Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

12-2022

Teaching Chinese as a Second Language: Exploring L2 Reading Via Dynamic Assessment

Siyu Ji
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports

 Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons

TEACHING CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:

EXPLORING L2 READING VIA DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

by

Siyu Ji

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Approved:

_____ _____

Dr. Joshua J. Thoms   Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini
Major Professor   Committee Member

_____ _____

Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya   Dr. Crescencio López
Committee Member   Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Logan, Utah

2022

ABSTRACT

TEACHING CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:

EXPLORING L2 READING VIA DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

by

Siyu Ji: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2022

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms

Department: World Languages & Cultures

This portfolio includes a collection of essays reflecting the writer's beliefs and exploration of teaching Chinese as a second language. The first part of the portfolio is the writer's professional environment and teaching philosophy statement. The second part of the portfolio is the writer's professional learning experience from a class observation. The third part of the portfolio is a reflection paper on the writer's exploration of reading dynamic assessment.

(45 pages)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAPPL: ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages

ACTFL: the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CDA: Computerized Dynamic Assessment

CDRT: Computerized Dynamic Reading Test

CT-DA: Critical Thinking Dynamic Assessment

DA: Dynamic Assessment

L2: Second Language

LPS: Learning Potential Score

SCT: Sociocultural Theory

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

MSLT: Master of Second Language Teaching

USU: Utah State University

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

ZAD: Zone of Actual Development

INTRODUCTION TO THE PORTFOLIO

In 2010, I graduated from Beijing Foreign Studies University majoring in teaching Chinese as a second language, and I have always been enthusiastic about teaching Chinese. As such, I became a Chinese language teacher at Yew Chung International School of Beijing. I taught Chinese as a first language and a second language in different grade levels in elementary school from 2010 to 2018. During this period, all of the teachers in the school including me focused on Krashen's Monitor theory which advocates for the importance of input in teaching a language. I designed my instructions mainly on how to provide input for my students. However, the second language(L2) learners in the school didn't develop Chinese proficiency as well as we expected. They could read the textbooks but not the road signs. They could pass a listening and speaking test in school, but they had difficulty asking for directions on field trips. Therefore, I began to rethink the instructions that depended heavily on input, and I wanted to find better ways to teach Chinese.

In 2018, I came to Utah to teach Chinese in the 6th-grade dual language immersion program (DLI) at Cedar Ridge Elementary School. The DLI program is a second language teaching program in that teachers teach not only language lessons but also content lessons such as science and math, 100% in target language, and DLI program allows students to learn and use the target language at the same time. In addition to teaching the Chinese language, I also teach science and social studies in Chinese. I have found that teaching in DLI classes is different from teaching an L2 class because grammar is not the primary focus and students need to use the L2 to learn science and social studies. In 2019, I enrolled in the LING 4700 DLI foundation course at Utah State University to get my Chinese language endorsement. I learned the theoretical foundations of dual language immersion (DLI) and I met Professor Spicer-Escalante who recommended the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program to me. I believed that learning more about L2 teaching theories and practice(s)

would help me become a better teacher, so I decided to continue my education in the MSLT program at USU starting in 2020.

While in the MSLT program, I have learned about the development of theories in L2 acquisition and the methodologies that have been influenced by different theories. From 2020 to 2022, I tried a lot of new approaches in my own classroom and I gradually extended my belief from input to output theory. I believe that in 6th grade, output is more important for my students than input because they need time to process the input I provide to them. They also need opportunities to try out their hypotheses about their L2 to test what they think they learned. In 2020, Dr. Fred Poole (a former MSLT student who is now an Assistant Professor at Michigan State University) launched a Chinese game in my class and recorded the communications that happened in the classroom. I helped decode the recordings and I found that while communicating with each other about how to play the game, students produced a lot of high-quality output. I realized that I needed to provide more meaningful opportunities for my students to produce output via engaging communicative tasks so that they can use the language out of their own interest, instead of being forced by me. Therefore, I began trying out the communicative approach to design tasks.

In addition to the theories and methodologies of L2 acquisition, MSLT courses including LING 6010 and LING 6500 helped me to understand how to search for and read academic journals, and how to learn from them. Before I took LING 6010, it took me a long time to read a research paper. However, after taking this course, I was much faster at reading journals, and I can now quickly locate the ones related to my field of research. In the summer of 2021, I took LING 6100 about assessment in L2 acquisition, and I was interested in how assessment can inform instruction that then leads to acquisition. Since then, I began exploring different types of assessments in my class and tried to add real-life questions to my assessments. I learned about dynamic assessments (DA) at that time, but it was not until I

took LING 6100 about theories in L2 acquisition that I was really interested in DA and researched it further. DA is a kind of assessment rooted in Vygosky's Sociocultural Theory, which believes that learners learn through sociocultural activities and learn by connecting oneself with the environment. DA focuses on the process of assessment, in which the test giver could provide certain kinds of assistance to the learner. Around the same time, in the spring of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in educators switching from face-to-face to online instruction, and I was required to put all of my teaching materials--including assessments--online. Therefore, I took LING 6520 about computer-assisted language learning (CALL). In this course, I learned and reviewed some educational websites including Quizlet, Flipgrid, and Bookcreator, and I was interested in how to make assessments online so that students can have more flexibility in doing the assessments. I researched computerized dynamic assessments (CDA) in reading comprehension, and I learned how to use DA to find students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) in reading. CDA allows learners to do DA via computer programs, and the computer can generate their scores immediately. ZPD is the most important idea of Vygosky's Sociocultural Theory. ZPD refers to the range of abilities that learners can perform with an expert's assistance but not yet on their own. In the 2021-2022 academic year, I began converting some of my reading assessments into DA. I will reflect on my practice of the DA in reading in the main section of this portfolio. In the following academic year (2023-2024), I will put those assessments on the computer and put them online so students can be flexible to do the tests whenever and wherever they are able to.

Finally, I learned that nowadays the expectations of teachers' and students' roles are very different from the time when I learned English. The Atlas Complex is a traditional way of teaching. According to Lee and VanPatten (2003), in the Atlas Complex, teachers provide everything to learners, such as knowledge, motivation, and other insights, but the students provide nothing besides imitation of the performance that they see (p. 7). The instructor tries

to be an expert in their field, but students are isolated from the instructor. The instructor takes full responsibility for students' learning meaning that they have little to no responsibility for their learning. Students' roles are reduced to being the receivers, listeners, note-takers, and imitators. Teachers' roles from this perspective include being the information givers, authorities, and knowledge transmitters.

However, I believe students will not acquire the target language via the Atlas Complex way of teaching, where the brunt of the work in the language classroom falls on the shoulders of the teacher. On the contrary, in communicative language teaching (CLT), students are expected to focus on conveyed meaning(s) in their conversations and interpret or negotiate meaning from others. They can use various ways to communicate with each other, including signs, facial expressions, rephrasing, drawing, etc. Teachers will often ask open-ended questions and students will provide answers that reflect their ideas to interact with the teacher. Teachers provide comprehensible input and interactive output opportunities. That is, this approach means that teachers will provide opportunities for students to use the language in real life. Students should share responsibility for L2 acquisition with the teachers.

