

Divergences in Perceptions as for Oral Activity in Morocco

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This article tries to find out the few discrepancies between the teachers and their scholars as to oral activity, which shows that scholars' expectations and needs are not quite responded to. The versions chosen as a sample for this study come from different schools in the academy of Rabat Salè Zemmour Zaer area and belong to three different educational levels including common core, first year, and second year in addition to a total number of 40 teachers who have contributed to this research throughout the whole process. This research has relied on different instruments to collect the data including questionnaires, interviews, and class observation grids. Results showed that scholars' perceptions highly favour thematic variety. Findings also reported match findings of previous research in highlighting the importance of using tech facilities and multimedia to improve oral activity.

Keywords: different educational levels, divergences in dealing with oral activity, expectations, perceptions

Introduction

This article will try to provide the findings related to the perceptions both teachers and scholars involved in the study hold towards the process of oral activity in Moroccan high school EFL classes. These results provide answers for research questions related to the hypothetical assumption that there are existing fundamental differences.

Divergences Amid Teachers and Their Scholars

Scholars' Version

Taking into account the fact that the new classification of high school programmes in Morocco includes 14 branches and due to the inconvenience of engaging students from all of these branches, the sample has been selected from the two broadest ones, namely, literary and science without specific classification of the two.

The sample included both male and female students covering age categories ranging from 15 to 21 years old. The next table (see Table 1) shows information related to the learners' number, gender, educational level, and age range in more details.

Table1

Demographic Information on Scholars

Educational level/profile	Number	Gender		Age range						
		Male	Female	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Common core literary	40	17	23	19	12	6	3	0	0	0
Common core science	39	21	18	22	14	3	0	0	0	0
First year science	30	16	14	0	21	6	2	1	0	0

(table 1 continued)

Educational level/profile	Number	Gender		Age range						
		Male	Female	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
First year literary	33	15	18	0	19	9	3	1	0	0
Second year science	28	13	15	0	0	15	9	2	1	1
Second year literary	30	14	16	0	0	16	10	2	2	1
Total Number %	200	96	104	41	66	55	27	6	3	2
	100%	48%	52%	20.5%	33%	27.5%	13.5%	3%	1.5%	1%

Approximately, an equal gender proportion is represented in the current research paper. The group is constituted of 104 females versus 96 males. The reason behind this situation is a remarkable higher/growing rate of female presence in high school as has been registered. The table also shows that a good proportion of learners' age category is situated at 16 to 17 years (60.5%) totaling 33% aged 16 and 27.5% aged 17. A growing population (20.5%) of students aged just 15 is recognized while the least age category proportion is aged 20 to 21 with a percentage estimated at just 2.5%.

All three high school educational levels have contributed in this research as Table 1 demonstrates. Since the speaking skill is a long process that needs to be improved through both knowledge building and skill building, samples from all three levels have been represented in this study to engage learners who have developed a number of observations throughout their learning process including all levels. Finally, on the whole, both science and literary students have been represented in this research with approximately equal student frequency proportions (science = 97; literary = 103).

Teachers' Version

A total number of 40 teachers have contributed to this research throughout the whole process. It is divided in this way: The student sample described above belongs to classes run by six (6) among the teachers involved in the whole investigation. On the other hand, 20 teachers have received the researcher as an observer in their classes. This served for the filling in of the checklists while 20 other teachers have been individually interviewed. All these groups are included in the total of 40 teachers who have accepted to report their experience through the teachers' questionnaires. Under teachers' request and for ethical considerations, the teachers' names and place of work remained confidential. As to their gender, 23 female teachers and 17 male ones have taken part in this study, among whom eight males and 12 females have also been visited in their classes.

Instrumentation

This research has relied on different instruments to collect the data including students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires, interviews run with teachers, and class observation grids. For this specific article, the students' questionnaire and the checklists have been used.

The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was used to attempt at gauging learners' perceptions, practices, and problems through multiple assumptions meant to be tested using statistical analysis. It consists of two main parts: The first one is mainly concerned with the personal information required from the participants while part two is elaborated to include seven basic sections.

The Teachers' Questionnaire

A closed-form questionnaire (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1990, p. 175) is also issued. The choice of a closed-form questionnaire is based on the belief that it can provide ample opportunities to direct teachers more towards the researcher's aims and also to compare and contrast with the data extracted from the students' questionnaires.

The Checklists

Checklists constitute a reliable instrument to collect data. They can be a useful instrument especially in cases where classroom observation serves as a route for insightful recognition of what is being done in class. In their introduction to research in education, Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1990) put forward that: "in many cases systematic direct observation of behaviour is the most desirable measurement method" (p. 191). Therefore, an immediate registration of instant practices is made possible through the checklists. In the year 2011, many visits have been done by the researcher and 20 observation checklists have been compiled through this process based on a dichotomous *yes/no* scale reported for its usefulness and unequivocalty in research methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morisson, 2007, p. 322). This was devised preferably through oral activities sessions conducted by the teachers.

