a positive self-concept and they should also make them aware of their own learning processes through the teaching of strategies for communication. We will delve deeper into aspects related to affect in connection with speaking a foreign language in Chapter 2.

1.3 Instructed second language learning

In this section we refer to findings from theoretical and instructed SLA research and from educational psychology, in particular, the socio-constructive model outlined above, with direct implications for language pedagogy. We offer a brief overview of how language teaching theories and practices have evolved over the past decades up to the present, with particular attention to task-based language teaching, followed by a review of relevant studies which have helped to advance the knowledge in the field of instructed second language acquisition and learning.

Until approximately the mid 1960s, second language pedagogy remained heavily influenced by practices that favoured the teaching of discrete language forms and grammatical structures by teachers who assumed the central role as providers of knowledge, based on the belief that learners would readily acquire whatever they might be presented. Criticism began to grow in the 1960s as a reaction to such behaviourist approaches, and as empirical research and accumulated experience in language classrooms indicated that second language acquisition processes could not be as easily manipulated (Van de Branden, Bygate & Norris, 2009, p. 4). It was observed that merely teaching certain forms and getting learners to practice, even to learn them by heart, did not mean that the learner would instantly internalise them. Rather, learning began to be seen as growing out of exposure to and use of language in meaning-based activities. Importantly, “meaning” is understood here in its wider sense as lexical, semantic, and pragmatic meaning. It was observed that learners’ communicative needs and intentions, not just their individual acquisitional processes, had to be taken on board in the planning and development of lessons. Communicative language teaching began to emerge as a pedagogical approach that aimed to provide more individualised, functional and situated learning opportunities which emphasised interpersonal and intercultural communication. In its initial stages this was done conservatively, as teachers tended to incorporate communicative exchanges, such as dialogues and role-plays, to existing form-focused designs. This was done mainly to add a realistic “feel” to the teaching of what were otherwise heavily structured syllabuses in which the contents were pre-fixed and particular learners’ needs were not addressed. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) adopted a new

perspective, claiming a stronger focus on meaningful communicative practice that would place learner needs at the centre of the pedagogical experience. Equally influential were contributions from educational psychology to second language teaching that emphasised the socially-situated nature of learning, the active role played by learners in their own processes of acquisition, and the role of teachers as guide and scaffold. Relevant contributors were Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978).

The following sub-sections cover in some more depth the main areas of analysis hinted at above, namely, research carried out into the cognitive processes and representations underlying L2 learning, “task” as a pedagogical unit, and sociocultural applications to second language teaching.

1.3.1 Instructed second language acquisition research

As was shown, findings from first and second language acquisition research suggest that language is first acquired unconsciously. Thus, instead of pre-teaching a target structure or a linguistic form, the emphasis is usually placed on providing plenty of opportunities for practice in authentic communicative situations that are meaningful to the learner and subsequently highlighting the salience of particular forms and structures as they arise in the input and in the output so as to aid noticing and to facilitate automatization. Several theories of language acquisition and learning have argued for the existence of these phenomena. Krashen's (1981, 1985, 1994) Input Hypothesis claimed that learners acquire new linguistic forms subconsciously through exposure to and comprehension of input, which has to be set in a context, and adjusted to the linguistic level in each case. This was a primarily naturalistic approach to L2 acquisition. This view was superseded by

other approaches suggesting that certain pedagogical interventions enhance acquisition. Critics, for example Canale and Swain (1980), who had applied Krashen's theory to their immersion programmes in Canada, attested to the fact that mere immersion and the use of content-based language did not guarantee the acquisition of target-like forms and usage. On the contrary, errors tended to become fossilised. Long's (1981, 1983) Interaction Hypothesis elaborated on the effects of input, which he claimed was crucial for language learning. Yet, he observed that, when input was no longer comprehensible, efforts made to promote successful communication in the form of modified input directed towards the learner aided development. Strategies for the negotiation for meaning were promoted (Long, 1996; Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Ellis & He, 1999; Mackey, 1999). Comprehension checks, requests for clarification, and reformulation (recast) were claimed to support L2 acquisition. Rulon and McCreary (1986, cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 72) coined the term *negotiation of content* based on the observation that small groups of learners produced more exchanges of information than teacher-led discussions. More recently, a number of studies have investigated the type of input (not modified, pre-modified or modified through interaction) with a view to unlocking the most effective ways to present it in order to improve comprehension (Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987) and language acquisition (Doughty, 1991; Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Loschky, 1994). Long himself (Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998) later added a new dimension to his theory by stressing the importance of implementing a focus-on-form (FonF) component to meaning-based tasks in order to facilitate sustained development. VanPatten (1990, 1993,

1996, 2007) has carried out extensive research into ways in which learners can be taught to process input to aid restructuring and internalization.

Also relevant to the study of SLA and learning was Swain's (1985, 1995) Output Hypothesis which, acknowledging the relevance of input for acquisition, identified *output* as a source of language learning, as it pushes learners to try and produce language that is accurate by “noticing the gap” (Schmidt, 1994), by testing hypotheses, and through metalinguistic analysis. Furthermore, Swain also put forward the idea that *pushed output*, that is, those instances in which learners are forced to make modifications in their output (such as in requests for clarification or pedagogical techniques such as *dictogloss*), facilitate L2 learning. R. Ellis (2005, p. 43) has recently reviewed studies carried out on effects of input and output on language acquisition, noting the controversy that these have generated.

A source of debate, therefore, is the question of whether learners learn more as a result of linguistic processing of input or whether output processing plays a more significant role. Skehan (1998), drawing on Swain (1995), summarizes the positive effects that can be derived from output processing:

- Better input processing through feedback.
- Strengthening of syntactic processing, giving students increased opportunities to test the target grammar as a result of negative feedback on error.
- Automatization of knowledge.
- More opportunities for the student to develop discourse skills, e.g. through participation in long conversational turns.
- Aid in the development of a personal voice for the student.
- Aid in directing conversation towards topics on which students may contribute opinions. (in Ellis, 2005, p. 39)

In spite of efforts at settling this debate, the subject is far from exhausted. Contrary to Krashen's earlier insistence that acquisition depends entirely on comprehensible input, many researchers now acknowledge the role of production for L2 development. Krashen himself has recently reassessed his model to incorporate the need for metacognitive work on the part of the student as a vehicle for development. Still, the pre-eminence of input as the driving force of L2 acquisition remains strong, as he affirms (2009):

I have changed my position on only one issue: At the end of *Principles and Practice*, I suggest the use of a form of deception - students may think they are acquiring vocabulary or learning subject matter, but unknown to them, they are acquiring because they are getting comprehensible input at the same time. I now think it is very important to make a strong effort to inform students about the process of language acquisition, so they can continue to improve on their own. (Introduction to the Internet Edition)

Swain (2000, 2002, 2006) has recently relabelled the term *output* as speaking, writing, collaborative dialogue, private speech, verbalizing, and/or *linguaging*, or the use of language to mediate higher mental cognitive and affective processes. Through her new emphasis on collaboration, Swain has expanded the concept of *output* as product to include aspects of interaction and thus lends weight to the Vygotskian notion that development and learning first emerge in collective behaviour and are then internalized.

Before proceeding to the next section, which will focus on task-based learning and teaching, it will be helpful to further develop some key concepts which are central to the study of second language learning and development in the context of the present study.

Second language/foreign language learning

A distinction needs to be made between second and foreign language learning within the field of instructed second language acquisition, as they reflect different instructional contexts which will affect teachers' pedagogical decisions. In L2 contexts the language is generally taught in an English-speaking country or the learner has some contact with the target language outside the classroom. In such cases, the learner has plenty of input from which to draw and opportunities to use the language for authentic communication. In a foreign language context, the learners are usually taught in their home countries as part of their language curriculum, but they may also attend courses in anglophone countries as visiting students. Hence, foreign language learners do not have much opportunity or, as in the case of those who travel abroad, they do not stay in the country long enough to become part of the speaking community. As regards the teaching approach, as Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 200) stated some years ago, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students receive overtly metalinguistic instruction, limited meaning-focused input and few opportunities for output. This is, to a degree, still the case for much of the EFL teaching being carried out in many parts of the world. This situation largely reflects the prior English learning experience by most learners in the present study and, consequently, this fact weighed heavily on the pedagogical decisions made by the teacher/researcher in addressing the language learning needs of this particular group.

Notwithstanding the above discussion, the rise of more effective methodologies in recent years, including content- and task-based instruction, and the growth of English as lingua franca have facilitated learners' better access to

larger input pools and to opportunities for meaningful communication. People nowadays use English more for travel, for work, to stay informed, to stay in contact via social media, etc. Motivated teachers and students nowadays have authentic materials at their fingertips, many immediately accessible via the internet, to make their teaching and learning of English a much more situated, realistic experience. This, on the other hand, may be one reason why significantly different levels may be found within the same population of students in an EFL class, as it is often the case that students of the same age and of similar educational background may have taken different routes to the acquisition of “their” English. This second issue, which suggests high levels of variability within groups of students expected to work as a homogeneous class, motivated key decisions in the design of the pedagogical approach to the present research work.

To summarise, any classroom-based research should be examined taking into consideration the particular ESL/EFL context in which it takes place, so that the appropriate pedagogical choices will be made. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed description of the specific instructional context in which this research was carried out.

The acquisition/learning dichotomy

Both acquisition and learning are related to the phenomenon of second language acquisition, but in a simplified analysis, only the latter implies the mediation of instruction. From the point of view of language processing, the level of consciousness or unconsciousness engaged in each of these processes needs clarifying, which brings us to another dichotomy:

Implicit/explicit learning

Studies of implicit and explicit learning have focused on the level of awareness that learners bring to their language processing. Roehr (2008, p.7), drawing on Anderson (2005) and Hultstijn (2005), defines explicit knowledge as “a declarative knowledge that can be brought into awareness and that is available for verbal report, while implicit knowledge is ... knowledge that cannot be brought into awareness and cannot be articulated”. A subject of much debate has been the degree of interplay between these two forms of knowledge in the learning process (Sharwood-Smith, 1981; DeKeyser, 1998; R. Ellis, 2003, 2005; Roehr, 2008, among others). Several cognitive interpretations evolved from that notion (see Doughty and Williams, 1998, p. 202). The so-called *strong-interface position* holds that implicit and explicit knowledge do interact. On the other hand, the *non-interface position* sees them as mutually exclusive, as they are seen to operate on different processing planes. This view was taken by Krashen (1982, 1985). Krashen claimed that explicit teaching of grammar is not effective as learners cannot use explicit rules in fluent communication. R. Ellis (2003, p. 106; 2005, p. 144) has proposed a weaker form of the *non-interface position*, arguing that explicit knowledge facilitates the development of implicit knowledge rather than changing into it. Explicit knowledge tends to be used when the learner is not under time pressure, as it requires controlled processing. Similarly to Krashen’s statement, Roehr (2008, p. 18) stresses the idea that oral tasks in particular make access to the learner’s analyzed knowledge more difficult, as attentional resources must be directed to immediate communicative goals.

Metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness

Applied to language acquisition, the term metalinguistic knowledge (MLK) refers to explicit knowledge about the language that can be brought into awareness or articulated (Anderson, 2005; Hultstijn, 2005; Roehr, 2008). For the purpose of this study, we first examine Roehr and Gánem-Gutiérrez's definition of metalinguistic knowledge as "a learner's explicit knowledge about the syntactic, morphological, lexical, phonological, and pragmatic features of the L2" (2009, p. 165). These authors have researched individual difference variables of language aptitude, working memory for language, and participants' language learning history and have found language-learning history in formal settings to be the strongest predictor for levels of MLK attained. This has led them to argue that metalinguistic learning is distinct from both language-learning aptitude and working memory for language. These findings suggest that MLK is an independent dimension and that it is worth developing in students to promote L2 acquisition. Roehr (2008, p. 10) brings to the fore the distinction between "internally induced MLK" and "metalinguistic knowledge gleaned from externally presented pedagogical grammar" and hypothesizes that "metalinguistic knowledge derived by the learner himself/herself may be more relevant to the individual's L2 learning situation than one-size-fits-all pedagogical grammar rules acquired from a commercially produced textbook".

Metalinguistic awareness (MLA), it needs to be stressed, does not necessarily imply the immediate explicit availability of information. It can manifest at a basic level, i.e., noticing, or at increasing levels of linguistic understanding, ranging from comparisons and hypothesis testing to analysis (Schmidt, 2001; see

also R. Ellis, 2006, 2009a; Roberts, 2011; Galambos & Goldin-Meadow, 1990; Andrews, 1997). In the wake of the Output Hypothesis, which suggests that producing language may stimulate learners to move from semantic to syntactic processing (Swain, 1995), the potential benefits of MLA have been discussed in relation to output-based pedagogic tasks. According to Swain, noticing, hypothesis-testing, and metalinguistic reflection play an important role in the language learning process. Reflecting on language is believed to enable learners to gain a deeper understanding of the L2 (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 2001).

Metacognitive awareness involves reflecting on one's thinking, or understanding and controlling one's own cognitive processes.

Fostering both metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness; that is, helping learners to become aware of task-related linguistic and cognitive demands, was then at the heart of this project "not simply to help learners to master a specific task but to help them to develop a principled understanding of the object of study that will enable them to transfer from the given activity to other activities" (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005, p. 257).

Focus on form

The focus on form approach to the teaching of linguistic features has received much comment over the past decades, as was already hinted at in the brief historical overview at the start of this chapter.

The term *focus on form* was first used by Long (1991; Long & Crookes, 1992). Long (1991) distinguished between *focus on form (FonF)* which "draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46) and *focus on*

forms (FonFs) “in which classes spend most of their time working on isolated linguistic features in a sequence prescribed by a syllabus or a textbook” (2000, p. 179). DeKeyser (1998, p. 43) identified Universal Grammar, the need for negative evidence and the complexity of the target structure as key linguistic variables to take into account when investigating FonF. These notions with contributions by other authors are explained at some length in the following.

Universal Grammar

We have already explained how from the perspective of Universal Grammar (UG) a marked feature in the target language may signal a demand for focused attention. An example of this might be the basic word order of subject, verb and object in Spanish and English. It follows, continuing DeKeyser’s argument, that if a structure is part of UG and UG is accessible to the language learner, then sufficient input processing will trigger acquisition, unless L2 is a subset of L1.

Negative evidence

Likewise, if the form or structure is not part of UG, negative evidence is required. Again, this was suggested in the section on nativism where reference was made to White’s study of the pro-drop parameter. DeKeyser’s examples for English L2 speakers are adverb placement and interrogative structures for native speakers of French. For cases like these, this author (p. 43) points to the need for “a rather strong variant of focus on form” which includes rule-teaching and error correction.

Complexity

According to DeKeyser, only abstract or categorical rules are well suited to FonF, as those that apply probabilistically are harder to acquire. In this analysis, rules that are easy to learn and hard to acquire are best taught through this approach.

DeKeyser illustrates this point with reference to the third person singular *-s*. However, the lack of apparent complexity of the structure may be misleading. Ellis (1990) sees the *-s* pattern, which learners repeatedly fail to use correctly, as a formally complex one due to its long distance relationship with the grammatical number of the subject, arguing that such features are only eventually learnable when the learner is ready to acquire them.

Another factor that demands attention, and which also applies to the 3rd person singular *-s*, is the fact that certain forms fail to be corrected when the error does not impede successful communication. In a classroom-based study, Mackey (2006) was able to establish a relationship between noticing and learning. The study compared several grammatical forms: morphological items (plural endings and past tense markers) and question formation and concluded that the fact that the latter one was more salient, as it required structural manipulation (adding an auxiliary and changing the word order) or negotiation, may have resulted in greater cognitive processing and facilitated learning.

As regards the choice of forms to be focused on, DeKeyser (1998, p. 43) sees pronunciation in need for intensive FonF, while vocabulary needs little and morphosyntax is a candidate. If the analysis centres on those forms used by the learner in a particular instance, Ellis (2003; citing Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993), points out two types: those that the learner used incorrectly and those that the learner did not use for lack of knowledge.

Regarding the teaching approach, Ellis (2003, p. 142) distinguishes between focused FonF tasks, in which the learners are not informed of the specific linguistic focus, and situational grammar exercises, which provide contextualized practice of

a specific linguistic feature. Focused tasks are designed with a view to eliciting spontaneous production of the form in focus. To illustrate these two different ways of proceeding, we may consider a task in the form of a dialogue in which a person is showing a tourist how to get from the train station to the city centre. A possible exploitation of this material as a situational grammar exercise might be to introduce the use of the present conditional in polite requests at the start of the activity and then show the learner the dialogue that frames the scene, in which the form “Could you tell me how to get to...?” is used. In contrast, a communicative FonF task might, for instance, aim to elicit such forms by involving the students in developing the situations themselves, by briefly preparing the dialogues in pairs and then performing them in front of the class. If the form in focus is effectively elicited in the students’ dialogues, two general FonF strategies may be used. First, an implicit, incidental one, whereby the teacher would briefly correct an erroneous expression or help fill a gap in his or her knowledge as the student speaks. For example, the teacher might immediately repeat in a questioning tone the phrase “Do you tell me...” to encourage the learner to switch to “Could you tell me...”. Alternatively, the teacher might decide to use an explicit post-task approach, inducing the learner to notice the error, or the gap, by means of a metalinguistic comment. For example, the teacher might ask the student what verbal form was used or ought to have been used to make his or her request for information a polite one. A key difference between these two types of FonF, the situational grammar exercise and the focused task, is the level of learner engagement, as the exercise in the example focused attention on a specific language feature, which the learners might or might not have been aware of and might or might not have been

motivated or developmentally ready to learn, whereas the dramatized role-play was designed with a view to eliciting the problematic forms in contextualized situations. The learners used whatever knowledge they had available in their memory store, and this was used by the teacher to signal possible gaps in their interlanguage. In the example, they may have not been previously aware of the verbal form used to express a request politely. Consequently, if a learner eventually resolves the problem and finds or is shown the appropriate form for the message he or she was trying to convey, this may create a stronger memory for future use than the mere repetition or imitation of forms and rules previously selected by the teacher. At this stage, it might be useful to point back to the relationship between affect and cognition referred to above (see the section on extra-linguistic aspects of L2 acquisition in Chapter 1.2.3). Also, if we agree with McNamara's claim that performance of communicative activities (even if these are part of a simulated situation in a classroom setting) increase learners' motivation to learn (see section on language learning strategies above), it follows that communicative FonF will have a greater effect on the cognitive activities of attention, noticing, hypotheses formation and testing and restructuring that lead to acquisition. In this regard, findings from cognitive psychology seem to point in the same direction, as research has shown that in order for automatization of knowledge to take place, tasks should be able to promote firm form-meaning mappings in the learners' mind. Only messages encoded in the form of meaningful communication create the kinds of strong associations and representations in the mind that are kept in long-term memory.

An intermediate approach between using FonFs exercises on the one hand and the communicative FonF activities proposed above would be the teaching of specific forms followed by contextualised communicative practice. DeKeyser (1998) and Lightbown (1998) favour this approach. DeKeyser draws on Anderson's skill-learning theory (1983, 1987) to affirm that the proceduralization of declarative knowledge of grammatical rules should precede any communicative practice, and it should be done carefully, with ample time to think and without time pressure. Thus, DeKeyser (p. 49), following previous work by Anderson (1987) and Anderson and Fincham (1994) makes the claim that "Proceduralization is achieved by engaging in the target behaviour –or procedure– while temporarily leaning on declarative crutches." Proceduralization, therefore, precedes restructuring, strengthening and automatization of knowledge. Doughty and Williams (1998) are not altogether persuaded of the usefulness of this methodological option, arguing that if no timely opportunity for use of the forms taught arises, these will no longer remain in memory (p. 5). This is particularly true in the context of EFL teaching and is one reason to adopt a more task-based approach to teaching.

At the start of this sub-section reference was made to the less communicatively oriented practice involving what Ellis (2003) terms production-practice activities, with the teacher deciding what is going to be attended to. This was the method of choice in the traditional, teacher-centered methodologies. Examples of FonFs task include repetition, substitution, gapped exercises, and others. Following years of rejection of anything that might ring of a conductist approach to teaching, the pendulum seems to have swung back, at least partially,

and this type of exercises are now assumed to have some pedagogical value. Ellis (2003, p. 261) reasons that activities of this kind, although they do not directly promote acquisition, may still be useful in helping learners to automatise forms that they have begun to use on their own.

To summarize, the account presented above shows FonF potentially taking place at different times: either before, during or after the communicative task has been performed. All, it has been argued, are valuable, widely used approaches. However, the communicatively motivated use of forms stands as the most effective in promoting L2 acquisition. As indicated earlier, Swain has proposed the use of FonF for conscious reflection through enhanced output (that is, after the communicative task has been performed), as it promotes the noticing of forms that were produced while attempting to communicate in the target language (1998, p. 67). In so doing, the communicative goal is maintained and valuable language is attended to afterwards. This is the approach adopted in the present study.

The value of input processing as an alternative to output processing in FonF has also been widely investigated, as was shown above. A wealth of studies, starting with VanPatten (see Chapter 1; section 1.3.1.) have been carried out in this area. However, research on input-based FonF is beyond the scope of this dissertation and it is not dealt with in this literature review.

Returning to the specific role of output in promoting acquisition through FonF activities, Swain (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1996; see also the start of the present chapter) stresses the cognitive activities of noticing, hypothesis formulation and testing, and metalinguistic processing as conducive to acquisition. Output generates *metatalk*, which the learner uses to reflect on language use. This

metatalk may or may not involve the use of metalinguistic terminology but being the result of a situated activity “it may also serve the function of helping students to understand the relationships between meaning, forms, and function in a highly context-sensitive situation” (1998, p. 69). One pedagogical procedure used by Swain (see Kowal & Swain, 1994, 1997) is *dictogloss*, which involves the learners in listening to a short text being read to them at normal speed and then trying to reconstruct it with their own resources. The text contains samples of a particular grammatical construction. Kowal and Swain used the transcribed talk of pairs of students working together at the reconstruction of texts to identify instances of *language related episodes (LRE)*. An LRE has been defined by Swain and Lapkin (1996) as “any part of a dialogue in which students talk about the language they are producing, question the language use, or other- or self-correct” (in Swain, 1998, p. 70). In the Kowal and Swain study, getting the students to reflect on their own output through metatalk was linked to heightened attention on the learners’ use of the language, particularly to things related to what they needed to talk about. Furthermore, it was also observed that the students tended to stick with the knowledge they had constructed collaboratively. This led the researchers to argue that these pedagogic activities are a potential source of language learning and to stress the value of collaborative work in promoting these processes. Another interesting pedagogical application has been Lynch’s (2001, 2007) use of transcripts of students’ oral performances as locus for reflection on the language. As will be observed in Chapter 3, these theoretical underpinnings and their associated pedagogical applications provide a theoretical base to some of the procedures adopted in the experimental phase of this thesis.

Another question that deserves study in relation to FonF is the context in which the L2 is being acquired. In our discussion of the rules that are amenable to FonF, it was shown how abstract rules appear to be easier to grasp than probabilistic patterns, which rely on learners' exposure to large amounts of input combined with opportunities for use in communicative practice. This would support an explicit approach to the teaching of certain easy-to-learn grammar rules in foreign language contexts which, as noted, are characterized by input-poor environments. This particularly applies to contexts such as that of the present research, involving a class of adult undergraduate learners with years of exposure to pedagogical grammar. In cases like this, brief sessions of remedial practice may help bring out already existing knowledge of, at least, the basic grammatical rules. Explicit metalinguistic practice would then be justified.

Finally, in approaching FonF from a sociocultural perspective, care must be taken to ensure that the activity engages both the learner and the teacher (see also Samuda, 2001) or a more competent other in determining what aspects of the language the student is able to achieve independently and what will require assistance (the learner's zone of proximal development), and then plan the form-focused practice accordingly. This, again, forms part of the approach taken in the design of the pedagogical sequence described in the present research, which will be described at length in Chapter 3.

Learner errors

So far we have reviewed notions related to the cognitive processes engaged in when processing linguistic forms in general and how these insights may be drawn upon by teachers to promote learners' L2 development. In what follows, learner

errors will be dealt with as specific products of a learner's cognitive activity on the route to achieving target language proficiency. This is an area of research that has received much attention in the field of language teaching and learning.

As outlined at the start of this section, L2 errors have been studied extensively, from the initial approaches in the first decades of the past century, marked by attempts to avoid their production, through the initial phases of the communicative approach, during which errors were not attended to, as the main goal was attaining the communicative aim. More recently, the role of error has begun to be acknowledged as instrumental in pushing a learner's interlanguage. Doughty & Varela (1998) saw negative evidence as a powerful device for second language learning, and suggested putting the error in focus by using repetition, rising intonation, stress on the target word or phrase and recasts (p. 123).

To bring the issue closer to home, we briefly report on two projects approaching errors by Spanish university students, as we understand these to be particularly relevant to the focus and the context of this dissertation. The first concerns the research carried out by MacDonald (2005) at Valencia Polytechnic University towards her PhD thesis, which involved gathering data from a series of synchronous and asynchronous telematic exchanges between students at UPV and other European universities and the construction of a corpus and further analysis of the student errors. The study offers an approximation to the type of errors frequently committed by Spanish undergraduate learners of English. Of particular significance to our research were those errors concerning the synchronous exchanges as, despite the medium being telematic communication, this medium (at least in the particular context in which the simulation was carried out) shares

some features with those of talk, such as time pressure and an informal conversational style. Analysis of the corpus generated some interesting results. One, for example, is that lexical errors had a high incidence and it was suggested by the researcher that more emphasis should be given to lexis in the English language classes (p. 226). Likewise, pronoun errors, auxiliary and modal verb errors were also found to be frequent. The article posed particular problems for the participants in the synchronous mode, as did the formation of comparative and superlative adjectives and adjective order. In the lexico-grammatical category, the Spanish L1 group showed particular problems with the use of verbs with complementation and dependent prepositions. Although these findings cannot be generalised, as they apply to a group of intermediate- to advanced-level learners learning English through simulations via the computer, the patterns of error found by MacDonald were similar to those in the study presented in this dissertation.

The second project is being jointly conducted at Madrid Autonomous University (UAM) and Valencia Polytechnic University (UPV). The investigation involves the development of an analytical tool, TREACLE (Teaching Resource Extraction from an Annotated Corpus of Learner English). A corpus-based methodology is being developed for the production of grammatical profiles of Spanish university learners of English. The main objective is to assist in developing proposals for redesigning the curriculum and to produce teaching materials focused on Spanish students' needs. The project is still ongoing. Errors in this resource are tagged according to the following main categories: lexical, grammatical, punctuation, pragmatic, and phrasing. The methodology involves the use of Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA), (Granger 1998, p. 12) to

determine the difference between the learner's interlanguage and the language being learned, as well as the role of the mother tongue and how it influences learner's production. Importantly, the focus is not strictly on errors, but rather on the choice of words and syntactic structures. To that end, the frequency of use in learners and native producers is being compared (O'Donnell et al., 2009). Some results from the Spanish study show that A1s and B1s make the highest number of lexical errors, which then decline as proficiency increases, and that grammatical errors increase steadily from A1 to B1, then drop. Grammar errors account for 44% of all errors. In addition, the results indicate that determiners amount to 65% of errors in the noun phrase and 30% of all grammar errors. Analysis of these results has enabled the authors to draw the following generalizations with implications for teaching:

- There is a large proportion of determiner errors, but determiners are not given much attention in class.
- The teaching of prepositions does not usually receive much attention in spite of the fact that students struggle with them at all levels.
- The teaching of verb tenses is given too much time in class.

The results are interesting, as they are largely consistent with those obtained by MacDonald and those in the present study, as will be shown. In the TREACLE project, several pedagogical applications are proposed by the authors in order to address the different types of error. The study also involves the examination of error type at each proficiency level in order to determine the amount of time required on each area. The data suggest that noun and verb phrases should receive more attention in class. With an equally pedagogical goal, Keith Stuart, a member of the TREACLE project, has created a system called *TextWorks* (2003) that enables

the creation of exercises (cloze, matching exercises and multiple choice questions, etc.) extracted from a learner corpus.

Feedback

The last of the key concepts used in this research is feedback, of which there are different types. It can be corrective, positive, or negative (Mackey & Philip, 1988; Ayoun, 2001, among others). This notion is also related to those of Formative and Dynamic Assessment discussed in this dissertation, which will be dealt with at length in section 1.4.2, and in the field of testing, to washback, in the same section.

As a form of corrective feedback, recasts represent “corrective reformulations of a child’s or adult learner (L1 or L2) utterances that preserve the learner’s intended meaning” (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). This method of error correction is often criticised as not being sufficiently explicit for the learner to notice it. We consider it a good option, as long as it is ensured that both teacher and learner are made aware of each other’s intended meanings.

In the context of this research, a more explicit form of feedback is investigated. It is intended to aid language learning and development and is co-constructed, as will be shown.

1.3.2 Task-based teaching and learning

Tasks have been described as holistic activity by Samuda & Bygate, (2008, p. 8), as “through engaging with the task, learners are led to work with and integrate the different aspects of language for a larger purpose”. In our earlier discussion, we saw how affective factors impact L2 development and how the willingness to communicate plays a key role in learners’ motivation to participate in language learning activities. This emphasises the need for situated, meaningful real-world

tasks that will engage the learners' interest and will address their specific communicative needs. This is now a generally accepted notion and TBLT principles are being applied in language programmes worldwide. To give a clearer idea of how this approach works and how it came about, the next sub-section will provide a description of how TBLT evolved and of its current applications. Likewise, we will refer to relevant research that has grown in connection with this teaching approach.

To begin with, it may be useful to distinguish the concepts of *task* and *exercise*, which are some times mistakenly used as interchangeable. As noted by Widdowson (1998), tasks are different from exercises in the kind of meaning involved. A task, on the one hand, is concerned with pragmatic meaning, i.e., with language use in context, while exercises focus on semantic meaning removed from authentic contexts of use.

Skehan (2009, p. 83) defines a task as an activity in which:

- Meaning is primary
- There is some sort of relationship to the real world
- Task completion has some priority
- The assessment of task performance is in terms of outcome

As can be seen, the previously highlighted distinction between tasks and exercises is restated in this description, which characterizes tasks as being pragmatically situated.

1.3.2.1 Historical overview

In order to understand how the concept of task in language teaching emerged and how the field of TBLT and research has evolved, we need to look back several

decades. The first studies on tasks and their effects on SLA began in the 1960s and 1970s. Earlier, in the 1950s and 1960s, the approach to language teaching was still heavily influenced by behaviourism. The use of self-contained exercises and drills unrelated to authentic communicative goals was the norm and teachers exercised full control over the content to be taught. Throughout the 1970s, the communicative approach (Wilkins, 1976; Widdowson, 1978; Brumfit & Johnson, 1979) began to take shape as a new paradigm to teaching that emphasised the need to attend to meaning, and not solely to the forms and the structure of the language. Prabhu (1987) proposed a new curriculum project constructed around holistic units of communication claiming that in order to acquire an L2 learners had to be encouraged to engage in meaningful communication. Gradually, a theory of L2 acquisition and development began to emerge that sought to establish the pedagogical value of tasks and activities in promoting more explicit form-meaning mappings.

Tasks have since been implemented at different levels of engagement. A task may involve work on linguistic forms. A class devoted to going through a glossary of useful language to be used by engineers on a building site may be seen as time well spent if it is well aligned to the learners' future communicative needs. Similarly, a practical session on the pronunciation of consonant clusters in the language laboratory may also serve some good purpose for a large number of Spanish Learners of L2 English. On the other hand, a task or a task-based syllabus design may embrace an entire educational activity that far outstretches the confines of the classroom. For instance, an English for Specific Purposes class at a School of Architecture might involve a research project on the feasibility of a new

housing development in a historic area of the city, whose general speaking goals would be the development of face-to-face communication and presentation skills in English to enable the future graduates to take part in expert committees and focus discussion groups using English as the medium of communication; the micro-skills might involve practice of the language for assessing past and present impacts of human development with attention to the grammatical tenses to express time reference; functional language for discussing positive and negative experiences, for determining a common vision, for deciding a common goal, as well as for expressing agreement or disagreement on a draft plan of action; while the ultimate educational goal would be to develop the students' awareness and sensitivity to cultural and environmental issues facing urban planners in cities around the world. Extensive research exists on the value of simulation and gaming as effective L2 learning environments (see García-Carbonell & Watts, 2007 for a review).

1.3.2.2 Needs analysis

In order to determine the most valuable learning outcomes for a particular group, needs analysis is carried out. This section briefly outlines this important aspect of task design. Needs analysis (Munby, 1978; Long, 1985; Long & Crookes, 1992) underlies task-based approaches to teaching as, in the context of TBLT, language learning is not seen as the acquisition of a pre-established set of grammatical rules and lexical items. It comprises a process that aims to develop the learner's ability to use the language effectively for specific communicative purposes in real-world scenarios, as the example above illustrates. These scenarios need to be specified at the outset. In a TBLT context, syllabuses are laid out in terms of target tasks. In the context of English for academic and professional purposes, such as the one in

which this research was conducted, tasks are designed with a view to exposing students to situations they will encounter in their specific occupational or educational settings (see Swales, 1990, for an early account of tasks in academic contexts).

1.3.2.3 Research on tasks

Research on tasks entails a range of variables worth investigating, as the outcomes can orient teachers as to how to plan and implement their lessons. The individuals taking part in the task are studied: Features such as their language learning ability or their willingness to participate; teachers' individual characteristics and teaching style are also analysed; the task types and characteristics, components and contexts are explored and their development, implementation and assessment are also placed under scrutiny. Experiments like these are conducted with the aim of observing how the manipulation of certain task variables may influence the outcome, for example, regarding levels of attention, awareness and noticing of linguistic forms and structures or in order to analyse their effect on performance, which is frequently analytically characterized in terms of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997). Regarding the communicative aspects of interaction, experiments are designed to observe to what extent tasks may promote learning through meaning negotiation. Other studies focus on aspects related to the ways in which information is presented. The reasons for the grading and sequencing of tasks are explored taking into account the processing conditions. We have already explained how Johnson's (1996) Skills Hypothesis, proposed sequencing tasks in such a way that these would enable automatization of declarative knowledge, thus placing the focus of attention on the

task on hand, as would be the case in real-life situations. Skehan (1998a) contributed his Capacity Hypothesis, which posits that more demanding tasks consume more attentional resources, with less attention available for focus on form, and therefore, tasks should be sequenced from less cognitively demanding to more demanding. Skehan has argued that complexity, accuracy, and fluency in language production may be manipulated by controlling the variables that influence performance. From a different perspective, Robinson (2001, 2005), has put forward the Cognition Hypothesis, claiming that learners have the capacity to attend to more than one aspect of language simultaneously. Thus, increasing task complexity by raising cognitive/conceptual difficulty would lead learners to complexify their speech to meet the increased conceptual and functional demands of the task (in Robinson, 2007, p. 20).