To sum up, I believe students learn their L2 best when teachers provide tasks that are related to real life and are given opportunities to communicate with others. In the following teaching philosophy statement, I will write about my beliefs in the communicative teaching approach, output theory, and DA.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Professional Environment

I am currently working as a Chinese teacher in the 6th grade DLI program at Cedar Ridge Elementary, so when I articulate this teaching philosophy, I am thinking of my own class and curriculum. My students are all from Utah and they have been learning Chinese as a foreign language in the DLI program since first grade. I use Mandarin Matrix books as textbooks, and I need to follow the 6th grade English language arts curriculum required by the Utah State Board of Education. My students are required to take the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL test) each November which assesses interpretive listening, interpretive reading, and presentational writing.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

With the development of global cooperation and technology, people have more and more opportunities to learn about other countries and cultures. Learning an L2 is a more common and more important demand. I have been learning English as my L2 since I was ten years old and have been teaching Chinese as L2 for ten years. I am always thinking about how people learn L2 successfully and hope I can help learners as much as possible. With the assistance of computer technology, teaching and learning L2 can be easier and more effective. In this article, I will write about what I learned from MSLT program and my practices in learning and teaching L2.

I will start with what I learned from the Communitive Language Teaching(CLT) approach and from Output-based theories and how I use them in my teaching context. In the second section, I will share some ideas about how I assess learners' language proficiency and give feedback to learners according to the tenets of Sociocultural Theory.

My Teaching Practice Informed by The Communitive Approach and Output Theoretical Perspectives

VanPatten (2017) brought up some principles of communicative language teaching in L2 acquisition. One of the principles is that "Instructors and materials should provide appropriate level input and interaction" (p. 90). In this principle, the two main points are to make input appropriate for students, and to make it interactive. One of the major roles of teachers is to provide comprehensible and communicative input for students. There are several ways to make input level-appropriate. For example, teachers can use short sentences, slower rates of speech, repetition, rephrasing, pausing at appropriate places when reading or speaking, making content clear to see, etc. When I demonstrate reading a text, I usually pause several times in a sentence, so that students have time to find the meaning of the text because in Chinese there is no natural space between words. If students pause at the wrong place in a sentence, they may have misunderstandings or they may feel the text doesn't make any sense. In 6th grade, students can read simple sentences by themselves, but they need more clarification on complex sentences. In this case, I usually use rephrasing to make it comprehensible. I also use Google slides to show key sentences and I always highlight the new words and the transitional words to make the form salient to my students.

VanPatten also pointed out that "tasks should form the backbone of the communicative curriculum" (p. 118). Tasks are good in language teaching because in order to complete a task, students need to create, interpret, and negotiate to get the meaning from their partners, and there is always a communicative purpose in a task. For example, when I taught students about the bullet train in China, I let my students write an email to the China traffic department to ask some questions about building a bullet train from Logan to the Salt Lake international airport. With this communicative goal in mind, I introduced the bullet train to my students and let them think about the advantages of having a bullet train, and students came up with questions that need to be solved to build one. In the end, they each wrote an email with three parts: the reason they want to have a bullet train here, the questions they

want to know about, and expression of gratitude in the end. However, the challenge is that students all know that their emails were only a practice and will not be delivered to the China traffic department. Given that my students are in elementary school, and because their work cannot be shared publicly, this makes the task feel unrealistic, even though it was designed to be communicative. Therefore, in 2022, I changed this task into an interview, so students could interview each other about their opinions about bullet trains and what difficulties they will encounter when they decide to build one from Logan to the Salt Lake international airport. After interviewing three students, they wrote a report to summarize their interviewee's ideas and make suggestions to overcome the difficulties, and I published their written reports on my class website so that every student could read all the reports.

Swain (1993) offered the field of second language acquisition (SLA) an Output Hypothesis which stated that input only is not enough for L2 acquisition and that producing output is critical for learners because it enables them to test out their hypotheses about the target language, and it shows learners the gap between their semantic knowledge (i.e., the meaning of words and phrases) and their syntactic knowledge (the use of the words and phrases). Even though we can't see through learners' brains to test their semantic and syntactic knowledge of the language, as an English learner myself, I had the experience that when I read and listen to a lot of words, I could understand their meaning but when I wrote and spoke, I could not think of those words that fit the situation. So if another person pointed it out that I should use a certain word in that certain circumstance, I would quickly get it and remember the word for a long time. Therefore, as a teacher, I believe that if learners are only exposed to input, they will assume that they know a lot of the language, but when they produce output by speaking and writing their own ideas, they will find that they cannot use the target language correctly. Thus, it is important for teachers to create opportunities for

learners to try out what they have learned about the target language via the production of output.

My students have learned Chinese for six years and their listening proficiency reached an intermediate level, so they can understand quite a lot of the language when they listen to it, but they usually find it hard to express themselves correctly orally or in written form, and constantly make the same grammar mistake such as "玩跟我的朋友" (play with my friend in English order). When I give them explicit feedback, they all understand it and know why it is wrong, but when they speak or write, they repeat the same mistake. If I don't give them numerous opportunities to speak or write in Chinese, they will continue to make the same mistakes over and over for years. However, if I let them have enough opportunities to speak and write, they will get enough feedback and they are able to make corrections. Some of my students already pay attention to linguistic form when they produce output, and they can avoid these mistakes. What's more, when they communicate with the other students, they pay attention to their interlocutor 's (i.e., the person they are speaking with) sentences as well and they give them feedback on particular forms.

Another example is the word in Chinese for 'often'. My students have learned this word since fourth grade. When they listen to and read sentences with this word, they have no problem understanding them, but when they try to speak or write it, they never use 'often', instead, they say, 'do something a lot of times'. So, when I provide them with feedback, I rephrase their sentences with the word 'often' and they realize they can use this word and they make the correction to their sentences. It is important that students also make corrections after I rephrase their sentences, because that is how I know they paid attention to the word "often." I will then observe if they can use the word correctly or correct themselves in the following tasks over a period of time. After a few times that I observe that they can use the word correctly by themselves, I can say that they have learned the word both by

understanding the meaning and by using it correctly in the context. I believe that it takes time and effort for students to use the L2 correctly, so teachers should be patient when they give feedback and continue to give students opportunities to test out their hypotheses about the language.

Assessments and Feedback Strategies

DA is a pedagogical approach to SLA based on Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which also integrates mediation and assessment into a unified activity (Poehner & Infante, 2017). Vygotsky (1978) defined mediation as the process through which individuals actively modify the environment while they are responding to it. Language is a symbolic tool to mediate oneself with the social environment. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1987) defined learning as a social process when a child first interacts with their environment then integrates whatever they get from others into their mental structure. The ZPD is the potential ability a learner can reach with others' assistance (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). Therefore, DA aims to facilitate test-takers navigating through their ZPD during the assessment. The test giver usually interacts with the test takers to mediate them through their ZPD (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018).

In my teaching context, I use pre-tests, mediation, and post-tests for reading and writing assessments. Before each unit, I administer students a test on reading comprehension. Mediation is my instruction in class. After learning about the unit, I let students take the test again to check if the mediation increased students' reading comprehension of the text. I also give students two opportunities to make multiple choices. The first time they have to make a choice and if they are wrong, I will mark an X and they can choose again. If they make the correct choice the first time, they get full points for that question, and if they make the correct choice the second time, they get half points for that question. Their points, in the end, indicate their ZPD. My students love this method, and they are motivated to make corrections because

they want to know where they are at and where they can be with a little bit of help, but they still consider the second score their own ability because they made the correction on their own, so they deserve the higher score. They think this method makes sense to them as they are in control of their assessment process.

In addition to assessment, feedback is also crucial to students' future achievement. If a student receives a grade of D or F, they will have low self-esteem in this subject, and it is possible to give up. I always grade students in their homework, test, and essays with A+, A, A-, and Bs, with a comment indicating what they might do to get a better score. I find it helps my students a lot. They ask me what the feedback means when they don't understand, and they are always curious about what the next step is. According to McDaniel, Anderson, Derbish, and Morrisette (2007), when teachers provide immediate feedback or present students with corrected work examples, students will benefit from the tests for later learning (cited by Oliva, Gordon & Taylor, 2019, p. 234). When my students write their sentences, I let them engage in peer feedback first, to look for certain mistakes, such as the misuse of"是" (am) and the wrong word order. When they come to me, I give them one-on-one feedback on their sentences by asking for clarification, reading aloud for them to notice the mistake by themselves, rephrasing, and making a correction to the characters' writing.