The Implication and Interpretation of Chi Square Tests in the Study

In this study, the Chi Square tests do imply and are interpreted through: (1) determining the chi-square value to see whether it is obtained by mere chance or that other factors do interfere. The chi-square value represents the degree of interference, so the higher the value is, the higher the degree of interference is and (2) determining the critical p value (the percent probability divided by 100) that a specific chi-square value was obtained by chance alone. In studies similar to the present one, the p value is also referred to as the probability that the observed results deviate from the expected results by the amount that they do solely due to random variation in the sampling process.

In the present article, the significance level refers to the probability that the observed correlation could have occurred by chance alone. As to the significance level, many statisticians prefer a .05 significance level, meaning there is only five percent likelihood that the observed relationship is pure chance. This latter significance level is what has been adopted in this study, too.

Therefore, concerning the significance level, the present study, like many other similar studies, has set a .05 p level, meaning there is only five percent likelihood that the observed relationship is pure chance. Therefore, all levels found less than this level $< .05$ are reported significant and those beyond that level $> .05$ are reported insignificant. Obviously, if the results reported are significant, this implies the random variation is rejected and the high deviation or difference noticed is attributed not to mere random variation or chance but rather to some other factors. In such case, the multiple assumptions assumed through the research instruments will be accepted and the independent variables advanced will indeed be reported to have direct correlation with the dependent one.

Results on Students' Perceptions of the Textbook

In this section, the researcher aims at finding out the learners' perceptions about the textbooks, the best texts they think that can help them improve their speaking in class. The assumptions in this instance focus more

on what the actual textbooks include, but also on what aspects learners might think can be helpful if provided in class. Such aspects may not be available either because of lack of communication aids, means, and technology facilities, or because they are not included in the textbooks, or simply because teachers overlook them in their teaching process. The questions about the textbooks are intertwined with issues related to listening texts, guided readings, short stories, songs, visual aids and materials with a thematic variety, personal interest, printed material, and so forth.

Next is a table (see Table 2) showing responses concerning perceptions related to the textbook. Eight items are concerned here and they include listening material, guided readings, short stories, printed songs, visual material, varied content, themes, and material other than the one included in the textbook.

Table 2

Students' Perceptions of Textbooks

1. To better speak in class	T. a	A	N. o	D	T. d	M	T	q	p
2. T.B with listening texts alone	55 27.5%	83 41.5%	27 13.5%	24 12%	8 4%	3 1.5%	200 100%	788	.000
3. T.B with guided readings	103 51.5%	54 27%	28 14%	13 6.5%		2 1%	200 100%	594	.000
4. T.B with listen and repeat short stories	67 33.5%	84 42%	29 14.5%	14 7%	2 1%	4 2%	200 100%	784	.000
5. T.B with printed songs	90 45%	59 29.5%	28 14%	11 5.5%	9 4.5%	3 1.5%	200 100%	788	.000
6. T.B with visual materials	82 41%	76 38%	21 10.5%	10 5%	10 5%	1 0.5%	200 100%	597	.000
7. T.B with varied content	72 36%	74 37%	38 19%	11 5.5%	3 1.5%	2 1%	200 100%	792	.000
8. T.B with themes interesting to you	118 59%	61 30.5%	12 6%	4 2%	5 2.5%		200 100%	800	.000
9. Other material not T.B	86 43%	73 36.5%	24 12%	10 5%	5 2.5%	2 1%	200 100%	792	.000

Notes. *p < .05 (all cases); *q = 788; 594; 784; 788; 597; 792; 800; 792 respectively; T.a = totally agree; A = agree; N.o = no opinion; D = disagree; T.d = totally disagree; M = missing; T = total; q = chi-squared value; p = probability (significance level).

As the above table shows, students' answers concerning their perceptions about the textbook reveal a significant estimation of different items reaching a very high q value aligned with a corresponding highly significant p value. Students' perceptions seem to be concerned with thematic importance (Item 8), thematic variety (Item 7), and the tendency to highly favor listening-focused textbooks (Item 2) including songs (Item 5). In addition, the use of non-textbook focused material is also highly favored (Item 9). The p value is highly significant (p = .000) for all hypotheses advanced above.

In what follows are the results obtained for students' responses concerning their perceptions about the oral activities used by teachers prior to the pre oral activities phase.

Type of Material Used

The coming part will deal with the type of material teachers make use of during the teaching/learning process. It will focus on testing a number of materials ranging from the textbook to more sophisticated ones.

In the following table, while recognizable percentages reveal most teachers make use of the textbook 82.5% (totaling 47.5% for always and 35% for usually) and the blackboard layout 85% (totaling 55% and 30%), learners have been found to highly favor the use of non-textbook focused material however (see Table 3).

Highly significant p values testify of the importance of the results obtained but teachers' perceptions on this area seem to oppose learners' ones.