Ellis (2009b) has reviewed a range of studies that focus on the manipulation of processing conditions, in particular, of different types of task planning on the complexity, accuracy and fluency on learners' performance of oral tasks, including forms of pre-task planning, such as rehearsal and task repetition (Bygate, 1996, 2001; Gass, Mackey, Fernandez & Alvarez-Torres, 1999; Sheppard, 2006; Foster, 1996; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Wendel, 1997; Wigglesworth, 1997; Skehan & Foster, 1997).

A very fruitful field of experimentation, particularly as it applies to the teaching of EFL, as was shown, concerns tasks that focus on form (Long, 1991; DeKeyser, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Ortega, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 1996, 2001), including consciousness-raising tasks (Sharwood-Smith, 1983; Ellis, 1991; Fotos & Ellis, 2001), the latter referring to tasks that are "designed to cater

primarily to explicit learning ... to develop awareness at the level of 'understanding' rather than at the level of 'noticing' " (Ellis, 2003, pp. 162-163). The role of the teacher in providing feedback (see, for instance, Samuda, 2001 cited above), and its effects on potential acquisition has also motivated a number of studies.

1.3.2.5 Task variables

Variability in L2 use has been attested by research, as was stated earlier in this chapter (see for example, Tarone, 1983). To further elaborate on the range of task variables investigated, a number of studies have focused on manipulating aspects of complexity (Iwashita, Elder & McNamara, 2001; Robinson, 1995, 2001), such as the degree of familiarity with the tasks, which may include task rehearsal and task repetition (Plough & Gass, 1993; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Bygate 1996, 2001; Robinson, 2001); the number of elements (Kuiken & Vedder, 2005; Robinson, 2001); if the task is individual or dual (Niwa, 2000); if it is performed in pairs, in groups or with teacher-mediated interaction (Pica & Doughty, 1985b; Ellis & He, 1999; Samuda, 2001); if the tasks are planned or unplanned (Crookes, 1989; R. Ellis 1987, 2005; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998; Ortega, 1999, 2005; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Wigglesworth, 1997; Yuan & R. Ellis, 2003); the task setting; for example, in the laboratory or in the classroom (Foster, 1998); individual difference factors, including social class, gender and age, among others.

As can be seen from this account, research on tasks is extensive and is still growing. In the introduction to a volume that gathered together representative research into TBTL from the past two decades (Van den Branden, Bygate & Norris, 2009), already cited at the start of this section, the editors summarise the value of

tasks as having the power of “bringing together the various dimensions of language, social context, and the mental processes of individual learners that are key to learning” (p. 11). They are cautious, however, in their affirmation of the extent of the success of the task-based project and highlight a number of challenges, which are presented below:

- a. The relationship between theory and practice is non-linear;
- b. Research findings are generally not unambiguous;
- c. Research is partial, and much of it is undertaken from perspectives and using research procedures that are not easily interrelated;
- d. Implementation (both small scale and large scale) poses problems of innovation;
- e. There is more than one way of designing and exploiting a task, or of linking several tasks together;
- f. Evaluation is elusive.

The context of task-based teaching and learning is presented by these authors as reflecting complex institutional, cultural, professional, research and pedagogical relationships. “But it is the very complexity —congruent with the nature of language and learning— that provides the richness which any properly educational methodology must have if it is to stand a chance of long term success” (p. 12). Research for the present study reflects the challenges, but also the appeal of such an endeavour.

1.3.3 Sociocultural theory and L2 pedagogy

Within sociocultural theory, understanding and driving second language development are part of the same interrelated activity. This stance towards language learning, language teaching, and research constitutes the essence of what Vygotsky conceptualised as *praxis*: “the dialectical [bidirectional] unit of theory and practical activity as an instrument of change” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 459). In this context, as stated in the introduction, Dynamic Assessment represents a pedagogical approach which aims at actively mediating development while assessing learners and responding to their individual and/or collective needs.

According to Vygotsky’s theory, when we learn we build meanings collaboratively through social interaction and with the help of more capable others. The Vygotskian constructs *internalization* and *mediation* can be operationalized in the classroom by means of particular tasks and activities. Within this paradigm, cognitive and affective mediation may be understood in terms of tutor-learner interaction, but also through pair- and whole-class discussion and assessment. All these methodological options were exploited in this thesis. For the purpose of clarity of presentation, the study of assessment will be dealt with separately in the following section. This is done in the knowledge that learning and assessment are both part of the same pedagogical and cognitive activity.

We will now refer to sociocultural theory and its connections to task-based language teaching, as we believe that its theoretical assumptions enhance our understanding of classroom dynamics and the processes of L2 acquisition. This notion was already brought up earlier following Ellis’ (2009) statement that it is

possible to take different, but equally illuminating approaches to the study of SLA, namely the psycholinguistic and the sociocultural. In this latter account, which emphasises the socially-constructed nature of learning, the role of improvisation stands as a feature of the interaction that takes place between the teacher/learner, among learners, and within the task itself. In this analysis, tasks are seen as “workplans that are enacted with accordance to the personal dispositions and goals of individual learners in particular settings, making it difficult to predict the nature of the activity that arises out of a task” (p. 110). Another key issue in the research of tasks in socioculturally-based pedagogy is the study of how task-mediated scaffolding assists performance. This is, again, one of the areas the present research seeks to shed some light on through the analysis of empirical data.

1.4 Second language assessment

The various purposes served by assessing languages inform the design and development of the test or the type of assessment involved. Within a higher education context, if what is being tested is the level of the student, be it for placement or certification purposes, the outcome of the test will serve as a source of information that will enable the instructor or the relevant certifying authorities or institutions to determine the level attained by a student or a group of students at a point in time. In contrast, assessing for learning and development (Dynamic Assessment within sociocultural theory) generally takes place in a classroom context and involves a student or a group of students, guided by the tutor, in reflecting on their own performance and in setting themselves new learning goals. Dynamic Assessment is understood to feed back into the dynamics of learning and to give the students new insights into their current stage of L2 development as well as into their particular style of learning.

Assessment should be related to theoretical models that reflect the underlying principles governing it (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Fulcher, 2003). To account for language development, a model of communicative competence such as those developed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) should be adopted. These approaches are explained in relation to speaking proficiency in some detail in Chapter 2.

When it comes to designing a language test, Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 9 et seq.) highlight two fundamental principles:

1. The need for a correspondence between language test performance and authentic language use. In order to demonstrate this correspondence, a

conceptual framework needs to be formulated that incorporates the characteristic of the tasks and those of the language users. Test task characteristics comprise characteristics of the setting, the test rubric, the input, the expected response, and the relationship between input and response. The characteristics of language users include topical knowledge, affective schemata, and language ability.

2. The need for a clear and explicit definition of the qualities of test usefulness.

These qualities are listed below, accompanied by a definition:

- *Reliability*: Consistency of measurement.
- *Construct validity*: Meaningfulness and appropriateness of the interpretations that are made on the basis of test scores, bearing in mind that test validation is an on-going process and that validity cannot be defined in absolute terms.
- *Authenticity*: Linking performance in the language test and language use in the target language use domains.
- *Interactiveness*: The extent and type of involvement of the test taker's individual characteristics in accomplishing a test task, the most relevant being language ability, topical knowledge, and affective schemata.
- *Impact*: The consequences the use of a test has on society, on the educational system, and the individual. The notion of *washback* is related to that of impact.
- *Practicality*: The relationship between the resources that will be required in the design, development, and use of the test and the resources that will be available for these activities. It applies to specific testing situations.

For teachers developing specific tests, this model of test usefulness provides a framework for quality control. However, many factors may stand in the way of achieving a balance between all these dimensions in a given assessment situation.

Lado (1961) referred to variations in conditions of the test, in the quality of the

test and in scoring as threats to reliability. As regards validity, construct under-representation and construct irrelevance (Messick 1989, 1992) have been put forward as threats that test developers and users should try to control.

Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 18) argue that the qualities described above should be regarded in terms of their overall usefulness, depending on the specific purpose the test is supposed to serve, the particular group of test takers and a specific language use domain, or the situation or context in which the test taker will be using the language outside of the test. If the assessment is performed in a classroom setting, the instructor should be competent in language testing. This will enable him or her “to make informed judgements in selecting appropriate language tests or to plan, construct, and develop appropriate tests of their own” (p. 8).

In order to establish what type of assessment to use, needs analysis will have to be performed. In a higher education context such as the one in which our research was carried out, learning needs are determined by the specific learning goals of the students’ academic disciplines. As regards the speaking skills, this includes the oral communicative contexts of study, research, and work.

Fulcher (2010, p. 115 et seq.) has described a test design cycle comprising several stages. As stated at the start of this section, a purpose for carrying out the assessment has to be specified; this is followed by a description of the test criteria, or the successful language behaviours that the learner or user will be expected to perform in the target domain; next the construct definition is given, that is, a statement of the abilities that underlie test performance expressed in abstract terms (for example, *intelligence* or *fluency*), so that it may be generalised to

different contexts; tasks or test items, including the test specifications, are then written; for example, a picture description task with specifications regarding the form of presentation of the visual materials. Evaluation of the materials and procedures follows. Finally, a positive appraisal of the previous stages leads to the piloting and then to the field testing stage. The process culminates with the test developer's or the teacher's reflective analysis of the data; as a result, inferences are made and decisions are taken concerning future uses of the test or the assessment tasks and procedures. The test design cycle is visually represented in Figure 1 below:

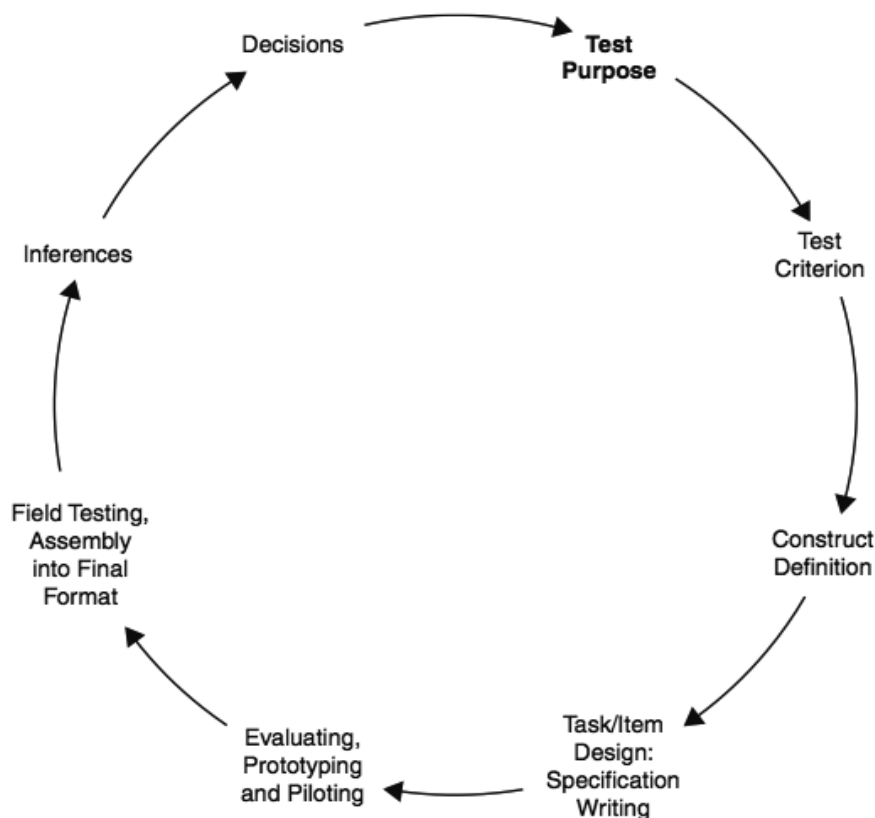


Figure 1. Fulcher's test design cycle (2010, p. 115)

Two major forms of assessment and their associated purposes are described at some length in the next sub-sections.

1.4.1 Assessment for diagnostic and certification purposes

As Watts (1997, p. 32) describes, “tests may serve as indicators of what learners are capable of doing in a foreign language. The reasons a learner may have to seek recognition are usually related to the need to prove qualification for a role, whether the recognition be by a trade, a profession or a teaching institution.” In the higher education context, learners are assessed for placement or certification purposes and also during the course of their studies. A test may take place at the start of an instructional programme, such as a course of English for academic purposes, to assess the students’ current level of proficiency, on the one hand, with a view to informing the placement of the student in the appropriate level, and on the other to gather data that will allow the instructor to correlate the students’ language learning needs and what the syllabus is offering them. Assessment also takes place throughout the instructional period and it takes a variety of forms along a continuum that ranges from formative/dynamic to summative. In addition, tests are usually administered at the end of the instructional period to establish whether the learner has acquired the expected outcomes.

Regarding what have come to be known as psychometric or standardized tests, or those tests that are marked by pre-established specifications and conditions of administration and scoring, one widespread test of English used for placement purposes is the Oxford Quick Placement Test (2001), which covers the general grammar and vocabulary. It is useful for basic average discrimination, but it does not comprise all skills. More comprehensive tests, like those developed by

independent examining boards and covering all four skills, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the University of Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) examinations are also available in the market. Some of these (TOEFL, IELTS) have an academic focus and are designed to assess the language ability of prospective students in tertiary education.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group (UCLES), a non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge. The Cambridge exams are widely acknowledged and used and are recognised for certification purposes. These tests are often described as “high stakes”, as the outcomes may involve access to or rejection of a study or work placement by the candidate as a result of having gained recognition by higher education institutions or professional registration bodies. They are generally taken at the end of the course of studies or at other times during the instructional period for a variety of reasons, for example, in the middle of the academic year to assess the level of the candidates applying for Erasmus placements, etc. Although they are not generally related to particular instances of instruction and learning (except those courses and activities structured around the preparation of a particular test, for example, a First Certificate in English preparation course), they have the power to influence the teaching, a phenomenon known as the *washback effect* (see Bachman & Palmer’s related notion of *impact* above), which may lead to changes in classroom practices by changing the behaviours of teachers and students to conform to the target language use expectations of a given exam (Shohamy, cited in Green, 2007).

IELTS and another two Cambridge ESOL examinations, Preliminary English Test (PET) and First Certificate in English (FCE) exams inspired the design of several features in the pre- and post-tests used in the present research. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a widely used resource for understanding different stages of language learning, was also used. A brief description of each of these tests and of the CEFR is given below.

Preliminary English Test (PET)

PET is an intermediate level exam. It tests the ability to cope with everyday written and spoken communications. This exam is at CEFR Level B1.

First Certificate in English (FCE)

FCE is an upper intermediate level exam. It tests the ability to deal confidently with a range of written and spoken communications. This exam is at CEFR Level B2.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

IELTS is a test of English for academic and vocational purposes. It is jointly owned by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge ESOL. It consists of four modules: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The same listening and speaking modules are taken by all candidates. The Academic module enables international students to gain access to tertiary education in English-medium institutions.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (2001) was published by the Council of Europe with the aim of encouraging practitioners (learners, teachers and developers) to reflect on the features of a second language and on the way the language is used for effective

communication and, ultimately, to provide detailed information that would facilitate the teaching, learning, use and assessment of the language. The document contains a range of illustrative descriptors of language ability at six main levels of proficiency (from A1 to C2), described in general terms and in relation to language activities and language tasks (see Appendix A). The six levels are named as follows:

C2 Mastery	Proficient user
C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	
B2 Vantage	Independent user
B1 Threshold	
A2 Waystage	Basic user
A1 Breakthrough	

As noted by Figueras (2012), over the years this resource has become Europe's most widely accepted currency for the recognition of L2 competence. One of the reasons for its success, according to this author, is its particular approach involving "the positive wording of the level descriptors, and its non-compulsory nature with a structure open to multimodality and adaptations" (p. 479).

The CEFR is used extensively by the examination boards for validating the claims which are made about the relationship of their exams to the Framework. The levels of the Cambridge ESOL examinations described above, are all aligned with the CEFR. The scales can be used as a tool for comparing levels of ability amongst learners of foreign languages and to track progress towards language proficiency. Likewise, teachers around the world use this tool in their classes as a point of reference to determine learners' language proficiency and to make decisions about grading.

1.4.2 Assessment for learning and development

Assessment for learning means that the assessment informs the teaching and feeds back into it. This type of classroom-based assessment and the standardized forms of language testing described above are generally characterized as occupying opposite ends of the spectrum. This affirmation is more or less clear (leaving aside the phenomenon of *washback* and the exam preparation courses) when what is being considered is the kind of assessment that culminates in the award of a grade (for example, an end-of year examination or a TOEFL certification) on the one hand, and the continued assessment that goes on in the classroom, on the other.

The psychometric approach to assessment has been criticised in recent years. Leung (2005, p. 871), in an investigation of the central issues concerning pedagogically oriented assessment affirms what he considers to be the generally accepted notion that even where test scores are available, teachers still need classroom-based information about individual students. “Furthermore, arguments for teacher assessment recognise that standardized testing does not necessarily provide valid information accurately and reliably about students’ ability or performance in a specific domain, particularly at the level of the individual” (p. 871). Drawing on Brown’s (1995) and McNamara’s (1997) view of the interactive nature of performance tests, this author goes on to argue that “psychometrics treats the attribute to be sampled as a property of the individual, which is quantifiable at any one time, whereas teacher assessment has to take account of the interactive nature of student performance in the classroom, which is dynamic and co-produced with the teacher and the others.” This analysis seems appropriate

for our purposes, as it very succinctly frames the issue of classroom assessment as engaging both static and dynamic traits.

1.4.2.1 Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic Assessment is a form of assessment that rests at the intersection between teaching and learning, with both the teacher and the students contributing to learner development. As was theorised in the previous chapter, Dynamic Assessment addresses both learning and assessment as two complementary aspects of the same educational activity. It promotes change by helping practitioners to diagnose and to understand poor performance in order to tackle those aspects within the learner's reach (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, pp. 12-13). Dynamic Assessment has been compared to formative assessment. Notwithstanding, as D'Anglejan and colleagues (cited in Poehner, 2008, p. 78) remark, DA differs from formative assessment in that the latter is used to inform teaching and learner development in relation to specific curricular objectives, while Dynamic Assessment's main goal is to promote learner development, with sensitivity to the learners' zone of proximal development, which entails dialogic cooperation between mediator and learner. The active role of the learner in DA needs to be stressed, as his/her responsiveness to mediation represents the force for re-directing and re-orienting pedagogical activity. Dynamic Assessment is therefore mediated activity where learner and expert work together to ascertain the learner's needs and where both the amount and quality of assistance required by the learner are considered as part of assessment (see Aljaafreeh & Lantolf, 1994; del Río & Álvarez, 2007; Lund, 2008).

Lantolf and Thorne (2006, pp. 327-356) describe two broad approaches to Dynamic Assessment: *interventionist* and *interactionist*. Interventionist DA favours standardised mediation where pre-established hints and prompts are given to the learners in response to the level of success demonstrated in a particular task. This help ranges from implicit to explicit, but because the specific clues and hints have been pre-determined by the teacher/assessor, it might not necessarily respond to a particular learner's source of difficulty. By contrast, interactionist DA tends to be a more contingent, negotiated process where mediation is more sensitive to a particular learner's problem and his/her response to that mediation; interactionist DA is, therefore, open-ended and flexible, and relies on a dialogic cycle where constant adjustments are made in relation to the learner's responsiveness to mediation (Lantolf, 2009, p. 360).

As Poehner explains, DA can be conceptualised as a whole programme of assessment-instruction to be implemented throughout an academic cycle where a non-dynamic pre-test is used as the basis for tailor-made assistance and Dynamic Assessment tasks and where the learner eventually takes a non-Dynamic Assessment post-test as a means to establish the effectiveness of the pedagogical treatment. Alternatively, DA can be implemented as a series of "procedures in which mediation is offered during the administration of the assessment, usually whenever problems arise" (Poehner, 2008, p. 19).

Dynamic Assessment has generated a growing body of theoretical and empirical research in the fields of cognitive psychology and general education. Feuerstein and his colleagues (1979) successfully applied it in educational programmes to improve the learning capacities of young disadvantaged children.

Feuerstein developed a theory of *mediated learning experience*. The method determines a range of criteria that are to be met to guarantee its effectiveness. The most important are intentionality and reciprocity of interaction, its transcendent character (i.e., having significance beyond the here-and-now situation), and the mediation of meaning for the child's cognitive development.

Lidz (1991), also working with children with special needs, proposed combining curriculum-based and process-based frameworks within a Dynamic Assessment model as the optimal approach to assessment. Her investigations concerned the cognitive processes that underlie curriculum objectives and how this analysis allows diagnosticians to explore the nature of children's learning approaches and areas of challenge. According to Lidz, the resulting recommendations offer valuable insights that can be integrated into instructional settings. One fundamental assumption in her instructional design was the emphasis on the process and on how these processes can be influenced through optimizing the child's experiences. Lidz and Jepsen (2000) developed a model of curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment for children, *The Application of Cognitive Functions Scale (ACFS)*. This tool aimed to provide a means of relating assessment to instruction and intervention. The application of this scale yields scores that indicate the degree to which the child has mastered the task and the responsiveness to intervention by means of behaviour ratings which describe non-intellective qualitative aspects of children's interaction with the materials and the assessor. In this programme, points are awarded not just for successful task completion, but also for metacognitive behaviours (p. 421).

Tzurriel (2000) developed the Cognitive Modifiability Battery (CMB) to be used both as a diagnostic tool and as an intervention instrument. The CMB constitutes a programme of intervention aimed in the first place at identifying the child's deficient cognitive functions and his or her modifiability. Based on resulting observations, implications are drawn regarding the intervention processes required in the future. In a case study of a child, Adam, the mediation included aspects like the graduation of the task level of difficulty, the provision of linguistic tools to gather information, learning how to explore information systematically, the control of impulsivity, the use of rules and strategies to deal with complex information, strategies for developing feelings of competence and self-confidence and for enhancing insight processes, among others. Recommendations for Adam's future learning included using CMB to further develop his cognitive skills, e.g., spatial orientation, linguistic expression of performance, or bridging cognitive principles learned in the CMB to subject matters. For example, learning to control the pace of reading and to stop when tackling a new word were related to regulation and control of impulsivity level.

As Haywood and Lidz (2007, p. 85) comment, DA has also been applied with second-language learners not affected by special education needs (e.g., Barrera, 2003; Kozulin & Garb, 2002; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Schneider & Ganschow, 2000). In the Kozulin and Garb study of young Israeli adults trying to learn English, the authors adapted a standardized test used for college and university EFL placement as a pre-test. An alternative form of this standardized test was designed for the post-test. During the mediation phase, teacher-assessors were taught to guide the students through strategies relevant both to the demands of the test and

of the nature of the students' errors in the pretest. A study of 23 students showed an increase in pre-test to post-test scores exceeding one standard deviation (effect size of 1.2), negative correlation between gain and pretest scores, correlation between pre-test and post-test of .80, and differential performance profile of a number of the students on pre-tests compared with post-tests. The authors suggest that information from this procedure has implications for intervention, for example, teaching "learning how to learn" strategies to students with average pre-test/modest gain scores, offering those with average pre-test/high post-test scores more challenging work with opportunities for independent study, and providing students with low pre-test/low post-test performance intensive work with reduced challenge.

Lund (2008) has articulated the need to align assessment, learning and instruction and has conceptualised assessment as a collective practice that involves "the capacity to take more than one's own perspectives and coordinate perspectives of others with one's own" (p. 33). A study by García-Carbonell, Watts & Montero (2004) takes a similar approach in its depiction of how learning communities can be fostered in simulation and gaming.

Erben and colleagues (2008, cited in Poehner, 2008, p. 98) are working to implement DA principles in a much broader context than the classroom. These authors are pursuing an initiative to reformulate an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher certification exam as a dynamic procedure. In his PhD thesis, Summers (2008) researched DA training of listening skills and its effect on mediation and highlighted the need for more robust DA training of teachers and students. Schneider and Ganschow (2000) have proposed a way to assess learners'

knowledge through questions and guided discovery. The teacher encourages the learner to ask questions and then uses these questions to assess the student's stage of learning. "Rather than responding to the student with an answer, the teacher responds with a carefully phrased question or gesture that guides the student to find his/her own answer to the question" (p. 73).

Some researchers have advanced the concept and application of reciprocal teaching (Brown and Palincsar, 1985; Moore, 1988; Palincsar and Brown, 1984) and how the assessment is used to bring conscious awareness to the learner. Lerner (1997; cited in Schneider & Ganschow, 2000) has stressed the distinction between metalinguistic and metacognitive processes. Applied to teaching the structure of language, this process becomes a metalinguistic awareness process. When the process focuses the student's awareness on taking control of and directing his/her own thinking process, the process involved is metacognition. Schneider and Ganschow argue that for students who struggle with language, such as subjects with dyslexia, a strictly communicative approach to their instruction is not sufficient. More explicit instruction of the language systems involved becomes essential. These authors emphasise the active role of the learner in the process of developing metalinguistic awareness. The teacher is facilitator and collector of Dynamic Assessment data provided by the student, who takes the role of *reciprocal respondent* "by consistently providing information as to why s/he is doing what s/he is doing with the language" (p. 77). Strategies for classroom application of metalinguistic processing skills involve eliciting a student's knowledge through thought provoking questions and/or gestures, a pleasant error-marking atmosphere by allowing time for rethinking, looking for similarities within and/or

differences between language patterns in the target language or between the native and the target language; the use of mnemonic devices, or the teaching models for structuring learning material, among others (pp. 79-80).

An interesting development of Dynamic Assessment is its implementation in groups. This approach to teaching and assessment rests on Vygotsky's already discussed assumption that cognition develops first on the intermental plane through collaboration with others and the use of physical and symbolic artifacts, and only later is it transformed and internalized. Poehner (2009) refers to the group as a psychological entity in itself and stresses the value of collective activity as a shared medium in which individuals recognise the interdependence of their goals (p. 473). Citing Petrovsky (1985), Poehner explains how, by participating in joint activity and in pooling efforts as forms of social relations, competitive behaviour gives way to cooperation. This represents the same view as Lund's (2008) conceptualisation of assessment as a collective practice, as we saw earlier. Group assessment is an integral part of the pedagogical design which will be described at length in the next chapter.

The present chapter has covered a wide area and discussed many developments in SLA acquisition and language teaching and learning. Some relevant research claims in connection with this research are summarized below:

- acquisition of an L2 is systematic and variable
- affect plays a critical role in SLA
- effective instruction should simultaneously identify and target the learner's ZPD
- learners engage in collaboration to jointly advance their L2
- peer- and teacher feedback aid L2 development
- Dynamic Assessment should be an integral part of the learning process
- assessment may be an individual or a collective practice
- the development of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness promotes L2 development
- output processing and languaging play a significant role in SLA
- FonF is a useful method for interlanguage development
- both implicit and explicit instruction are useful and necessary at different times
- useful tools for L2 teaching are self-correction tasks and reflective questionnaires
- TBTL is a powerful educational approach in L2 instruction
- learning context and tasks influence language use and acquisition
- lack of homogeneity is often found in the classroom

2. Speaking Competence

Speaking is a key skill for every language learner, not only for all the important reasons outlined earlier concerning the status of English as an international language and for its role as a tool for study, work, and pleasure. The way L2 learners perform orally is proof not only of their ability to articulate words and to use certain language features to generate and exchange messages in the target language for particular communicative purposes. Second language speaking also brings out aspects of a learners' personality, attitudes and intelligence. In ESL undergraduate courses, teachers typically start their first class in the semester by getting the students to produce a few words in English in order to get an idea of their level of oral proficiency as well as other potential, less "academic" facets: Will this student participate in class, or will he just sit at the back and let the others do the hard work? Will that other student be polite, punctual, hardworking? Is this a good class? Am I going to have to struggle the whole term to get them involved? All sorts of judgements are made on first impressions, much of it based on appearance and on the learners' first few words in class. Foreign language learners need to be made aware of the relevance of acquiring good working oral communication skills in English, as these skills may not only improve their chances of getting a job and succeeding professionally, particularly in the current trend towards globalization; they will also increase the learners' self-confidence and, if acquired through reflection, introspection, and the ability to extrapolate to their life experience, learners' efforts to improve their L2 speaking skills will even help them to develop valuable world-knowledge and a more well-rounded personality.

2.1 Approaches to the study of oral communication

The study of oral communication has been approached from different disciplines. It has already been mentioned how the influential work of Noam Chomsky brought the focus of linguistic research to bear on the description of language as the innate cognitive structure that reflects a Universal Grammar, with certain properties shared by all languages (see Chapter 1), and differentiated the notion of *competence*, or what an ideal speaker-listener is able to do with the language, from *performance*, which refers to the production of actual utterances. According to Chomsky, *competence* should be regarded as the central object of linguistic enquiry. Within the framework of the Philosophy of Language, the theory of Speech Acts, laid out by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969), focused attention on how language is actually used in real communication, and described the patterns of interaction among speakers, highlighting the relationship that exists between a speaker's utterance and the listener's interpretation of it. In the field of linguistics, Grice (1975, 1989) developed a theory of linguistic meaning which saw language not in abstract or descriptive terms, but as occurring at a specific time and place and motivated by a communicative purpose. Grice developed the notion of conversational implicature to explain how certain aspects of meaning in an utterance need to be inferred on the basis of contextual assumptions and principles. Grice (1975, pp. 45-46) proposed the co-operative principle, which was articulated into four maxims:

- quality (try to make your contribution one that is true)
- quantity (make your contribution as informative as necessary, but not more)
- relevance (do not say what is not relevant)
- manner (be brief and orderly, avoid obscurity and ambiguity)

Or, as Davies (2000) paraphrases:

there is an accepted way of speaking which we all accept as standard behaviour. When we produce, or hear, an utterance, we assume that it will generally be true, have the right amount of information, be relevant, and will be couched in understandable terms. If an utterance does not appear to conform to this model ... then we do not assume that the utterance is nonsense; rather, we assume that an appropriate meaning is there to be inferred. (p. 2)

Language as interaction has been studied as a phenomenon of social communication. As mentioned in the previous chapter, learners need to develop sociolinguistic competence, or the social dimensions of language use. Hymes (1971, 1972) developed a communicative framework for the analysis of children's first language which embraced the strictly linguistic, the social and the contextual components of the oral discourse, with attention to the sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy, and used the term *communicative competence*. By taking this approach, Hymes was challenging Chomsky's view of competence as the underlying structure of language of which performance provides only indirect evidence.

The notion of communicative competence has been taken up by research into L2 acquisition and learning. Canale and Swain, (1980) drew on Hymes' model and other studies of language and communication in their attempt to develop a more integrative model that would reflect not only what the learner knows about the L2, but also to what extent the learner is able to use this knowledge in actual communicative situations and what resources are deployed by language users to achieve their communicative goals. The model initially incorporated three

components, but it was extended to four by Canale (1983), resulting in the following categories:

1. *Grammatical competence*: knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.
2. *Sociolinguistic competence*: the ability to express, interpret and negotiate meaning according to culturally-derived norms and expectations. In other words, the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts.
3. *Strategic competence*: the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to achieve successful communication.
4. *Discourse competence*: the ability to understand and create written and spoken forms of the language that are longer than sentences. Discourse competence includes understanding how texts relate to the context or situation in which they are used, and recognises that what makes a text coherent often depends more on our background knowledge, or on overall text structure, than on the structure of individual sentences or the meanings of individual words.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) refined and elaborated on earlier work in communicative language ability and use, including the above-mentioned framework by Canale and Swain, as well as on Bachman's (1990) model of *communicative language ability* to propose a model that reflected the interplay that exists between language users and their context (See Bachman and Palmer's model of language ability in Table 1. below). The model involves an interaction between language knowledge, topical knowledge, affective schemata, personal characteristics and strategic competence. This latter component has a special place in their design, as it enables linguistic knowledge to be activated according to the contextual demands drawing on the individual learner's resources. In this model,

speaking is not separated from the skills of reading and writing, as these are all seen as different modes of language in use.

Table 1. The components of Bachman & Palmer's model of language ability (1996, pp. 67-73)

Language use	Organisational knowledge	grammatical · vocabulary · syntax · phonology/graphology
		textual · cohesion · rhetorical or conversational organisation
	Pragmatic knowledge	functional · ideational · manipulative · heuristic · imaginative
		sociolinguistic · dialects/varieties · registers · natural or idiomatic expressions · cultural references · figures of speech
Strategic competence	Goal setting	· deciding what one is going to do
	Assessment	· taking stock of what is needed
	Planning	· deciding how to use what one has

A number of studies on speaking have drawn on Levelt's (1989) model of speech processing and production in the L1. Levelt identified three phases leading from the speaker's intentions to the overt speech, which he termed *conceptualization*, *formulation* and *articulation*. Wendel (1997) used this model as the basis for his classification of two types of planning: strategic planning, or planning with anticipation, which takes place when the student has time to plan the task before carrying it out, and online planning, which takes place while the task is ongoing.

According to Wendel, strategic planning implies conceptualization, whereas online planning directs itself to formulation and articulation and is controlled by monitorization, which involves the speaker in keeping track of his or her own production. Other models have placed the emphasis on the two-way processes engaged in human communication. Kramsch (1986) formulated the notion of *interactional competence* as an individual learner's ability to communicate intended meanings and to co-construct discourse. In sociocultural terms, speaking behaviour blends the individual and the social in the same communicative event (see Chapter 1 for a detailed theoretical description of sociocultural theory). To give an indication of the strength of this approach in recent SLA research, Nunan, (2005, p. 235) notes the case of Merrill Swain, who, having worked for decades in the psycholinguistic tradition, has recently given prominence in her research on classroom interaction to the function of output as a socially constructed cognitive tool. By way of illustration, Nunan presents an extract of a classroom transcript in one of Swain's studies depicting a collaborative conversation between two learners as they construct a story based on pictures. The evidence from this exchange indicates that the jointly constructed performance enhances the learners' individual competencies (Swain, 2000, p. 111). In his ensuing discussion of what he sees as a new trend in language teaching research, Nunan observes more research tools and techniques being used, as "Classroom researchers appear to be increasingly reluctant to restrict themselves to a single data collection technique, or even a single research paradigm" (pp. 236-237).

Speaking has been investigated from a range of perspectives, including psychology, philosophy, general linguistics, pragmatics, conversation and

discourse analysis, cognitive and affective approaches, as well as within the framework of pedagogy. As has been discussed, particularly relevant research areas for the purpose of this investigation concern those studying the phenomenon of L2 speaking development within the framework of task-based teaching and learning, with attention being directed to both the psycholinguistic (cognitive and affective) and the sociocultural processes involved.