To conclude, I believe teachers should plan for real-life related tasks or tasks that encourage students to exchange ideas meaningfully. I also believe that students will acquire the L2 better when they are given enough opportunities to produce output and appropriate feedback. In addition, teachers can test out and adjust their instructional strategies when they give students DA to find their ZPD. Students may benefit from DA by decreasing learning anxiety and increasing learning motives.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING THROUGH CLASS OBSERVATION

Context

In October 2021, I observed a reading lesson in a 6th grade Spanish DLI program at Heritage elementary school. The teacher was from Mexico. She had over ten years of teaching experience overall and this was her fourth year in the Spanish DLI program. There were 26 students in the class I observed. The lesson lasted from 9:30 to 10:15 am and students went to recess after the lesson. I contacted the teacher two weeks before I came to observe the lesson and the time was set up by the teacher herself. This lesson was taught face-to-face in the classroom and the main goal of this lesson was for students to summarize the main idea of an article from a newspaper and find facts to support the author's claim about using eco-friendly materials. Because I don't speak Spanish, I had to guess most of the communication in the lesson from the keywords written on the whiteboard and the teacher's gestures. During recess time, the teacher explained the topic to me and let me take a picture of the article to translate on my phone.

Instructional Procedure

There were four main parts throughout the lesson. First, the teacher introduced the learning goal of the lesson. Second, students read the article paragraph by paragraph. Third, there was a discussion between students about what materials people use in daily life. In the end, students wrote a paragraph about the topic in Google docs. The teacher took three minutes to write the learning objective on the whiteboard and let students read the objective, followed by peer talk to check if everyone understood the learning objective. The last part of the lesson took 15 minutes including students going to the front of the classroom to get the Chromebooks and log in. Most of the time was spent on the second and third parts of the lesson which were reading and discussion.

There were four paragraphs in the article. For each paragraph, the teacher let one student read the whole paragraph and then asked a question about the text to check for

understanding. After one student read the second paragraph, the teacher took out two plastic bags from Walmart in Utah and in California. She asked students to discuss in pairs which was better to use and which was better for the environment. After two minutes, she drew a name stick to let the student share his opinion. And then she let two students read the last two paragraphs and asked students to discuss in pairs what materials were used to wrap or store goods in Walmart and what material was best for the environment. After peer discussion, the teacher used name sticks again to let students share their ideas with the class.

Before the teacher let students use the Chromebooks, she wrote the question on the whiteboard: '*¿Qué haces para cuidar los planetas? Papel, plástico, vidrio, carbón…*'(What do you do to protect the planet? Paper, plastic, glass, carbon…) The teacher walked around to answer students' questions when they were writing. The students were working on their own and only used Google docs. I noticed several students highlighted one sentence in the beginning and used different colors in the other sentences in the paragraph.

Evaluation

In this lesson, the teacher gave students numerous opportunities to speak with their peers. There were three main discussions. In each discussion, the teacher brought up the question, students talked with their peers and the teacher randomly chose one or more students to share with the class. This strategy was effective for class engagement because every student had the chance to speak in front of the class, so they were all attentive during the discussion. The teacher used objects from real life to catch students' attention and used the objects to explain the author's idea. This strategy helped students and me understand what the main idea was and how the article related to real life. When the teacher talked, she used gestures and a slower speech rate to emphasize the keywords in a sentence so that students could easily understand what she was talking about. If a student was stuck on one word when reading the article, the teacher would read the word for the student and let them repeat it and

continue reading. If a student couldn't think of a word when they were sharing the idea after a pair discussion, the teacher asked, "do you want to say XX?" The student repeated the word and continued sharing. Recasting and asking for clarification were the main feedback strategies in this lesson. Both feedback strategies were effective because students repeated the correct form after the teacher provided it to them.

Overall, the lesson was well structured, and students participated a lot. The learning goal was clear, and students had the opportunity to check if they were successful by writing a summary on the Google doc. Reading the article was done by four students and the other students were reading in their heads and listening to those four students, so there were some students not paying full attention in this process, but everyone was engaged in the discussions, so they met the learning goals.

Reflection

This observation was my first time entering a Spanish literacy class. The students' reading and speaking proficiency was very impressive. They could read authentic news about science and society in 6th grade. In comparison, my 6th grade students are still reading stories and fiction books; they are far less competent in reading. Observing other classes is beneficial for me in several ways. When I am teaching, my focus is more on myself. When I am observing, I can focus on students, so I can get a better idea of how students learn through different tasks. Going into language classes that I'm not familiar with also gives me the opportunity to feel the way the students feel. After I observed this Spanish lesson, I began to understand again how those lower proficient students feel in language classes. This insight prompted me to begin providing more mediation suitable for them. In addition, I learned how different teachers implemented communicative approaches, encouraged students to produce output, and how other teachers gave feedback to students in various ways.

I learned several teaching strategies from this lesson. First, I will use more gestures and a slower speed for keywords when I talk to students so they will understand the main idea. I can also use this strategy to emphasize certain forms such as 都 (all). I can make a gesture of a big circle to include everyone when I say this word in a sentence and say it longer to emphasize the meaning. Second, showing real objects is a good way to bring the texts to life and promote more meaningful communication. In this Spanish lesson, the two plastic bags evoked interesting discussions among students. Most students liked the California bag better in the beginning because it was thicker and more durable and they said it can be reused. But later, they changed their mind because the Utah bag was easier to degrade so it was better for the environment. If I taught this lesson, I would ask students if there was any evidence to support their claim, so the students need to go back to read the article and find appropriate evidence. I think this would be the best moment of the lesson. At this juncture, students would have the opportunity to negotiate meaning with each other because they would be trying to persuade their peers, so the oral discussion would deepen their reading comprehension. If they were further led to read the article to find supportive evidence, reading comprehension would also help with the discussion. In sum, three modes were used in this process, including speaking, listening, and reading. The more modalities involved, the more likely language acquisition will happen.

Third, the teacher gave a lot of opportunities for students to produce output. There were pair talks, sharing with the class, and interaction with the teacher. In addition, students were asked to write a summary of the lesson by answering a question that directly reflected the learning goal. During the lesson, students got enough scaffolding (a strategic series of questions to help students understand what they read) through the reading comprehension and the discussion, so they could assess themselves by writing the summary and they could practice typing at the same time. I know it will take much longer for my students to type

Chinese on computers, but I will try to squeeze some time in at the end of my lessons so they can practice this skill as much as possible. Plus, it is a great way of self-assessment.

During the while-reading process observed in this class, the Spanish teacher let students read the whole article so it took them a long time to read. Other students had to listen and it took them less time to read in their minds. This time imbalance brought some distraction to the class. I would use different reading strategies with the four paragraphs. I usually read the first paragraph to the students because it is the introduction, and the main idea lies in the first paragraph. When students hear me reading, they may feel the flow and understand the main idea better than listening to a student reading. I will then let students read with me or follow me in the second paragraph, so they can imitate my tones and my speed. For the third paragraph, I will let students read to their peers. They can take turns reading to each other, so there is less anxiety compared to one student reading to the whole class, and they can have peer assessment and peer feedback for reading. In addition, I will let all the students read the last paragraph silently and they will need to compare the last paragraph to the first paragraph and let them detect how the last and first paragraph relate to the other parts of the article. The differentiating and organizing skill belong to the fourth level of cognitive skill in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). There are seven levels in total in Bloom's Taxonomy, which is a tool to help teachers to plan their instruction to meet students' cognitive needs. The first level involves the easiest skills such as memorization while the seventh level includes the hardest skills such as evaluating.