Table 3

Material Effectively Used by Teachers

Which of these communication aids do you use in class?	A	U	S	R	N	M	T	q	p
1. The textbook	19 47.5%	14 35%	5 12.5%	1 2.5%		1 2.5%	40 100%	117	.000
2. The blackboard layout	22 55%	12 30%	4 10%	1 2.5%		1 2.5%	40 100%	117	.000
3. Pictures, posters, slides	2 5%	16 40%	8 20%	11 27.5%	1 2.5%	2 5%	40 100%	152	.000
4. Printed material like magazines, newspapers	1 2.5%	5 12.5%	14 35.5%	12 30%	5 12.5%	3 7.5%	40 100%	114	.000
5. Data show projection	1 2.5%	3 7.5%	6 15%	6 15%	22 55%	2 5%	40 100%	114	.000
6. Audio/cassette recorder or CD	7 17.5%	17 42.5%	8 20%	5 12.5%	37 92.5%	3 7.5%	40 100%	296	.000
7. Video projection	2 5%	3 7.5%	5 12.5%	8 20%	19 47.5%	3 7.5%	40 100%	148	.000
8. Digital video camera	1 2.5%	2 5%	5 12.5%		30 75%	2 5%	40 100%	114	.000
9. Computer/Internet	2 5%	1 2.5%	6 15%	7 17.5%	22 55%	2 5%	40 100%	152	.000

Notes. *p < .05 (all cases); *q = 117; 117; 152; 114; 114; 296; 148; 114; 152 respectively; A = Always, U = Usually, S = Seldom, R = Rarely, N = Never, M = Missing, T = Total.

Among the highest records found, the q value related to audio material (q = 296) (Item 6) where a very remarkable percentage of teachers have reported *never* to using this type of material. Therefore, there is a very limited use of materials like cassettes and recorders (these with a *never* percentage reaching 92.5% among the teachers population). This stands in total contradiction to what learners have reported as they have revealed a tendency to highly favor listening-focused textbooks especially songs. This significant underuse of audio material however might be linked to the reality teachers have reported (in the content-analysis section below), which is a recognizable shortage in means and a lack of electricity. Least important q values are recorded for extra-curricular material (q = 114) like printed magazines and newspaper, the use of data show projection, and also digital camera.

Moreover, significant *never* percentages are reported for Items 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 reaching respectively 55%; 92.5%; 47.5%; 75%, and 55% which provide clear indications of the low or very limited use of ICT (Information Communication Technology) like data show projection, audio cassette recorder, video projection, digital camera, computer or Internet in teaching oral activities in Moroccan classes.

After this quantitative registration of the material used by teachers' activities, the next section will focus on the discussion and implication for research on the material used by teachers.

Discussion and Implication for Research on the Material Used by Teachers

Divergences between the teachers and the scholars' samples have been revealed, which show that scholars' expectations and needs are not responded to. Correspondingly, while the results show that a high proportion of teachers make use of the textbook (82.5%) and the blackboard layout (85%), learners have been found to highly

favor the use of non-textbook focused material. Highly significant values concerning learners' responses show the importance they give to the use of extracurricular activities as opposed to teachers' responses concerning this issue.

Quantitative results presented above show a low frequency of the use of audio material since a very high percentage of teachers have reported *never* to using ICT material (cassettes, recorders, data show projection, audio cassette recorder, video projection, digital camera, computer or Internet) in teaching oral activity. This is a clear indication of the low or very restricted use of ICT in general.

On the other hand, results recorded also reveal learners' tendency to highly favor variety in the content used in class including themes and a noticeable inclination towards audio and listening based material. They reported preferring textbooks which include listening to/repeating short stories, listening to songs and guided readings. This aspect of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Moroccan class can have a de-motivating impact on the learners whose expectations and needs differ drastically from the practices in the real context.

Statistically, significant results, even though with less important values, have been obtained concerning the use of extra-curricular material, such as printed magazines and newspapers, the use of which can also reduce the discrepancy between what learners expect or aspire to and what actually takes place in EFL classes.

To conclude, findings reported and discussed above corroborate findings of previous research in stressing the importance of using tech-facilities and multimedia to improve oral activity (Chapelle, 1998; Goolkasian, 2000; Kataoka, 2000; Tsutsui, 2004; WANG, 2004; Volle, 2005). Many of these studies have provided empirical evidence that language learning in general and oral skills particularly can be very positively affected when supported by multimedia. Learners have been found to demonstrate important gains in oral proficiency thanks to the implementation of ICT. Finally, it is worth mentioning that most Moroccan teachers involved in this study have expressed a need as well as a willingness and readiness to get help in that area, which again alludes to the necessity of in service training.

Conclusion

This article has been compiled in conformity with the chi squares obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and checklists and analyses the different values (frequencies, percentages, missing cases, the total, as well as the q and the p values) related to the existing divergences in perception as for oral activity in Moroccan high school classes.

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