2.2 The construct and conditions of spoken language

There are many definitions of speaking in the literature. We borrow Fulcher's (2003, p, 23) definition as "the verbal use of language to communicate with others" as it is a straightforward notion. However, this assertion focuses solely on the channel of communication and therefore invites a great deal of comment and further characterization.

The skill of speaking has often been described in opposition to that of writing. Thus, speaking tends to be described as being less formal in the use of vocabulary, with fewer full sentences, more repetitions and repairs, as well as using more conjunctions instead of subordination (in Fulcher, 2003, p 24). Yet speaking follows much the same rules of syntax and semantics as are used in writing. Two issues demand attention regarding the speaking/writing dichotomy. First, the evidence that such a distinction is not always straightforward or, as Bygate states, "this schematization [referring to the dimensions of speech] reflects propensity, rather than rigid incompatibility" (2009, p. 416). The language used in a speech delivered by a scholar in a conference presentation to an audience of academics will have little to do with, for example, the informal chit-chat that the same presenter may engage in with her colleagues over coffee as regards the style,

tone, level of formality, interaction patterns, processing demands, etc. required in each case. Also, the boundary between spoken and written communication is becoming even more blurred in the age of multimedia, as society moves towards new ways of communicating. Technology-mediated talk is nowadays commonplace and it is possible to observe how elements of spoken discourse are being introduced in written genres such as personal e-mail, instant messaging, chat, etc. to reflect the immediacy, the familiarity, the emotional involvement, and other features generally associated with face-to-face communication. In her dissertation, MacDonald (2005) describes aspects of orality and virtual “presence” (p. 152) in the online conversations carried out by the students in the context of a pedagogical series of teleconferences.

Returning to the issue of “live” speech, recent investigations have been directed towards gaining insight into the nature of spoken grammar and vocabulary (see McCarthy & Carter, 2001). One valuable outcome of this line of research has been the publication of a comprehensive spoken and written English grammar by the same authors (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Their manual sets the construct of spoken grammar apart from the standard grammar that most students are regularly taught in their classes, which largely reflects the items and forms that are supposed to be acceptable in the written usage of adult educated native speakers of English. By contrast, spoken grammar often exhibits forms that are considered incorrect according to the norms of standard written English, but are nevertheless acceptable and common in speech (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 167).

The following illustrative examples are offered:

- He won't be late I don't think. (double negation)
- We decided to immediately sell it. (split infinitive)
- He's about six foot tall. (a singular noun after a plural measurement expression)
- *gonna, wanna* (contracted forms)

These examples are a clear indication of the greater freedom native language users exert in constructing their spoken utterances when what matters is successful, nuanced, often time-pressured communication, compared to the constraints exhibited in contexts conditioned by formal conventions as reflected in prescriptive grammars.

When considering the construct of spoken language, it needs to be stressed that the current role of English as an international language has brought about more inclusive conceptualizations of the notion of competent speech, as not only the different national and regional varieties of English, but also the language spoken by users whose native language is not English, are now being acknowledged as acceptable standards and promoted around the world. McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2004) note the current debate between Native (NS) and Nonnative Speaker (NNS) models for the teaching of speaking, and cite Seidlhofer's proposal to develop a spoken corpus of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) "which will help to profile ELF as robust and independent of English as a native language and may establish 'something like an index of communicative redundancy' with pedagogical applications" (p. 27). In this view, competent non-native English speakers may be described as "expert users" or "successful users of English" (p. 28) without reference being made to an "ideal" speaker or to a homogeneous speech

community. In a recent article that examines the relationship between spoken language research and L2 pedagogy over the last 20 years, Timmis (2012) takes a similar approach and emphasizes the importance of considering sociocultural issues, and poses the following question: “In a world where English is increasingly used in international contexts, what is the relevance of native-speaker language and culture to learners whose primary need may be to communicate with other non-native speakers of English?” (p. 517). Timmis points to a reappraisal of the term “real English” and asks us to consider what “authenticity” we should actually be aiming for.

Developments in corpus linguistics have increased researchers’ empirical evidence of the use of spoken language in authentic environments and have greatly contributed to understanding the construct of speaking (see McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2004, for a review of studies in corpus linguistics). Many methodological decisions are currently being made on the basis of knowledge gained through corpus-based evidence and a wealth of teaching materials are being produced that draw on input from corpus linguistics databases (see Stuart, 2003 in the section dealing with learner errors in Chapter 1, section 1.3.1).

Drawing on this newly acquired evidence and on previous research, Bygate (2009, pp. 416-417) identifies a number of criterial features of talk, some directly associated with speech, such as pausing and turn-taking, and others which are not exclusive to the spoken medium, but are more common in speech, including:

- deictic pronouns
- pronouns in general
- ellipsis
- interrogatives and negatives
- present progressive aspect
- parataxis
- particular formulaic expressions clustering with complement constructions (e.g., “I think that...”)

In addition to grammar, vocabulary in spoken discourse presents its own idiosyncrasies. Certain words, phrases and expressions are found with relative or high frequency in conversation. Among these, generic and vague words tend to be used because they are familiar and fully comprehensible or, in the latter case, because they fill in a gap in ongoing discourse, all of which helps to make spoken communication quick and easy (in Luoma, 2004, pp. 17-18). Likewise, fixed conversational phrases also help to automatise the speaking process and to promote fluency. However, in speech, as in writing, vocabulary choice depends on the speakers and the situation. As McCarten (2007, p. 5) indicates, the form “goodbye” is appropriate in formal usage, “bye” being its informal counterpart. Similarly, the use of the formula “I was, like, ‘hey’” for reported speech is only to be expected in highly informal contexts. McCarten’s study draws on corpus analysis to reflect on the kind of vocabulary that characterizes speech and in her report, this author focuses on items that reflect the interactive nature of conversation, which she organises into the following categories:

- *Discourse markers*. Used to organise or manage the conversation, e.g. “anyway”, which the speaker uses to come back to the main point of a story or to signal the end.

- *Responses*. Used to react or respond to what other people say, e.g. “absolutely”, “That’s true”.
- *Monitoring expressions*. Used to establish a relationship with the interlocutor, e.g. “You know”, “Let me tell you”.
- *Vague expressions*. Use of very general, informal words to monitor shared knowledge and views, e.g. “or whatever”, “thing”, “stuff”.
- *Hedging expressions*. Used to avoid sounding blunt, too direct, etc. e.g. “I guess”, “In a way”.
- *Expressions of stance*. Used to express attitude to what one says, e.g. “unfortunately”, “to be honest”. (pp. 9-14)

It has been argued here that language is made up of rules and forms that are put to the service of a communicative aim in a given context. In order to develop pragmatic competence, or the ability to interact by means of language in a specific context, learners need to become familiar with the functions of language and how these embody a range of speech acts with awareness of the social conventions in each communicative situation.

Bygate (1987) identifies different types of speaking “routines”, which he defines as “conventional ways of presenting information” (p. 23), and mentions two types: those that involve conveying information, on the one hand, and the kind of turns typically found in interactional exchanges on the other. The former are further classified into expository and evaluation routines and span various functional domains:

Expository routines

- description
- narration
- instruction
- comparison

Evaluation routines

- explanation
- justification
- prediction
- decision

As regards interaction routines, Bygate provides several examples, including service encounters, telephone conversations, interview situations, conversations around a table at a dinner party, etc. These speaking routines represent *macrofunctions*, or categories for the functional use of spoken discourse and this author argues that because these routines “are conventional they are predictable and they help ensure clarity” (p. 23), noting however that these types of exchanges may vary depending on individual choices, the situation, and culture.

In addition to the features of spoken language, the particular conditions under which speaking takes place need to be understood and addressed by researchers, teachers and language users. Bygate (1987, 2009) views speaking as a complex skill which is affected by processing conditions of speech, such as time pressure, and by reciprocity conditions and interaction. Speaking takes place in real time, hence, it needs to be planned, formulated, and articulated with considerable speed and is affected by the circumstances of performance context and by interlocutors. Bygate (2009) recalls Chafe’s (1985) notions of *fragmentation*, defined as “the relative lack of group modification and subordination, the relative frequency of sub-clausal level units or fragments and the occurrence of ‘overt’ editing features” (2009, p. 416) and *involvement*, covering “features which signal personal identity and group membership (e.g., generational, cultural, class, or regional group membership) and those which convey personal feelings and attitudes to the interlocutor or the content of discourse (such as

disjunctive adverbs or adjectives, including intensifiers and mitigators” (p. 416). Bygate suggests that these dimensions may correlate with proficiency, although this claim has not yet been supported by research. In a classroom or in a testing situation the time-pressure condition is relatively easy to create but “Reciprocity is harder if confined to the asymmetrical contexts of teacher-pupil or tester-candidate interaction” (p. 418). Improvisation is another key aspect of the circumstances of speech that, together with reciprocity emerges in relation to fragmentation and involvement and which demands attention on the part of teachers and testers.

In considering the features that make up the construct of speaking, Fulcher (2003) argues for an operational definition that will reflect the requirements for a particular testing purpose. This may involve taking into account general traits of speaking, such as those described above, but it may additionally demand the inclusion of contextual factors in the construct definition (p. 19). As Fulcher himself explains, “We should not assume that any description, any rating scale, captures some psychological reality that exists in the language competence of all speakers for all time in all contexts. Different constructs are useful for different test purposes” (p. 19). According to this author, speaking tests should be designed in such a way that they are able to elicit “spoken language of the type and quantity that will allow meaningful inferences to be drawn from scores to the learner’s ability on the construct the test is designed to measure” (p. 47). Fulcher has developed a framework for the speaking construct adapted from Bachman and Palmer (1996) that encompasses the dimensions of language competence (phonology, accuracy, and fluency), strategic capacity (achievement and avoidance

strategies), textual knowledge (the structure of talk), pragmatic knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge. The detailed framework is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. A framework for describing the speaking construct. (Fulcher, 2003, p. 48. Table 2.2)

Language competence

Phonology

- Pronunciation
- Stress
- Intonation

Accuracy

- Syntax
- Vocabulary
- Cohesion

Fluency

- Hesitation
- Repetition
- Re-selecting inappropriate words
- Re-structuring sentences
- Cohesion

Strategic capacity

Achievement strategies

- Overgeneralization
- Paraphrase
- Word coinage
- Restructuring
- Cooperative strategies
- Code switching
- Non-linguistic strategies

Avoidance strategies

- Formal avoidance
- Functional avoidance

Textual knowledge

The structure of talk

- Turn taking
- Adjacency pairs
- Openings and closings

Pragmatic knowledge

- Appropriacy
- Implicature
- Expressing being

Sociolinguistic knowledge

- Situational
- Topical
- Cultural

2.3 Speaking processes and development

Following models of speech processing (see, for example, Levelt 1989, in section 2.1), Bygate (2009) identifies two models of processing: automatised and controlled. The first is associated with articulation and formulation, and with markers of fluency, complexity, and accuracy, while controlled processing is seen by Bygate as crucial for conceptualization and monitoring.

One important assertion in Bygate's (2009) account draws, among others, on Johnson's (1996) distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge in language learning (p. 419). Declarative knowledge is taken to mean factual knowledge and includes semantic memory (memory for concepts) and episodic memory (memory of events). Bygate reasons that "speaking is likely to develop declarative knowledge partly, at least, from memories of a wide range of speech events ... constituted along at least two major dimensions, first in terms of the pragmatic relations projected between language features and the goals they are used for ... and second, in terms of discourse structures." And, importantly, this author (following Hulstijn, 2007), argues that people's capacities will reflect the range of learning experiences they have encountered (p. 419). Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, allows speakers to activate their declarative knowledge. Bygate stresses the idea that the knowledge of how speaking skills develop over time should inform the approaches to the teaching of L2 speaking.

To attain their communicative goals learners mobilise a range of strategies. Bearing in mind that speaking is a two-way process involving the speaker and the listener, a speaker's interaction strategies should be oriented towards establishing a common mental context with the interlocutor. Lam and Wong (2000; cited in

McCarthy and O’Keeffe, 2004, p.35) identified several strategies that help to keep speakers and listeners attuned. Examples of these are seeking clarification, clarifying oneself, and checking that other people have understood one’s message (See also Bachman & Palmer, 1996 and Fulcher, 2003 in the next section). The reciprocal nature of the interaction, as was argued in the preceding sub-section, also implies that the speaker needs to be prepared to deal with unpredictable content, in which case improvisation will be called for.

2.4 Teaching and learning speaking

According to Bygate, learners need to have access to the kinds of markers of fragmentation and involvement in speaking described above so that they can bring them to bear in their spoken production and interaction.

Regarding the teaching of lexis, it may be helpful to recall the study by Romaine (2005; see Chapter 1, section 1.2.1) suggesting that L2 learners’ first steps in the language are based on vocabulary means. Accordingly, even at the lowest levels it is crucial to provide a sufficient lexical base for learners to be able to engage in communication. In connection with this assertion, it has already been noted how the overemphasis on grammar in many EFL teaching contexts has led to generations of poorly-trained L2 English speakers lacking in lexical (and other) resources that might enable them to communicate meanings effectively.

Regarding grammar, it is important to note that accuracy should be approached by teachers with awareness of the phenomenon of spoken grammar, and that accuracy in speech may be impaired when the speaker is pressed for time. Teachers should try not to interrupt a learners’ communicative flow to correct a grammatical error unless the comment or correction is timely and justified, for

example, in those cases in which the error impedes understanding. Fulcher (2003, p. 28) notes that serious errors are sometimes made by learners when attempting to experiment with new and more complex structures; this represents a sign of learning and therefore they should not always be penalised.

Other aspects of the teaching of speaking involve work on improving learners' pronunciation and intonation. For all the reasons stated above concerning the emphasis on preparing learners to be able to reach the global community, it is important to work towards intelligible, but not necessarily native-like speech. Bygate (2009, p. 423) reports research indicating that work on learners' perceptual processing of the phonological repertoire rather than on production practice can help improve performance. For native Spanish speakers, a number of features, such as word stress, intonation patterns, pronunciation of consonant clusters and vowels, etc., call for attention as they are different in English. Work on these features will improve learners' fluency. It is important to encourage positive attitudes towards communication, an understanding of error as part of the learning process, as well as good use of speech planning and pausing phenomena. This implies the use of metacognition by learners as an aid in the development of fluent speech.

Fulcher (2003, p. 31) has summarized key strategies for speaking, which he separates into *achievement* and *avoidance (or reduction)* strategies. The former represent attempts by the speaker to express him/herself in spite of a lack of linguistic resources by finding ways around the problem. The latter involve the learner in finding ways to avoid using the language that is beyond his or her control. Fulcher presents the most common strategies as a list:

Achievement strategies

- Overgeneralization/
morphological creativity
- Approximation
- Paraphrase
- Word coinage
- Restructuring
- Cooperative strategies
- Code switching
- Non-linguistic strategies

Avoidance strategies

- Formal avoidance: the learner avoids using particular linguistic elements
- Functional avoidance: the learner avoids expressing functional or topical content

Raising awareness of these phenomena through metacognitive training has been claimed to improve oral communicative effectiveness (see, for example, Nakatani, 2005).

Pragmatic and discourse competence also need to be addressed in the teaching of speaking. Learners need to be taught how to express meanings appropriately in given contexts and in socially acceptable ways, adhering to the rules of speaking. Likewise, learners need to learn how to anticipate words and expressions, grammar and topics, based on previous experience or practice. They should also learn to internalise basic communication patterns, the so-called praxeograms or diagrams representing the structure of communicative interaction. This will enable them to comprehend a variety of communicative situations and will help develop fluency in understanding and generating speech. For example, a class activity may be planned with a view to familiarising the

students with the structure of a job interview. This would reflect Bygate's (1987) advice on the value of practising routine types of spoken interaction, such as those frequently observed in agenda management (topic development, turn-taking, etc.) or in formal meetings. For example, in Building Engineering, domain-specific discourse training might involve familiarising the learners with such spoken production and interaction routines as those expected to be performed by building engineers in the course of their professional activity, for example, communication during the planning, the execution, and the closing-out and evaluation phases of a construction project.

A web search for positions being advertised for building engineers brought up a number of skill descriptions, including the following:

- Good interpersonal, organizational and communication (written and oral) skills, including those necessary for communication with contractors.
- Ability to persuade people with varying points of view.
- Ability to present information in a concise and accurate manner.
- Good communication (oral) skills including experience with presentations to large audiences, technical client interfacing and leading group meetings.

To further illustrate the requirements for professionals in the field, a detailed description of key oral skills for civil engineers (including building/construction engineers) developed by the Canadian Department for Human Resources and Skills Development is provided in Appendix B1. The document lists the different areas of oral competence, ranging from easier to more complex, that prospective civil engineers should be able to demonstrate at work. Teachers and syllabus developers should draw on similar informed documents and professional expertise to prepare their ESP courses.

2.5 Assessing speaking

As stated above, in an classroom assessment context the oral tasks should reflect the communicative situations specified in the learning outcomes, provided that sufficient opportunity for the practice of similar situations was offered during the course. The learners' performance should then be evaluated against those outcomes. For example, if "leading group meetings" was a required skill, an appropriate speaking task would be a group oral assessment task. Such task might involve, for instance, a simulation in which the learner would assume the role of an engineer working in a city's public works department and his or her role might be that of facilitating and leading a public information session on the viability of the restoration of a historic building in the city, as was exemplified in the section on task-based teaching and learning. The teacher or assessor would then have to attend to and grade accordingly those aspects of the learner's oral production and interaction skills that might be seen to transfer to authentic communication in groups in the workplace.

Concerning the nature of the assessment, two main types of test are identified: Those tests and tasks that fulfil exclusively a pedagogical goal, such as the one described in the preceding paragraph, and the tests that are related to external certifying requirements; for example, an oral interview (a simulation in its own right but one aiming for external recognition outside the confines of the classroom).

The construct of spoken language should be clear in the assessor's mind (particularly at higher levels) as, in order to accurately assess speaking, teachers and testers should not overlook the aspects of spoken grammar that learners may

have internalised. Thus, in an assessment situation, features such as broken up sentences, ellipsis, reduced syntactic complexity, thematic fronting, etc., should be acknowledged as acceptable features of spoken discourse, as long as these are used as native speakers do. Awareness of these features will keep teachers and assessors from judging a learner's speech as inaccurate. It is also important to remember that speaking is a social act and is usually co-constructed. When the speaking assessment takes place in pairs or groups, the role of the interlocutor and his/her contribution should be acknowledged. For example, a candidate in an oral interview might be paired with a very fluent speaker who would dominate the conversation and provide little opportunity for his interlocutor to demonstrate his interactional skills.

The analysis and interpretation of the complexities involved in assessing speaking should be supported by research in the fields of L2 speaking and assessment, including aspects like examiner training and test design as discussed in the preceding paragraphs, but also aspects related to test development and administration. Bygate (2009, p. 429) points to specific variables that can influence performance as relevant areas for research. Sources of variability would include, for instance, the effect of planning time, task repetition and task complexity, among others, on complexity, accuracy and fluency (see research on tasks, in subsection 1.3.2.3). Other factors may be related to learner's individual characteristics, such as cultural background, age or intelligence, and, as mentioned, to the characteristics of the assessors; for example, their degree of severity or leniency in scoring or their experience of oral assessment, among others.

An issue worth investigating in an instructional context guided by principles of Dynamic Assessment is the value of carrying out process- in addition to product-based assessment so as to more clearly reflect improvement longitudinally as a result of learners' participation in an extended learning cycle. Bearing in mind the socioculturally-based approach to classroom assessment proposed in this research, a student's final grade will necessarily incorporate aspects of development, with the focus not exclusively on the final attainment of a certain level of speaking proficiency, but also on other achievements, such as having developed certain strategic communication and interpersonal skills, a trend towards the acquisition of specific linguistic structures, or the development of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness related to the skill of L2 speaking. Additional important issues are the effect of spoken interaction and co-construction on performance and assessment, as we saw at the start of this section.

Regarding the different types of task that may be designed for the development of speaking skills in the classroom, the specific speaking competencies (described in the form of learning outcomes) targeted in the course syllabus need to be considered. Dyadic and group tasks, such as role-plays and simulations based on real-life situations (see García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts, 2001; Angelini Doffo, 2012), as well oral interviews and presentations, are some examples. Fulcher (2003, p. 53), offers a perspective on the advantages of using a descriptive framework for speaking tasks which can be evaluated with reference to the choices made when defining the construct. Drawing on Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Weir (1993), Fulcher lists the following components that may be identified in speaking tests:

Table 3. A framework for describing speaking tasks. (Fulcher, 2003, p. 57. Table 3.1)

1. Task orientation

- Open: outcomes dependent upon speakers
- Guided: outcomes are guided by the rubrics, but there is a degree of flexibility in how the test taker reacts to the input
- Closed: outcomes dictated by input or rubrics

2. Interactional relationship

- Non-interactional
- Interactional:
 - One-way
 - Two-way
 - Multi-way

3. Goal orientation

- None
- Convergent
- Divergent

4. Interlocutor status and familiarity

- No interlocutor
- Higher status
- Lower status
- Same status
- Degree of familiarity with interlocutor

5. Topic (s)

6. Situations

In addition to a detailed description of the tasks and task-types, the test framework (for example, the interview structure) should be clearly specified, including the planned sequence of talk as well as the phases or sections of the test and its components (the language knowledge, strategies and skills required). Developing clear test specifications is paramount (see Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Fulcher,

2003; Luoma, 2004). The test specifications and the rating procedures should be explained to ensure that they will be reliably interpreted, both by the test-takers/learners and the testers/assessors.

The instructions and materials to be used in the test should be made available.

Luoma (2004, p. 51) lists the following:

- The rubric and the instructions to examinees.
- The tasks materials which the examinees use while performing the task.
- An interaction outline, which gives guidelines or scripts for examiners about the content and wording of questions or prompts.
- Plans and instructions for administration.

The use of rating scales helps reduce bias and subjectivity by providing descriptors on which assessors may anchor their judgements. Band descriptors (such as the CEFR common reference levels A1-C2) place learners at a specific level based on what they can (or cannot) do with the language. Speech samples can be scored based on holistic (an overall impression of the speakers oral ability) or analytic criteria (assessing individual traits, such as vocabulary range or fluency). In the latter case, there is the risk of incurring cross-contamination (Alderson, 1981) across categories.

There are numerous challenges involved in carrying out speaking assessments. Rater training should be encouraged, also for those carrying out their assessment in a classroom context (Fulcher 2003, p. 136). According to Bygate (2009, pp. 413-414), a teacher's or tester's ability to estimate speakers' oral proficiency will depend on their capacity to detect differences in constellations of features, to relate them to gradations of proficiency, and also on their

understanding of the linguistic demands of the task, including possible trade-offs between features competing for attention and the circumstances of performance.

The preceding paragraphs represent an attempt to summarise the key aspects involved in assessing speaking. Bygate (2009, p. 432; citing Iwashita, Brown, McNamara & O'Hagan, 2008), issues a word of caution regarding the assessment of oral features, as research suggests that “only a limited number of features correlate significantly with test bands, and with, at best, modest effect sizes”. Bygate draws on a number of studies that point to the difficulty of accurately identifying patterns of oral language development across levels and of assessing accordingly. For example, the use of pausing, communication strategies, or formulaic language as indicators of proficiency is more complex than it might appear. As has been argued throughout this chapter, speaking is a complex skill affected by the interaction of multiple factors. In the present research, care was taken to control for the influence of confounding variables through task planning with awareness of the theoretical and practical issues involved in oral assessment in classroom settings. The next chapter will provide a description of the speaking tasks, the assessment procedures, as well as the research methods that were used with the aim of generating valuable insights regarding the value of Task-Based Language Teaching and Dynamic Assessment in the development of L2 oral proficiency.

3. Materials and Method

3.1 Context and participants

The study involved an intact class of undergraduate students of English for academic and professional purposes (N=30) at lower intermediate level in the Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain. Two students who did not carry out the whole set of tasks were removed from the sample before the analysis. The participants in the study were School of Building Engineering (ETSIE) students and had been learning English as a foreign language for ten years on average, in most cases within pedagogical contexts that emphasised grammar and vocabulary building at the expense of communicative practice. In this class, the students received 4.5 contact hours per week (1.5 hours three times a week) for twelve weeks. The teaching approach aimed to support communicative language development with a specific focus on tasks and topics related to the field of Building Engineering. The Dynamic Assessment component described in this thesis represented approximately a third of the total class time, and took place during nine out of the total of twelve weeks of the academic term.

3.1.1 Teaching speaking at the School of Building Engineering

At the School of Building Engineering, English is taught at two levels: B1 and B2. The present study concerns the teaching of the lower of these two levels. For this group, a general adult English language coursebook was selected, *Language Leader Intermediate* (Falvey & Kent, 2008) on the grounds that it would provide a balanced focus on general and academic English skills and plenty of rich input, as well as engaging communicative practice.

This, together with the discipline-based content and activities, seemed appropriate for this group of lower intermediate-level students at ETSIE, as the

aim was to develop a syllabus that would combine the content of a pre-designed, commercially-produced course, with the materials prepared by the instructor with a view to familiarising the students with the language, genres and situations that the future building engineers would need to engage in at work.

The examples provided below illustrate the type of speaking and listening activities the students carried out in class related to the field of Building Engineering. Some had been specifically designed or compiled by the class tutor, while others were to be found in the textbook and, in a number of cases, adapted to meet the needs of this particular class. The spoken materials included scripted dramatized exchanges as well as samples of authentic speech and interaction.

Speaking:

- A simulated student placement interview for applicants wishing to spend a semester studying in a School of Building Engineering in a European University.
- A role-play discussion by a team of architects and building engineers on plans for a building project.
- A seminar attended by members of *Forum-UNESCO University and Heritage* at UPV in which the project's mission and work was presented to the class. The session was conducted entirely in English and it was led by a native English speaker. The class were invited to participate during the presentation and in the follow-up discussion. Some of the topics addressed were of immediate relevance to the professional expectations of these students, such as future prospects for graduating building engineers in a globalised world and in the current context of economic crisis, the internationalization of markets, English as the language of international communication, etc.

Listening:

- A videotaped interview with architect Frank Gehry on his life and work.
- Video documentaries showing building engineers on the building site, describing their tasks and role and touring the premises.
- Audio-recorded conversations among building engineers discussing a project.

Examples of oral productive and receptive activities the students engaged in for the development of their global oral skills included:

Speaking:

- Describing pictures
- Giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing
- Asking questions, giving answers
- Discussing advantages and disadvantages; making suggestions
- Describing personal experiences

Listening:

- Listening to people agreeing and disagreeing
- Listening to people discussing advantages and disadvantages
- Listening to people narrating past events
- Listening to a job interview
- Listening to people choosing a new team member, a holiday destination, a language course, etc.

The speaking and listening tasks aimed to enhance oral production through input and output processing and communicative activities such as simulations and role-plays, in addition to other forms of classroom interaction such as dialogues and class discussion. The focus comprised phonetics, grammatical structures, and vocabulary (including functional phrases and formulaic expressions) relevant to the topic on hand, as well as the development of listening and speaking skills through guided practice. As regards the practice of speaking, discourse and

pragmatic patterns, as well as aspects of pronunciation and intonation were also dealt with. The ultimate goal was then to promote the development of the learners' speaking skills through meaningful, real-world tasks. Regarding the focus-on-form approach, many instances represented features specifically targeted in the coursebook, always in connection with some communicative activity (for example, irregular past forms, reviewed through pedagogical grammar following a brief lead-in discussion; then practised through reading, listening, and speaking tasks). Others occurred incidentally as the learners attempted to express themselves, and were dealt with by the teacher through corrective feedback strategies, both implicit and explicit, depending on the situation.

3.2 Tasks

Bearing in mind the wide range of language features and tasks contained in the core course component, it seems important to stress what was considered to be the potential added value of incorporating an extended task-based design, as it clearly represented an addition to an already comprehensive syllabus. Implementing the design meant that part of the textbook contents had to be dropped. The reasons behind this decision are based on the teacher's consideration of findings from the research reported in this thesis and their perceived relevance for the particular EFL setting in which this class was taught. Previous piloting experiences with similar groups helped to identify language learning needs and methodological choices in need of revision. These are outlined below:

- The need for a pedagogical approach that would help to longitudinally address the individual students' developing interlanguage and would enable pedagogical

decisions to be made accordingly (for example, what specific grammar features might be worth focusing on; which ones could be addressed by means of metalinguistic explanations, which ones would be best acquired through exposure to comprehensible input, etc.). It should be noted that the textbook-based syllabus already targeted a range of forms and rules benchmarked at the Common European Framework of Reference For Languages (CEFR) level B1.

- The need for a pedagogical approach that would create opportunities for the whole class to function holistically in pursuing higher levels of language competence, and not just be a sum of individuals who might share a classroom but not necessarily contribute much to one another's development.
- The need for a pedagogical approach that would enable ZPD-oriented learning itineraries to be created for particular classes alongside the pre-specified stages to be found in the syllabus of a commercially-produced language course.

These reflections led this researcher (and class tutor) to develop a task-based design beginning with samples of oral discourse that might subsequently be recycled for form-focused practice. This design was intended to help the students notice relevant (for them) linguistic forms and rules in their output. It aimed to highlight the successes and problems in the student performances, and so to help them broaden their interlanguages by targeting their zones of proximal development through a Dynamic Assessment cycle.

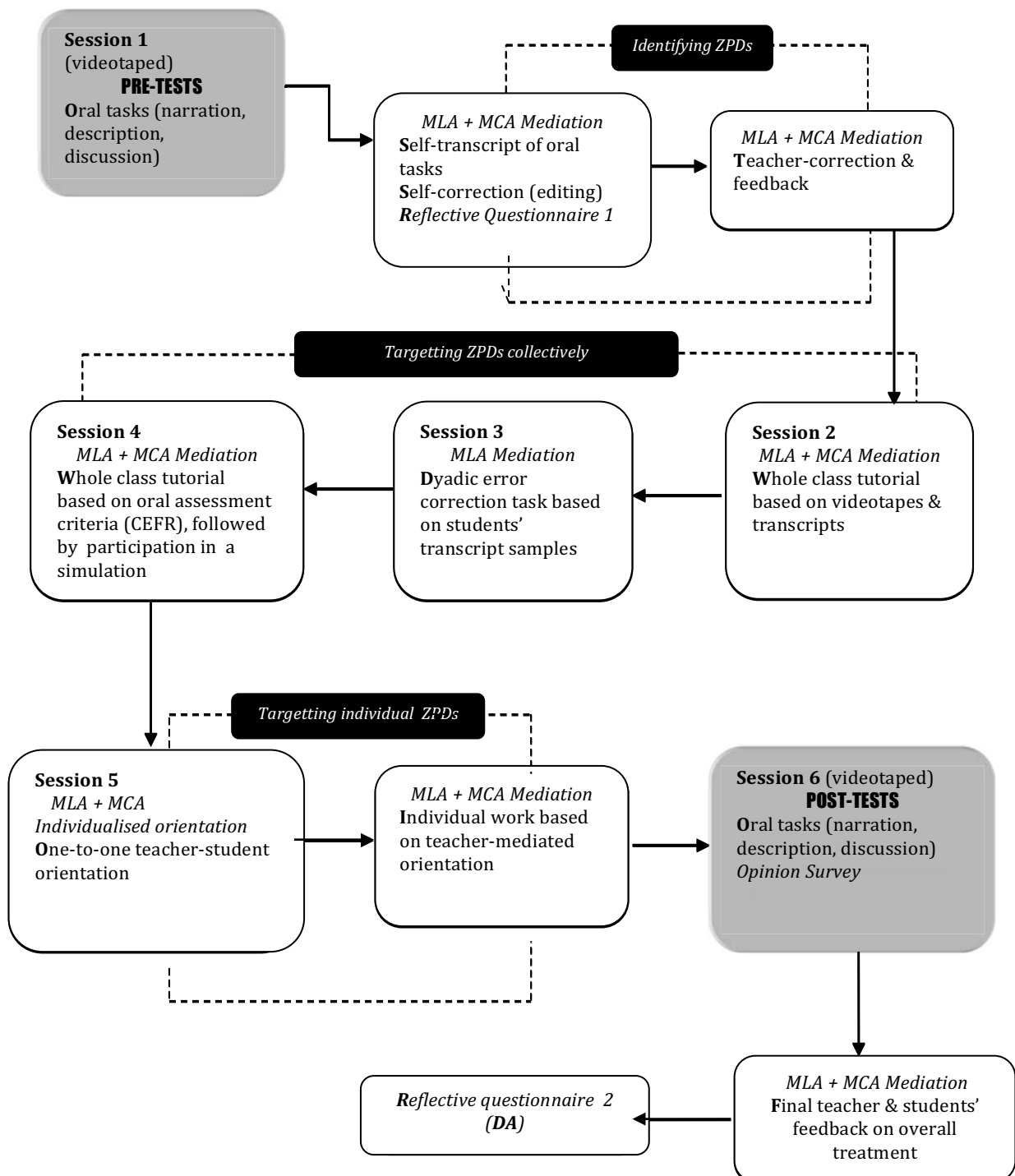
Thus, based on (a) the general foundations of Dynamic Assessment discussed in the theoretical background section above and (b) the fundamental premise for group DA highlighted by Poehner (2009, p. 477), our implementation of DA observed the following principles: the purpose of mediation is to help students co-construct a zone of proximal development; in the case of group

Dynamic Assessment, the group's ZPD is also taken into account; the focus of DA is on process rather than product; the role of the teacher is to guide and orient students throughout the procedures in order to help them achieve their goals and gain confidence in their own agency; support is offered along an implicit to explicit dimension and quality and quantity of mediation is provided in accordance with the learners' responsiveness to assistance. Ability is ultimately determined by considering performance, quality, and amount of mediation needed throughout assessment procedures.

3.2.1 Task implementation

The pedagogical treatment was conducted during the academic year of 2010-2011 (Winter semester). It extended over a period of nine weeks between the pre- and post- tests. The task sequence is given in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Dynamic Assessment cycle



The pedagogical procedures were carried out in three modes of implementation, i.e., whole group, small group, and individually, depending on the nature of the task. The design had been piloted the year before and several improvements were made on the previous version based on the analysis of student performances and on evidence gathered regarding the effectiveness of the different tasks. Said improvements will be discussed in relation to the individual tasks.

3.2.1.1 Oral pre-test

For the first stage (**ORAL PRE-TESTS**), students worked in trios and took turns to each perform three meaning-oriented oral tasks involving two monologues, i.e., a narrative and a description based on visual prompts, and a dialogic task where the three students interacted together. The format of this test was adapted from PET, FCE and IELTS examination guidelines with the aim of eliciting a comprehensive range of speech acts and conditions (for example, pre- and online planning; individual and collective, interactive tasks). All the sessions were video-recorded with the students' consent. These recordings served a dual purpose: They were an intrinsic part of Dynamic Assessment on the one hand and a source of data for our investigation on the other hand. Each participant's contribution lasted an average of four minutes. The videotaped files were then used as the backbone for subsequent work on the co-construction of individual and collective zones of proximal development focusing on metalinguistic (MLA) and metacognitive (MCA) awareness as hereby outlined.