Finally, I would add some choral responses after students read each paragraph and before I ask questions for peer discussion. The choral response refers to all students saying the answers at the same time. The choral responses would answer the questions about the details of the text. For example, I would leave the numbers blank in a sentence from the text, so the students may find the sentence and say the number together. This is a way to train

students to find details from the text and to listen to keywords in a question such as how many, what, etc. Jones (2018) pointed out that choral response allows for 'sheltered' practice because they can hear others while they answer, and if one student's pronunciation is incorrect, other students don't know who made the mistake. Thus, students have less anxiety compared to an individual response which exposes one student to the whole class. However, teachers need to encourage students to focus on pronunciation and combine choral responses with visual or movement support. Therefore, I would use a Google slide as visual support to show the new vocabulary, main idea, and important facts of the article after I ask for choral responses. I think there will be more whole-class participation during the reading process.

To conclude, I will use more gestures and say keywords slower when I give instructions to my students, and I will engage students by different types of responses including choral response, partner talk, and individual sharing with the whole class. In addition, I will also use controversial topics to introduce different opinions so that students can produce more output and negotiate meaning with each other.

REFLECTION PAPER

Dynamic Assessment in Chinese Reading Comprehension

Introduction

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is a pedagogical approach based in Vygotsky's concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which integrates mediation and assessment into a unified activity (Poehner & Infante, 2017). Language is a tool to mediate oneself with the social environment. The ZPD is the potential ability a learner can reach with others' assistance (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). Therefore, DA aims to facilitate test takers' navigation through their ZPD during the assessment. The test giver usually interacts with the test takers to mediate them through the ZPD (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018).

I'm curious about how DA can assess learners' reading comprehension and find learners' ZPD because reading is more of one's internal learning process and less interactive than listening, speaking, and writing. Additionally there are some studies that have researched the effects of using CDA on learners' development. Thus, in this reflection paper, I researched how the researchers designed different types of DA and how effective it was to determine learners' ZPD in L2 reading. In addition, I researched how the studies collect and use the scores generated by DA. In the academic year 2021-2022, I tried to implement DA in my reading unit tests by changing the way I gave points to each multiple choice question and the way I gave feedback to students after each attempt. I had 53 students in total, and I collected data on their points before and after they were provided feedback. I also did a survey in May 2022 about how students felt about the way they took the test and whether the feedback and multiple attempts helped them with reading proficiency. I got positive feedback from my students so I will continue implementing DA in my future class and try to make them computerized via software like Viewlet Quiz which allows teachers to edit comments in word, pictures, and audio recording to each options of multiple choice questions to provide different kinds of mediation when students have a wrong answer in the test. Before reviewing relevant literature about DA/CDA and providing a reflection about my experience

experimenting with these approaches in my classroom, it is necessary to provide some background information about the theoretical framework/perspectives on which DA/CDA approaches rest.

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) laid the foundation for DA. ZPD refers to the period of development between "the level of functioning individuals reach independently and the level they reach when external mediation is provided" (Lantolf & Infante, 2017, p. 277). The concept of mediation is essential in Vygotsky's theory. People learn through social interaction and use semiotic/symbolic tools such as art and math to show their knowledge of the world. Language is the primary symbolic tool for people to interact with others and understand the other semiotic tools like books (Peohner & Infante, 2017) created by people in different times and places.

DA is a pedagogical approach in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) that tries to determine what students can do in the present and predict what they are capable of doing (i.e., their proximal development). Mediation in DA integrates the two different mediations/assistance: one is interaction with other people, the other is via semiotic tools. Learners will not learn only by being exposed to the input; they need a human mediator to modify the information for them (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018).

There are two approaches of DA: interventionist and interactionist (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). Within the interventionist approach, there are two formats. The first format was developed by Budoff (1968, 1987) and was widely used as a pre-test, mediated instruction (intervention), and post-test. The pre-test tries to determine the current level of learners' proficiency and the post-test tries to prevail any changes made from the intervention (Haywood & Lidz, 2007) so that teachers may find the students' ZPD and make arrangements for future instruction. The second format provides students with mediation during the DA test

to access different kinds of intervention. Both forms need the tester to pre-script the mediation before the test, so the testers need to determine what they will say or do to the students to provide each step of mediation before DA and they cannot change the pre-determined mediation according to students during DA. On the contrary, in the interactionist approach, the students get tailored assistance from the interaction with the mediator during the test. A dialogue approach is often used as mediation. The assistance is tailored to the students, not standardized in the interventionist approach (Lantolf & Poehner, 2003).

Kozulin and Garb (2002) developed a formula to calculate students' learning potential scores (LPS) with DA approaches. LPS = (2* Mediated Score - Actual Score)/ Maximum Score (p. 121). Teachers can place students into low, medium, and high groups according to the LPS and decide on future instruction for each group. If I can divide my students with their learning potential scores, I can put them in learning pairs so that students with different proficiency levels can help each other during pair work.

Teachers may adopt an interactionist approach when they have time to interact with students and provide one-on-one corrective feedback to be more sensitive to students' ZPD. However, it isn't easy to manage interactionist DA in a large-scale test like AAPPL reading test, so there are two ongoing developments of DA to become more efficient: group DA (GDA) and computerized DA (CDA). The former is brought up by Poehner (2009) in a task that students can not complete independently, but they can do it as a group when mediation is provided. In this way, the teacher can find the ZPD of a group of students. In addition, Poehner and Lantolf (2013) tried to move interactionist DA to a computer program by providing prompts from most implicit to most explicit feedback moves according to students' responses in multiple-choice questions in a reading comprehension test. They used "gained score" to represent the difference between a mediated score and an actual score. The mediated score means the score students get after they get the mediation and the actual score

means the score students get without getting any mediation. The gained score indicated the effect of the mediation of the test. The LPS score and gained score together located students' ZPD and how future instruction could help students from improving. To sum up, the interventionist DA is developing GDA to become more efficient in assessing a large group of students, and CDA to provide more accurate mediation to more than one student at the same time. I learned various adaptations and applications of CDA in L2 reading assessment and summarized them in the following relevant literature.

Summary of Relevant Literature

Kozulin and Garb (2002) found the traditional assessments of EFL text comprehension consisted of vocabulary questions, which checked for memorization and former knowledge instead of reading strategies. Therefore, the researchers aimed to apply DA in EFL reading comprehension that targeted checking for reading strategies aligned with EFL instruction. The research used pre-test, mediation, and post-test methodology. Twenty-three at-risk EFL learners who failed to pass the high school English exam in Israel participated in this research. The results showed that most students benefited from the mediation as their post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores, and it indicated that the mediation had helped them to apply strategies learned from the mediation to the post-test. Many students with identical pre-test scores had different scores in the post-test. This result indicated that the mediation had brought students into their ZPD and their learning potential differed. Most importantly, the researchers developed a formula to calculate students' learning potential score (LPS) to indicate the gained score from post-test to pre-test and the absolute achievement at the post-test. The procedure was demonstrated as follows:

LPS = (Post score – Pre score)/Max score + Post score/Max score = (2*Post score-Pre score)/Max score (Kozulin & Garb, 2002, p. 121).

