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.