3.2.1.2 *Dynamic assessment tasks*

As indicated above, each student was asked to produce a verbatim **TRANSCRIPT** of their videotaped performance. Once the files had been transcribed, students were asked to identify and self-correct any language errors apparent in their transcriptions. At this stage, each student also completed a reflective questionnaire (1a) and an open question (1b) on their oral performance (see Appendix D1) based on the insights gained from having transcribed their videotaped files. The self-corrected transcripts and the completed questionnaires were then handed in to the teacher who proceeded to provide individual mediation and orientation to further enhance metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness by adding corrections, feedback, and comments to each of the student's transcriptions and questionnaires.

A subsequent series of sessions involving whole class, dyadic, and individual work were carefully designed by the teacher based on (a) her analysis of students' videotaped oral performance; (b) her analysis of the students' self-corrected transcripts and reflective questionnaires; and (c) relevant documentation from CEFR.

As emphasised above, the overarching aim of the Dynamic Assessment sessions was to facilitate the co-construction of ZPDs by providing theoretical and practical support based initially on individual, and subsequently collective, responsiveness to mediation. Taking samples from the students' videotaped performance and transcripts the teacher designed tutorials and tasks, e.g., dyadic error correction (Appendix E), to guide students on aspects of grammar and communication including morphosyntax, lexis, discourse features, pronunciation and pragmatic appropriacy. The students also became familiar with the notions of

range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence as outlined in the CEFR (Appendices A1 – A4). These notions were particularly relevant to their needs, as all UPV students have to demonstrate a B2 CEFR level of English before they graduate.

Further individualised orientation was provided in sessions where problematic language features identified by both the teacher and the students in the transcripts and reflective questionnaires served as the basis for teacher-student negotiation of individual work plans. The materials for this practice stage were primarily web-based; for example, a student who showed inconsistent use of past forms was directed to exercises that reinforced that area of grammar; a student feeling that he/she lacked discussion skills was guided to materials that focused on skill development in that particular area and so forth.

3.2.1.2.1 Dynamic Assessment roles and interaction

Once individual and collective emerging capacities were identified, the teacher's role was to continue enabling the recursive diagnosis and understanding of poor performance and to respond to the students' needs in an effort to target those emerging capacities as herein described.

Interactions between the teacher and individual students in class aimed at targeting the students' maturing metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities attending to their responsiveness to help by tapping into their present abilities and behaviour, by further mediating development through additional resources (e.g., online materials), and by introducing them to a community of practice and knowledge (e.g., the language experts authoring pedagogical websites, dictionaries, and online resources). The support provided was also intended to equip the

students with cognitive and practical tools they would be able to use autonomously in the future (see Poehner, 2008, p. 105).

Collective interactions during DA, i.e., between the teacher and the whole class and between students themselves, also served as a mediational mechanism for the teacher to provide contingent, adaptable assistance. The aim of these collective dialogues was to enhance MLA by helping learners to create connections between their individual abilities, as reflected in their videotaped performance and self-transcripts, and the wider contexts of communication and assessment. The following are two examples of how these interactions emerged:

In order to begin the collective dialogue, the teacher drew attention to the features described in a document: *Improving your speaking* (See Appendices E1 and E2), which was available on the class website. Carter and McCarthy's (2006) Cambridge Grammar of English was used as a reference in preparing this tutorial, whose aim was to develop critical awareness in the learners of what represents good speaking. Those aspects included:

- communicative purpose
- grammar
- vocabulary
- discourse
- production/delivery
- interaction
- communication strategies

Each of these notions served as a signpost that helped to mediate the discussion. Throughout the session the students were encouraged to ask questions and to make comments and suggestions on ways to improve their oral skills. The students seemed comfortable speaking about how they had felt and what they had done or what they wished they had done during their oral performance. However,

responsiveness was low for some students. When the teacher asked those students why they would not speak, one student said she “knew how to explain things in Spanish, but not in English”. Other responses emerged as the class watched and discussed some segments of the videotaped tasks, which the teacher used to illustrate key points. Here the teacher struggled to get the students to assess the performance of their peers. Several students argued that they did not feel comfortable “judging” their classmates. It was apparent that, added to the language problem, i.e., their self expression, these students were in need of training in expressing balanced views based on analytical reasoning, and in overcoming emotional hindrances to the expression of their thoughts and ideas.

The teacher then focused on the concept of assessment. She elicited contexts in which the students would be scrutinized for their ability to use their spoken English effectively and skilfully, e.g., oral presentations at university, job interviews, meetings at work, etc. The most immediate context for these students would be the English language assessment they would have to undergo at some point during their studies, as students at this university (UPV) have to demonstrate a CEFR B2 level of English for the attainment of their university degree. This argument was used as a rationale for introducing the CEFR analytic criteria for oral ability, i.e., range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence. The students were given these criteria and were then asked to discuss the various parameters in dyads. Finally, the class discussed their ideas collectively, comparing their explanations to the descriptors in the CEFR scale. This dialogue helped to create awareness of relevant dimensions involved in speaking English in the L2 context.

Based on language errors from the students' oral pre-tests transcripts, the teacher created a document which served as the basis for a dyadic error correction task (Appendix E4). The pairs were given a handout listing sentences which included errors and were asked to both correct the sentences and to classify them under various error categories, such as pronouns and determiners, adverbs and adverbials, prepositions, verbs, word order, subject missing or redundant, comparatives and superlatives, choice of word or expression, among others. A whole class discussion followed to check answers and tackle questions.

These examples demonstrate a collective endeavour and an attempt to make the group's ZPD visible (Lund, 2008) by involving the tutor and students in "an interactive, reciprocal dialogue" (Schneider & Ganschow, 2000, p. 80). One useful contribution of this approach was that the teacher and the whole group were able to examine together the experiences of individual students using the class itself as a case from which everyone could learn. Considering both the demands and constraints of having to adhere to a syllabus as well as time limitations, i.e., nine weeks, part of the teacher's effort centred around creating opportunities for maximizing learners' exposure to instances of the language used by their peers in their communicative activities.

The next stage in the DA procedure involved mediation through situated activity. Enhancing MLA within the framework of Dynamic Assessment was conceived as "a collective practice involving learners, teachers, and institutional tools" (Lund, 2008, p. 34). A simulation (see García-Carbonell, Watts & Montero, 2003) was used as a springboard for mediating the co-construction of oral assessment skills. In the scenario proposed, the students prepared their role, which was that of a student applying for an Erasmus grant. They were asked to

prepare for an interview in which they would be competing against other candidates wishing to spend a semester in a European university. The purpose of the interview was to select the best candidates, based on their English language skills and on their preparedness, motivation, and academic credentials. This was a realistic scenario appealing to a number of students in the class who would have to undergo external assessments similar to these in the near future.

The class was divided into three groups: the panel of interviewers, the candidates, and the English language experts. This latter group was given the task of assessing the candidates' oral skills. They were asked to use the CEFR global assessment and analytic criteria for *range*, *accuracy*, *fluency*, *interaction*, and *coherence*, with each "assessor" attending only to one of these criteria; they then pooled their ideas before reaching a decision. The goal was to find the best candidate on the basis of the assessment generated by the assessment team. After the interviews took place between candidates and interviewers, the "English language experts", who acted as assessors, commented on performance. Some comments leading to their assessment included: "He was not fluent", "He took a long time to answer", "He gave lots of reasons", "She couldn't keep going comprehensively." These comments suggest that the simulation also offered the learners opportunities to reflect on metalinguistic and metacognitive aspects involved in the development of L2 oral competence by, for instance, allowing learners to reflect on what being, or becoming, fluent and accurate entails.

The simulation mediated the appropriation of the official assessment tools, i.e., the CEFR scales, by enabling a dialogue between learners, instructor, and those experts who actually developed the CEFR scales and who, in effect, were all active in determining the communicative competence of this group of students. In this

way, the students' act of assessing their peers rendered an immediate product (marks) through a future-oriented process. Through the simulation, students either received or gave a mark and in so doing they advanced their understanding of current institutional assessment practices; they were given the opportunity to experience assessment as inextricably linked to development: "By taking part in a practice usually reserved for teachers, these learners are in the process of developing assessment expertise by being collectively involved and by being given access to the same cultural tools as those of the teachers" (Lund, 2008, p. 45).

Having provided an analytic overview of how MLA was evidenced through the various dialogues between learners and teacher, between peers in the classroom, and among the individual and the group, aided by the various pedagogical tools, we will now focus on the "product" of those interactions. The next section will therefore report on and discuss the effect on overall oral performance of the pedagogical treatment based on Dynamic Assessment.

3.2.1.3 Oral post-test

Having worked on the co-construction of individual and collective ZPDs throughout the various treatment sessions, the **ORAL POST-TESTS** took place. The topics which served as prompts for the tasks were similar, but not identical, to the ones used for the pre-tests; the format and procedures were the same as those of the oral pre-test tasks, i.e., students worked in trios, and took turns to each perform three meaning-oriented oral tasks involving two monologues (a narrative and a description) and a dialogic task where they interacted. Each participant's contribution was **VIDEO-RECORDED** and lasted an average of 4 minutes. A second **REFLECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE 1B** (Appendix D) was completed by the students to gather

information about their thoughts in relation to their oral performance. Verbatim **TRANSCRIPTIONS** of the recordings were produced by the teacher for the purposes of analysis and assessment of students' oral performance.

3.2.1.4 Final Dynamic Assessment tasks

As a final step in the DA cycle, students received individual feedback from the teacher based on their oral post-test performance.

In summary, data for analysis presented in this study were gathered from the following sources. For RQ1, data came from student transcripts of the video-recorded pre-test interviews, teacher comments and three sets of responses to opinion questions formulated at three different moments (with the transcript task, immediately after the second interview and two weeks after the end of the course). For RQ2, video recordings of the oral pre- and post-tests, student transcripts of the oral pre-test and teacher transcripts of the oral post-test were used. The two DA reflective questionnaires (RQ3) were codified on a scale from 0 to 4. Reflective Questionnaire 1 was part of the overall DA cycle and also supported various aspects of data analysis and interpretation.

3.3 Data analysis

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out to address the three research questions posed. These were:

RQ1: How is metalinguistic awareness evidenced through Dynamic Assessment?

RQ2: What is the effect of Dynamic Assessment on the participants' oral performance?

RQ3: What are participants' perceptions of Dynamic Assessment as implemented in this study?

3.3.1 Metalinguistic Awareness Episodes - RQ1

The first research question (RQ1) was addressed through an analytical account of key components of the DA cycle where Metalinguistic Awareness episodes (MLA) played an essential role. MLA episodes brought into focus by the students themselves were considered a launching opportunity for the co-construction of ZPDs, therefore, all the students' oral pre-test transcripts were analysed in terms of MLA episodes operationalised as error noticing including self- (and other) repair. All MLA episodes were quantified and categorised based on their foci, i.e., morphology, syntax, lexis, discourse.

3.3.1.1 Error tagging method

The taxonomy of errors is adapted from MacDonald Lightbound (2005, p. 168), having herself used the International Corpus of Learner Error, ICLE/Louvain error tagging system (Granger, 1993; Granger, Dagneaux & Meunier, 2002). This tool was built on research work carried out at the Centre for English Corpus Linguistics (CECL) at the Université Catholique in Louvain (UCL), Belgium and was co-developed with John Hutchison at the Linguistics Department of Lancaster University.

Management and analysis of data were carried out in ATLAS.ti (v6.2). Atlas.ti is a computer-based package designed to aid users in managing, organising and supporting research with qualitative data (see the principles of Grounded Theory as applied in the qualitative analysis in section 3.3.3), but it also enables the manipulation of quantitative data. In order to gain an understanding of the nature of errors in the sample, a "hermeneutic unit" or unit of analysis was developed which enclosed all the data gathered by the researcher concerning the

MLA episodes. Categories, codes (sub-categories), memos and structures were developed on the primary data extracted from source documents (the transcriptions of the oral interviews; the teacher and student corrections and the various questionnaires). For this particular analysis, a terminological network was created on the basis of the taxonomy of errors described in the preceding paragraphs. Table 4 below lists those categories and sub-categories.

Table 4. Taxonomy of errors (Adapted from ICLE/Louvain - Source: MacDonald Lightbound, 2005)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	
F	M	Morphology
G GRAMMAR	A	Articles
	ADJCS	Adjectives, comparative/superlative
	ADJN	Adjectives, number
	ADJO	Adjectives, order
	ADVO	Adverbs, order
	NC	Nouns, case
	NN	Nouns, number
	P	Pronouns
	VAUX	Verbs, auxiliaries
	VM	Verbs, morphology
	VN	Verbs, number
	VNF	Verbs, non-finite/finite
	VT	Verbs, tense
	VV	Verbs, voice
WC	Word class	
L LEXIS	CC	Conjunctions, coordinating
	CLC	Connectors, logical, complex
	CLS	Connectors, logical, simple
	CS	Conjunctions, subordinating
	P	Phrase
	S	Single
	SF	Single, false friend
R REGISTER		[No subcategories]
S STYLE		[Other]
	I	Incomplete
	U	Unclear
W WORD	M	Missing
	O	Order
	R	Redundant
X LEXICO-GRAMMAR	ADJCO	Adjectives, complementation
	ADJPR	Adjectives, dependent preposition
	CONJCO	Conjunction, complementation
	NCO	Noun, complementation
	NCO	Noun, dependent preposition
	NUC	Noun, countable/uncountable
	PRCO	Preposition, complementation
	VCO	Verb, complementation
VPR	Verb, dependent preposition	
CS CODE SWITCHING	CS	[No sub-categories]

3.3.2 Measures of oral performance - RQ2

In order to ascertain the effect of Dynamic Assessment on the participants' oral performance (RQ2) the oral pre- and post-tests were subjected to two independent stages of analysis. In the first instance, the tests were independently scored by two accredited raters who used CEFR oral assessment scales. The scales include five notions: *range*, *accuracy*, *fluency*, *interaction* and *coherence*. In the second instance, the tests were analysed according to the CAF set of measures, i.e., complexity, accuracy, and fluency. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was then carried out on the two sets of scores. Wilcoxon t-test was chosen because, in contrast to parametric statistics such as a repeated measures ANOVA, Wilcoxon t-test is distribution free and suitable for statistics of small sample sizes such as the one in the current study.

3.3.2.1. External speaking assessment

In order to ensure validity and reliability of assessment, Fulcher's (2003) and Luoma's (2004) guidelines for the design and implementation of the rating process for speaking were followed. As regards the CEFR-based assessment, guidelines from the Council of Europe's manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR (2009) were used. The assessment involved several components:

Raters and rating procedures

The raters were two native English speakers (one British and one American) with many years of experience in formal examinations. Both were accredited UCLES examiners. The raters and researcher first went through the paperwork containing the construct specifications (assessment context, brief description of the test), the task specifications (rubric and instructions, task description, administration

plans), and the assessment specifications (criteria and scales, rules for scoring and rating forms). Raters then watched calibrated performance samples for levels A2, B1, and B2 (levels A1, C1 and C2 are extremely infrequent among these groups of learners) presented randomly and were asked to rate them using the CEFR criteria, scales and descriptors, as well as the marking scheme and rating forms described below.

Rating forms, scales and scores

The CEFR analytic rating scales for speaking (See Appendices A2 and A3) were used, with averaged task scores for the different parameters, i.e. the assessment criteria: *range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence*. The raters were first shown the group task and subsequently one examinee was graded at a time using a candidate assessment sheet (see Appendix C2) to help raters focus on the performance on hand and on the specific analytic and global assessment criteria themselves rather than comparing examinee's performances (criterion- vs. norm-referenced assessment). The form also included space for the raters to write specific comments about the performance or about the rationale for giving a certain score, and to give the researcher individualised feedback about the test. The raters first scored each examinee independently and then reached a consensus for the final grade, as is customary in the UCLES oral examinations.

The researcher took notes during the sessions. She did not participate or try to influence the assessments. The marking scheme for the global and analytic ratings involved scores as shown below (see also appendices A2 and A3).

A2/ A2+	B1/ B1+	B2/ B2 +
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Interview structure and tasks

The IELTS, PET and FCE tests were drawn upon in the design of the oral interview (given in appendix C1). The construct, the processes and the conditions affecting L2 speech production as well as findings from research into task design influenced the choices made at each stage to ensure that the test would elicit reliable and valid measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. The test aimed to induce different levels of cognitive processing (for example, pre- and online planning) and a variety of speech acts and functions (narrating, describing, comparing, etc.). Likewise, the tasks were designed with a view to creating opportunities for participants to deal with situations and topics within their level and expectations. A summary of relevant tasks and task features in the source tests follows:

Monologue (pre-task planning)

IELTS (Part 2)

Task type & Format	Part 2 is the individual long turn. The examiner gives the candidate a task card which asks the candidate to talk about a particular topic, includes points to cover in their talk and instructs the candidate to explain one aspect of the topic. Candidates are given 1 minute to prepare their talk, and are given a pencil and paper to make notes. Using the points on the task card effectively, and making notes during the preparation time, will help the candidate think of appropriate things to say, structure their talk, and keep talking for 2 minutes. The examiner asks the candidate to talk for 1 to 2 minutes, stops the candidate after 2 minutes, and asks one or two questions on the same topic.
Task focus	This part of the test focuses on the candidate's ability to speak at length on a given topic (without further prompts from the examiner), using appropriate language and organising their ideas coherently. It is likely that the candidate will need to draw on their own experience to complete the long turn.

Monologue (within-task planning)

PET (Part 3)

Task type & Format	A colour photograph is given to each candidate in turn and they are asked to talk about it for up to a minute. Both photographs relate to the same topic.
Task focus	Describing photographs and managing discourse, using appropriate vocabulary, in a longer turn.

FCE (Part 2)

Task type & Format	An individual "long turn" for each candidate with a brief response from the second candidate. In turn, the candidates are given a pair of photographs to talk about. A 1-minute "long turn" for each candidate, plus 20-second response from the second candidate.
Task focus	Organising a larger unit of discourse, comparing, describing, expressing opinions.

Interaction

PET (Part 2)

Task type & Format	Simulated situation. Candidates interact with each other. Visual stimulus is given to the candidates to aid the discussion task. The interlocutor sets up the activity using a standardised rubric.
Task focus	Using functional language to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement.

FCE (Part 3)

Task type & Format	A two-way conversation between the candidates. The candidates are given spoken instructions with written and visual stimuli, which are used in a decision-making task.
Task focus	Sustaining an interaction, exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.

The interview followed a sequential structure which was made available to the students, but they were not informed about the content. In other words, they knew about the sequence of talk, the functional areas and the interactional patterns that would be elicited, but not about any particular themes or vocabulary areas.

3.3.2.2 Measures of Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF)

Examinee performances were analysed according to the CAF set of measures, i.e., *complexity, accuracy, and fluency*. The description is adapted from Ellis (2003, 2009), Skehan (2003), and Foster, Tonkyn & Wigglesworth. (2000). From the latter, the *AS-unit* (Analysis of Speech) for the segmentation of oral data was used, defined as "a single speaker's utterance consisting of *an independent clause, or subclausal unit*, together with any *subordinate clause(s)* associated with either" (Foster et al, 2000, p. 365). This unit is based, in turn, on Hunt's (1970) *T-unit*, which contemplates grammatically full forms: sentences and clauses, to allow for the inclusion of sub-clausal units, as these are common in speech (see a description of the construct of spoken language in Chapter 2.2). Intonation and pauses are used as aids for identifying *AS-units* when they present unclear boundaries, particularly in utterances marked by ellipses. Some examples might be the cases in which the speaker drops the subject, produces communicatively independent adverbial clauses, such as utterances starting with "Because..." (implying: "I say this because..."), independent but communicatively meaningful noun phrases, units constructed cooperatively with the interlocutor, etc. On the other hand, subordination is also a distinctive feature of *AS-units*. Speakers develop complex arguments through subordination and this needs to be accounted for in the

analysis. As a matter of fact, this dimension has frequently been used as a measure of complexity when assessing L2 linguistic competence (see Foster et al., p. 365).

The measures contemplated in the present study are described as follows:

Complexity

Grammatical complexity (adapted from Ellis, 2009, p. 495) is understood in terms of amount of subordination (mean number of clauses per AS-unit); *Lexical complexity* was measured by Guiraud's index of lexical richness or type-token ratio (the number of word types in a text divided by the total number of words).

Accuracy

This measure was interpreted as the ability to produce error-free speech, operationalised as error-free clauses per AS-unit. The following criteria were considered (in Ellis, 2003, p. 117):

- Number of self-corrections
- Percentage of error-free clauses
- Target-like use of verb tenses
- Target-like use of articles
- Target-like use of vocabulary
- Target-like use of plurals
- Target-like use of negation
- Ratio of indefinite to definite articles

Fluency

Following Ellis (2009, p. 492), fluency was broken down into two kinds of measures: those that examined the temporal aspects of fluency (e.g. number of syllables per minute) and those that examined repair phenomena (false starts, repetitions, and reformulations).

3.3.3 Reflective questionnaires – RQ3

The third aspect of the present investigation (RQ3) focused on the participants' thoughts and opinions regarding various aspects of Dynamic Assessment in general and metalinguistic awareness in particular. Data to address this issue were gathered by means of a reflective questionnaire (DA) (see Appendix D2) which was quantitatively (Likert scale items) and qualitatively (open-ended questions) analysed. Insights from Grounded Theory (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) informed the qualitative analysis. Grounded Theory is a research approach involving the discovery of theory through the analysis of rich data. For the purpose of this research, the data subjected to our analysis included the comments made by the learners on their performances and on the pedagogical procedure. Focused questions and a broad, open-ended question were used. This was done with the aim of eliciting, on the one hand, specific statements by the learners concerning events that the research had set out to investigate (for example, how the learner had dealt with mistakes as he/she spoke; whether the Dynamic Assessment tasks had helped the learner to improve his/her vocabulary), and on the other, any other responses that conveyed the participants' personal impression and reflections.

The codes were grouped into concepts and categories with the help of memos, which served as a way of capturing ideas and observations and for the synthesis and integration of the data. These processes helped the researcher to develop a theoretical understanding of the learners' perceptions regarding the various aspects involved in Dynamic Assessment. Our findings are presented in the following chapter.

4. Results and discussion

As set out in the introduction to this thesis, metalinguistic awareness was explored as an aid to the development of learners' speaking skills within a task-based pedagogical design using Dynamic Assessment. This chapter aims to answer the questions posed at the outset in relation to the pedagogical value of the procedure and the students' perceptions of it.

4.1 Evidence of Metalinguistic Awareness in Dynamic Assessment

The co-construction of the learners' zones of proximal development was actually mediated through the mechanisms and interactions outlined in the Dynamic Assessment cycle (Chapter 3; section 3.2.1). It was first necessary to identify the zones of proximal development which would set in motion the procedures, and generate the data, which would enable the co-creation of both individual and collective ZPDs.

4.1.1 Identifying Metalinguistic Awareness Episodes

As mentioned in the Tasks section above, the first instance of mediation took place between the tutor and each individual student through reflective tools in the form of a self-transcription task and a questionnaire. The students' transcripts of their oral pre-test were then analysed for metalinguistic awareness (MLA) episodes (Chapter 3; section 3.3.1).

Table 5 provides an overview of the metalinguistic awareness episodes which formed the basis for the subsequent DA procedures. The main objective of this analysis, and classification, was twofold: (a) to gain a general indication of what were considered the students' emerging opportunities for L2 development and which (b) would therefore inform and guide the various procedures associated with the implementation of DA as conceived and carried out in this

study. At the core of this position towards pedagogical research and practice lies the concept of praxis, defined as “the dialectical [bidirectional] unity of theory and practical activity as an instrument of change” (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 459).

The error-tagging analysis yielded MLA episodes that can be classified in four general categories, morphology, syntax, lexis and discourse. The errors in morphology were tagged as derivation or inflection. The category of errors in syntax was then broken down into determiners, comparative and superlative, pronouns, noun forms, subject-verb agreement, infinitives/gerunds, tense/aspect, word class, missing words, redundant words, word order, connectors, negation, complement and prepositions. Lexis refers to instances of single words or phrases. The table finally displays errors attributed to discourse.

Table 5. Classification of Metalinguistic Awareness (MLA) episodes

		<u>Student</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>S & T</u>
MORPHOLOGY	Derivation	5	2	7
	Inflection	7	2	9
	TOTAL	12	4	16
SYNTAX	Determiners	31	19	50
	Comparative	6	8	14
	Pronouns	11	4	15
	Noun form	8	6	14
	S-V agr	20	16	36
	Inf/Gerund	8	9	17
	Tense/aspect	73	18	91
	Word class	4	5	9
	Word missing (e.g., Sub drop)	21	34	55
	Word redundant	11	9	20
	Word order	13	3	16
	Connectors	16	4	20
	Negation	6	4	10
	Complement	14	12	26
	Preposition	8	4	12
	TOTAL	250	155	405
LEXIS	Single words	75	36	111
	Phrases	22	17	39
	TOTAL	97	53	150
DISCOURSE	Discourse	17	0	17
	TOTAL	376	212	588

Note: numbers represent raw figures. The last column shows the grand totals adding up all the episodes, i.e., regardless of who initiated them, identified in the data.

As can be seen in Table 5, the largest values of MLA episodes occurred in the categories of syntax and lexis. Of the 405 total errors in syntax, there were 91 in tense/aspect, 55 in missing words or subject drop and 50 in determiners. In the category of lexis there were 150. Of particular interest is to note the balance of repair (student versus teacher-initiated) as an indication of specific areas to target in both individual and collective ZPDs for this cohort of students. For example, tense/aspect marking was the single most problematic morphosyntactic area for

the learners in this study when producing speech. However, when given the opportunity to reflect on their performance as an object of study (see Swain, 2000), participants were highly successful in identifying and repairing their errors (73 out of 91 episodes); the remaining 18 episodes were corrected by the teacher. In the case of determiners students were able to repair their errors on 31 occasions out of 50, although in the case of missing words or subject drop, more teacher corrections were called for (34 versus 21).

As shown in the table, pronouns, connectors and word order are also cases where students were clearly able to identify and repair their errors, followed by noun forms, subject-verb agreement, redundant words, negation, complements and prepositions. Comparatives, infinitives/gerunds, word class and the above-mentioned missing words were cases in which more teacher repairs were needed in comparison to the number of student repairs.

In lexis single word errors, more student repair was evident, 75 out of 111 cases; in phrases, 22 out of 39 instances were repaired by students. Finally, in the categories of morphology and discourse the majority of students were able to identify and repair their own errors.

Table 6 shows the percentage of student and teacher episodes. As regards student errors, the category with the highest percentage is syntax (66%).

Table 6. Percentages of MLA episodes

	Student	Teacher	S & T
MORPHOLOGY	3%	2%	3%
SYNTAX	66%	73%	69%
LEXIS	26%	25%	25%
DISCOURSE	4%	0%	3%

The table of percentages points out the balance between errors identified by the students and by the teacher although in the category of discourse the teacher did not identify any errors.

4.1.1.1 Instances of self-regulation

This section presents some instances of self-regulation which exemplify the ZPDs identified.

4.1.1.1.1 Tense/Aspect

Three differing degrees of regulation, i.e., ability to gain voluntary control over social and mental activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 202-207) were observed in the data regarding *tense/aspect marking*:

In all instances where *present perfect* was required but had not been produced in speech, the students were able to notice and self-repair their errors with minimal help; that is, having the opportunity to listen to their recorded performance and produce a transcription of it was sufficient to mediate self-correction, for example:

(S17) My favourite shop is H&M and I *bought a lot ... > ... and I **have bought** a lot...

Note: In all the examples provided, * denotes errors highlighted by the learner him/herself and the symbol > signals the student's self-repair shown in boldface type; researchers' comments are shown in parenthesis.

In other areas of *tense/aspect marking* the transcription task was useful to an extent, but not sufficient as a mediational mechanism. A case which illustrates this point is the use of *simple present* when *simple past* was required, for example in the case of narrative events:

(S10) So in the first picture appear a big family. In the past I think the family *are **was** very different than now because now we are only four or three peoples in the family and before they was (not noticed) twenty or fifteen. There *are **were** more person in the family because they *have **had** a different culture or different necessities or neededs because they wanted to *have **had** (erroneous repair) a big family. (...) Last year I went to London in December I think, and you *can't **couldn't** take photos, you *can't **couldn't** go out, you *are **were** always inside, in a museum, in a restaurant, because If you *go **went** out you *are freeze **were freeze** (erroneous repair).

The repair patterns of this learner suggest that she is aware of the pedagogical rule(s) relating to past tense formation and use, but the variability evident in relation to accuracy clearly differentiates the ability level of this student from others in the same group. Different sources of variability (Pica, 2005; Romaine, 2005; Saville-Troike, 2006) are in evidence which could be attributed to performance-related, i.e., oral vs. written mode, as well as developmental factors as suggested by the failure to repair the plural form of the verb *to be* in the past and the overgeneralisation applied to an infinitive, for example, despite the fact that performance was being mediated by the reflective written task.

The third example illustrates the lowest level of regulation found in the data regarding *tense/aspect marking* and shows an instance where the mediational mechanisms were insufficient for the student to even notice an error. In the example below, the participant was talking about the problems a speaker might face adjusting to life abroad:

(S8) The first problem that he has was the food because he didn't like. *Fat a lot...

In cases such as this (a minority in relation to this language feature), increasing levels of support were available for the students both individually, for example

from the teacher who offered feedback and comments, and collectively through tasks such as the dyadic error correction exercise as outlined in the DA procedures above.

4.1.1.1.2 Determiners

Use of *determiners* was the third most problematic area in morphosyntax; similar patterns of regulation as highlighted above were observed in this area. Learners were generally successful at self-correction and were able to take advantage of a minimal level of mediation. In the example below the L1 seems to have influenced oral production. However, increased levels of regulation appear to have been achieved through the activation of metalinguistic awareness brought about by lessening task-related cognitive demands:

(S6) I like *the motorbikes. > I like **motorbikes**.

4.1.1.1.3 Subject drop

By contrast, the balance of repair mediated through the transcription task shifted regarding *subject drop* as shown in Table 5. While there were instances where the transcription task facilitated error noticing and self-repair (example a), the predominant pattern for this feature was for the teacher to provide the correction as shown in (b) below:

(S19) I think * is sad > I think **it** is sad

(S16) ... and if * is good weather (corrected by the teacher: if **it's** good weather)

Errors of subject omission are common among L1 Spanish learners of English; this recurring problem can be explained, at least partially, in terms of language transfer, as the Spanish verb contains grammatical information related to person

which allows the speaker to drop the subject, particularly pronominal subjects, without affecting meaning (see White, 1985 in Chapter 1; subsection 1.1.1).

4.1.1.1.4 Lexis

Lexis-related episodes accounted for 25% of all MLA episodes. Judging by the kind of creative strategies, e.g., achievement, approximation, circumlocution, which learners appeared to have deployed to avoid breakdown in communication, it is probable that some level of metalinguistic awareness was in play during oral performance as the following examples suggest:

(S20) They work of foot. (Using the Spanish phrase *de pie* to convey “they work **on their feet**”).

(S20) People who work to sat. (*sentados* to express “people **who sit** at work”).

(S16) I buy it all the days (*todos los días* instead of “I buy it **every day**”).

In the majority of cases (97 out of 150) learners were able to self-correct their errors aided by the transcription task. For the remaining 53 episodes, however, the teacher had to correct the errors.

4.1.1.1.5 Discourse

Finally, there were a small number of episodes (17) related to *discourse* and they were all modified by the students themselves based on their transcriptions (see Table 5). In general, MLA episodes at the level of discourse occurred when the learners attempted to improve the structure and organization of their output so that the communicative purpose for that particular context was achieved. Sometimes the learner decided to change the focus of attention, e.g., adding or moving a word or phrase to front position. In example (a) below, this may have been intended to generate a more impersonal expression by drawing attention to a description of the place, rather than to one’s experience of the place:

(S8) And you can go to Gulliver Park. > Another important place is Gulliver Park.

One possible way to interpret this shift in sentence topic might be in terms of the discourse domain the learner was trying to accommodate to. In this case, she may have decided that a formal interview in an academic setting demanded a more impersonal, declarative style. In other cases the substitution may reflect a focus on textual organization. In example (b), the repair can be seen as an attempt by the learner to emphasise the sequence of events, e.g., replacing *other* with *the next*.

(S5) We went to Toledo, Madrid and other days we went to Andalucía >
We went to Toledo, Madrid, and **the next** days we went to Andalucía.

At times, an MLA episode points to decisions based on criteria of stylistic appropriacy. For instance, when one learner dropped the conjunction *and*, which he had used three times in the same sentence, and replaced it with fully independent sentences.

Other features of discourse involved the addition of stance or attitude markers to make a claim more assertive (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 283) as the example below suggests:

(S18) Barcelona there is a place in north east coast of Spain and there are beach.
> Barcelona is a place in north east coast of Spain and **obviously** there are beaches.

In sum, the transcription task proved to be a particularly useful mechanism for enhancing metalinguistic awareness which, in turn, formed the basis for teacher and students' work in the DA cycle.

4.1.2 MLA evidence in student comments

4.1.2.1 Responses to Reflective Questionnaire 1

The 26 responses to the open question asked in the first questionnaire (four students did not respond to that question) showed few of the categories that were defined in the error analysis. Student comments mainly focused on the need to learn more vocabulary and better grammar. They also noted the need to improve speaking and listening skills.

Regarding the vocabulary used in the interviews, student comments were all similar. Several illustrative examples are given below (see appendix F for originals).

(S12) I can learn vocabulary about nature, tourism ... I should learn more vocabulary to express myself correctly.

(S16) I can speak and people understand me but I need very much vocabulary.

Other students focused on the cognitive activity involved, including search in their mental lexicon.

(S18) I learned that I need more vocabulary and more oral practice because ... I couldn't find words in English.

Pausing was seen by one student as proof of her struggle with her limited vocabulary.

(S26) I can see that I haven't a lot of vocabulary because I say "ehhh..." all the time.

In another example, a student, acknowledging that her own internal resources had not sufficed her during the interview, expressed how she had tried to fill the gap in vocabulary following the interview.

- (S28) To correct all the bad words I have had to look at the dictionary and in some translators. I have learnt some new words and expressions that I could have used in my interview.

She then added those new words to her improved version in her transcript.

In the area of grammar, many referred to the mistakes they made.

- (S4) I've been able to see my mistakes and correct them.
- (S16) The interview was nice and you see the mistakes you make when you're talking. I think the problems that I have are verb forms and I say a lot of times "that".