The Max score in this formula indicated the maximum obtainable score in the test. This LPS formula removed the possibility that the instructor interpreted the low gained score from a high pre-score student to be a low achiever or had low learning potential. This study confirmed that DA effectively identified students' different learning potentials or ZPD. But the researchers pointed out that future researchers could explore the reliability of LPS and have various mediators because the gained score could also represent and be affected by the quality of mediation. This study laid the foundation for later studies on DA in reading comprehension. The LPS score was later widely used to identify students' ZPD. What's more, this study made it possible for instructors to develop individual learning plans according to students' different LPS. If my students' LPS are high, it indicates that they will develop their proficiency with a little bit of reteaching and I can move on soon. However, if their LPS are low, I should spend more time on reteaching and more explanations in my instructions before I move on to next unit. When I meet with parents, I can also refer to the students' LPS by saying this student is currently at this level, but his LPS is high which means he will shortly reach the next level. If a student's current level is low and the LPS is also low, I would suggest parents seek some assistance at home, such as finding a tutor.

Various Designs of Mediation in L2 Reading CDAs

Focusing on a CDA approach, Teo (2012) investigated whether the CDA program promoted EFL learners' inferential reading skills in ten weeks. The participants were 68 freshmen in a university in Taiwan who did not major in English. During the 10-week research study, participants had 2-hour English lessons each week with the researcher. In week 1, the students received a pre-test consisting of 12 reading passages and 12 multiple-choice questions selected from TOEFL samples in the previous year. From week 2 to week 9, the participants used a pre-scripted mediational computer program (i.e., Viewlet Quiz3) to practice inferential reading skills. They wrote a reading profile to record their reading

strategies in their L1 (Chinese). In week 10, they had a post-test in the same format as the pre-test. The data was collected by analyzing their reading profile and a paired sample T-test. The results showed that the CDA program's mediation increased students' inferential reading skills. The reading profile showed that the CDA encouraged the emergence of meta-cognition in the reading process. Meta-cognition refers to the process that students monitor and assess their reading performance. Many students wrote their learning process in which they learned the reading strategies from the mediation prompts in the CDA program and used the system in their following reading practices.

This study inspired later research with the design of the CDA mediation prompts and how it generated students' mediated scores. The researcher pre-scripted four levels of mediation prompt that were ordered from implicit to explicit. The emergence of each group of mediation depended on how many attempts the students had. The first level was the most implicit; teaching students generally how to make an inference to the text. The second level gave students hints on which two or three sentences they should read more carefully. The third level narrowed down the lead to one sentence. The last group pointed out keywords in the sentence and explained the hidden meaning. The scores were calculated from which level students got mediation from. If the student got the answer without any mediation, the score was 4. If the student got the solution with the first level of mediation, the score was 3, and so on. Calculating the mediated score was similar to Poehner and Lantolf's (2013) study. The difference was that Poehner and Lantolf (2013) weren't focused on a specific reading strategy, so the mediation was less targeted. Moreover, Poehenr and Lantolf (2013) separated the actual score and mediated score, which helped instructors to find the LPS and students' ZPD. Therefore, as an instructor, I could design a computer-based reading practice targeting one strategy at a time so my students can have multiple attempts in the multiple-choice questions and practice by themselves in their spare time, such as when they finish classwork

earlier than others. Canvas, which is an educational website for teachers to upload their teaching materials and quizzes online, has a feature that allows me to provide students with multiple attempts and I can add different comments when students select different choices.

As mentioned, Poehner and Lantolf (2013) designed an online program of DA on French and Chinese learners' listening and reading comprehension. The learners were enrolled in their fourth semester college-level language classes, and their first language was English. The reading tests consisted of several passages followed by multiple choice questions to check comprehension. The learners had five attempts for each question, and after each shot that was wrong, a message would pop up to remind them that they were incorrect. After the correct effort, a message would pop up to explain why it was right, so if the learners guessed the answer correctly, they could still get the mediation. When a learner got the correct answer at the first attempt, they got a four, and then the score would decrease as their attempts increased. The tests generated three scores: actual score, mediated score, and potential learning score (LPS). The actual score was the sum of 4s, which indicated how many questions the learner got correct at the first attempt. The mediated score was the total score of all the moderated questions. The LPS was calculated with Kozulin and Garb's (2002) formula. The authors also designed transfer items within the questions to determine how learners could use previous mediation to solve more complex problems. Therefore, a transfer score was also discussed along with the LPS. The result showed that a higher LPS also got more transfer items correct. Students who got lower a LPS got fewer transfer items right, even though some of them had actual high scores. This result supported the hypothesis that LPS indicated students' learning potential because students with higher LPSs can learn from the test very quickly and apply what they have learned from previous questions to latter questions. In my Chinese unit tests, there are some key words that appear multiple of times throughout the test. Some students who didn't recognize a word at first but after seeing it so

many times in different contexts in the test could figure out what it meant, and they could revise their previous answers. These students must have a high LPS. I would let these students share their strategies with other students.

Poehner et al. (2015) continued discussing the previous C-DA Chinese listening and reading test. In this paper, the authors introduced the entire process of the DA test, from the pilot test to the final C-DA test instruments. There were three steps in developing the actual test. First, 28 students participated in a non-DA test in paper form, aiming to decide whether the test items were suitable for intermediate learners. Second, an interactionist DA test was conducted on 11 students one-on-one, intended to determine what mediation was helpful so the researchers could write scripted mediation for the CDA. Third, a reading CDA test was conducted among 82 learners. The CDA test was the same one described in Poehner and Lantolf (2013). Poehner and Lantolf (2013) discussed how the transfer score correlated with the LPS, so the LPS effectively decided learner's ZPD within the test's context. Poehner et al. (2015) then suggested future research could investigate whether LPS could predict how learners will perform outside of the test's context. This research indicated that all learners benefitted from the mediation. The author also found that when students' actual scores were the same, they had different mediated scores because they had different responses to the mediation. They explained the difference between LPS and gained scores. LPS was designed to reflect learners' maximum potential regardless of their actual high score and earned score reflected the effects of the mediation or how students were responsive to mediation.

At last, the authors provided an example of the students' profiles that the CDA test generated. This profile could distinguish between two students who got the same actual score, mediated score, and LPS. The result analyses grouped the test items with the constructs and showed how many mediated prompts each student used during the test. Teachers could find what area each student needed to improve on in the future. For example, if a student used

several prompts in the questions that tested grammar, that student should receive more instruction on grammar. However, reading each student's profile is time consuming. Teachers usually don't have time to do this multiple times a year, so I suggest teachers can implement this in the beginning of the year and read students' profile to get familiar with each student's needs so throughout the year teachers can give instructions targeting to students' needs.

Bakhoda and Shabani (2019) implemented CDA with 183 Iranian EFL learners in a reading context. The authors aimed to find if a learner's learning preference might affect the result after the mediation of the CDA so that it would impact learners' ZPD. During the CDA in this study, learners could choose from audio support, textual support, and visual support. The test consisted of 15 reading passages, and learners needed to find out the main ideas. The result showed more students chose visual mediation over textual and audio mediations. There were more and more students who could get the answer correctly the first time without any mediation. It indicated that the computerized mediation with students' preferences positively influenced students' ability to get the main idea of a passage. The study also captured several students who changed their preference of mediation during the test. This study proved that the mediator could integrate a learner's learning preference into CDA, and the cognitive role of the learners realized "a transformation from ZPD to a ZAD (learner's current ability)" (Bakhoda & Shabani, 2019, p. 226).

This study differs from previous studies because the learners could choose which mediation methods they could receive during the assessment. The learners played an active role in the evaluation, and the result showed different effects of visual, audio, and textual mediation methods. The result showed it was better to respond to individual learning preferences in DA to bring learners to their ZPD. I'm enlightened by the idea of letting learners choose mediation methods before the assessment. I agree that learners' active participation can make a difference.

