

Using Probability Analysis in Investigating Denotative Values on Teachers’ Perceptions of Oral Activity in Moroccan Classes

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Abstract: This article examines responses obtained from teachers’ questionnaires to test and answer this research question “What are Moroccan EFL high school teachers’ perceptions of the teaching/learning process of speaking skills?” Two quantitative frequencies investigating both the rate of teaching speaking and the position it holds among the other skills shall be used. On the one hand, tables used include a summary to the Chi square results obtained on teachers’ perceptions of the frequency of teaching speaking in Moroccan secondary school EFL classes. On the other hand, the second part is an attempt to determine the position of speaking in comparison to the other skills. More results pertaining to teachers’ perceptions will be highlighted with the content analysis of the interviews done with teachers.

Key words: The teaching/learning process of oral activity, teachers’ perceptions, probability analysis, denotative chi square values.

I. Introduction

Teachers’ perceptions on the frequency of teaching speaking

For the importance it holds as a criteria judgment of whether or not the speaking skill is afforded enough importance in the Moroccan teachers’ weekly schedule, this query was posited to detect the frequency of teaching the speaking skill among EFL teachers’ population.

Table (1): Teachers’ responses on the teaching frequency of the speaking skill

How often do you teach speaking in class ?	A	U	S	R	N	M	T	q	p
1-Once a week	11 27.5%	3 7.5%	5 12.5%	6 15%	2 5%	13 32.5%	40 100%	108	,000
2-Twice a week	4 10%	6 15%	10 25%	3 7.5%	4 10%	13 32.5%	40 100%	81	,000
3-Three times a week	1 2.5%	5 12.5%	4 10%	6 15%	8 20%	16 40%	40 100%	96	,000
4-More than three times a week	7 17.5%	2 5%	1 2.5%	4 10%	13 32.5%	13 32.5%	40 100%	108	,000

*p<.05 (all cases) ; * q= 108; 81;96;108 (respectively)

As the above table shows, while many teachers have reported to teach speaking just once a week (q= 108, item 1), the same value is obtained for teachers with more than three times a week (q=108, item 4). This captures a contradictory fluctuation in the teaching frequency of this skill. All instances show highly significant p values. The fluctuating nature of the results attained could be due to the inexistence of a common ground about when to teach the skill. This frequency criterion might already be indicative of the neglect this skill is treated with but since there is a need to further investigate the issue and bring more evidence, there is a need to employ findings concerning teachers’ perceptions of the speaking skill in comparison to the other skills. This will be an attempt to examine the position of teaching speaking in EFL Moroccan classes in comparison to the other skills as an added criterion.

Teachers’ perceptions of the speaking position among the other skills

Compared to what precedes, table 2 will show results concerning the position or rate of teaching speaking in comparison to the other language components. In other words, the aim is to check whether they consider speaking as a skill on its own or only as complementary to other language skills or components.

Table (2): Teachers' responses on the position of speaking among other skills in class

When do you introduce speaking in class ?	A	U	S	R	N	M	T	q	p
1-Together with listening	18 45%	9 22.5%	5 12.5%	3 7.5%	4 10%	1 2.5%	40 100%	156	.000
2-As an integral part of grammar , functions or vocabulary	12 30%	18 45%	3 7.5%	3 7.5%	2 5%	2 5%	40 100%	114	.000
3-As a skill on its own to improve students speaking	6 15%	7 17.5%	14 35%	8 20%	2 5%	3 7.5%	40 100%	148	.000

* $p < .05$ (all cases) ; * $q = 156; 114; 148$ (respectively)

The most important values registered are concerned with teachers' answers regarding the position of speaking skill as integrated with listening with a total of 67% combining always and usually with a high q value ($q = 156$, item 1) and p level ($p = .000$). However, speaking is also treated as an integral part of grammar, functions or vocabulary for an even higher percentage 85% of teachers (combining always 30% and usually 45%) with a chi squared value reaching $q = 114$ (item 2). As for the answers to item 3 related to whether speaking is treated as a skill on its own, estimations tend towards not having it as a skill on its own with 35% of teachers reporting just sometimes and 20% rarely doing so at a chi-squared value estimated at ($q = 148$, item 3). However, the trivial difference between the above two chi-squared values (156 and 148) shows that there isn't any clear cut difference between item 1 and 3 (those who teach speaking together with listening and those who teach it as a skill on its own). Although this witnesses of the interrelatedness of skills, most importantly, these fluctuating frequencies and the highly significant p values ($p = .000$) in all cases register once more the lack of a well determined position of speaking among the other language skills and components in EFL classes.

Therefore, this emphasizes the somewhat negligence that the skill is treated with and is indicative of it being a medium for transmission of learning among the other language skills but not a target one in itself. More perceptions confirming or refuting this assumption will be singled out with analysis of the interview data, which will allow further investigation to teachers' perceptions on this aspect and capture whether or not there is indeed confirmation of its negligence.

Implication for research

Regarding the skill integration principle the textbooks adhere to, both the quantitative as well as the qualitative findings reveal teachers tend to perceive speaking as integrated with listening, which is indicative of the interrelatedness of both skills just as previous research has pointed out (Murphy, 1991; Duzer, 1997; Florez, 1999; Hinkel, 2006). However, results have revealed that speaking is also treated as an integral part of grammar, language functions or vocabulary, which means that the skill is integrated with these other components too. However, the trivial difference of the chi-squared test values shows that there is no significant difference between those who teach speaking together with listening and those who teach it as a skill on its own. Thus even though one can witness a degree of interrelatedness of both skills, there is also a noticeable irregularity concerning this relatedness. This catches a certain degree of confusion in treating this skill, which might be indicative that speaking is being used merely as a medium for learning and not a skill in its own right in the Moroccan classes. This absolutely matches with what famous pedagogues retained regarding this skill specifically Nunan and Bygate in 2001.

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