To some, the interview and transcript task had the effect of laying bare their deficiencies. As one student put it:

- (S27) I have to improve very much because there are many mistakes.

By contrast, others assessed the value of the MLA activity in more positive terms, portraying it as an opportunity to develop their linguistic skills.

- (S24) I found it a very positive experience and I learnt a lot by correcting my mistakes.

Students also commented the usefulness of these tasks in the development of their speaking and listening skills.

- (S1) I think the interview is very interesting to see how you speak English, so you can correct your mistakes and improve your oral expression.
- (S2) It's difficult to speak in English when your level is bad, but I hope to improve my English in this course (This student actually did improve from A2 to B1).
- (S18) I think the interview is good to improve our oral English level and our listening.
- (S19) I think it was a good activity to improve our vocabulary, grammar and oral expression.

Overall, as stated before, student comments were limited to generalizations about vocabulary, grammar and oral comprehension and expression.

4.1.2.2 Responses to the Opinion Survey

Students' comments to the open question following the second interview (N=30) were mainly metacognitive, about their motivation, perceived performance, and assessment of the procedure, both positive and negative. Anxiety, inhibition and low self-esteem interfered in their perceived performance in both interviews but, on the whole, the students expressed their sense of having improved, as in the following examples.

(S18) today when we had this interview I've felt more relaxed and I think that I've improved my English.

(S1) I think that I've improved because in the last interview I've been more confident and relaxed than in the first.

However, those students who started the course at a lower level seemed to perceive that they had not achieved as much, especially regarding their oral expression. The students whose comments are given below remained an A1 throughout.

(S7) In the first interview I was quiet because I didn't have enough vocabulary ... In the second I have spoken more, but I wasn't able to express myself clearly.

(S9) My experience in the interviews has been good and bad. I mean, it has been good because I have been forced to communicate in English, which I always try to avoid, as I am aware that I sound really bad. On the other hand, bad, ... having so many things to say and not knowing how to express myself is very frustrating ... I have not improved much, but I think my level has not been at the level of the course, especially when speaking.

There were few metalinguistic comments. As examples, the following student observations were made on grammar and vocabulary.

(S5) I think the experience has helped me with my speaking because in the first interview I spoke more slowly and I didn't have much vocabulary or expressions to use. But in the second interview I have realised that I've used new words and I've talked faster than in the first.

- (S18) I was more in control and I have used the correct grammar and the correct vocabulary.
- (S29) The first interview was very bad because I was very stressed and I had little experience with English and I didn't have vocabulary. I spoke little and very badly. The second interview I think was better than the first. Because I had more experience and vocabulary. I could discuss with my friends very well.

Comments were also made regarding the students' experience in the course as a whole.

- (S30) In this course I have learned to express myself better in English. I've also improved my pronunciation and my grammar when I speak.

4.1.2.3 Responses to Reflective Questionnaire 2

The student comments were elicited at the end of Reflective Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix D3) two weeks after completion of the course via the UPV online platform. The last question asked the students to provide one or more specific items of grammar, vocabulary, etc. which they had used incorrectly in the oral tasks and which they thought they were currently able to use correctly as a result of the DA cycle.

Several episodes were excluded from the list; this was done in cases in which the instances given by the student had not been noticed as a result of their participation in the DA cycle, but in one of the other components of the course. Some examples are specific items of vocabulary, statements related to the learner's behaviours acquired through participation in the DA cycle (such as having become more participative) or strategies for improved performance (such as planning what one is going to say). These latter cases were not included, as they focused on instances of metacognitive, rather than metalinguistic awareness.

Analysis of strictly MLA comments was based on the classification of MLA episodes in Table 5 above and yielded the following categories: *grammar*, *lexis*,

discourse, and *pronunciation*. The following sub-categories emerged for *grammar* through subsequent coding: *determiners*, *pronouns*, *nouns*, *verbs*, *adverbs*, *prepositions*, and *connectors*. A full list of the MLA comments generated by the students is provided in Appendix F. See also the number of instances for each category in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Instances of MLA

MORPHOLOGY	Inflection	2
SYNTAX	Determiners	1
	Pronouns	2
	Nouns	1
	Comparative	1
	Verbs	8
	Adverbs	2
	Prepositions	2
	Connectors	2
LEXIS	Lexis	5
DISCOURSE	Discourse	3
PRONUNCIATION	Pronunciation	1

As the table shows, the majority of student comments reflected awareness of syntax, which in the first set of responses was hardly noted. Above all, the comments were related to verbs, followed by comments on pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, connectors and other elements of syntax. The students had been asked the following: “Give a specific item of grammar, vocabulary, etc. which you used incorrectly in the oral tasks and which you think you now use correctly.”

Several illustrative responses focusing on grammar are given below:

Determiners

(S21) Using *the* (erroneously) in front of people.

Pronouns

(S6) It has also helped me to use pronouns better.

Nouns

(S15) I have also learnt that “children” is a plural form and that there is no need to add a final -s.

Comparative

(S4) I say “quicklier” (erroneous correction) instead of “more quickly”.

Verbs

(S9) I now add –s to the third person singular in the present: ‘he speaks’.

(S4) I say “for moving” instead of “to move”.

(S13) I now think about the verb tense before speaking, so I don’t mix up present, past and future.

(S8) I’ve tried to improve the use of tenses and to use past forms more.

(S26) Using the past form of verbs, because when we did the interviews I used present instead of past forms.

Adverbs

(S15) I’ve corrected the use of “very”.

Prepositions

(S10) using the preposition “to” in the wrong place.

(S25) I often make mistakes in the use of prepositions (at, on, to, for...), which I either use badly or do not use at all.

Connectors

(S11) I try to use different connectors in my sentences, such as: but, also, because, for, then, moreover, etc.

In contrast to the other two sets of responses, students comments were directed less to vocabulary. Some of those comments were more explicit than others. One student simply hinted at the fact that she no longer confused the words “travel” and “trip” (S10); another, however, explicitly said that “In one of the interviews I said ‘discotheque’ instead of ‘disco’” (S26).

It is interesting to note, too, how some students became aware of discourse features: “(before) I didn’t pause as I spoke and I linked my sentences with ‘and’” (S6); or “I try to use phrases to get my partners to speak and I try to include them in the conversation; I try to plan what I’m going to say” (S4).

To conclude this analysis of MLA episodes, it is also worth noting that there was one comment on having improved pronunciation.

In close examination, some of the comments reveal that a number of the students had incurred in erroneous or unsubstantiated assertions in reply to the MLA question. For example, when one student affirmed having learnt that the correct comparative form of “quick” is “quicker”; another, that “country” is not a correct translation of the Spanish word *campo*. Some examples did not provide a clear context that would allow us to infer the nature of the error, for example, “using ‘the’ in front of people”, or “I’ve corrected the use of ‘very’”. Clearly, saying that one has corrected the use of ‘the’ in front of ‘people’ does not prove that the article was wrongly used, unless it was specifically stated that “the” was erroneously used for general reference, as in “*the people need to be loved”. Therefore, in cases like this one, it was not made clear whether the student now fully understand the different uses of articles (in this example, ‘the’ and zero article) .

4.1.3 Teacher comments

Comments made within the transcript aimed to highlight specific errors apparent in the transcript, such as the incorrect use of a preposition, the omission of an object pronoun, or having used the wrong verb form or tense. These comments involved correcting the erroneously used form and adding metalinguistic

comments in the form of pedagogical grammar rules. All such comments were already classified and quantified in Table 5 above.

Comments that were made by the teacher following (not inside) each student's transcript and Reflective Questionnaire 1 focused on both linguistic and metalinguistic aspects of the students' performance. Regarding the former, the comments aimed, on the one hand, to offer the students a general impression of the language area or the areas that they had successfully focused on or those that were in need of attention. She also offered the students advice, based on how they had performed in their interview, on how they could use their English more effectively in their speaking.

Grammar was a key source of teacher comments throughout the MLA cycle. As stated above, the approach taken by the teacher was to provide focused individual grammatical and lexical feedback with the transcripts in the form of feedback on the student errors, in individual oral feedback and with the class (in the dyadic and group error analysis task), while more discourse- and communication-oriented observations were provided in the comment that followed the transcript and in individual and group oral feedback. One recurrent remark stressed the idea that grammatical mistakes in speaking are not as serious as those committed in controlled written work and that fluent, confident speech is preferable to accurate but disfluent expression in normal conversation. The following comment (to S7) illustrates this point: "I think you were feeling a bit insecure and that is why you did not speak as much as you could. ... you have to make up your mind to be a bit more 'proactive', to take more risks; just say anything that comes to mind, even if you feel it's not grammatically correct."

The other major focus of attention was on discourse management. The teacher tried to make the students aware of the fact that oral discourse is constructed as a series of stages involving different turns and that it may be facilitated by certain interactional moves, such as asking questions and offering feedback. The teacher included comments to highlight instances in which discourse was managed effectively by the student, for example, for holding the floor and for keeping turn: "... you were able to stay on the topic (S3)" and also to invite contributions "You took the initiative some of the time and you also facilitated your partners' turns." (S10); Or both: "When it comes to arguing your points, you give sound explanations and clarifying examples. In the discussion, you take the lead at some points but you also try to include the other speakers in the conversation". Some students seemed to require more explicit feedback, as it occurred in one particular case, in which the student had expressed her opinions in rather blunt terms: "As far as your performance in the discussion, you were quite active, volunteering ideas and trying to help to move the conversation along. One thing you could try to do is use phrases to include your partners in the conversation, such as 'What do you think?', 'I'd do this.... What about you?' And when you contradict somebody's points, try to use what we call *hedging expressions* (used to avoid sounding too direct). Instead of replying with an emphatic "No!" to what somebody has said, you could say: "Well, I don't really agree."; "Possibly, but don't you think that that..?" (Student 14)". This advice seems to have offered new insights to this student, as in her reply to the post-course opinion question she wrote: "In the oral interaction activities I've learned to get my classmates to participate and to include them in the conversation."

Another element of discourse management concerned pausing in speech, which was addressed differently by the teacher depending on how each student had employed it. For some, the teacher interpreted and explained pausing as a case in which communication was interrupted due to lack of language resources: “You sometimes had to pause to search for language” (student 3). For other students, pausing was portrayed as a positive planning strategy: “You were able to pause to organise your ideas and you took time to find the right words.” (28). Planning discourse moves, although an issue of metacognition, was also interpreted and highlighted as a necessary step for structuring oral discourse.

With respect to vocabulary, the teacher some times noted a problem area and then suggested one way forward. In the example below, one student seemed to have difficulty eliciting vocabulary in real time, to which the teacher commented: “You expressed your ideas clearly, though at times you seemed a bit ‘lost for words’ ... To buy some time if you cannot think of the right word or expression, you could use some fillers such as ‘well’, ‘you know’, or some other framing expressions, such as ‘I haven’t really thought about that’”. (S1). Or “If you cannot find a word in English, just pause for a few seconds and try to think of a synonym, a definition or another way to say it” (S14). By familiarising the students with a range of metacognitive strategies, such as those shown in the preceding examples, the teacher tried to promote a more effective use of the learners’ linguistic resources.

4.1.4 Conclusion

The transcription task proved to be a particularly useful mechanism for students to note and, in most cases, repair their own errors, as the tagging of errors brings

to light in this study of 30 transcripts. It was hypothesized that with this cohort of undergraduate engineering students of English as a Foreign Language, self-regulation would be evidence of metalinguistic awareness. The instances found of both successful and unsuccessful self-regulation point to confirmation of metalinguistic awareness in the learners examined. Likewise, the nature of the MLA comments in the three sets of questions suggest a tendency towards enhanced awareness of grammatical features, especially of syntax, in speech towards the end of the instructional cycle.

The teacher comments highlighted to the student instances of MLA already attained as well as specific areas that the student needed to focus on. In the course of the pedagogical cycle, new insights regarding language use in oral communication emerged as a dialogue built up between the teacher and the students, first individually and then with the class at large. After the first interview, most students reported that they had experienced problems speaking because they lacked the vocabulary and the confidence. Further on in the course they began to understand and to explicitly acknowledge that they needed more complex and detailed arguments, more features of interaction, and that they also needed to strive for accuracy; they began to recognise patterns of error in their speech and to tackle them, but at the same time the students also learnt to accept the errors and inconsistencies in their speech and to move on. They developed awareness of the nature and of the changing patterns of their interlanguage. Full competence at speaking, comprising complex, accurate and fluent speech as well as effective interaction began to be seen more as a goal that they could attain in the future while they engaged in the processes of developing their language and communication skills. Thus, the cyclical nature of the design enabled the

integration of different moments of discovery in which the students, guided by the teacher, began to understand the complexities, the challenges and also the advantages involved in speaking a foreign language.

4.2 Effect of Dynamic Assessment on oral performance

In order to examine whether or not the participants had improved their oral performance after having participated in the DA cycle, the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-ranks test ($\alpha= 0.1$) was used to compare the results of the oral pre- and post-tests for both sets of measures, CEFR and CAF (see section 3.3.2 in the previous chapter).

4.2.1 Common European Framework (CEFR) measures

Table 8 presents the results for the CEFR measures, which show that there was improvement for the group across the five variables. Furthermore, the global scores between pre- and post-tests were significantly different, confirming an overall improvement in the participants' oral performance.

Table 8. Statistics for oral performance based on CEFR variables

	Range		Accuracy		Fluency		Interaction		Coherence		Global	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
mean	2.12	2.94	2.00	2.33	2.18	2.79	2.27	2.82	2.27	2.61	2.09	2.70
SD	2.06	1.71	1.84	1.73	1.93	1.96	2.07	1.86	2.08	1.90	1.99	1.74
p value	0.00*		0.12		0.01*		0.00*		0.18		0.00*	

* significant at the .01 level

More specifically, the results show significant improvement in the following categories: range, fluency and interaction, but not in relation to coherence or

accuracy, the latter category being particularly relevant in relation to metalinguistic awareness.

4.2.2 Complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) measures

The pre- and post-tests were also analysed based on CAF measures. Table 9 shows the p values for complexity, which includes grammatical complexity ($p = .33$), measured in terms of amount of subordination (mean number of clauses per AS-unit) and lexical complexity ($p = .45$), measured by type-token ratio (the number of word types in a text divided by the total number of words). Accuracy ($p = .03$) was interpreted as the ability to produce error-free speech, operationalised as the percentage of error-free clauses per AS-unit. Fluency ($p = .13$) included temporal aspects of fluency, operationalised as number of words per minute and repair phenomena, i.e., false starts, repetitions, and reformulations (see R. Ellis, 2009, pp. 492-495). In contrast to the results based on CEFR scores, the results based on CAF variables did not show improvement across all variables. The descriptive statistics show improvement for accuracy and fluency, but not for complexity. Moreover, none of the variables resulted in significant difference at the .01 level although accuracy ($p = .03$) would be significant at the .05 level.

Table 9. Statistics for oral performance based on CAF variables

	Complexity		Accuracy		Fluency			
	CperAS	TTR	EfreeC	WordsMin				
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
mean	1.61	1.66	0.47	0.46	0.45	0.50	0.82	0.86
SD	0.40	0.38	0.09	0.07	0.32	0.17	0.36	0.33
p value	0.33		0.45		0.03		0.13	

Despite the fact that there is some variation across variables and between sets of measures, i.e., CEFR and CAF, it can be concluded that overall, the participants benefited from the treatment. The contrast between accuracy and fluency is of particular interest with regard to the differences between the results across measures. While the raters following CEFR guidance did not find improvement in accuracy between pre- and post-tests, the results based on the CAF measures, which might be seen as a more accurate representation of the students' ability given their strictly "quantifiable" nature (although see Norris & Ortega, 2009 in the Conclusions), showed improvement in the amount of error-free speech.

It is precisely regarding the matter of how we measure and account for development, where the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of DA are particularly relevant as highlighted throughout this chapter. These results, therefore, should be considered in relation to the ZPD which is regarded as essential in actively guiding change and development and is at the heart of Dynamic Assessment (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, 2011).

We conclude this section with a discussion of some mismatches apparent in the data. In our view, these must be considered to gain a broader understanding of development since this might not necessarily be fully, or even accurately, reflected in “objective” results of assessment; in this case, the oral pre- and post-tests.

4.2.3 Mismatches: same numbers, different needs

Mismatches, both between final grades and what we consider development, on the one hand, and between similar grades and individual needs, on the other, highlighted two important issues apparent in our data.

In the first instance, there were a number of cases where individual students did not gain higher scores in their oral post-tests than in their oral pre-tests. However, closer examination of the relevant data through genetic or historical analysis, i.e., “analysis that returns to the source and reconstructs all the points in the development of a given structure” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 65), revealed instances of development understood as the ability to appropriate and re-shape the L2 meaning-making tools and, by doing so, enhancing one’s linguistic repertoire (see Lantolf, 2005, p. 349). Examples of this were found at all levels, but particularly with regard to morphosyntax and lexis:

Tense marking was a problematic area for some participants who, having consistently used simple present when simple past was required in their pre-test, managed to successfully overcome the trend in their post-test as illustrated below:

Case 1 (S8)

(pre-test)

...in the past people *have a lot of childrens...

...(children) didn't have anything but they *are happy...

...in the past it *is...

(post-test)

...we lived together two years...

...she studied the same like me

...we went together (to) a lot of parties...

Development at lexical level can be exemplified in the following instance where producing language led this student to test hypotheses (see Swain, 1995) in relation to the use of affixation:

Case 2 (S8)

In the pre-test, the student in question tried to repair the word in real time by trying out various alternatives:

...now people travel more but in the past that was (.) *impensable (.) *inthinking?
(.) *unthinking?

The regulatory affordances provided by the subsequent transcription task gave her the opportunity, time, and probably resources, e.g., a dictionary, to reflect on the choices, which led to a successful self-correction in the written mode. Importantly, she was able to then use the targetlike form successfully twice in her post-test, thus demonstrating her ability to transfer the mediated performance, i.e., demonstrating self-regulation (see Lantolf & Poehner, 2011; Poehner 2007, 2008, 2009):

I like to live in a house with my pets and in a flat that is unthinkable...

Travelling by globo (hot-air balloon) - unthinkable!

In the video-recorded performance of her post-test it is possible to appreciate the fact that her face literally brightened up when she produced the correct form for the first time. This suggests that she had felt proud of her achievement and, crucially, that the pedagogical procedure had enhanced her metalinguistic

awareness in this instance, a fact she herself acknowledged in the post-treatment reflective questionnaire: “I have learned the word unthinkable, which I didn’t know how to use and which I was able to use correctly twice in my interview” (referring to the oral post-test).

We now turn our attention to what we consider mismatches between similar grades (inter and/or intra-subject) and individuals needs. In other words, the fact that two individuals have similar grades does not necessarily mean that their developmental scope – as evident in the amount of mediation required – is also similar. By the same token, and perhaps more self-evidently, an individual student’s grade does not necessarily reflect accurate developmental levels with respect to distinct lexical or grammatical features. That is, the amount and type of mediation required by an individual to become self-regulated in relation to tense/aspect marking can easily differ from the amount and type of mediation required by that same individual in relation to the use of determiners, for example. However, this developmental subtlety is not necessarily reflected in the “grades” or “level” given to that student which, in effect, results in masking a case of intra-subjective mismatch. In the case of inter-subject mismatches, individuals can –and often are– grouped in classes where they are deemed to share the same L2 “level” as their classmates when they do not if, as argued here, type and amount of mediation, i.e., ZPDs, are also taken into consideration. This type of mismatch has also been demonstrated by Antón (2009).

Finally, mismatches regarding self-perception and actual performance were also in evidence in our data. An example illustrating this point was observed when a student demonstrated metalinguistic awareness both in her questionnaire (see below) and in real time speaking:

Case 3 (S15)

I laugh a lot with him (.) his (.) him

He was, he was studied, no he studied tourism and he talk at me in English...

In her post-treatment reflective questionnaire she mentioned that her L2 ability had improved: "I have corrected the use of the adverb 'very' and all 'personal pronouns'. I have also learnt that 'children' is a plural form and that there is no need to add a final -s." However, in the oral post-test she said:

...the families have very childrens...

Besides the issue of perception and actual performance, examples such as this also bring into the spotlight the much debated matter of how useful metalinguistic instruction, and by extension, awareness, in the L2 context is (Ellis, 2006; Macaro & Masterman, 2006). Although we must be cautious since our findings cannot be generalised, cases such as the one highlighted above remind us of the need to take into account task implementation and mode, e.g., written versus oral, both for theory building and in terms of pedagogical practice when discussing transferability and usefulness of MLA.

In sum, the pedagogical treatment, that is, Dynamic Assessment, relied heavily on enhancing metalinguistic awareness through error correction, self-reflection, feedback, and scaffolded assistance; the overall findings in this case study showed improvement in our participants' oral performance. While the non-experimental nature of our research design limits the scope for any claims regarding cause and effect assumption and, by definition, does not isolate variables, our findings can nonetheless be read in the context of experimental studies such as White and Ranta (2002), where it is reported that metalinguistic instruction had an impact on oral performance (see also Serrano, 2011). The next

section addresses the final research question, which focused on the learners' assessment of the pedagogical treatment.

4.3 Participant perceptions of Dynamic Assessment

The analysis of results relating to the participants' thoughts and opinions of Dynamic Assessment as implemented in this study are summarised in this section. In questions 1 to 9 (see Appendix D3), students were asked to assess to what degree the various DA procedures and tasks had helped them improve different aspects in relation to speaking in English. Responses were quantified on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (a great deal).

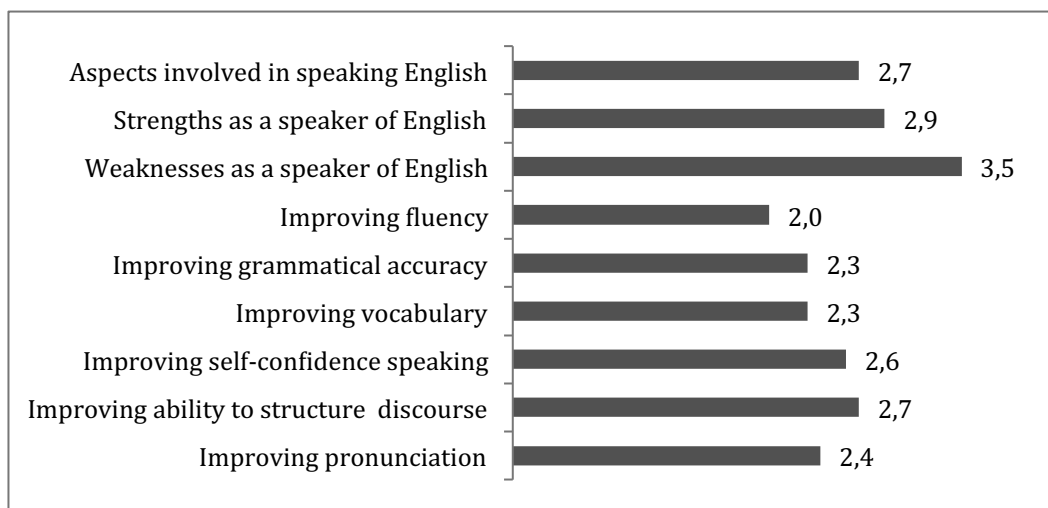


Figure 3. Overall perceived usefulness of DA to improve oral skills (figures represent mean)

As the figures indicate, the overall perception of DA among the participants was positive, but conservative. Given the emphasis on metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness during DA procedures in general, and on accuracy in particular for the transcription and error correction tasks, for example, it is not surprising that the students rated “fluency improvement” the lowest (2.0). By the same token, we would have expected higher rates than 2.3 for grammatical accuracy and

vocabulary. Interestingly, they found the procedures helpful to improve pronunciation (2.4). The skills found particularly supported by DA were metacognitive, i.e., understanding what is involved in speaking English as a foreign language, gaining self-confidence, as well as being able to learn about their strengths and weaknesses as speakers. It is likely, and indeed evident in some of the comments made in the open-ended questions, that having the opportunity to watch their own performance was considered particularly useful by some participants, e.g., "I think [watching the video] is very interesting in that it helps you to see how you speak English so you can correct your mistakes and improve your oral expression". We believe that both watching their performance and having been asked to transcribe their audio-files had an impact on the students' judgement regarding the usefulness of DA to help them improve the ability to structure discourse (2.7) because these tasks gave them an opportunity to analyse the product of their performance holistically.

The seven items included in the second part of the questionnaire (questions 10 – 16 in Appendix D3) gathered information about the participants' thoughts regarding the usefulness of specific mediational sessions and tasks. The same 5-point Likert scale, 0 – 4, was used. Figure 4 below shows the results:

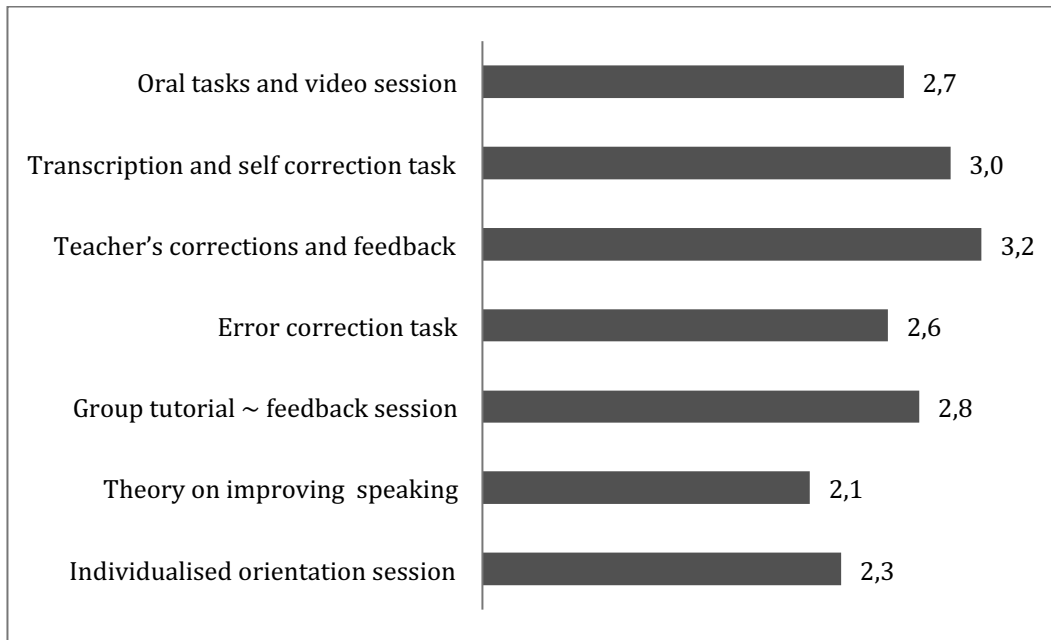


Figure 4. Perceived usefulness of specific tasks and sessions for improving oral performance (figures represent mean)

The sessions and tasks which focused primarily on identifying, and targeting, participants'; ZPDs were the ones perceived as most useful by the students, i.e., transcription and feedback sessions and tasks. Although individual feedback sessions got slightly higher rates (3.0 and 3.2), group tutorial and feedback was also deemed highly useful (2.8). As reflected in Fig. 3, students found DA in general useful to help them with metacognitive skills related to oral performance; interestingly, an important mediational means for targeting those skills was precisely the session which included "theory on improving speaking", the task which got the lowest score, 2.1.

4.3.1 Self-assessment of oral performance

Some of the questions elicited replies regarding the learner's overall self-perception as a speaker of English. One student showed awareness of the problems caused by his lack of self-confidence: "I didn't participate actively in the discussion

because I am not very fluent and I prefer to say nothing rather than to make a mistake.” Conversely, others expressed a positive attitude, despite being aware of their limitations: “It is difficult to speak when your level is low, but I hope to improve my English in this class.”; “It was my first interview and it is normal to be nervous.”

Analysis of the replies to the questionnaires suggests that these proved effective in orienting the learners’ attention to different aspects of their oral performance. This ability to monitor her own production can be illustrated by the responses one student gave to the open question at the end of the pre-course questionnaire. The preceding questions may have helped focus her attention on several aspects of her performance:

I don’t feel confident when I speak English, and I think it showed in the interview. Sometimes I didn’t know how to say a word in English and I tried to find other similar words. I gave long answers when I thought about the question for a few minutes, and I gave short answers when the teacher questioned me directly and I didn’t think. Another error that I made was that I used tenses incorrectly so the teacher couldn’t understand me. Finally, I think that I write better than I speak because when I corrected the interview I saw all my errors. And this is because I need to practise a lot and have more conversations with English speaking people.

As stated earlier, individual self-assessment of the first oral interview was followed by teacher mediation and class discussion. Teacher feedback was provided both in writing and orally. Besides the comments of a linguistic nature, the teacher added other comments related to the learners’ communicative efficacy. These were then recycled in a class tutorial. Being able to exchange their own impressions with the group and with the teacher proved a very effective way for

the learners to re-assess their beliefs regarding the their own self-concept as speakers of English. The class tutorial provided an experience in inducing positive attitudes and in promoting the use of effective strategies in oral interaction and production.

4.3.2 Positive receptiveness to Dynamic Assessment

Self-perceived improvement manifested in comments by the learners in the post-course opinion survey (see Appendix D2), which was administered immediately after the final oral interview. Analysis of these comments generated the following categories of self-perceived improvement, which are presented with illustrative examples:

- *Interaction*: “In the oral interaction activities I’ve learned to get my classmates to participate and to include them in the conversation.”
- *Grammar*: “I have also improved the use of verbs.”
- *Fluency*: “I think the experience has helped me to improve my speaking skills, because in the first interview I spoke more slowly and in the second one I’ve realised that ... I’ve talked faster than in the first.”
- *Range of expression*: “In the second interview I’ve used more words.”
- *Affective stance*: “the experience has helped me to learn to control my anxiety.”

4.3.3 Low receptiveness to Dynamic Assessment

Possible reasons for the low scores in receptiveness to DA by some learners might be related to the following circumstances:

As previously indicated, some of the students felt they lacked the language knowledge to be able to interact. It was a fact for this group that a number of students enrolled in the class had a lower L2 level than that required by the syllabus. Nevertheless, it was not in the instructor’s hand to exclude these

students. As a result, the learners stayed on in the group for the rest of the course. The instructor tried to facilitate some of the tasks, e.g. she translated into Spanish the document that guided the tutorial (see Appendix E2) and made it available to the students before the session started in the hope that reading it would help them to follow the thread of the class. An additional challenge for these students was the fact that the seminar was conducted entirely in English. Conducting the session in Spanish would have made these sessions more accessible for the lower level students and it would have made them more ready to participate. However, the instructor felt that she could not compromise the learning opportunities afforded to their classmates through having English as the language of instruction.

Task difficulty was possibly a reason for low receptiveness. In the dyadic error-correction exercise, each category of error included a list of examples taken from the students' interviews. This treatment had been piloted the year before. On that occasion, the students had been asked to correct errors in a list of sentences under their corresponding grammatical or lexical error category (e.g. subject-verb agreement; pronouns and determiners; collocations). The list had previously been compiled by the teacher drawing from the student error corpus and it included errors reported by the students themselves and others identified by the teacher. The same design was used again with modification, which was introduced as an attempt to improve the effectiveness of the task, which had been perceived as difficult by both the teacher and the students when it was piloted the previous year. The changes entailed:

1. Discarding sentences with more than one error, as the students appeared to have difficulty processing several errors at a time.

2. Discarding sentences that were not originally generated by the learners.

Those were typical errors commonly made by English L2 learners at different levels and had been added to those categories for which only a limited number of illustrative examples of a particular feature (e.g., comparative/superlative) were available in the corpus of student-generated errors.

The rationale for incorporating additional examples had been that a larger number of illustrative errors might facilitate learners' hypothesis formation and testing. This was done on the assumption that the two groups were comparable in terms of language level distribution and the types of error that emerged in their interviews. The latter claim was supported by the fact that it was not necessary to create or to delete any of the categories that were generated for the pilot version, as the type of errors coincided for both pilot and experimental groups.

The improved version was eventually implemented. Contrary to what had happened in the pilot study, this time the task appeared to be overly challenging only for the lower-level students. One such student admitted that she felt overwhelmed by the sheer number of errors she was unable to detect. Overall, however, the students seemed engaged and motivated. There was plenty of verbalization, or "languaging", to borrow Swain's (2006) terminology, between the pairs and also with other class members but, again, it was still taking too much time for the students to get through all the examples in the different categories. As a result, the class tutor decided that they would only look at two of the examples in each category together, first continuing in dyads and then as a class, with focused attention by the teacher on clarifying rules and category attribution, as well as any questions on the vocabulary. The remaining phrases were set as homework.

As a post-hoc analysis, one possible interpretation of the difficulties encountered by the students in dealing with this task might be the fact that presenting the errors according to abstract grammatical notions may have proved demanding for some of these more technically-oriented students, who might not be so well acquainted with linguistic conceptualizations. Even the best students in the class appeared to think twice when coming face to face with such notions as “subject-verb agreement” or “non-defining relative clauses”. On the other hand, bearing in mind the many years of exposure to pedagogical grammar these students had been through, these notions were not entirely unfamiliar to them. This alone should be one argument in favour of employing this technique.

4.3.4 Outcomes

In spite of the challenges that this particular treatment presented (it was a cognitively demanding task that required some grammatical knowledge), two positive outcomes may be observed: First, the learners had an opportunity to review some real examples of communication breakdowns incurred by themselves and their peers while speaking in unrehearsed situations. This meant that they were recycling instances of authentic language in use, and in so doing, they were establishing valuable form-function relationships which, as pointed out in Chapter 1, have been theorized to support second language development. In addition, the use of grammatical and lexical categories served as advanced organizers that, we hypothesize, would potentially support future learning by providing a framework for integrating new input.

5. Conclusions

The overall aim of this case study was to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing Dynamic Assessment individually and in a group. More specifically, this dissertation focused on three issues: (a) investigating the number and foci of metalinguistic awareness episodes which emerged during the pedagogical procedure and were, together with metacognitive awareness, a guiding foundation for the treatment; (b) evaluating the effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment for improving oral performance; and (c) learning about the participants' thoughts and perceptions regarding key aspects of Dynamic Assessment as implemented in this study.

The evidence of metalinguistic awareness took the form of instances of self-regulation, errors tagged by the teacher, responses to open questions collected at three different moments during the course and teacher comments which pointed to what the student had done well and what the student needed to improve. Findings showed a clear tendency towards enhanced metalinguistic awareness.

In response to the second research question, the statistical analysis of two different sets of measures, i.e., CEFR scales and CAF components, rendered contrasting results regarding the participants' level of oral performance with only the former set suggesting improvement. However, as pointed out in the mismatches, the statistical analysis does not allow a broad understanding of learner development.