Zare, Barjesteh, and Biria (2021) integrated critical thinking skills into DA to promote L2 learners' reading comprehension abilities. Sixty-five undergraduate EFL learners came from Islamic Azad University in Iran, and 21 other intermediate-level learners in the same university participated in this study. They were divided into three groups: CT-DA (DA with critical thinking) group, DA group, and control group. They had a reading comprehension test aligned with ACTFL's reading skills before and after receiving eight weeks of instruction. The CT-DA group was provided mediation with critical thinking from the mediator-learner interaction, using both Poehner's (2005) mediation typology and Davis and Barnett's (2015) necessary thinking framework. The DA groups were provided mediation using Poehner's (2005) mediation typology, and the control group was not offered mediation at all. The result of mediated score indicated that CT-DA did not affect learners' responsiveness to mediation compared to DA, so the researchers ran an independent sample T-test of LPS. The researchers found that CT-DA had a more positive impact on learners' learning potential. Moreover, the study identified 11 critical-thinking strategies used by the mediator. The three most frequently used strategies were motivating learners to provide evidence and counterevidence, accepting responses, and offering a choice. This result inspired me to include critical thinking in my instructions. For example, when my students write a story to describe a picture, I will ask them to include evidence from the picture to support their story, so they will need to write what they observed in the picture and what they thought was happening in the picture.

Application and Results of CDA in Different Contexts

In a related study, Ebadi and Saeedian (2015) researched CDA of reading comprehension to investigate how process-oriented CDA tests helped at-risk learners in Iran who learned English as a foreign language. The at-risk learners were defined as those who "may need especially close monitoring and prompt intervention to prevent reading difficulty"

(Ebadi & Saeedian, 2015, p. 3). The authors focused on how learners comprehend successfully or fail to comprehend and used the qualitative method to collect data. Thirty-two participants were senior students majoring in teaching English as a foreign language at Islamic Azad University. They were considered advanced level in English, but due to their low proficiency, they were categorized as at-risk learners. The researchers used DIALING software and computerized dynamic reading test (CDRT) developed by Pishghadam and Barabadi (2012) to determine the participants' reading proficiency and effectiveness of an enrichment program. This research adopted the pre-test, mediation, post-test format of DA. The pre-test used DIALING to identify learners' reading proficiency. After the pre-test, the learners were given training under an enrichment program in DA. The post-test used CDRT to give learners' actual scores, mediated scores, and LPS. The result showed that the learners who felt hopeless with their pre-test scores but did well in the enrichment program gained good scores in the CDRT. Therefore, the pre-test (non-DA) failed to identify individual needs, but DA could help to identify students' ZPD and to reduce stress. I don't find this result surprising because one test is only a snapshot of students' actual proficiency level, and students are definitely more stressed if they only have one opportunity. DA allows for more opportunities and helps during the test, so students are more relaxed, so they can perform more naturally.

Yang and Qian (2017) conducted a CDA-based study in two parallel classes of EFL freshmen in Jinan Normal University in China. Group 1 participated in a pilot study that gave learners a reading passage and had them write down their thinking process while they answered five multiple-choice questions. This pilot study's purpose was to identify any difficulties they had in the reading process, and the result helped researchers to pre-script the mediation used in the second group. Group 2 participated in the main study, the C-DA, and they filled out a questionnaire to give feedback on the C-DA they received. According to the

authors, three main obstacles were when learners read a passage. The first was new words. The second was to locate relevant information in the text according to the keywords in the question. The third was that some students made inferences with their background knowledge rather than the original text. The English test in the college entrance examination suggested that all participants had similar proficiency. Still, the CDA revealed different actual scores and mediated scores so that CDA could identify learners' ZPD compared with non-DA. According to the questionnaire, most learners favored CDA against non-DA, and they found the helpful mediation to promote their reading comprehension. More importantly, the low-achievers gained confidence in C-DA, so they were more motivated to practice reading because they could get immediate assistance in the test. This article helped me to decide what kind of mediation I need to provide to my students in DA. My mediation was designed to overcome the three main difficulties summarized in this article. My first mediation was reading the questions to the students so they could identify the important vocabulary. My second mediation was helping students to locate the key information and by doing so, the students would realize they needed to focus on the text rather than their own inference from English language background.

Yang and Qian (2020) investigated how students performed in the pre-test, post-test, and transfer-test of reading comprehension with CDA and via traditional methods. The participants were first-year students majoring in English at a university in Southern China. Both groups received a pre-test, a four-week enrichment program, a post-test, and a transfer test. All the test items were selected from TOEFL paper-based test and were all multiple-choice questions. The researchers conducted a pilot study to select eight passages and 30 multiple choice questions for the pre-test, post-test, and transfer test. The researchers also used the result of the pilot study to find the item facilitation value of each test question, so that they could control the difficulty of each test and ensured the transfer test was more

difficult than the pre-test and post-test, which had a similar difficulty. The result showed that within each group, the students all got higher scores in the post-test compared with the pre-test but a lower score in the transfer test compared with the post-test. In comparing the two groups, the CDA group performed better than the control group in both the post-test and the transfer test.

The participants in this study were very similar in English proficiency because 99% of them were from the same providence and followed the same learning path. Therefore, the individuals' ZPD was not as different as in previous studies, and the researchers could identify the group's ZPD precisely. Moreover, unlike previous studies, the researchers selected test items from Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a widely used English proficiency standardized test globally, so the test items were reliable. However, only multiple-choice questions were utilized in this study, so there could be more kinds of questions to find learners' ZPD. In addition, the researchers pointed out that the transfer test was too tricky for both CDA and control groups, so there could be more types of transfer tests, including near-transfer tests and far-transfer tests, to identify a group's ZPD more accurately.

Summary

Numerous studies showed how DA was better than static tests in prevailing L2 learners' ZPD. Both the interventionist approach and interactionist approach succeeded in this task. Mediation could promote learners' reading comprehension abilities. There are different kinds of mediation, including process-oriented mediation (Ebadi, & Saeedian, 2015), emotionalized mediation (Abdolrezapour, 2017), and critical-thinking-oriented mediation (Zare et al., 2021). All of these various mediations had helped learners get a better score in reading comprehension post-tests than in reading comprehension pre-tests. In the

classroom, instructors could provide learners with dialogical mediations that integrate emotion and critical-thinking questions when learners read a text.

In the meantime, CDA allows instructors to synchronously test all students and still differentiate students' learning potential (Poehner & Lantolf, 2013). The mediation in CDA was pre-scripted from pilot DA studies, and during the CDA, they emerged from most implicit to most explicit according to how many attempts learners had. This method allowed for a weighted scoring system to generate learners' actual scores, mediated scores, and calculate LPS according to Kozulin and Garnb (2002). Although the mediation was pre-scripted, the CDA is interactionist DA because each learner had one-on-one dialogical mediation. In addition to the set of scores, CDA also generates learner profiles, so instructors can identify which kinds of questions need more instruction (Poehner et al., 2015). Some studies explored different types of mediation in CDA, including reading skills (Teo, 2012), learning preferences (Bakhoda & Shabani, 2019), and reading difficulties (Yang & Qian, 2017). Instructors could further get information on which type of mediation was most helpful during a CDA.

CDA seems easy to administer, but the scores and profiles are too complicated for teachers. Therefore, teachers need the training to analyze the scores and profiles. I would simplify the results to make them easier to interpret for the teachers if I were the researchers. For example, I would provide a summary after the scores, indicating which construct of the reading test students needed the most mediation for and which type of mediation was used most frequently if students could choose the form during the test.