As student perceptions brought out, Dynamic Assessment as implemented in this study was perceived useful in improving oral skills. Regarding the tasks, teacher's corrections and feedback were deemed the most useful, followed by the transcription and self-correction tasks.

In this thesis we argue that looking at development from the perspective of Dynamic Assessment adds an important dimension, a dimension which allows for a more “organic” (Norris and Ortega, 2009, p. 556) view of L2 oral performance and its measurement; a view where other factors such as “the role of context, individual differences and human agency” (Larsen-Freeman, 2009, p. 582) need to be entered into the equation.

To further elaborate on the discussion above, we would like to draw attention to two aspects of learning that have been amply demonstrated by SLA scholarship. The first is the fact that, as Long and Robinson (1998) put it, “effects of instruction of any kind may be, and probably almost always are, gradual and cumulative rather than instantaneous and categorical, and they draw on memory for noticed features at subsequent points in development as learners process linguistic material at higher level... with developmental processes occurring along other dimensions of language ability than those specifically targeted by the instructional treatment.” (p. 40). Doughty & Williams (1998, p. 254) have also argued that the effects of focus on form do not always immediately lead to interlanguage changes that are reflected in increased accuracy. In particular, the effects of instruction in the area of speaking may be less apparent, or may take longer to manifest than they would in the case of writing, as the cognitive processing demands while speaking may limit the ability of the individual to draw on already apprehended, but perhaps not yet proceduralized patterns and forms. It is important, as regards both teaching and assessment, that teachers understand these constraints and do not have unrealistic expectations regarding the rate of development of their students’ oral proficiency. We believe that instances of intermediate development, such as those elicited by the transcription task, should

be regarded as valuable measures towards teaching and grading decisions. Dynamic Assessment was, in our view, particularly successful in helping participants and the teacher identify and work on specific language features which were problematic for individuals, on the one hand, and for the whole group, on the other, as the analysis of MLA episodes demonstrates. Finally, the post-treatment questionnaires enabled us to gain insights into the participants' thoughts and evaluation of DA. Based on their questionnaire responses, it is possible to conclude that, overall, the students found the treatment useful.

In this study, we set out to investigate the feasibility and value of a task-based Dynamic Assessment design as a pedagogical approach in an EFL classroom as well as the value of metalinguistic awareness as an intrinsic aspect of the approach. We will briefly make some concluding remarks regarding the feasibility of DA, individually and in groups, and through task-based teaching.

5.1 Implementing Dynamic Assessment

Our work demonstrates that it is possible to successfully implement Dynamic Assessment on a group basis as a more realistic alternative to one-to-one DA for many L2 tutors. Undoubtedly, compromises had to be made and even so, as with any thorough L2 approach to teaching, the task was challenging for those involved, not least for the class tutor. Nevertheless, the findings reported in this research study suggest Dynamic Assessment is an approach worth embarking upon. However, other studies will have to be carried out which aim to compare the relative gains between DA and other types of instruction on the one hand, and on the relative effectiveness of group DA compared to individually implemented DA.

The latter comparison could also render valuable information in relation to the role of individual differences.

We also provided evidence of the value of DA for tapping into what we (and others) regard as learners' emergent abilities as reflected in the amount and quality of assistance required by individual students, in relation to individual language features. We would like to emphasise the key role of the transcription task (see Lynch, 2001, 2007; Mennim, 2007) as a useful mechanism acting as a springboard for enhancing metalinguistic awareness and for starting the process of co-constructing zones of proximal development. We found that metalinguistic awareness played a positive role as a mechanism for increased self-regulation, particularly in written tasks such as the transcription activity, but to some extent in oral performance as well. We are, however, aware that given the contrasting results of the two sets of measures taken into account for assessing oral performance, on the one hand, and the fact that students were naturally engaged in additional L2 activity as part of their whole language programme, on the other, neither causal nor conclusive claims can be made from our study. We trust, however, that by providing a detailed account of the way in which DA was operationalised and implemented in this study, we will contribute to the community's increasing efforts to find ways in which individual and collective zones of proximal development can be constructed in the second language classroom.

5.2 Implementing a task-based design

Concerning the task-based Dynamic Assessment cycle, adjustments will need to be made to improve the procedural and conceptual design of the tasks. Closer analysis will be required to improve aspects related to task difficulty and task sequencing. Tasks will be incorporated in which repetition will be an internal feature of the design so as to elicit spoken language across different repertoires and conditions. It seems appropriate to provide repeated opportunities to use the DA-based framework in other activities in the course (for example, in a class discussion). This makes sense as well in accordance with Schmidt's (1995) information-processing account, which claims that attentional capacity is increased when information is presented in varying modalities.

On the value of tasks, we agree with Skehan's view that the interactions that take place in the classroom can be taken in any direction that students or teachers choose and teachers need to be prepared to provide guidance. This resonates strongly with the assumptions in sociocultural theory of learning, and we believe that here, precisely, lies the value of this approach:

- Seen from the perspectives of second language acquisition and sociocultural theory, as research in both these areas has shown that individuals exhibit their own paths of development and cannot be successfully averaged to their peers without omitting key information about their particular stage of interlanguage development.
- Seen from the point of view of preparation for life, with its unexpected turns, the implication is that learners will need to go beyond the skills and strategies targeted in the course syllabuses.

As regards the issue of variability as an indication that a task-based approach might be flawed, Skehan (2003, p.9) has agreed with critics who claim that systematic, careful control of variables is impossible or meaningless, admitting that that may well be the case and ought to be accepted. We believe that practitioners taking this type of approach to L2 teaching should be well equipped to perceive and to interpret the main variables involved in speaking a second language, and to understand that these are largely dynamic and situated. This does not mean to say that we should not try to control variables. Rather, they should be acknowledged, brought to light, and, as far as possible, used to reassess course syllabuses, as well as the teaching and assessment practices. Furthermore, we subscribe to the proposition that complexity, which the range of variables that any task-based teaching project underscores, is intrinsic to the nature of language and teaching and, importantly, it adds depth and richness to the educational experience.

5.3 Future research

We are aware that improvements will need to be made to further adjust the design and the mode of implementation of this pedagogical procedure. Adjustments relating to aspects of task complexity and sequencing, as suggested by Robinson, will help us reorient it so that its effectiveness in promoting language processing may be enhanced. In the error analysis task it seems appropriate to include fewer examples in each session to avoid the cognitive overload experienced by learners when they are asked to focus on several language features simultaneously. In addition, we hypothesize that providing repeated opportunities to use the proposed Dynamic Assessment framework throughout the course may further

reinforce its pedagogical value by strengthening the learners' metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge and awareness and thus promote L2 acquisition. In this respect, one area for improvement is the need for a more sustained and integrated focus on form throughout the instructional period. Finally, a more carefully controlled post-task design, in which learner and teacher agree on and plan the type of language features to work on, will be proposed, keeping in mind that the focus of the intensive work should not seek to attend to too many forms simultaneously. The duration and scope of the focus will be closely monitored.

The improved pedagogical design constitutes one of our proposals for future research. Other possible lines of research, some already mentioned above, include:

- A comparison of the relative gains between DA and other types of instruction.
- A comparison of the relative effectiveness of group DA compared to individually implemented DA.
- The study of vocabulary acquisition as a result of the DA treatment.
- Assessing the degree of potential transfer of forms and structures across tasks.
- Aspects related to the management of the cognitive demands of the task and whether the use of more than one channel of information may influence processing/understanding.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Proficiency scales and guidelines

Appendix A1 - The Common European Framework: Global scale

Common European Framework Reference Levels: global scale		
<i>Descriptive label</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
Basic User	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
Independent User	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. 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.
<i>Descriptive label</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
Proficient User	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexible and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Table A2. Common European Framework Reference Levels: global scale (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

Appendix A2 – Common European Framework oral assessment grid for speaking

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/ herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he / she needs to, though he /she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

Common European Framework oral assessment grid for speaking
(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 28)

Appendix A3 – CEFR oral assessment grid for speaking. Supplementary criteria grid: “Plus levels”

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2					
C1					
B2+	Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Shows good grammatical control; occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.	Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech. Can use circumlocution and paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure.	Can intervene appropriately in discussion, exploiting a variety of suitable language to do so, and relating his/her own contribution to those of other speakers.	Can use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.
B2					
B1+	Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.	Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influences.	Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and “cul-de-sacs”, he/she is able to keep going effectively without help.	Can exploit a basic repertoire of strategies to keep a conversation or discussion going. Can give brief comments on others’ views during discussion. Can intervene to check and confirm detailed information.	<i>No descriptor available</i>
B1					
A2+	Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words.	<i>No descriptor available</i>	Can adapt rehearsed memorised simple phrases to particular situations with sufficient ease to handle short routine exchanges without undue effort, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation, asking and answering questions on topics of interest, pastimes and past activities. Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations, given some help, but participation in open discussion is fairly restricted.	Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.
A2					
A1					

Common European Framework oral assessment grid for speaking. Supplementary criteria grid. Plus levels
(Council of Europe, 2009, p. 186)

Appendix A4 – Common European Framework self-assessment grid

	Reception		Production		
	Listening	Reading	Spoken Interaction	Spoken Production	Written Production
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.

	Reception		Production		
	Listening	Reading	Spoken Interaction	Spoken Production	Written Production
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can write straightforward connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences

Common European Framework Reference Levels: self-assessment grid
(Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 26-27)

Appendix B: Oral communication skills in engineering

Appendix B1 – Civil engineers oral communication skills (Source: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada)

Tasks

(Shown from least to most complex)

1. Talk to suppliers and contractors about technical specifications, price quotes, service options and delivery times for materials, equipment and supplies. For example, a civil engineer may speak to a road building contractor about asphalt composition and compaction specifications. (1)
2. Discuss ongoing work with co-workers and colleagues. For example, they discuss project objectives, priorities, schedules and progress with engineering managers and ask for their guidance and approvals. They assign tasks to workers and contractors, answer their questions and provide them with direction. (2)
3. Discuss technical and legal matters with co-workers and colleagues. For example, a building engineer may discuss design and construction processes with architects, mechanical and electrical engineers and technologists at site meetings. A structural engineer may speak to colleagues in government departments about national, provincial and municipal regulations governing the design and construction of bridges and highways. A transportation engineer may speak to urban planners about the collection and analysis of traffic data and the development of a simulation model to assess transit priority strategies. (3)
4. Present proposals, recommendations, designs and research findings to senior management, clients and senior representatives from client organizations. They may also negotiate project deadlines and budget amounts. For example, a structural engineer may present proposals, designs, schedules and budgets for the construction of a length of pipeline. A transportation engineer may present the findings from a feasibility study of proposed airport development plans. (3)
5. Facilitate and lead public information sessions on the construction and repair of structures and systems related to highway and transportation services, water distribution and sanitation. During these sessions, they may present information, designs and concepts, facilitate discussions and answer questions from participants. For example, a public works engineer may facilitate and lead a public information session on a bridge construction project. A municipal engineer may facilitate and lead a public information session on the closure of a landfill site. (4)

Available from

<http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/English/ShowProfile.aspx?v=330#OralComm>

(Retrieved November 11, 2012)

Appendix C: Oral interview

Appendix C1 – Interview structure and tasks

Part 1	
Task type and format	An individual long turn for each student. The examiner gives the student a task card which asks him/her to talk about a topic (out of a choice of two). The card includes points to cover in their talk and instructs the student to explain one aspect of the topic. Students have one minute to prepare their talk and they are given a pen and paper to make notes. The examiner asks the students to talk for one to two minutes and stops them after two minutes.
Focus	This part of the test focuses on the student's ability to speak at length on a given topic related to his or her own experience (without further prompts from the examiner), using appropriate language and organising their ideas coherently. <i>Functional language:</i> Describing familiar objects/events; narrating personal experiences.
Timing	3 minutes including preparation time
Part 2	
Task type and format	Individual long turn for each student. In turns, they are given a pair of photographs to talk about.
Focus	<i>Functional language:</i> Comparing, describing, expressing opinions on daily life and current issues.
Timing	2 minutes
Part 3	
Task type and format	A discussion between the students. The students are given spoken instructions with written and visual stimuli, which are used in a decision-making task.
Focus	Sustaining an interaction. <i>Functional language:</i> exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.
	1-2 minutes each student/4-5 minutes group

Appendix C2 – Candidate assessment sheet

NAME:

General Impression

RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE

Comments:

Rating Form. Eurocentres (North, 1991/1992) / Swiss Project (Schneider & North, 2000)
(Council of Europe, 2009, p. 182)

Appendix C3 – Online resources consulted

Resources and documents accessed in preparing this session (Retrieved on July 7, 2010)

Seminar:

Seminar to calibrate examples of spoken performances in line with the scales of the CEFR

http://www.ciep.fr/publi_evalcert/dvd-productions-orales-ecr1/index.php

Guide for the organisation of a seminar to calibrate spoken performances

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/guideseminar.pdf>

Manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Manuel1_EN.asp

Calibrated examples:

Asset Languages - Cambridge ESOL Examinations

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/what-we-do/assessment/other.html>

DVD "Spoken performances illustrating the 6 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages." Comments on the assigned levels in English..

http://www.ciep.fr/en/publi_evalcert/dvd-productions-orales-ecr1/docs/comments_en.pdf

Sample levels of the Cambridge ESOL DVD:

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/CambridgeESOL.pdf>

Samples of the Eurocentres/Migros DVD:

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/videoperform.pdf>

Oral Assessment Criteria Grid (CEFR Table 3)

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/grid.pdf>

Data analysis:

Report on the analysis of data

<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/SevresreportNJ.pdf>

Oral exams - Handbooks for teachers

FCE

https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/digitalAssets/109701_fce_hb_dec08.pdf

IELTS

<https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/exams/academicandprofessional/ielts>

Appendix D: Questionnaires

Appendix D1 - Questions in Reflective Questionnaire 1

Dealing with questions

1. Did you understand and answer the questions?
2. Did you ask to repeat questions you didn't understand?
3. Did you give quite long answers to the questions?
4. When appropriate, did you give reasons for your answers?
5. Did you support your answers with examples?
6. Did you express your opinions and ideas clearly?

Body language and voice

7. Did you look positive, confident and friendly?
8. Did you look at your interlocutor directly when speaking?
9. Did you speak clearly, so the interlocutor could hear you?

Dealing with problems

10. When you made a mistake, did you ever try to correct it?
11. When you couldn't think of the correct word, did you find other ways of expressing the idea in English?
12. Did you answer completely in English?

Managing interaction (dialogic task)

13. Did you participate actively in the discussion, contributing and exchanging ideas with the other speakers?

Please write a personal comment about the oral tasks.

(Adapted from Brook-Hart, 2004)

Appendix D2: Opinion Survey

Write a paragraph (100-150 words) describing your experience.

Appendix D3: Questions in Reflective Questionnaire 2

Please rate the perceived usefulness of the treatment procedure (0 = not at all – 4 = a great deal):

1. Do you think the tasks have improved your understanding of the aspects involved in speaking English as a foreign language?
2. Do you think the tasks have helped you to learn about your strengths as a speaker of English?
3. Do you think the tasks have helped you to learn about your weaknesses as a speaker of English?
4. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your fluency?
5. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your grammatical accuracy?
6. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your vocabulary?
7. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your self-confidence speaking English?
8. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your ability to structure your discourse?
9. Do you think the tasks have helped you to improve your pronunciation?

Students were also asked to rate the perceived usefulness of specific tasks (0 = not at all – 4 = a great deal):

10. The oral interview and viewing the video.
11. The transcript and your corrections.
12. The teacher's corrections and comments.
13. The error correction task based on examples from your interviews.
14. The feedback session we did in class based on your interviews.
15. The document entitled "Improving your speaking - Theory" that guided the feedback session.
16. The website resource "Improving your speaking – Links" I proposed for further practice.

Give a specific item of grammar, vocabulary, etc. which you used incorrectly in the oral tasks and which you think you now use correctly.

Appendix E: Class materials

Appendix E1 - Improving your speaking – Theory (English)

Speaking is one of the most difficult skills in language learning, especially if you are not in an English-speaking country. As a foreign student, you will have to make an extra effort, as you cannot learn the language in a natural context. Listening to the radio and watching TV and movies, reading and talking to native and non-native speakers will help you to increase your vocabulary and fluency. As a general rule, do not be afraid to make mistakes and use every opportunity you have to practise your speaking.

Added to this, understanding the different dimensions of spoken language will also help you to self-assess and improve your oral skills. Below you will find a checklist of the different levels of language that you need to be aware of when speaking in English and the common errors that students at your level tend to make. The list includes aspects of *grammar*, *vocabulary*, *discourse* and some hints on ways in which you can improve your *pronunciation*, *fluency* and the ability to *interact* with others.

Note that in this document I will only be referring to speaking. There are some aspects of *spoken grammar* that differ from what you have learnt at school about what is correct, as when we speak we do not always have time or do not need to build perfectly formed sentences. In your transcripts I have not considered some errors when they do not affect oral communication. I have underlined (but not corrected) spelling errors.

GRAMMAR

Grammar tells us how sentences and utterances (the things we say) are formed. We need to learn how to form the words and how to organise them into phrases, sentences, and other units of expression. We often make mistakes influenced by the structure of our own language. For instance, when we say “I’m agree” instead of “**I agree**” we are probably trying to translate the Spanish verb ‘estar de acuerdo’ into an equivalent form in English. But do not be too harsh on yourself if you make mistakes in grammar while speaking. Focus on *what* you want to say, never mind if you do not get a tense or a preposition right. People will still understand you, and you can do some grammar revision when you are on your own and with some time to spare.

In the sections that follow you will find some common errors in grammar and some examples to illustrate them. Most are taken from your transcripts.

Parts of speech (categorías gramaticales)

Nouns

A frequent source of error is the confusion between **countable/uncountable nouns** (I left the luggages at the front desk → I left the **luggage**). ‘Luggage’, like ‘furniture’ or ‘milk’ are uncountable nouns, and we cannot use them with *a/an* or in the plural. Concerning word order, remember that the noun phrase in English may take several modifiers in front or after the noun (“some of the very hard working French students in the class”. Here, ‘students’ is the noun and the other words add information on it. **Premodification**, that is, placing the modifiers before the noun, is a feature of the noun phrase in English. A common error is placing the adjective after the noun (He is a student very hardworking → **a very hardworking student**).

Gerunds are words derived from verbs. They end in *-ing* (**playing**) and are used as nouns. Spanish speakers tend to use the base form (play) instead. In the example that follows, the prepositional phrase needs a noun or a noun substitute (the gerund), but the base form has been used instead. (Barça was interested in play at home → **interested in playing**).

Pronouns and determiners

When using pronouns (words such as *he, your, himself*) and determiners (*a, the, some, my, every, two, other*) pay attention to **agreement** or **concord** (= concordancia), that is, agreement with the noun or pronoun with respect to **number** and **person**. In the examples that follow you need a plural determiner to go with a plural noun (Look at that people cooking paella → **those** people). When using articles, one issue is knowing when to use them or when ‘zero article’ applies (We lived in United States for a Year → **in the United States**; He plays bass → **the bass**).

Verbs

The English verb system is complex. You need to pay attention to many features: the structure of the different tenses, for example, which auxiliary verb is used for a given tense (I was not seen that film → I **had not seen**), the formation of passives, the irregular past

forms, the adverbial time phrases, etc. The first thing you have to think about is the **time** you are referring to (present, past or future). In the following example, you cannot use the *Present Perfect* (have done) if the action was finished in the past and is no longer connected to the present. You would use a *Simple Past* form (e.g. If you are talking about the school you went to, you cannot say: I've been there all my school years → **I was** there all my school years). The **adverbial** will often help us to define the time frame (I *am* not working at the moment = present).

Another issue is **aspect**, i.e., if the action is still going on or finished (I spoke on my mobile in class and all of a sudden the teacher appeared in front of me → **I was speaking** on my mobile... and my teacher appeared); if it is temporary or permanent (I have been living here all my life → **I have lived** here all my life).

Adjectives and adverbs I have already pointed out the problems with word order in the noun phrase. Likewise, we need to know where to place adjectives and adverbs in the sentence. For instance, you need to learn that frequency adverbs (always, often, etc.) go in front of the verb, except for the verb *be*. (It always is sunny in Valencia → **It is always** sunny).

Another source of error is the confusion between **adverbs/adjectives** (He was a very seriously man → a very **serious** man). On the topic of adverbs too, remember that uncountable nouns (health, milk, etc.) add *much*; countable add *many*. (There is too many traffic on that road. → **too much** traffic). A frequent source of error is in the use of **comparative and superlative** structures (That is the cheaper restaurant I have been to → **the cheapest** restaurant).

Prepositions Some rules apply about when to use them for time, place, etc., but you will be better off learning them through use, and that not only includes using them for real communication, but also through drills and exercises. Also, if you are in doubt about what preposition follows a noun or a verb, or in a time expression, you can look up the word or the preposition in a dictionary to find examples of use. For instance, she works in a farm/**on a farm**; She is looking to the sky → **looking at** the sky. You can look up the words *farm* or *look* and see examples of the way they collocate with other words.

Connectors. Whether in speech or writing, we help people to understand our message by signalling how one idea leads on from another. The words and phrases which have this connecting function are like ‘signposts’ (señales) on a journey. They show different relations of meaning, such as cause, reason, result, sequence, condition, etc. Connectors (conjunctions such as *and, or, although, because* and other linking words and expressions like *in order to, as long as*) help create a well-connected discourse. You often need to learn the phrase and also the way it fits into the rest of the sentence or paragraph. (In spite of I was late, I got a place in the bus → **in spite of being late**, I got a place) In the example, *in spite of* is followed by a noun/–ing form or a clause (In spite of the fact that I was late).

Sentence structure

You need to understand how sentences are built in English, that is, how the different parts (e.g. subject, verb, connectors, etc.) are arranged to convey meaning.

The dominant word order in English is as follows:

subject	verb	object	complement	adjunct
Nobody	stayed.			
She	gave	a speech.		
Paul	is		my brother in law.	
I	travelled			for a year.

There are many other possible combinations, depending on whether we use interrogative or negative structures, auxiliaries, etc. When we speak, however, we may choose to bring an element forward for emphasis (I like Dave but **Pat** I find rather odd; I find **on these pictures** two different families.); or we may decide to place one of these forms at the end (Are **they** both at university, **your brother’s kids**?).

Particularly in spoken English, the context may affect how we say things. We have more flexibility in the way we use the grammar, but we still need to stick to some general rules, especially while we are still in the process of acquiring the language. Some common errors related to sentence structure are listed below:

Omission of the subject. In Spanish we may go without one, but we do need a subject to build sentences in English (Is where I work → **That** is where I work.).

Subject-verb agreement. We have looked at the concept of agreement in the noun phrase. The point to be made here is that singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs. (She come every day to help me with the household chores → She **comes** everyday). In the singular, regular verbs take an *-s* ending in the 3rd person (she comes), while all other regular present tense forms have the base form (they come).

Word order. Word order is more rigid in English than it is in Spanish. The basic pattern *subject-verb-object-complement-adjunct* that we saw above is generally followed. You also need to be clear about the structure of affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences. In the example that follows, the speaker has used the order and structure of an interrogative instead of the affirmative (It depends on what do they like → It depends on **what they like**). Other things to bear in mind are adverb and adjective placement, as well as many fixed phrases and structures. (I am looking forward to hear from you → I **am looking forward to hearing**). As you know, infinitives are formed with *to* + the base form of the verb (to do, to visit), but this particular phrase takes the gerund (looking forward to doing, to visiting).

Passives. Passives are not difficult to learn. Just use the verb *be* in the appropriate tense and add a *Past Participle* (done). (I was gave the results of the test → I **was given** the results of the test). Here, the speaker used a *Past Simple* instead of a *Past Participle* to build the passive structure. Of course, you will be in trouble if you do not know your tenses well. But then it is just a question of doing a bit of tense revision. Note too that the subject is introduced by *by* (The trees were planted **by local residents**).

Relative clauses. Errors with relatives tend to involve the use of the wrong pronoun (who, that, which, etc.) (That's a town who I want to visit soon → **a town that/which** I want to visit); *who* is for people only. Another frequent error is repeating the pronoun in the relative clause (Did you see the car that it broke down in the middle of the road? → the car **that** broke down). Remember, relative pronouns replace subjects, objects or prepositional complements of their clauses.

Word forms

Here we look at the morphology, i.e., the internal structure of words. Examples of errors using word forms include:

Using **the wrong part of speech**; for example, a noun instead of an adjective (people living in poverty conditions →in **poor** conditions).

Aspects of **inflection**, e.g. omitting 3rd person singular *-s* (My sister play basketball →my sister **plays**) or the ending of the past/past participle *-ed* (I have study five years at university →I have **studied**).

Problems with **derivation**. In the example that follows, the wrong suffix was chosen to build an abstract noun. (You don't have any *privacity* →**privacy**).

Errors forming **compound nouns** (I can see a bus of school in the background → **a school bus**).

VOCABULARY

Just as important as learning the grammar is to develop a rich vocabulary. My advice is that you read widely in English, preferably something that appeals to you. If you are a windsurfing enthusiast, you will surely find lots of website, online magazines and blogs where you can read about your favourite sport while you acquire new vocabulary and structures. You can learn with movies, online games, books, newspapers...

And, of course, you can also increase your vocabulary by doing exercises and quizzes. Look out for sections in English language learning websites on **collocations**, **idioms**, **phrasal and prepositional verbs**, as these are all very common in spoken English. Learn some of these, as they are a really good way to make yourself sound more natural when speaking English. **Confusing words** are also dealt with in most English learning websites. Do the quizzes and use the lists for reference when you are in doubt about a word or expression.

When we do not know how to say something in English we sometimes just come up with the wrong form by attempting a transfer from our own language, for example: “en mi ciudad natal” (It was a little school in my born city, Castellón → **in my home town**, Castellón). Others, we just “invent” the word. Sometimes this may work as Spanish and English share some vocabulary, but it has not worked here: Having a TV in your cafe could be rentable when there is live football on TV → **could be profitable/worthwhile**.

Again, do not be afraid to make mistakes; nobody will make judgements about you. They will just think that you are an English learner and will probably be happy to help you by suggesting a better form.

Finally, you need to know when to use a *formal* or an *informal register* and the appropriate *style*. This will affect your choice of vocabulary too. Try, for instance, to avoid very informal language, such as contracted forms like “gotta” “ain’t”, or forms of address like “you guys” if you are talking to an interviewer in a formal oral test.

DISCOURSE

Discourse refers to how we organise the language beyond the level of the sentence or beyond the individual speaking turn to convey meaning (our thoughts, information, feelings, etc.) in a specific context. If we are trying to develop an idea, we need to make sure that we organise our points and present them in a clear and coherent way so that the listeners will be able to follow our train of reasoning. We also construct our discourse in collaboration with others, as we do when we are taking part in a conversation. Some examples of the way we organise discourse in speaking might be how we open and close conversations and how we organise speaking turns (who speaks when).

Here is a visiting Erasmus student’s start to her interview (the name has been changed). I have highlighted the *discourse markers* that she uses throughout in a very effective way to introduce, develop and close her topic. Note how she uses conversation patterns (for example, to greet the interviewer) and cohesive devices to show us where she is and what information is coming next.

Ok, Hello, I'm Mia Forman from the Czech Republic and my topic is "Beautiful places in my country", so I'd like to talk about my home city because I think it's really, really nice city, and I have to mention Prague, because it's the biggest city in the Czech Republic and I think it's very beautiful. But I'll start with my city. It's a small town. It's about 10.000 people only, but I think it's very beautiful. The Czech Republic is divided into two parts and Moravia and my city - or my town - is located on the east of Bohemia. And we have a nice castle and many very nice buildings which you can see. The castle is situated on a square and on the square is also a castle - oh, I'm sorry - is also a church, many restaurants you can go there. And the second place is Prague; it's our biggest city. It's about one million people and in Prague you can see the Prague castle, our president of the Czech lives in this castle, and many churches and very interesting buildings and places. I can really recommend you to visit Prague.

PRODUCTION

By this I mean the actual performance, the act of speaking. Did you speak loud enough? Did you articulate (= vocalizar) your words? Did you use your body language (hands, facial gestures, etc.) effectively to reinforce your message?

One aspect of speaking that you should aim for is ***fluency***. We are fluent when we speak at a comfortable pace, without too much pausing. But remember that native speakers also use pauses to plan what they will say next, so don't be afraid to stop briefly or to use fillers such as *well*, *OK*, and vague expressions like *kind of*, *and all that*, or *something* to help move your ideas forward, particularly in conversation. Being fluent has a lot to do with being confident and keen to communicate with others.

If you want to improve fluency and avoid pausing too much, try ***shadow speaking***. This is a very good exercise that consists in following along somebody speaking on the radio or TV. Imitating native speakers will help you assimilate the pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of English while increasing your speed in the process.

Pronunciation and stress patterns

Getting the pronunciation of a word wrong may lead to misunderstandings. For instance, if you ask somebody "Where is the nearest tube station?" and pronounce *tube* as the Spanish

‘tube’, the listener might not be able to help you, as they would not understand the word. To avoid problems like this, learn the phonetic symbols (tube= /tub, tyub/) and always look up in the dictionary and practise the pronunciation of new words. *Wordreference.com* and *Dictionary.com* are good places to do this and you will also be able to hear the words pronounced.

Some common problems (for Spanish speakers) are listed below.

Note: I have written in red the approximate pronunciation, not the phonetic symbols of the words as they would sound in Spanish.

Pronunciation of individual sounds or groups of sounds.

- since (‘sains’ → ‘**sins**’) the vowel is wrongly pronounced as a diphthong.
- first (‘first’ → ‘**ferst**’) the *i* sound is pronounced as it would be in Spanish.
- helping (‘jelping’ → ‘**helping**’) the *h* sound sounds like a Spanish *j*.
- stays (‘esteis’ → ‘**steis**’) /es/ is added in front of words beginning with /s/+ consonant.
- worked (‘work’/’workid’ → ‘**workt**’) mispronouncing or not pronouncing the past endings of verbs.

Stress patterns

The stress and intonation patterns of English are different from those of Spanish, which is a syllable-timed language (acentuamos las sílabas). This means that each syllable has equal importance. English is a stress-timed language. We place strong stress on syllables or words that carry the main meaning. Other syllables or words have weak stress. Sometimes the error involves pronouncing the individual sounds correctly, but placing the stress on the wrong syllable. This can also lead to misunderstandings. For example, the word ‘**contest**’, with the stress falling on the first syllable, is a noun (= competición), while ‘**contest**’ (= refutar) is a verb. Within the clause (= frase) or sentence, the stress falls on whole words. Look at this example:

- **How long** did you **spend** at the **museum**?

The main words the listener needs to understand are the question words, the verb and the noun, the others: auxiliary, pronoun, article and preposition, are pronounced more quickly and at a lower volume, as their meaning can be inferred from the context.

INTERACTION

Consider the following: are you generally aware of the people you are talking to? This is very important, as *speaking is a two-way process* that requires the participation of both the speaker and the listeners. We communicate successfully when we understand and make ourselves understood by the people we are talking to. In order to do this effectively, we have to pay attention to our interlocutors, check that they are following, help them develop their ideas and, in sum, be generally polite and collaborative. You need to know how to get a conversation going, when it is appropriate to keep quiet and let the others speak or when and how you can interrupt somebody, ask questions, etc. All that pertains to the “art” of communicating effectively and involves the use of a range of language functions such as discussing, negotiating, persuading, etc. Learning some fixed phrases for expressing these functions will help you express yourself more effectively and accurately.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

You can employ a range of strategies to make up for any deficiencies, such as not knowing a word or a language structure. *Circumlocution* (using other words when you cannot think of the right one) will get you out of many tricky situations. Look at the way one student managed to find a way to express what he wanted differently: “I have a nice...nice...OK. I think it was a beautiful school for kids.” As I said before, just do not worry if you feel you need to pause for a moment, as long as you appear calm and confident. Another feature is *self-correction*. When we are learning a language we do it all the time. That’s fine too: “She come... she **came** to see me after class.” *Clarification* is another sign that you are aware of the listener. If they are not following you, you will notice and then you can use a definition or an example to better explain what you meant. Lastly, make sure you use *feedback* strategies, that is, check that the listener is following and making sense of what you are trying to convey, and that they can respond appropriately. You can do this by keeping eye contact and using questions and tags such as: *Don’t you think?; Isn’t it? So you mean that..?*

Appendix E2 - Improving your speaking – Theory (Spanish)

Una de las principales dificultades a las que se enfrenta un estudiante de inglés es el manejo de la expresión oral. No es fácil expresarse con soltura y naturalidad cuando se aprende la lengua fuera del país donde se habla. Por esa razón, deberás realizar un esfuerzo adicional si quieres alcanzar un buen nivel como hablante de la lengua. Puedes escuchar la radio, ver películas, leer o conversar con hablantes nativos o competentes en la lengua. Todas estas actividades te ayudarán a enriquecer tu vocabulario y aumentarán tu fluidez y confianza al hablar. También es muy importante que asumas los errores como parte del aprendizaje, más que un impedimento, y que aproveches cada oportunidad que se te presente para practicar.

Además de practicar, también puedes reflexionar sobre el uso que haces de la lengua y sobre los recursos y las estrategias que utilizas al hablar. Podrás comprender mejor el fenómeno del habla y esto te permitirá evaluarte como hablante y avanzar más rápidamente hacia tus objetivos. He preparado un resumen de los niveles de la lengua a partir del examen de vuestras entrevistas. Incluye una breve descripción y algunos ejemplos, así como los errores más comunes en el uso del inglés oral. Se incluyen los siguientes niveles: ***la gramática, el vocabulario, el discurso, la pronunciación, la fluidez y la interacción.***

Recuerda que este documento solo hace referencia al inglés oral y que hay algunos aspectos de la ***gramática de la lengua hablada*** que difieren de lo que aprendiste en la escuela como correcto. Por ejemplo, cuando hablamos, no siempre tenemos tiempo o necesitamos formar oraciones perfectas, con todos sus elementos. En vuestras transcripciones veréis que solo he corregido aquellos errores que afectan a la comunicación. He subrayado pero no he corregido los errores de ortografía.

LA GRAMÁTICA

La gramática nos indica cómo se forman los enunciados (las cosas que decimos) y las oraciones. Para hablar, deberemos aprender cómo se forman las palabras y cómo se combinan para formar frases, oraciones y otras expresiones. A menudo cometemos errores porque usamos estructuras o palabras traducidas literalmente del español. Por ejemplo, decimos ‘I’m agree’ (‘estoy de acuerdo’) en lugar de ‘**I agree**’, incluyendo el verbo ‘estar’, innecesario en la expresión española. Pero no seas demasiado exigente con estos pequeños fallos. Céntrate en el *qué*, en el mensaje, y no tanto en si has usado el verbo o la preposición adecuada. Seguro que quien te esté escuchando te entenderá y ya tendrás tiempo para repasar la gramática cuando estés más tranquilo y con tiempo para estudiar.

A continuación incluyo un listado por secciones que incluye errores comunes en el uso de la gramática y el vocabulario y algunos ejemplos ilustrativos. Casi todos proceden de vuestras transcripciones.

Categorías gramaticales

Nombres

A menudo el error se debe a la confusión entre los sustantivos *contable/incontable* (I left the luggages at the front desk → I left the **luggage**). ‘Luggage’, como ‘furniture’ o ‘milk’ son sustantivos incontables y no podemos usarlos con *a/an* o en plural. En lo referente al orden de las palabras, recuerda que la mayoría de los adjetivos y otros modificadores del nombre lo suelen preceder. Podemos encontrar varios elementos (artículos, pronombres, adjetivos, etc.) delante de un sustantivo (“some of the very hard working French students in the class”). En este ejemplo, ‘students’ es el sustantivo y está modificado por elementos que lo preceden y en este caso también detrás, aunque es más frecuente que vayan delante. Un error común consiste por tanto en colocar los adjetivos detrás del sustantivo (He is a student very hardworking → **a very hardworking student**).

Los *gerundios* son palabras derivadas del verbo. Acaban en *-ing* (**playing**) y se usan en lugar del nombre. En castellano suele emplearse el infinitivo en estos casos. En el ejemplo que sigue, verás que el error se ha debido al empleo de un infinitivo en lugar del gerundio

en la frase preposicional ya que, como sabes, estas se forman con nombres o sus derivados. (Barça was interested in play at home → **interested in playing**).

Pronombres y determinantes

Cuando uses los pronombres (palabras como *he, your, himself*) y determinantes (*a, the, some, my, every, two, other*) fijate muy bien en la **concordancia**, es decir, es decir, en la equivalencia con el nombre o pronombre con respecto al **número** y el **género**. Verás a continuación un ejemplo en el que el determinante no coincide en número con el sustantivo (Look at that people cooking paella → **those** people). Una cuestión a tener en cuenta con el artículo es el hecho de que a veces este se omite erróneamente. (We lived in United States for a Year → **in the United States**; He plays bass → **the bass**). Deberás repasar y practicar los diferentes usos del artículo.

Verbos

El sistema verbal en inglés es complejo. Tienes que prestar atención a muchos elementos: a la estructura de los diferentes tiempos verbales; por ejemplo, qué auxiliar se usa para un tiempo verbal concreto, como en el caso del *pretérito pluscuamperfecto con 'had'* (I was not seen that film → **I had not seen**), la voz pasiva, las formas irregulares de pasado y participio (conviene repasar la lista de los verbos irregulares más frecuentes), las locuciones temporales (expresiones temporales que se usan con cada tiempo verbal), etc. Lo primero que necesitas saber es el **tiempo** en el que vas a situar la acción (presente, pasado o futuro - o la forma condicional o de subjuntivo). En el siguiente ejemplo no puedes usar el *pretérito perfecto* (have done) si la acción acabó en el pasado y no tiene conexión con el presente. En un caso así deberás usar una forma de *pasado simple* (Por ejemplo, si estás hablando de la escuela en la que estudiaste, no puedes decir: I've been there all my school years → **I was** there all my school years; porque ya no estás allí como alumno). El **adverbio** o **la frase adverbial** a menudo nos ayuda a situar el tiempo en el que tiene lugar la acción (I am not working at the moment = presente). Otra cuestión a tener en cuenta es el **aspecto**, es decir, si la acción todavía continúa o ha terminado (En el caso que te indico a continuación no es posible usar una forma simple, porque la acción está en desarrollo: I spoke on my mobile in class and all of a sudden the teacher appeared in front of me → **I was speaking** on my mobile... and my teacher appeared); también el verbo que escojas indicará si la acción es temporal o si es permanente, o al menos duradera (I have

been living here all my life→ **I have lived** here all my life). Deberás usar una u otra forma dependiendo del contexto. Y recuerda que algunos verbos no se usan en la forma continua, como aquellos que indican estado (*believe, know, understand, own*).

Adjetivos y adverbios Ya he señalado las cuestiones relacionadas con el orden de las palabras en la frase o sintagma nominal. De la misma forma, también deberás saber dónde colocar los adverbios. Por ejemplo, los adverbios de frecuencia (*always, often, etc.*) van delante del verbo, excepto en el caso del verbo *be*. (*She stays always at the same hotel* → *She always stays*; *It always is sunny in Valencia*→ *It is always sunny*). Otra fuente de error es la confusión entre *adverbis/adjetivos* (*He was a very seriously man*→ *a very serious man*). Sin abandonar el tema de los adverbios, recuerda que con los sustantivos incontables (*health, milk, etc.*) se usa *much* y con los contables *many*. (*There is too many traffic on that road.*→ **too much** traffic). También se confunden las formas de *comparativo y superlativo* (En el caso que indico a continuación se ha usado una forma de comparativo para expresar un grado superlativo: *That is the cheaper restaurant I have been to* → **the cheapest** restaurant).

Preposiciones Existen ciertas reglas acerca de su uso para indicar tiempo, lugar, etc., pero lo más práctico es aprenderlas con el uso, hablando, leyendo y escuchando inglés de forma habitual, aunque también puedes aprenderlas a base de hacer ejercicios. Muchos verbos rigen una preposición concreta (*to count on somebody to do something; to accuse someone of doing something, etc.*). Esto también deberás aprenderlo con la práctica o mediante ejercicios. Y no olvides que el diccionario es un recurso muy útil que te resolverá muchas dudas, ya que todos ofrecen ejemplos concretos de cómo usarlas en distintas combinaciones. Por ejemplo, *she works in a farm/on a farm*; *She is looking to the sky*→ **looking at** the sky. Puedes buscar en el diccionario las palabras *farm* o *look* y encontrarás ejemplos en los que aparecen combinadas con otras.

Conectores. Ya sea oralmente o por escrito, para hacernos entender por los demás empleamos 'señales' con el fin de que quien nos lee o nos escucha pueda seguir nuestra argumentación y la dirección que lleva nuestro mensaje. Las palabras y frases que usamos con esta función son como 'postes' (señales) en el camino. Muestran diferentes relaciones lógicas, tales como causa, resultado, condición, finalidad, secuencia, etc. Si usas con precisión los conectores (conjunciones como *and, or, although, because* y otras frases y

expresiones como *in order to*, *as long as*) tu expresión resultará clara y comprensible a los demás. Para utilizarlos correctamente, es importante que conozcas su forma y como encajan en el resto de la oración o en el párrafo. (In spite of I was late, I got a place in the bus → **in spite of being late**, I got a place) En este ejemplo, *in spite of* va seguido de un nombre + *-ing* o de una oración subordinada (**In spite of the fact that I was late**).

Estructura oracional

Es importante que conozcas la estructura de la oración en inglés, es decir, cómo se organizan los diferentes elementos (por ejemplo, el sujeto, el verbo, los conectores, etc.) para transmitir un significado.

El orden básico de los elementos en la oración en inglés es el siguiente:

sujeto	verbo	objeto	complemento	frase adverbial
Nobody	stayed.			
She	gave	a speech.		
Paul	is		my brother in law.	
I	travelled			for a year.

Hay muchas otras combinaciones, dependiendo de si formas una oración interrogativa o negativa, si hay auxiliares, de si el objeto directo o el indirecto es un pronombre o un nombre, etc. En cualquier caso, cuando hablamos puede que decidamos dar énfasis a un elemento de la oración, y en ese caso lo llevaremos al frente o lo dejaremos para el final (I like Dave but **Pat** I find rather odd; I find **on these pictures** two different families -Are **they** both at university, **your brother's kids**?). Cuando hablamos, el contexto puede afectar al modo en que colocamos las palabras. Hay más flexibilidad a la hora de usar la gramática. No obstante, es importante atenerse a unas reglas básicas, sobre todo si todavía nos encontramos en la etapa de hablante no experimentado.

A continuación te indico una serie de errores de los más frecuentes, que también he extraído de vuestras transcripciones.

Omisión del sujeto. En español esto no suele ser un problema, porque el verbo contiene información gramatical sobre el sujeto ('estamos' indica que nos encontramos ante un sujeto plural) pero en inglés sí que nos hace falta, salvo que lo acabemos de citar y el oyente ya no necesite esta referencia (Is where I work → **That** is where I work.)

Concordancia sujeto-verbo. Ya nos hemos fijado en la cuestión de la concordancia en el sintagma nominal. Aquí ocurre lo mismo. Un sustantivo plural precisa de un verbo en plural, uno singular necesita un verbo también singular. (She come every day to help me with the household chores → She **comes** everyday). En tercera persona de singular, se añade el sufijo -s al presente simple, mientras que el resto de formas se construyen con la forma base del verbo (they come).

Orden de las palabras. El orden de los elementos dentro de la oración es más rígido en inglés que en español. La estructura básica *sujeto-verbo-objeto-complemento-frase adverbial* que hemos visto anteriormente se suele respetar. Sobre todo, no separes el verbo del objeto a menos que sea por énfasis, como he indicado al referirme a la gramática del inglés oral. También deberás repasar el orden de los elementos en las oraciones interrogativas y negativas. Fíjate en este ejemplo, en el que el hablante debería haber usado el estilo indirecto, no la forma interrogativa directa, en la que como sabes, el verbo auxiliar va delante del sujeto. Sin embargo aquí no se usaría el auxiliar porque no es una pregunta directa: It depends on what do they like → It depends on **what they like**. Otras cuestiones que ya hemos citado son la colocación de adverbios y adjetivos. Y algo que no hemos mencionado, la gran cantidad de frases, sustantivos compuestos y estructura peculiares con su propia combinación de elementos. Por ejemplo, la expresión "quedo a la espera de"/"tengo muchas ganas de" acaba con un verbo en *-ing* precedido de 'to'. Esta es una construcción atípica porque a 'to' normalmente le sigue el verbo en infinitivo, así que hay que aprenderla como excepción (I am looking forward to hear from you/to visiting you → **I am looking forward to hearing/to visiting**, etc).

La voz pasiva. En principio, las formas de pasiva no tienen mucha dificultad. Deberás usar el verbo *be* en el tiempo verbal al que te estés refiriendo y añadir el verbo con el contenido léxico en *participio de pasado* (done). (I was gave the results of the test → I **was given** the results of the test). En este caso, el hablante ha usado una forma de *pasado simple* en lugar

de un *participio de pasado* para formar la oración pasiva. Está claro que es más difícil si no dominas los distintos tiempos verbales. Pero en ese caso, repásate un poco todas las formas de presente, pasado, futuro, etc. Por último, recuerda que el agente -el que realiza la acción- aparece introducido por la preposición *by* (The trees were planted **by local residents**).

Oraciones de relativo. Los errores más frecuentes están relacionados con el uso incorrecto de la partícula interrogativa (*who, that, which, etc.*) (That's a town *who* I want to visit soon → **a town that/which** I want to visit); *who* solo se usa para personas. Otro error bastante común consiste en duplicar el pronombre (Did you see the car *that* it broke down in the middle of the road? → the car **that** broke down). Recuerda, los pronombres de relativo sustituyen a los sustantivos y a los pronombres de la oración principal.

Formación de palabras

En este apartado nos centramos en la morfología, es decir, en la estructura interna de las palabras. Os muestro algunos ejemplos de este tipo:

El uso de la **categoría gramatical (adjetivo, sustantivo, etc.) equivocada**; por ejemplo, un sustantivo en lugar de un adjetivo (people living in poverty conditions → in **poor** conditions).

Aspectos relacionados con a **flexión**. Por ejemplo, omitir el morfema *-s* de 3ª persona de singular (My sister play basketball → my sister **plays**) or el de participio de pasado *-ed* (I have study five years at university → I have **studied**).

Problemas con la **derivación**. Fíjate en el siguiente ejemplo, en el que se ha usado el sufijo incorrecto para formar un sustantivo abstracto. (You don't have any privacy → **privacy**).

Errores en la formación de **nombres compuestos** (I can see a bus of school in the background → **a school bus**).

EL VOCABULARIO

Tan importante como la gramática es adquirir un vocabulario amplio. Avanzarás muy rápidamente si adquieres el hábito de leer en inglés. Busca un tema que te interese y mantente al día leyendo en internet, viendo programas de TV, etc. Si lo que te gusta es hacer windsurf, seguro que encuentras un montón de webs, revistas online o blogs de gente que comparte tus intereses. Lee mucho y verás cómo adquieres rápidamente una gran cantidad de vocabulario y expresiones útiles. Acostúmbrate a ver películas subtituladas, a leer novelas, periódicos, revistas, etc. También se aprende mucho con los juegos online. Y, por supuesto, puedes aumentar tu vocabulario a base de ejercicios y juegos. Busca en las webs de aprendizaje de inglés las secciones en las que se practican ***collocations*** (compuestos y combinaciones de palabras fijas), ***idioms*** (modismos, frases hechas), ***phrasal and prepositional verbs*** (verbos frasales y preposicionales). Se usan mucho en el habla cotidiana y si aprendes a usarlos adecuadamente lograrás expresarte de forma más parecida a como lo hace un nativo. También encontrarás muchos ejemplos y ejercicios sobre ***confusing words*** (palabras equívocas) en las webs para aprender inglés. Te aconsejo que te imprimas una lista para consultarla cuando te surjan dudas.

Cuando no sabemos cómo decir algo en inglés, a veces recurrimos a la traducción literal. Esto funciona muchas veces, pero otras nos lleva a error, ya que a menudo no existe una equivalencia directa entre las dos lenguas. Por ejemplo “en mi ciudad natal” (It was a little school in my born city, Castellón → ***in my home town***, Castellón). Otras veces nos arriesgamos a inventar, con resultados desiguales. El español y el inglés comparten muchas palabras con raíz similar, debido a la herencia del latín y el francés. Pero no ha funcionado en este ejemplo: Having a TV in your café could be rentable when there is live football on TV → ***could be profitable/worthwhile***. En cualquier caso, insisto en que para hablar hay que arriesgar. Que no te preocupe equivocarte porque quien te escucha no va a emitir un juicio sobre ti. Simplemente pensarán que estás aprendiendo y estarán encantados de ayudarte, por ejemplo, sugiriendote una palabra más apropiada o animándote a seguir.

Por último, deberás saber cuándo usar un ***registro formal*** o ***informal*** y el ***estilo*** apropiado. Esto condicionará también el vocabulario que escojas. Por ejemplo, trata de evitar un lenguaje demasiado informal como las contracciones “gotta” “ain’t”, o expresiones como

“you guys” si te encuentras en un contexto formal, como sería el de una entrevista de trabajo.

EL DISCURSO

El discurso se refiere al modo en que organizamos el lenguaje más allá del ámbito de la oración o del turno de palabra individual con el fin de expresar un significado (nuestros pensamientos y sentimientos, información específica, etc.) en un contexto concreto. Si estamos tratando de desarrollar una idea, es importante saber organizar el contenido y presentarlo de forma clara y coherente, de forma que el que nos escuche pueda seguir el hilo de nuestro razonamiento. El discurso también se construye en colaboración con otros, como ocurre en el contexto de una conversación. Un ejemplo de elemento discursivo serían el lenguaje y las estrategias que usamos para iniciar y para poner fin a una conversación y el modo en que organizamos los turnos de palabra (quién habla y cuándo lo hace).

En el recuadro que verás más abajo te muestro el comienzo de la entrevista de una alumna. He indicado en azul los *marcadores discursivos* que usa al hablar para que adviertas el modo en que presenta, desarrolla y concluye al tema que se le ha asignado. Fíjate también en cómo emplea ciertas fórmulas (por ejemplo, para saludar al entrevistador) y los recursos que utiliza para dar cohesión al discurso y así mostrarnos qué información está presentando y de qué nos va a hablar a continuación.

Ok, Hello, I'm Mia Forman from the Czech Republic and my topic is "Beautiful places in my country", so I'd like to talk about my home city because I think it's really, really nice city, and I have to mention Prague, because it's the biggest city in the Czech Republic and I think it's very beautiful. But I'll start with my city. it's a small town. It's about 10.000 people only, but I think it's very beautiful. The Czech Republic is divided into two parts and Moravia and my city – or my town – is located on the east of Bohemia. And we have a nice castle and many very nice buildings which you can see, the castle is situated on a square and on the square is also a castle - oh, I'm sorry – is also a church, many restaurants you can go there. And the second place is Prague, it's our biggest city, it's about one million people and in Prague you can see The Prague castle, our president of the Czech lives in this castle, and many churches and very interesting buildings and places. I can really recommend you to visit prague.

LA PRODUCCIÓN ORAL

Al hablar de la producción oral me refiero a un momento concreto del habla y el modo en que se lleva a cabo. ¿Empleas el volumen adecuado? ¿Vocalizas correctamente? ¿Cómo usas tu lenguaje corporal? Nuestra expresión corporal y facial, el modo en que gesticulamos y nos movemos, pueden ayudar a reforzar el mensaje que queremos transmitir. No dudes en gesticular con las manos, por ejemplo, para enumerar o para comunicar toda clase de ideas (desarrollo, énfasis, movimiento, etc.).

Un aspecto que hay que trabajar es el desarrollo de la **fluidez** al hablar. Hablamos de forma fluida cuando lo hacemos siguiendo un ritmo natural, sin demasiadas pausas. Pero no olvides que los hablantes nativos también usan las pausas para planificar lo que van a decir a continuación, de modo que no te preocupes si tienes que detenerte brevemente o usar frases de relleno o ciertas coletillas (*kind of, and all that, or something*) para organizarte cuando estás hablando. La fluidez tiene mucho que ver con la seguridad en uno mismo y en el deseo de comunicarse con los demás. Para trabajar este aspecto del habla te recomiendo que practiques lo que en inglés se conoce como "*shadow speaking*", es decir, reproducir lo que dice alguien que está hablando en la radio, la tele o en alguna grabación que tengas. Es un ejercicio muy bueno que te ayudará a asimilar los patrones de pronunciación, acentuación, ritmo y entonación en inglés y a aumentar la velocidad.

Pronunciación y acentuación

Si no pronuncias bien una palabra es posible que no te entiendan. Por ejemplo, si le preguntas a alguien "Where is the nearest tube station?" y pronuncias *tube* como lo harías en español, puede que la persona a la que te dirijas no sea capaz de ayudarte a encontrar la parada del metro, al no entender la palabra. Para evitar problemas de este tipo, aprende los signos fonéticos (tube= /tub, tyub/) y, siempre que te encuentres ante una palabra nueva, fijate en la transcripción fonética y escucha el sonido. ***Wordreference.com*** and ***Dictionary.com***, entre otros, te ofrecen información de este tipo.

Enumero más abajo algunos problemas comunes en la pronunciación para los hablantes nativos de español. Los ejemplos son de vuestras entrevistas.

*Nota: He escrito en rojo la pronunciación aproximada tal como lo haría un español, no los símbolos fonéticos. en **negrita** verás la pronunciación correcta.*

Pronunciación de sonidos individuales o grupos de sonidos

- since ('sains' → '**sins**') se pronuncia erró la vocal como un diptongo (dos vocales).
- first ('first' → '**ferst**') el sonido *i* se pronuncia como en español.
- helping ('jelping' → '**helping**') el sonido *h* suena como una *j* del español.
- stays ('esteis' → '**steis**') /es/ se añade un sonido *e* de apoyo en palabras que empiezan con /s/+ consonante
- worked ('work'/'workid' → '**workt**') el sufijo -ed de pasado se pronuncia incorrectamente o no se pronuncia.

Acentuación y entonación

Los patrones de acentuación y de entonación son diferentes en español, ya que en español acentuamos las sílabas y cada una de ellas tiene la misma importancia. Por el contrario, en inglés existen acentos fuertes y débiles. El acento fuerte recae en las sílabas o las palabras que tienen más significado, mientras que en las demás es menos prominente. A veces, un error en la acentuación puede llevar a confusión. Por ejemplo, la palabra '**contest**', con acento en la primera sílaba, es un nombre (= competición), mientras que '**contest**' (= refutar) es un verbo. En una frase u oración, el acento recae en palabras completas. Como en el ejemplo que sigue:

- **How long** did you **spend** at the **museum**?

Las principales palabras que el interlocutor necesita entender son la partícula interrogativa, el verbo y el nombre, y las he indicado en negrita. Las otras: verbo auxiliar, pronombre, artículo y preposición, se pronuncian más rápido y con menos fuerza, ya que su significado se puede deducir del contexto.

LA INTERACCIÓN ORAL

Es importante prestar atención a las personas con las que estás hablando. Esta cuestión tiene mucha importancia, ya que cuando hablamos participamos en un **proceso bidireccional** que requiere la participación equilibrada de las dos personas, o de todos aquellos que intervienen en una conversación.

Nos comunicamos de forma efectiva cuando entendemos y nos hacemos entender por las personas con las que hablamos. Para que la comunicación realmente funcione, debemos prestar atención a nuestros interlocutores. Asegúrate de que te están entendiendo, ayúdales a desarrollar sus ideas y, en general, se amable y colaborador. Es importante saber cómo mantener una conversación, cuándo es apropiado callarse y dejar que sean otros los que intervengan y saber cuándo y cómo interrumpir, preguntar, seguir la conversación, etc. Todo ello forma parte del ‘arte’ de comunicarse e implica el uso de una serie de funciones comunicativas, tales como discutir, negociar, persuadir etc. Aprende algunas frases hechas que te sirvan para expresar estas funciones. Esto te ayudará a expresarte con más precisión y eficacia.

LAS ESTRATEGIAS DE COMUNICACIÓN

Puedes usar una serie de estrategias para compensar las deficiencias en el momento de la comunicación, como no saber o no recordar una palabra o una estructura lingüística. Puedes recurrir a la **perífrasis**, es decir, expresarlo mediante un rodeo. Fíjate en cómo un alumno ha encontrado otra forma de expresar lo que quería decir: “I have a nice...nice...OK. I think it was a beautiful school for kids.” Como ya he dicho, no te preocupes si tienes que detenerte a pensar brevemente, siempre y cuando se te vea tranquilo/a y seguro/a. Otro rasgo es la **autocorrección**. Cuando aprendemos una lengua lo hacemos todo el tiempo. También es perfectamente aceptable: “She come... she **came** to see me after class.” La **aclaración** es otro signo que indica que estás pendiente de tu interlocutor. Si no te siguen, te darás cuenta y en ese caso puedes tratar de definir mejor el término o usar un ejemplo para explicarlo. Por último, usa también estrategias de **retroalimentación**, o **feedback**, comprueba que la persona con la que hablas está entendiéndote y que pueden responder de forma adecuada. Mírale de vez en cuando y haz preguntas para confirmar y para darle la oportunidad de desarrollar sus ideas (*Don’t you think?; Isn’t it? So you mean that..?*). Un buen comunicador sabe llegar a los demás demostrando que se interesa por lo que ellos puedan aportar.

Appendix E3 - Improving your speaking – Links (English)

Listed below you will find web pages with resources for practicing English through grammar, vocabulary, listening/video, writing and speaking activities.

BBC Learning English is, to me, the most comprehensive portal for English learning. You will find all sorts of activities, quizzes and multimedia contents to make learning English a very enjoyable experience.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>

Activities for English as a Second Language is also well stocked with exercises and quizzes for learning English.

<http://a4esl.org/>

English Page provides very interesting resources in a very user-friendly format. The grammar tutorials are excellent and the *English Reading Room* has links to many books, newspapers, magazines and reference works.

<http://www.englishpage.com>

Flo-Joe is an exam preparation website for the Cambridge First Certificate, Advanced and Proficiency exams.

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/>

open2net is the home of BBC/Open University TV and radio programmes on the web, but it also works as an online learning portal. It contains lots of interesting educational content.

<http://www.open2.net/home.html>

Videonation. This website is run by the BBC and it offers snapshots of the lives of ordinary people in the UK. Here you can learn English language and culture from native English speakers, and hear the different accents spoken in the UK.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/network/>

English Central. This website offers captioned (subtitulados) videos on a wide range of topics.

<http://www.englishcentral.com/en/videos>

English Second Language Lab. A very useful website for listening practice. The exercises are graded according to the level of difficulty.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/>

Using English for Academic Purposes. This website focuses on academic English. There is a whole section containing interesting resources for developing academic oral proficiency, such as participation in group oral tasks and making oral presentation.

<http://www.uefap.com/>

How Stuff Works. An excellent site for anyone curious to learn how all kinds of different things work. It includes photographs, diagrams, videos and animations, and articles written in language that is designed to be easy enough to be understood by the average person.

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/>

The English Learner movie guide. For movie lovers. An entertaining way of learning English while enjoying some interesting films.

<http://eslnotes.com/synopses.html>

The links in the section that follows guide you to pages with resources for practicing the aspects of English covered in the “**Improving your English**” tutorial.

GRAMMAR

Parts of speech (categorías gramaticales)

Nouns

A tutorial and grammar exercises on nouns: singular-plural; countable-uncountable, -s or noun phrase.

http://www.english-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/substantiv.htm

Pronouns and determiners

You can practise using articles and pronouns here:

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/grammar.html>

Using ‘the’ or ‘zero article’. You can find a detailed explanation with examples in the section called “Ask about English”.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/learnit/learnitv198.shtml>

Verbs

Tutorials and quizzes on:

Verb tenses

<http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html>

Conditionals

<http://www.englishpage.com/conditional/conditionalintro.html>

Gerunds and infinitives

<http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/index.htm>

Modals

<http://www.englishpage.com/modals/modalintro.html>

Adjectives and adverbs

Take this interactive tour on the topic of adjectives. You can go over the basics and practise with quizzes and games.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/interestsentences/adjectives/index.shtml>

You can read about adverbs and adjectives, learn to distinguish between them, look at word order and comparative and superlative structures and see many examples of use.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/ask_about_english/adj_adv.shtml

Quantifiers

http://www.learn4good.com/languages/evrd_grammar/quantifier.htm

-er/-ing adjectives

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/934_gramchallenge3/

Prepositions

Useful tutorials and exercises on prepositions and phrasal verbs.

<http://www.englishpage.com/prepositions/prepositions.html>

Conjunctions and linking words and expressions

Take this tutorial.

<http://www.vivquarry.com/wkshts/linkwd.html>

Do the following exercises:

Contrast

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/cae/students/writing/linking/contrast.htm>

Addition

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/cae/students/writing/linking/addition.htm>

Cause and result

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/cae/students/writing/linking/result.htm>

Time

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/fce/students/writing/linking/time.htm>

Sentence structure

Word order

At English-Hilfen, a German website for learning English, you will find quizzes to practise word order in affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences.

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/satz.htm

Subject-verb agreement

Listen to this BBC Learning English podcast and then take the challenge.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1844_gramchallenge47/

The passive

Try this tutorial from the English Page website.

<http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/activepassive.html>

Now try these quizzes:

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/vm/active-passive.html>

Relative sentences

Fill in the gaps

<http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/multi/relative1.htm>

Omitting the pronoun

<http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/multi/relative2.htm>

Defining / non-defining

<http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/multi/relative3.htm>

Word forms

Practice writing the correct form of the verb.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/vf002-gk.html>

Read about common adjectival endings and do the quiz.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/learnit/learnitv98.shtm>

These quizzes cover different parts of speech.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/ifl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?ContentType=text/html;quiz=1554_wordbuilding

http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/ifl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?ContentType=text/html;quiz=1433_word_formation

VOCABULARY

Collocations

BBC Learning English Quiznet. Here you can practice common collocations.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/ifl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?ContentType=text/html;quiz=1349_common_collocat

Flo-joe.

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/fce/students/strategy/mcclze/collocb.htm>

Idioms

The teacher. This is a very funny, very British section of the BBC Learning English website for learning idioms with video.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/theteacher/>

On **a4esl** website you can increase your vocabulary through the practice of idioms, phrasal verbs and slang.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/idioms.html>

Phrasal and prepositional verbs

Funky Phrasals.

In this section of Learning English you can learn phrasal verbs in context. Listen and read the conversation on topics such as careers, homes and health and do the quiz.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/148_phrasalverbs/

Flo-joe. A quiz for practicing phrasal verbs.

<http://www.flo-joe.co.uk/fce/students/strategy/mcclze/pverbs.htm>

Confusing words and expressions

You are going to love this section of the BBC Learning Website, which answers many of our doubts about specific words and expressions in English.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/learnit/index.shtml#a>

Now take this quiz

<http://www.world-english.org/confusingwords.htm>

General vocabulary

Take this interactive vocabulary quiz from the BBC Learning website. There are thousands of words to practise.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/flash/wordmaster/>

PRODUCTION

Pronunciation and intonation

Learning English. The pronunciation section from the BBC website. It has excellent resources, including videos illustrating the sounds and quizzes.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/>

The sounds of American English. An American pronunciation website from Iowa University.

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html>

English Phonetic Activities A website developed for Spanish students. The explanations in Spanish are a good help.

<http://club.telepolis.com/phonetics/index.html>

Pronunciar inglés. This blog is written by a Spanish native speaker living in England and contains interesting resources and activities to help Spanish speakers improve their pronunciation of English.

<http://www.pronunciaringles.com>

Spoken Skills. Practise polite versus rude intonation and many other features of speaking on this website.

<http://www.spokenskills.com/student-activities.cfm?section=studentpractice&practicepageID=1501>

DISCOURSE, INTERACTION, AND COMMUNICATION

Using English for Academic Purposes. In this website you will find many valuable resources related to academic English. Click on the link below and then go to the subsection called ***Groupwork***. Here you will find a collection of words and phrases used to express different ***language functions***, such as giving opinions, interrupting, suggesting, emphasising a point, etc. Learn some of them and try to use them in real communication.

<http://www.uefap.com/speaking/spkfram.htm>

Easy Conversations for ESL/EFL Beginners. This website gives you the opportunity to practice lots of daily exchanges.

<http://www.eslfast.com/easydialogs/>

Appendix E4 - Improving your speaking – Error correction**GRAMMAR*****PARTS OF SPEECH*****Pronouns and determiners**

I can see another persons that are cooking paella.

Italy has good skiing including cross country skiing and others winter sports.

I couldn't find nowhere to park and had to turn around.

The people always go to that places to relax.

I met there a friends who I hadn't seen for ages.

I like talking with she/him.

She fell down and hurt her.

You cannot have a good food if you haven't got money.

I can see a office with people working.

I like cinema and reading.

I also like driving the motorbikes. That's one of my hobbies.

I'm musician; I play guitar in a band.

I play with another musicians.

Adverbs and adverbials

I like very kinds of food, for example Italian food.

I had to wait during three hours to get my bags.

To be really fit you must train all the days.

He didn't give me much long answers.

There aren't too much jobs for Spanish people in London.

In poor countries it is too important to have a teacher.

Last year I visited Burgos. I liked it more and I saw more things.

Standing in the bus all the way home is a few uncomfortable.

I spoke few because I didn't know what to say.

If you want to get to the city centre, it's quicklier by bus.

Adjectives

I enjoy different kinds of music.

She is a girl very nice.

Nouns and noun phrases

The children sit together and listen to the teacher.

Nowadays we are only 4 or 5 persons in each family.

The website contains lots of news and informations.

Prepositions

I read newspapers and magazines in internet.

Many of the best beaches in Menorca are in the east coast.

You have to get there in train.

Verbs with prepositions

You don't need to wait the bus outside.

He was looking us but he couldn't find us.

We decided to travel in car and share the cost.

I'm not sure which of the two banks is best. It depends of what you want to do with the money.

When starting a trip, it's always important to know some basic details about the place you are going to travel.

I prefer stay at home when it's cold.

Verbs

I have been in Liverpool the last summer and in every cafe they had TVs showing football.

After I got off the plane, my mentor was waiting for me at the airport and we were going to his home for lunch.

The trip was to celebrate that we end school and we start university.

My father works as an accountant for that company since twenty years ago.

María is a friend since I was sixteen.

Connectors and other linking words

For be an elite sportsperson you must do your activity every day and every year.

Due to we weren't expecting him, it was an incredible surprise to find him there.

We decided to have a holiday in England despite of the bad weather.

I'd rather go by plane instead the boat.

In the one hand, people are happier living in the country, in the other, there are fewer job opportunities.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE**Word order**

It has a lot of great facilities and the city where is situated the campus seems like a good place to live.

We went to see what was she doing and how was she.

If you want to be a monitor camp you must be at least nineteen year-old.

In a developing country have more importance the teacher. (*you will need to make some changes to the expression*).

Subject missing or redundant

Being a famous person it's good too because you can meet very interesting people.

When I was in the London underground saw a lot of people using ipods.

The best transport to get around the island it's the boat.

Money it's the first thing you need when you're abroad.

Subject-verb agreement

The guy who work at the garage said I couldn't park there.

The furniture are too big for the space we have in the room.

There are more technology in developed countries.

She is a famous tennis player and therefore she have to talk with the media but she don't want to.

Living in a large town is easier because there is a lot of shops and places to go.

There was more girls than boys in my school.

People is more friendly in the country.

Comparatives and superlatives

It's more easy to meet people in a pub that in a football stadium.

I decided to come by plane because it is the most cheapest form of transport.

Living in the country is now more expensive that in the city.

My car is more little than yours.

Relative pronouns

I don't like places who are many people and you can't move.

There is a natural spring in where you can swim.

I can see a woman that she is standing at the bus stop.

I'd go with you on that trip if I knew the people with who you are travelling.

Verbal structures

I am looking forward to go there next Christmas.

I don't enjoy to work long hours.

Have a child is a difficult decision for families these days

In bars people work stand up (de pie) and in an office sat (sentados).

Negative structures

There are not roads in this part of the country.

I try to not spend too much on clothes.

If you have no money you can't go nowhere.

They haven't books to study with.

Benidorm is no far from Valencia.

Interrogative structures

When you gave him the news?

Why she went to live abroad?

Do you changed the tickets or do you want me to do it?

WORD FORMS

The main different between these two families could be cultural.

It is impossible to satisfice everybody.

One good thing about Madrid is that you can meet people from all over the world because it is a very tourist city.

You need to be very healthful to be a professional sports athlete.

My sister sings beautiful and she can cook really well.

But you can pay a young hostel.

I can see a person who's had an injure and is lying on the floor.

I've forgotten all the knowledges I had about science.

I'd like to talk about the difficults of using different forms of transport.

VOCABULARY

Choice of word or expression

The woman has a damage in her leg.

Going to a concert is always funny. I really enjoy it.

What I would love about being famous is that you have lots of 'fanatics'.

I am going to describe my travel to Paris with my classmates.

When I go shopping, I like 'proving' (probarme) the clothes.

My friend helps me to decide if these clothes 'fall me well' (me quedan bien) or not.

We went down to the beach and 'had a bath' in the sea.

I have two sons: a boy and a girl.

Nowadays marriages only have one or two sons. (2 errors)

In the first picture I can see some 'agricultors'.