To conclude, DA is helpful to reduce the reading anxiety of learners in the assessment environment (Ebadi & Saeedian, 2015). Song (2018) stated that foreign language anxiety negatively affects L2 learners' reading process and performance of reading comprehension (p.103). In all, DA is effective in determining learners' ZPD and creating individual learning

plans. In addition, it reduces learners' anxiety and provides quantitative support for instructors to carry out differentiated instruction in the future. However, there are some difficulties to apply DA or CDA in classrooms. First, there is a lack of computer programs to let teachers implement mediation during the assessment of each student. Second, teachers need professional training to implement DA or CDA and to understand the scores. Third, teachers need to think of the kind of instruction that can be most effective at helping students realize their language learning potential.

Implementation of DA in My Class

Before I learned about DA, I used a template given by the fifth-grade teacher to design unit tests. That template was used from fourth grade to sixth grade in my school. It includes five main parts, and the total points were 100. The first part was connecting correct pinyin to characters. Pinyin is the Romanized representation of Chinese characters' pronunciation. It aimed to test if students could match the correct pronunciation to the given characters. The second part was filling out blanks in a paragraph with given vocabulary. It tried to test if students could use the new words correctly in a context. However, the paragraph was chosen from the textbook students read, so it was not a new context to students and even if students had the correct answers, I could not tell if they can still use the word correctly in other contexts. Therefore, I changed the paragraph into sentences that did not appear in the textbook trying to test students' ability to use the words in new contexts. The third part of the template was answering questions about the stories students read in the textbook. The questions were discussed during class when students learned the unit. I don't think this type of question aimed to assess students' reading proficiency, because students didn't have access to the textbook or the paragraph that they need to read in order to answer the questions during the test. Students struggled in this part for various reasons. Some students didn't remember the part of the story the question was asking about because it was

not provided to them during the test, and some students found it hard to express their ideas with whole sentences in the correct grammar. There were also students who wrote pinyin instead of characters because they couldn't write certain words. Therefore, I deleted this part in my unit tests because it didn't correctly reflect students' proficiency levels. The fourth part was a reading comprehension test. Students needed to read a short story and answer some questions about it. In this part, there were two kinds of questions: multiple choice and short answers. The multiple-choice questions usually tested if students could find the main idea of the story and some details such as time, place, and main characters. The short answer questions let students write opinions such as reasons and predictions. Students were required to write in full sentences to answer these questions. This is the main part of my DA. I will write how I changed this part in the following section. The last part of the test was a writing test. Students needed to write a short paragraph according to a picture or a group of four pictures.

One traditional unit test usually took my students one and a half hours to complete. It took me an average of three hours to check every student's answer and calculate their points. The points reflected an overall reading and writing ability. I would input the points in Powerteacher Pro (a software to record students 'grades), and the computer changed the points into standard based grades 1 to 4. Above 90 is a 4, which meant exceeding expectations. 70 to 90 is a 3, which meant meeting expectations. 50 to 70 is a 2, which meant starting to meet expectations, and below 50 is a 1, which meant failing to meet the expectations. After I checked the answers and calculated the scores, I needed to reteach, try to explain the questions and let students discuss the correct answers. At last, I give students their test papers and let them make corrections. The whole process of a unit test always took me one week and students disliked doing these tests or making corrections. Over time, I found that students who got a 4 always got 4s in different unit tests, and students who got 1 or 2s

couldn't get better scores in the following unit tests. Students themselves became less motivated to learn because they knew they always got low scores. What's more, the overall points in each test failed to reflect students' reading and writing proficiency separately, as the test combined reading and writing skills together. Therefore, besides the content of the tests, I needed to make more changes to make it effective to reflect students' reading proficiency separately and to inform future instruction on reading comprehension.

First, I separated the unit tests into three tests and gave students multiple attempts to each one. I put the character and vocabulary tests into Canvas because it was easier for students to do multiple choice questions and type words on the computer and the computer can automatically grade them. After each try, students can see their scores and correct answers, and they can do it again and again up to 10 attempts over the course of the semester. I didn't record this score towards their reading proficiency because it mostly is aimed to help students to match the pronunciation and the appearance of Chinese characters but not their meaning. I intended to use this test to encourage students to learn and review the characters while they had multiple attempts. They can also do it at home or anytime they were available. Most students were able to get full scores after three attempts, and none of my students needed more than five attempts this year, but I encouraged them to do it from time to time as a review, so they can recognize more characters when they read texts.

I also removed the writing task from the unit tests because I believe writing should be a process instead of a result. I let students write stories according to a picture of a group of pictures as practice during lessons, and I gave them one-on-one oral feedback right after they finish writing the first draft. They then needed to revise their stories and I gave them a score according to the Advance Placement scoring guide. Later, I summarized four main types of grammatical errors in all of the students' writing, and I put them on a poster for every student to refer to when they wrote stories. After a few weeks, students were required to do self-

corrections on those four grammatical errors before showing me the story, so I could give more feedback on the meaning of the story than the grammar.

I focused on changing the reading comprehension test from the previous unit tests this year. I plan to put the test online so students could be more flexible in time and place in the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year, so I did a pilot DA on paper this year to test if it fits my need. First, I changed the short answer questions into all multiple choices because I don't want to mix reading proficiency with writing. Second, I gave students three attempts on each question over four options and made a graded scoring system. If they got the correct answer the first time, they got three points. If they were correct on the second attempt, they got two points, and if they answered correctly on the last attempt, they could get one point. Third, I gave students different mediation when they tried a second or third time. The mediation was more explicit for the third attempt than the second attempt (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Attempts	Mediation	Score
first	none	3
second	The teacher reads the question and options with an emphasis on the keyword	2
third	The teacher underlines the sentence containing the key information to the question in the text	1

When students did it the first time, they needed to read all by themselves and make the choices without any help. If they needed to do it a second time, I read the question and the

options for them with an emphasis on the keywords in the question. This mediation was aimed at the non-familiar words in the questions or the options, and students may understand the meaning when they hear the sound, but they didn't recognize the appearance of the character. When students did it a third time, there would be two options left. I would underline the related sentence in the story and let them read the sentence. If they were stuck on a certain word, I read it to them. This way, they could focus on reading one sentence and try to find the correct answer there. If they still didn't get the correct answer, they would have a zero on the question meaning they failed to understand that part of the story. Since there was only one short story and five questions, this whole process took only half an hour for every student to complete and I could calculate their scores in the same period of time. I gave them two scores. The first score was the sum of 3s which they got correct the first time. This score represented their actual reading ability without assistance. The second score was the sum of all the 3s, 2s, and 1s representing how much they could get with assistance. I wrote both scores on their test paper and students didn't have to make corrections at another time. Later, I put both scores into Excel and calculated their potential scores with Kozulin and Garb's (2002) formula. I put students' potential scores into Powerteacher Pro which will count as their performance in the class.

When I changed the reading comprehension test, my students felt less stressed doing the tests, and they were happy to see the two scores with and without assistance. In the survey, they pointed out that they liked the new test because it was easier and shorter than the previous unit test. The two scores let them see where they were at and where they could be on the next test. They regarded the second score as their goal. For me, the new reading test directly reflected on students' reading proficiency, and it was time-saving for me and the students. I didn't have to reteach and let students remember the correct answers, because I provided the necessary mediation during the test. When I made plans for reading lessons, I

intentionally added questions to let students find key information from the text because both students and I knew they needed to do the same things on the next reading tests. The key information included who, when, where, what, how, and why. Therefore, this dynamic reading assessment made me, and my students clear of future goals for reading comprehension, and because my instruction was more effective, student participation was higher during reading lessons.

Reflection

Both students and I benefited from the DA used with L2 reading. The students felt the stress was not on themselves anymore as they could get support when they needed it. They were willing to make multiple attempts because they could get credits out of it. The graded scoring system encouraged them to try their best at each attempt, and the increasing explicit mediation allowed them to try to find the answer by themselves compared to reteaching and making corrections on the traditional unit tests. Moreover, students were aware of their actual ability to find the main idea and some details from the texts as well as their goals for the next test, so they had positive attitudes in reading lessons afterward. For me, the reading test took less time overall because I could check answers, give feedback, and calculate scores in class when students do the test. Reteaching the test was not necessary anymore because I already gave support to students when they did the test. I also didn't have to make time for students to make corrections because during the multiple attempts they already corrected themselves. During reading instruction, I intentionally asked students to locate key information in the text. When I asked, "Where did they go", and students answered, "They went to Dufu's cottage", I asked "Where in the text can you find the answer?" so students needed to read the sentence where they found the answer. This question helped students to find the details in the text so when they did the next test, they knew what to do.

There were some limitations in the reading tests. One limitation was that there were only two abilities tested, finding the main idea and details from the text. The ability to make inference from the text and the ability to make predictions was not tested. In the previous unit tests, these two abilities were investigated via short answer questions, so students needed to write their thoughts by themselves. However, the new dynamic test only had multiple choice questions. In the next semester, I will add multiple choice questions to test those two abilities. Students could find clues to make inferences from the text, so the mediation should be the same, but I need to provide different mediation to the questions that ask for predictions, because it is more open than the other questions. When students need to have a second try, I can point out what already happened in the text related to the question. When they need to have a third try, I can tell them what I will do if I were the main characters in the text and let them think about which option is more similar to my prediction.

During the test, students went back and forth to let me check their answers and give feedback individually while other students were still reading, so it was not as quiet as the traditional unit tests. Some students may hear me giving others mediation when they were doing the first attempt, because they were slower than other students. This would not happen if the test was on computer, as they would have their own earphones and they can only hear their own mediation. Therefore, I will put the tests into a software/program called Viewlet Quiz which allows for graded scoring and different mediation at different attempts. I will also add different types of mediation into Viewlet Quiz because I can insert audio and pictures for feedback. After I have different types of mediation, I can let students choose their own preferences. Some students need to listen to the questions, but some students only need to know the meaning of specific words. However, I need to overcome technical difficulties. In the future, I will learn to develop a program that suits my own needs, and this will be a long-term goal.

Another challenge is that I need to ensure the difficulty of the text to be higher than 60% of my students, because that is how I can locate students' ZPD. If the text is too easy, everyone can get a full score on their first attempt, so I won't know where their reading proficiency is and I won't know how I can help them in future instruction. Therefore, the DA should be used as formative assessment and not summative assessments. However, if my students get more and more comfortable with the difficult text, they will find it easier when they do a standardized summative assessment. Apart from the text I choose, I also need to pay attention to the options I provide to students. I should not give options that are same in meaning but different in grammar, because I do not intend to assess students' grammar knowledge.

At last, I can better use the potential scores generated by the dynamic tests. At the beginning of the semester, I can make study groups with the potential scores. The students with high actual scores can help students who have medium actual scores but high potential scores. Students with medium actual scores can help students who have a low actual score but high potential scores. I need to focus more on the student who has a low actual score and low potential scores to provide extra help. In parent-teacher conference, I can tell parents where their children's reading proficiency is currently and where it can go with support. Parents will therefore have more clear ideas of how to support their children and what tools they need.

Future Goals and Plans

After I graduate from MSLT, I will continue teaching Chinese as a second language in the future. There are more and more international schools in China that adopt dual language immersion programs. I hope to stay in dual language immersion programs either in the US or in China.

I will learn to explore technology to assist Chinese language learning, like Viewlet Quiz, Flipgrid, and Canvas. These technologies will be widely accepted by students to promote learning automaticity. I will start by developing reading CDA in Viewlet Quiz, and I will learn to develop my own program by researching Python codes on Github and learning from my friends who major in computer science.

After I develop the reading CDA, I will research listening and speaking DA and I hope I can help Chinese teachers in my school to develop a set of DA from first grade to sixth grade.

References

Bakhoda, I., & Shabani, K. (2019). Bringing L2 learners' learning preferences in the

mediating process through computerized dynamic assessment. *Computer Assisted*

Language Learning, 32(3), 210-236.

Ballman, T.L., Liskin-Gasparro, J.E., & Mandell, P.B. (2001). *The*

communicative classroom. Heinle & Heinle/Thomson Learnng.

Ebadi, S., & Saeedian, A. (2015). The effects of computerized dynamic assessment on

promoting at-risk advanced Iranian EFL students' reading skills. *Issues in Language*

Teaching, 4(2), 26-1.

Gordon, W., Taylor, R. & Oliva, P. (2019). *Developing the curriculum*.

9th ed. New York: Pearson.

Kozulin, A., & Garb, E. (2002). Dynamic assessment of EFL text comprehension. *School*

Psychology International, 23(1), 112-127.

Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory into*

practice, 41(4), 212-218.

Lee, J., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen.* (2nd Ed.).

New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2003). Dynamic assessment of L2 development. *Journal of*

Applied Linguistics, 1, 49-74.

Poehner, M. E. (2005). *Dynamic assessment of oral proficiency among advanced L2 learners*

of French [Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University]. ProQuest

Dissertations and Theses Global.

Poehner, M. E. (2009). Group dynamic assessment: Mediation for the L2 classroom. *TESOL*

Quarterly, 43(3), 471-491.

Poehner, M. E., & Lantolf, J. P. (2013). Bringing the ZPD into the equation: Capturing L2

    development during Computerized Dynamic Assessment (C-DA). *Language*

    Teaching Research, 17(3), 323-342.

Poehner, M. E., Zhang, J., & Lu, X. (2015). Computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA):

    Diagnosing L2 development according to learner responsiveness to mediation.

    Language Testing, 32(3), 337-357.

Poehner, M. E., & Infante, P. (2017). Mediated development: A Vygotskian approach to

    transforming second language learner abilities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 51(2), 332-357.

Shrum, J. L, (2015). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction*

    5th ed. Cengage Learning

Song, J. (2018). Relationships among reading anxiety, reading process, and

    reading comprehension. 외국어교육[Foreign Language Education].

    25(2), 83-113.

Swain, M. (1993). The output hypothesis: Just speaking and writing aren't enough. *Canadian*

    Modern Language Review, 50(1), 158-164.

Sun, W. (2020). The output hypothesis and its implications for language teaching. *Journal of*

    Advances in Education Research, 5(3).

Teo, A. (2012). Promoting EFL students' inferential reading skills through computerized

    dynamic assessment. *Language, Learning & Technology*, 16(3), 10-20

VanPatten, B. (2017). *While We're on the Topic: BVP on Language, Acquisition, and*

    Classroom Practice. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 1001

    North Fairfax Street Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: the development of higher psychological processes

    (M. Cole, Ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). Thinking and speech. *The collected works of LS Vygotsky*.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology: A methodological

    investigation. *The collected works of LS Vygotsky*, 3, 233-343.

Yang, Y., & Qian, D. D. (2017). Assessing English reading comprehension by Chinese EFL

    learners in computerized dynamic assessment. *Language Testing in Asia* 7，11.

    https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-017-0042-3

Yang, Y., & Qian, D. D. (2020). Promoting L2 English learners' reading proficiency through

    computerized dynamic assessment. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(5-6),

    628-652.

Zare, M., Barjesteh, H., & Biria, R. (2021). The effect of critical thinking-oriented dynamic

    assessment on Iranian EFL learners' learning potential: A study of reading

    comprehension skill. *Teaching English as a Second Language*, 40(2), 193-227.