You will need warm clothes if you want to go 'to the snow.'

It's a lovely beach where you can 'take the sun' and relax.

She 'has the same years' as me. We have both 20 years.

I didn't give long answers because my vocabulary is short.

Collocations, idioms, phrasal and prepositional verbs

We did a big party to celebrate his 18th birthday.

At home I have to do the beds and make the shopping.

I had to look for the word in the dictionary because I didn't know the exact translation.

If you have my car, please bring back it.

I'm going to talk about a trip that I did.

I was sitting there all by my own (*solo, sin compañía*).

Appendix F: Student responses to open questions

Appendix F1 – Student responses to opinion question in Reflective Questionnaire 1

S1

I think the interview is very interesting to see how you speak English. So, you can correct your mistakes and improve your oral expression. It's the first interview and it's normal to be nervous. So, also, it's a way to lose all sense of shame.

S2

I personally think that It's an interesting method to improve my English, but it's difficult to speak in English when your level it's bad. I hope to improve my English in this course.

S3

In my interview I was a little bit shy because I was in front of a camera and I had a lot of pressure. Also my english level is very poor and basic but anyway I understood everything. I think that I should talk more and in the next interview I will do better.

S4

I think the interview has been a good exercise to practise and improve our English. Moreover, I've been able to see my mistakes and correct them. I will try to do my speaking exercises better and I hope I could improve my English because it's an essential tool of work.

S5

I think the interview has helped me to realised what I have to improve about my English. It has been a good experience to talk in English about different things and meet new people.

S6

I spoke few in the interview because i have problems to speak English, but i will flight to solve this problem in this months.

S7

No comment given.

S8

I didn't fell selft-confident when I speak English, and I think that in the interview I showed it.

Sometimes I didn't know how English say some words and I tried to find another similar words for explain something.

Another error that I commited was that I used temps verbals incorrectly so you couldn't understand me.

Finally I think that I write best than I speak because when I corrected the interview I saw all my errors. And this is because I need to practice a lot and do more conversations with people who speak English.

S9

No comment given.

S10

I think it is an interesting activity. It makes possible to hear you and know how you speak English and know what mistakes you make.

S11

I think the interview was a good idea to learn to strive and motivate us to speak English and pay more interest in the language.

S12

I think that the interview was a good activity for learning English. Transcribing it, I can see my mistakes and correct them. I can learn vocabulary about nature, tourism...

I should learn more vocabulary to express myself correctly.

S13

No comment given.

S14

I think that is a special form of learning of your mistakes and seeing in the future the evolution of our learning of the English language.

S15

I was very nervous. Even so I think we should do more of how you are. As I did the interview I thought it was very important to try to speak English.

S16

The interview was nice and you see some mistakes that you do when you are talking. I think the problems that I have are verbal forms and I say a lot of times "that". I can speak and people understand me but I need very much vocabulary.

S17

Well, I think doing the interview made me realize the errors, like I have to find other words, so I have to study more vocabulary, and give reasons in a paper after going to speak, so I will be able to express my opinions and ideas clearly. So I think it (the interview) is really important to improve our oral English.

S18

I think that the interview is a good activity to learn about our English level oral and listening. For example, I learn that I need more vocabulary and more oral practice because when I answered the questions and tried to bring ideas I was blocked for the reason that I couldn't find words in English.

S19

I think it was a good activity to improve our vocabulary, grammar and our oral expression.

S20

I believe that it is positive to do the interview because this way we learn to unroll ourselves in situations that can give us in a future. And also we get used to speaking in English like in a conversation.

S21

I think I was too nervous and I speak sometimes too quickly, I think that I try to change this two points, but more or less I think I'm ok. I think that we must repeat this exercise, because nowadays speak English correctly it's very important and this is the form to improve your English.

S22

I think that this interview is a good idea to practice speaking English. It was a bad experience for me because I have never spoken English before.

S23

No comment given.

S24

I found a very positive experience and learned a lot by correcting my mistakes. I hope to learn to speak well and do better next time.

S25

I think that I need speak more, because I look very quiet because my English is a little poor and I didn't know what I say. This method is good to improve the level and the experience.

S26

I was not nervous, but I was afraid because I have never spoken in English before a camera. I can see that I haven't a lot vocabulary, because I say "eehh..." all the time. In my opinion, the interview is well because I can see my way expressing me. And in some months, I will be able to make a better interview without mistakes and a better expression.

S27

I have seen the interview and I think that it was better than I was waiting. The first one, very badly but in the second my phrases are more coherent, though I have to improve very much because there are many mistakes.

S28

I think that this interview is very useful because we can listen ourselves speaking English and we realized everything which is wrong and then we can correct it with this kind of exercise. To correct all the bad words I have had to look at the dictionary and in some translators. I have learnt some new words and expressions that I could have used in my interview.

S29

My participation in the discussion was a little bit bad because for me speaking in English is very embarrassing and become very shy when I have to speak with another person in a foreign language.

S30

I personally believe that these activities are very positive because they force us to speak in English and thus we lose the shame of public speaking. I think we should do it more often to really learn how to speak and express themselves in English, which is a very useful and necessary today.

Appendix F2: Student responses in Opinion Survey

S1

I think that in the first interview I was very nervous because I haven't done many oral exams. However, I think that it is very necessary to learn English. For me, the grammar is very important but the oral part is more. To practise speaking in English and improving your oral English is necessary for these exams. The experience helped me to learn to control my anxiety. Moreover, I think that learning English or learning another language is very important if you want to get a good job. So, I think the university should teach more English.

S2

I personally think that these interviews are a good way to push us to speak in English. It's difficult because, if you always speak Spanish, and suddenly you have to switch into English, it isn't easy. I would have liked to do more interviews and I know that grammar is very important, but it's too boring. Finally, I think this type of interviews helped me but I know that I have to study a lot of vocabulary and improve my pronunciation.

S3

I think that I improve because in the last interview I have been safer and more quiet than the first time. In the first interview I was very nervous because I don't practice English since a few years ago and the interview was a little new to me. And on the other hand I'm practicing English with a particular teacher in addition to English classes because I want to improve my English and I want to go Erasmus. In addition, I think that the English language is very important and I don't want to lose the English language that I learned because if I don't practise my English I forget it.

S4

I think the interviews are useful form to evaluate our progression, if we are improve our English or not. But I don't like talking in front of a camera because I get nervous. Moreover, we are very stress and it's a bit difficult to concentrate.

About the transcript task, you can see your mistakes and correct them. In my opinion, some of the topics are a little bit difficult because I need more vocabulary or think other form to express it.

Finally, I have to say that this is a fast exam and it is easy to see if we do it better.

S5

In that course we have done two interviews where we've talked about different topics, like doing different trips around the world or talk and comparing different photographs. I think the experience has helped me in my English speak, because in the first interview I spoke more slowly and I hadn't much vocabulary or expressions to use. But in the second interview I have realised that I've used new words and I've talked faster than in the first.

With the transcript task I have seen the little mistakes I usually done and I have improved my English level.

S6

I had long ago did an oral exam, and this year in English subject after the two tests we have done in this class, I can say it's not for much.

I thought that I'd be very nervous and I have been more or less quiet. I like the idea to record it on video. The first time I saw the first interviews I laughed a lot.

On the other hand, I think that it's a good idea to correct our interviews. I think it's the best way to learn and to correct mistakes. I think I not talk very well but I have improved my English this year. I had five years before studying English and this year I had remember things. I had forgotten and I have learned some things more.

S7

This course I have done two interviews. In the one interview I was quiet because I didn't have enough vocabulary. The transcrip task has help me for learn. In the two interviews I was speak more, but I (no he podido explicar con claridad). The interviews have been interesting because I have learn.

S8

This course I have done two interviews. In the one interview I was quiet because I didn't have enough vocabulary. The transcrip task has help me for learn. In the two interviews I was speek more, but I (no he podido explicar con claridad). The interviews have been interesting because I have learn.

S9

This course I have done two interviews. In the one interview I was quiet because I didn't have enough vocabulary. The transcrip task has help me for learn. In the two interviews I was speek more, but I (no he podido explicar con claridad). The interviews have been interesting because I have learn.

S10

I think these interviews are a different activities that we are used from what we are used to do in our English lessons. They are very interesting because you can to show you and listen to you and know your real level of English. When we talk in English we think we say all well but it's not real I make a lot of mistakes and I would like to correct them.

On the other hand, the interviews isn't a real demonstration of our english because the camera make you feel nervous and in an exam you forget all the knowledge that you have.

S11

The experience has been very positive, because I think that through the interviews I've improved speech and vocabulary. Since the first interview didn't speak anytjing and now I can say I have been able to express a bit. I can also say I was less nervous than the first time, but even so I've collapsed a lot. As regards the task has helped me improve my grammar and vocabulary by listening. Finally, I can say it has been a bit luck this subject because English is very important for working life and to travel the world.

S12

No comment given.

S13

In this cours I have done two interviews. The first interviews was about two photographies. I was with mas nervous. But I was pit quiet. Also talked with parents about other photographies.I made errors and after I did correct. The second interviews was equality that first. I think that interviews have been interesting. Because after I looked my video and I looked as I was.

S14

In the first part I spoke about my boyfriend and about our relationship, but I think I had many problems making myself understood and I didn't like that at all. In the second one I did better because I looked up words to describe the photos well and I tried to explain the

differences with more logical phrases. I was less nervous in the third part because it was more dynamic than the other parts, in spite of my level of English. Finally, I think the interview is a great way of getting over our fear of speaking.

S15

This was a different experience. I had never tried to speak English because I have a character very close and I am very shameful. I think it's an exciting prospect because it takes much effort to get to speak English fluently. The transcription activity is very effective because in that way, you truly realise what you do and say bad.

S16

I like this kind of experiences because is different to another courses that I have done, I like it because one o the big problems people have is speak with people behind you, and when you transcript it you can learn of which kind of problems you have on your speaking. One problem I have is that I am very nervous when I have to speak in public with people

S17

I think English is essential to your way in the world if you want to progress into good positions. So the experience I had in the interview has been really good because it helped me to improve my English and I can deal in front of the camera and my companions. During the course, besides of the interview, I've also made many listenings, exercises and practices that have help me to better develop my english. In conclusion, I have to say that I'm glad a choose this subject because I learn and it has taken me away the shame to speak English. This has been a good experience.

S18

I think that the first interview was more difficult for me because I was more nervous and I forgot my english pronunciation. On the other hand, today when we have this interview I have felt more quiet and I think I improve my english. I have used the correct grammar and the correct vocabulary for explain the situation that the teacher give me for speak. The transcript task is a good method for know the fails I have when I speak english. Considering that I don't study english since four or more years ago I think I lost the practice but this four months studying english on the university help me for refresh all the contents of the basic english.

S19

In my opinion it's an interesting experience because during ten years of learning english I have never done that. With this experience you can evaluate yourself speaking with the stress and nervousness because the camera is recording and the teacher is watching you. Also positive because when you finish the interview you transcript your words and you see your mistakes, and then you can improve. In conclusion, I agree with this methode because it's didactic, different and also funny however I'm not happy with my second interview, I was too nervous.

S20

My experience in the interviews was positive. The first interview was very bad, because I didn't know how to express myself. The second interview was much better. I felt more confident and I knew what I wanted to say using the vocabulary I learned in class during the last months. The transcription is very positive because you know your mistakes and then you can improve. In conclusion, it's a nice experience and positive.

S21

I think that I was very nervous because only I have one experience before. I think that is very good experience, and I think that the teachers (or the educators) must put us in education oral exams because you know what you know exactly. Because if you know many grammar but you don't know speak, you won't go to other country. I think that english is very important from our life and when we finish the career we must know and speak english very well.

S22

I had a good experience in the interviews because I think that it is a nice and exciting thing. It is a good way to learn speaking English because you have to improvisate yours answers instantly. The transcript task is a long-time exercise to do at home in spite of the interview was short. But is a good thing to correct your own mistakes when you talk. This english course was a good experience to learn language and I learned many new things and reviewed some old things.

S23

Both of the interviews were really useful, especially when they were captured to digital videocamara. Because of the filming, you could see by yourself what are your weaknesses and by seeing those are able to make changes. It was also really thoughtful to have different parts from text and pictures and the group task. It is important to be able to speak with other students about the same topic and especially if you think your future. You will probably need your english skills later in your life and, who knows, maybe you will be working only with english in futrue.

The transcript task was also really usefu when you really had to think what you have said and what you should have said.

S24

My experience in the interviews has been very differents. In the first interview my feeling was very bad because I think that I don't speak good but in the second interview I have speaking better.

S25

I think that I improve in this interview. I speak a little bit than previous interview, perhaps because I'm not nervous and the other time it was the first interview in English after four years without speaking english.

Other thing there are more easy for me this time, has been the topic about I speak, because it seems more easy to speak about that.

But I consider I must improve my English yet. Because it's an important thing now and in the future when I will work. I hope will go Erasmus next year and learn english very well. I will continue studying to keep what is already.

S27

I have seen the interview and I think that it was better than I was waiting. The first one, very badly but in the second interview my phrases are more coherent, though I have to improve very much because there are many mistakes. I think that my experience is very possitive because this is a form very good of know the form of we talk, to express... with other people and with the camera.

S28

For me the two interviews have been a bit estressful. I was very nervous and I didn't say all the things I would have liked. I know that I speak much better and I know more English than I showed in the interview. However, I think that is the best way to learn English or another language, because you win fluency. Then when you transcript your own interview, you can see all the mistakes that we have done. In these three or four months I have learn too much vocabulary. I've remember all the grammar and understand listening.

S29

The first interview was very bad, because I stayed very extressing and I had a little experience with the English and I hadn't vocabulary. I spoke little and very bad.

The second interview I think was better than the first. Because I had more experience and vocabulary. I could have discussed with my friends very well. However I need to practise because I don't speak fast, fluency...

S30

I personally believe that these activities are very positive because they force us to speak in English and thus we lose the shame of public speaking. I think we should do it more often to really learn how to speak and express themselves in English, which is a very useful and necessary today.

Appendix F3: Student responses in Reflective questionnaire 2

S2

Right now I can't think of any. What really helped me was to see myself speaking. In this course I have remembered things that I knew but didn't remember.

S4

I have corrected "more quickly" for "quicklier"; I have learnt the expression "for moving" instead of "to move", etc.

S5

I have learnt to say "people", instead of "persons". I have learnt some phrasal verbs like "set out" or "stop off", and vocabulary like complaints (quejas) o budgets (presupuestos).

S6

For example, I didn't make pauses and I joined phrases with "and". It has also served e to use the pronouns better.

S8

I have tried to use tenses better, not using the present all the time and using also the past. I have learnt the word "unthinkable", which I didn't know to pronounce and which I used in both interviews. I have tried to use -s in the third person.

S9

Now I put -s 'in the third person singular in the present, "he speaks".

S10

Using "travel" and "trip" correctly. I haven't learnt anything in particular. The only problems I had were mistakes due to nerves. I didn't pause to think what I was going to say next. One mistake I made several times was using the preposition to in the wrong place. I said it, then paused for a moment and continued the previous sentence. Therefore, that preposition was unnecessary. That's what impressed me most when I saw myself in the video.

S11

Now I try to use linking words like, "but", "also", "because", "for", "then", "moreover", etc. I have improved my vocabulary, which was very bad, with words like "hard-working", "sensitive", "*budgest", "talkative", etc.

S12

The use of connectors.

S13

Now I think about the verb tense before I speak, so I don't mix up present, past and future.

S14

Verbs in general.

S15

I have corrected the use of the adverb “very” and all personal pronouns; I have learned some vocabulary, as in the first interview I had to describe the pictures for *campo-ciudad* and I said “country”, which of course is not *campo*; it is *país*. I have also learned that “children” is in the plural and you don’t have to add an -s.

S21

The error I have corrected is the use of “the” in front of “people” and of “is” with “people”. Also the use of “much/many”.

S25

When we did the transcription and the corrections of the interview, I saw that I said many things with no meaning and that I used verbs in the wrong tense, while doing it in writing and thinking a bit more I know how to say it or I do it a bit better. One of the errors I make usually is with prepositions (in, at, on, to, for...), or I put them when I musn’t or I don’t use them. In words, thinking about something more concrete, I confuse “people” and “person”; before I said “responsible” and now I say “responsible”.

S26

Using the past form of the verbs, because when we did the the interviews I used present only and not past forms.

S30

I can’t think a concrete example, simply, I’ve developed my pronunciation in some words like “since” which I pronounced bad.

Appendix G: An Erasmus Placement Interview Simulation

Scenario

LOOKING FOR A UNIVERSITY

The School of Building Engineering is going to shortlist a number of candidates for an ERASMUS grant. There are three possible destinations:

- UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN
- COVENTRY UNIVERSITY
- ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC

Profile 1: Candidate

You have decided to apply for the grant. Next week you will have to attend an interview where you will have to persuade the panel to give you the grant. Prepare the interview following these instructions:

1. Access the website of each of these universities and compare them based on the following criteria:
 - COURSES OFFERED
 - STUDY FACILITIES
 - STUDENT LIFE
 - LOCATION
 - CLIMATE AND LANDSCAPE
 - ACCOMMODATION
 - TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
2. State your interests: when, how long, what you want to study, interests other than academic ones. You could create a comparative table based on the above categories or use another way of organising the information.
3. State your preference based on the information you have gathered.

PREPARING FOR YOUR ERASMUS PLACEMENT INTERVIEW

Complete the questionnaire below:

Name (and names of other group members)

Your skills, interests and strengths

- What kinds of activities make you happy?
- What personal characteristics are you most proud of?
- What skills do you have that may help you in the future? Don't just think of things you do at university. Think of things you do outside university.
- Which of these interests and skills would help you in an international setting? (some examples would be: like meeting people, like seeing new things, like tasting new foods, etc.?)

Your action plan for the future

- A specific area within your sector you are interested in.
- Special training and skills you need for this professional choice and where you can gain those skills.
- What you should be doing now to prepare for this career.

Your choice of university and the courses you intend to take. Justify your decision.

Profile 2: Interviewer

You are a member of the panel of interviewers. With the other members of the panel, prepare a list of the questions that you will ask during the interview. You may consult the tasks that the candidates have had to carry out to find out about the universities to which they wish to apply. You may also use some of the questions from the questionnaire that all the candidates have had to answer. You must be prepared to conduct the interview and take turns with the other members of the panel in asking the candidates questions.

Profile 3: English language expert (range)

You are one of the English language experts who will judge the candidates' range in English during the interview. You will have to decide if the candidate has enough language to succeed in giving clear descriptions of what s/he wants to say, without much hesitation. Please give the candidate a mark on a scale of 10 on the assessment form and make note of

any comments on the candidate's performance. You must then reach an agreement with the other experts in your group to decide on the candidate's final mark for range.

Profile 4: English language expert (accuracy)

You are one of the English language experts who will judge the candidate's accuracy in English during the interview. You will have to decide if the candidate shows sufficient accuracy in grammar and does not make errors that cause misunderstanding. Please give the candidate a mark on a scale of 10 on the assessment form and make note of any comments on the candidate's performance. You must then reach an agreement with the other experts in your group to decide on the candidate's final mark for accuracy.

Profile 5: English language expert (fluency)

You are one of the English language experts who will judge the candidate's fluency in English during the interview. You will have to decide if the candidate keeps going comprehensibly, even though pausing to choose appropriate grammar and vocabulary; correcting mistakes may be evident. Please give the candidate a mark on a scale of 10 on the assessment form and make note of any comments on the candidate's performance. You must then reach an agreement with the other experts in your group to decide on the candidate's final mark for fluency.

Profile 6: English language expert (interaction)

You are one of the English language experts who will judge the candidate's interaction in English during the interview. You will have to decide if the candidate can initiate and maintain a conversation. The candidate may repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding. Please give the candidate a mark on a scale of 10 on the assessment form and make note of any comments on the candidate's performance. You must then reach an agreement with the other experts in your group to decide on the candidate's final mark for interaction.

Profile 7: English language expert (coherence)

You are one of the English language experts who will judge the candidate's coherence in English during the interview. You will have to decide if the candidate can link what s/he says with connectors to form a connected, linear sequence of points. Please give the candidate a mark on a scale of 10 on the assessment form and make note of any comments on the candidate's performance. You must then reach an agreement with the other experts in your group to decide on the candidate's final mark for coherence.

(The questionnaire for the candidate's profile was adapted from <http://indianaintheworld.indiana.edu/ch4-4.pdf>, retrieved August 29, 2010)

Appendix H: Sample interviews

Appendix H1 – Instructions to students

This practical activity aims to give you an opportunity to improve your oral expression by assessing your own performance. You are asked to watch the video and to transcribe the words you said and then to answer a questionnaire. That way, you will begin to understand what linguistic and non-linguistic resources you need in order to interact effectively in English. You will learn about your strong points and about the things you need to improve. By transcribing your own words (everything you said; not what the others said) you will note errors in grammar and vocabulary, and you will have a second chance to try and express more clearly what you didn't have time to elaborate while you were speaking.

1. Watch the interview and write a transcript of your part. Then correct in red the mistakes in grammar and vocabulary and add your corrections, highlighted in yellow.
2. Answer the questionnaire.

Appendix H2 - Sample student transcripts

Appendix H2 – Sample student transcripts

Student 4

Interview 1

I'm going **to speak to talk** about my school. I started when I was three years old and I finished when I was eighteen years old. It's a **school very religious and very serious very religious and serious school**. I don't like it because **I don't think like people** who is there **I don't share their opinion**. **There was** more girls than boys, because at first it was a school only for girls and boys started when I was a five years old. I was thirteen years there and it's a big experience. We **wear wore** uniform.

Comentario [1]: This is ok too.

Comentario [2]: people who are

Comentario [3]: There were

Interview 2

In the first picture we can see lot of people in the country. It's very different than the second one because they have to **work too much more** than the other **one ones** and they have less money and it's very uncomfortable. They can wear the clothes that they want and in the second one they have to wear **tracksuit**. In the second one there is **lot of technologies** and in the first one it's very basic. I think in the second one they have **studies** and the people in the first one haven't **studies**.

Comentario [4]: they have to work much more

Comentario [5]: a suit

Comentario [6]: a lot of technology

Comentario [7]: they've had an education

Interview 3

- It's **more quickly quicklier**.
- Or you can go by camel because it has to be fine but I think like him because travelling by boat you can **round go round** the island and go **for by** the river.
- And you can take the motorbike.
- Yes, it's funny. You can go with a friend.
- And **for moving if you want to move** it's **more easy easier** than the car and it's **more little** than the car.
- You have to take a different form of transport **for moving to move on around** the island.

Comentario [8]: quicker

Comentario [9]: smaller

Answer the following questionnaire.

Dealing with questions

1. Did you understand and answer the questions? Yes, I did.
2. Did you ask to repeat questions you didn't understand? Yes, I did.
3. Did you give quite long answers to the questions? Sometimes I did it.
4. When appropriate, did you give reasons for your answers? Yes, because I had to justify my answers.
5. Did you support your answers with examples? No, I didn't.
6. Did you express your opinions and ideas clearly? I tried to do it.

Body language and voice

7. Did you look positive, confident and friendly? Yes, I did.
8. Did you look at the interviewer directly when speaking? Yes, because when I looked at her I wasn't worry.
9. Did you speak clearly, so the interviewer could hear you? Yes, but my pronunciation wasn't perfect.

Dealing with problems

10. When you made a mistake, did you ever try to correct it? Yes, I corrected me some times.
11. When you couldn't think of the correct word, did you find other ways of expressing the idea in English? Yes, but sometimes I didn't know how to explain that word.
12. Did you answer completely in English? No completely.

Managing interaction

13. Did you participate actively in the discussion, contributing and exchanging ideas with the other speakers? Yes, I told my ideas and commented the ideas of my partners.

Write a personal comment about the interview.

I think the interview has been a good exercise to practise and improve our English. Moreover, I've been able to see my mistakes and correct them. I will try to do my speaking exercises better and I hope I could improve my English because it's an essential tool of work.

María,

Yours was a good interview. You were able to express your ideas quite effectively, and you were not afraid to pause for a bit to plan your next words. In most cases you also managed to find other ways to say those things for which you couldn't find the right word. Your knowledge of the vocabulary is acceptable too. Note the corrections I have made in the grammar, eg in the use of comparatives, but for the most part you were able to correct the mistakes yourself.

You took part naturally in the discussion, making good eye-contact with the other students and helping to move the conversation along.

Student 30**1st activity**

I went to **the** school in my city.

The name is the bracal.

I started when I was four years old.

I don't know how many people studied there.

I studied there **since until** I **go went** to **the** secondary school.

I like about it that I **met a lot of** **made many** friends.

I dislike that I don't know.

2nd activity

In the first photograph I think **is** important because **the childrens** **children** don't know how **works** the computer **works** and the teacher is important to explain it. And in the second photograph I think the teacher is important because **the childrens** **children**

Comentario [10]: it's

don't know anything about the school. They are in a **the** third world. They need a teacher because they have to study the primary **school education**.

3rd group activity

I think **that** the **big biggest** problem is the language because he **doesn't know** speak English **it's is** a big problem...

Comentario [11]: He doesn't know how to speak...

...**To get something is difficult** is difficult **to get something** if he **don't doesn't** know **what is** the...

Comentario [12]: It's

... yes, because **there's not the euro** it's the lira and the weather is **also** a problem **too** because in Spain we **have a good weather** and there **rains...**

Comentario [13]: it's not

Comentario [14]: we have good weather

...I think the transport **it's is** a problem because if he **don't doesn't**... if he **don't doesn't** **drive drives** his car he **have has** to **take the catch** public transport and it's a problem...

Comentario [15]: it rains

Comentario [16]: doesn't drive

...I think it's a problem because they drive **at on** the left and we **at on** the right.

Answer the following questionnaire.

Dealing with questions

1. Did you understand and answer the questions? Yes, I understood the questions, but I need more vocabulary to express myself properly.
2. Did you ask to repeat questions you didn't understand? No, I don't.
3. Did you give quite long answers to the questions? Not too
4. When appropriate, did you give reasons for your answers? Yes, because they were general topics.
5. Did you support your answers with examples? I answered my own experience.
6. Did you express your opinions and ideas clearly? Not at all, I need lots of practice

Body language and voice

7. Did you look positive, confident and friendly? In my opinion I need more clarity and safety talking.
8. Did you look at the interviewer directly when speaking? As I can't see the video I can't say exactly, but I remember I was looking to the teacher at all times.

9. Did you speak clearly, so the interviewer could hear you? The video didn't hear so well, but it can be understood correctly.

Dealing with problems

10. When you made a mistake, did you ever try to correct it? Yes, i tried to fix it or find another way to express it.
11. When you couldn't think of the correct word, did you find other ways of expressing the idea in English? Yes, although the lack of vocabulary it was a little difficult.
12. Did you answer completely in English? Yes, i did.

Managing interaction

13. Did you participate actively in the discussion, contributing and exchanging ideas with the other speakers? Of course, I tried to express my ideas and share them with my classmates.

Write a personal comment about the interview.

I personally believe that these activities are very positive because they force us to speak in English and thus we lose the shame of public speaking. I think we should do it more often to really learn how to speak and express themselves in English, which is a very useful and necessary today.

Ines,

You managed the interview quite well. You argued your points and gave detailed examples and reasons for your answers. You appeared friendly and in the discussion you volunteered ideas and helped develop the topic. In the transcript, you have been able to identify quite a few mistakes, such as those of subject-verb agreement, prepositions, tenses, etc.

Well done.

Student 17

1r video:

This is H&M.

I am going to speak about shopping.

My favourite shop is H&M and I bought have bought a lot because I like shopping there and may be I can stay there two hours and may be I don't buy anything but I like to visit there because I like the dresses and T-shirts and anythings something related to clothes and accessories of this.

2nd video:

This photografy show us car crowding so I think.. there are very transports is because.. when.. there are more many cars can be accidents and this so it's better to go with public transports (*) because and when there are more many people we can agobied overwhelmed in the train or in the metro.

(*) but it can also happen that there are many people as crowede public transport, as we can see in the picture below, so we can overwhelmed.

Video de las tres:

..and he should buy a dictionary or something like a book to translate somethings something and I think the food ... it's a problem too because it is different cutltures culture and the aliments also is a problem too.

...equivalence of a money...

...and the car... he has (a headeach some) ill.

...if he make a mistake...

...and the telephone is too expensive from the Spain to England.

Comentario [17]: photograph

Comentario [18]: shows

Comentario [19]: a traffic jam

Comentario [20]: many forms of transport

Comentario [21]: there may be

Comentario [22]: *in public transport

Comentario [23]: may feel overwhelmed

Comentario [24]: either

Comentario [25]: food/feeding people

Comentario [26]: rate of exchange?

Comentario [27]: is ill

Comentario [28]: makes

Answer the following questionnaire.***Dealing with questions***

1. Did you understand and answer the questions? Yes, I understood all the question but, when I had to answer those, I had a problems.
2. Did you ask to repeat questions you didn't understand? Yes.
3. Did you give quite long answers to the questions? No.
4. When appropriate, did you give reasons for your answers? Yes, I did, but, normally, it is hard me because in my leanguage occurs the same.
5. Did you support your answers with examples? Yes.
6. Did you express your opinions and ideas clearly? No, because the same reason as five question.

Body language and voice

7. Did you look positive, confident and friendly? No.
8. Did you look at the interviewer directly when speaking? I didn't look at the interviewer always.
9. Did you speak clearly, so the interviewer could hear you? May be, I think the interviewer could hear me in some answers but it didn't in all of them.

Dealing with problems

10. When you made a mistake, did you ever try to correct it? Yes.
11. When you couldn't think of the correct word, did you find other ways of expressing the idea in English? Yes.
12. Did you answer completely in English? No, because I tried to find other word or sentence when I couldn't think of the correct word but I didn't so I fail into the error of speak Spanish.

Managing interaction

13. Did you participate actively in the discussion, contributing and exchanging ideas with the other speakers? Yes.

Write a personal comment about the interview.

Well, I think doing the interview made me realise the errors, like I have to find other words, so I have to study more vocabulary, and give reasons in a paper after going to speak, so I will be able to express my opinions and ideas clearly. So I think it (the interview) is really important to improve our oral English.

Alex,

Yours was a good first attempt. You developed your topics at length, which is very good. One good thing is that you have good eye-contact with me, the interviewer, and with the other people in your group and that you contribute ideas to the discussion. I have noticed, though, that you are a bit unsure when you speak. I believe that your English is better than you think, so try to work on your body language, your facial expressions, etc. Just try to appear more confident. And try to be the first one to volunteer ideas some of the time. I have added a few more corrections to your transcript. I hope they are helpful.

Student 28

First interview

I'm going to talk about a trip that I did when I was seven with my parents, my family, my cousins and some friends. We went to first to London, we spend there two or three days. Then we traveled to Orlando, in to Disney World and then to finish that trip we traveled to New York. Then we come back to Spain. It was a very beautiful travel trip because London is very different than New York and in Orlando is the journey was very different because we stayed all days in Disney World with Mickey Mouse, etc, because we were a child

Comentario [29]: A trip that I made

Comentario [30]: spent

Comentario [31]: came

Comentario [32]: children

Second interview

In the first picture is there is a town, the life there is very different than in the city, a lot of people work with the fruit and with animals in the land, they are farmers. The life is very tranquila calm, quiet.

Comentario [33]: the life there

Comentario [34]: same

In the second picture is there is a city with a lot of traffic jams and if you want to go to any place go anywhere you must take have to take a car, a bus or a train and in a town

you can walk to **anyplace anywhere**. In the city you can go shopping, to the cinema you can do a lot of things **than** in the town you can't do.

Comentario [35]: things **that**

Common interview

I think **the same of** Esther because **is** the easiest transport to go around the island.

Comentario [36]: the same **as**

Because the motorbike not I think that the motorbike is not a good transport because **there are not roads** and the train, if the island **don't doesn't** have rails you can't take the train. And Sergio what do you think?

Comentario [37]: **that** is (you need a subject here)

In the jeep is the **easiest best**, I think, not the ship. The ship is **more slow slower** than the jeep.

Comentario [38]: there are **no** roads

2. Answer the following questionnaire:

Dealing with questions

1. Did you understand and answer the questions? I understood all the questions on the paper but I didn't answer all of them because of the nerves.
2. Did you ask to repeat questions you didn't understand? Yes, in the last topic where we had to argue with the partners I didn't understand at first what we had to speak about exactly.
3. Did you give quite long answers to the questions? I spoke about two topics. In the first one, I had to explain one travel and I spoke more than in the second one that it was about the differences between the city and the town. In this second topic I didn't know what to say, I was confused.
4. When appropriate, did you give reasons for your answers? I believe that no. I was very nervous and I didn't say all that I would have liked to say.
5. Did you support your answers with examples? The truth is that no. I would have liked to speak a little bit more.
6. Did you express your opinions and ideas clearly? In the interview I express more or less the idea that I thought or that I wanted to say, but I had to speak more.

Body language and voice:

7. Did you look positive, confident and friendly? Yes, I was very excited because I have never listened me speaking English.
8. Did you look at the interviewer directly when speaking? Yes, because if I looked at the camera made me nervous.
9. Did you speak clearly, so the interviewer could hear you? Yes I spoke clearly because I don't had shame. I think that she could heard me perfectly.

Dealing with problems

10. When you made a mistake, did you ever try to correct it? Yes, I sometimes tried to correct it and other times I didn't think that I said something wrong. But now doing this exercise I have realized that I said bad things, more that I would like.
11. When you couldn't think of the correct word, did you find other ways of expressing the idea in English? Yes I tried to think quickly other word and in this moment I felt nervous.
12. Did you answer completely in English? Yes, I said everything in English less one word, (tranquila) but quickly I said "calm and quiet".

Managing interaction

13. Did you participate actively in the discussion, contributing and exchanging ideas with the other speakers? I think that I could have said mote things but in the moment I didn't think what to say.

If not, why? Because in that moment I didn't think what to say but when I left the class I thought about a lot of things that I could have said. The topic was a little bit strange.

Write a personal comment about the interview.

I think that this interview is very useful because we can listen ourselves speaking English and we realized everything which is wrong and then we can correct it with this kind of exercise. To correct all the bad words I have had to look at the dictionary and in some translators. I have learnt some new words and expressions that I could have used in my interview.

A very good exercise, Amparo. In the interview you appeared calm and controlled. You were able to pause to organise your ideas and you took time to find the right words. You gave quite long answers with proper explanations and examples.

As far as the communicative aspects, in the individual turn you looked at me and smiled most of the time; if you were anxious, you definitely didn't show it. In the discussion, you had very good eye contact with the others and you helped the conversation along, by inviting comments and reacting to your partners' ideas.

In the transcript you have managed to identify and correct many mistakes and your self-assessment in the questionnaire is rather detailed and accurate.