

# The innovative solution of speaking in class in several subjects, the case of environmental protection in Morocco

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**Abstract.** Oral activity is one of the fundamental components of the didactic sequence. This shows its importance in the teaching/learning of French. This study deals with the issue of speaking in class, in oral session. It is part of the field of oral didactics and focuses on the development of verbal production skills through the use of theatrical play. The problem related to this research is the following: what is the contribution of theatre for oral speaking in French class in qualifying high school? To respond to the problem raised and achieve the objectives of the research, we based ourselves on a field survey. Teachers' responses stated that theatre is a means of promoting classroom speaking during oral activity.

**Index Terms**— oral activity, language class, verbal competence, teaching, speaking, environmental protection, theatre.

## 1. Introduction

Oral activity is one of the fundamental components of the didactic sequence. This shows its importance in the teaching/learning of the language, here French, in Morocco. Its primary objective is to make the learner autonomous and prepare him for higher education and working life [1] through the progressive acquisition of expression and communication techniques [1]. The learner will thus be able to express himself orally and correctly in various communication situations.

The oral activity consists of developing in the learner the competence of oral communication. Nevertheless, it poses a lot of problems both for the teacher and for the learner. Indeed, some teachers tend to transgress oral activity and "to privilege written tasks" [2] for certain reasons:

-The problem of classroom management.

-The difficulty of designing the oral activity; Teachers do not have sufficient tools to conceive of oral speaking as an activity in its own right and as an object of teaching.

-The absence of interaction between students in oral session. That said, learners encounter several difficulties at the oral level insofar as they are unable to express themselves orally.

These problems are identified during class observations carried out in a public high school, during the years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

This study deals with the issue of speaking in class, in oral session. It is part of the field of oral didactics and focuses on the development of verbal production skills through the use of theatrical play. The problem related to this research is the following: what is the contribution of theatre for oral speaking in French class in qualifying high school?

The use of theatre as a means of teaching oral remains marginalized. Admittedly, theater is present in the first two years of high school but its teaching is centered more on the study of text than on staging.

Theatrical play or role-playing arouse expression through the implementation of real communication situations. In other words, the appropriation of the language is done through the body and the voice, which guarantees the involvement of the learner and creates a desire for expression [3]. The actor performs several exercises before making a theatrical presentation. The first is diction. It is a whole work on voice and punctuation. The second is articulation and the last exercise is summed up in "diction applied to the text". These exercises are applicable to any kind of oral communication [2].

This research aims to show the relevance of the integration of theatre in oral teaching. It consists in solving the problem of speaking in class, especially in oral sessions, through the integration of theatre. The learner would be led to develop his oral language skills through theatrical play. Oral competence is based not only on a know-how but above all on a know-how [4]. In other words, it is not enough to have a fairly high linguistic skill, but rather to know how to make good use of it in a given communication situation.

This contribution will serve as an aid to teachers by presenting them with a solution to the problem of speaking in order to get them to help learners in difficulty to improve their verbal production skills, on the one hand. On the other hand, it will allow learners to get rid of the problems that are at the origin of their resistance to the act of speaking, through the development of their emotional intelligence. Indeed, theatre is used to work on both verbal expression (voice, language) and non-verbal expression (gestures, movements, mimicry); two fundamental components of verbal competence.

In this article, we have started with a summary that briefly introduces the topic of the study. We then moved on to an introduction in which we specified the context of the research conducted and its status in relation to the research previously conducted. The following section has been devoted to the working method adopted to respond to the problem. This allowed us to carry out an analysis of the results and to present some suggestions to close after our article with a general conclusion and a list of references used.

## **2. Speaking out about environmental protection**

We conducted an experiment during the year 2022/2023 in a public high school. We facilitated a set of activities for the benefit of the students of the common core as part of the textual typology module.

During the written production activity, learners were asked to write scenes on the theme of environmental protection; Theme dealt with in the text of proposed during the reading

activity. This is in order to ensure a decompartmentalization between the different activities of the sequence.

The class was divided into six groups of five students. The socioconstructivist approach is thus emphasized. All learners engaged in the work and all groups managed to write a scene on the proposed theme. We were dealing with six scenes with the title: "Protect our environment", "All to avoid water shortages", "Save water", "Our environment is in danger!", "Fight against pollution", "Protect the environment is protect humanity".

After the distribution of roles among the members of the group and the memorization of the lines, the students played the scene they wrote. The oral activity thus took the form of a role play.

We noticed that all learners engaged in the work. After training sessions and, despite some errors in pronunciation, they all managed to speak and express themselves with ease by combining body and voice.

### **3. Methodology**

To respond to the problem raised and achieve the objectives of the research, we based ourselves on a field survey. For this, we used the questionnaire, which was distributed to qualified secondary school teachers working in the Rabat-Salé-Kenitra region. The investigation tool used allowed us to address several questions to the respondents in order to:

- Identify barriers to learners' speaking up.
- Determine the status accorded to theatre in the teaching/learning of French in general, and oral in particular.
- Clarify the importance of theatre in solving the problem of speaking.

### **4. Data collection and analysis**

The survey was conducted during the 2022-2023 school year. The questionnaire was distributed to teachers in paper version but also distributed, electronically, via email, in order to collect a large number of responses. All questions asked to teachers are closed-ended and multiple-choice questions (MCQs). This choice is intended to allow respondents to fill in the questionnaire in a short time and also to go straight to the objective of the study, which facilitated the analysis and interpretation of the answers.

#### **4.1. Identification of respondents**

The population surveyed consists of 140 teachers, of whom 60.71% are women and 39.28% men.

-Most teachers, i.e. 87.14% work in the public sector while only 12.85% work in the private sector.

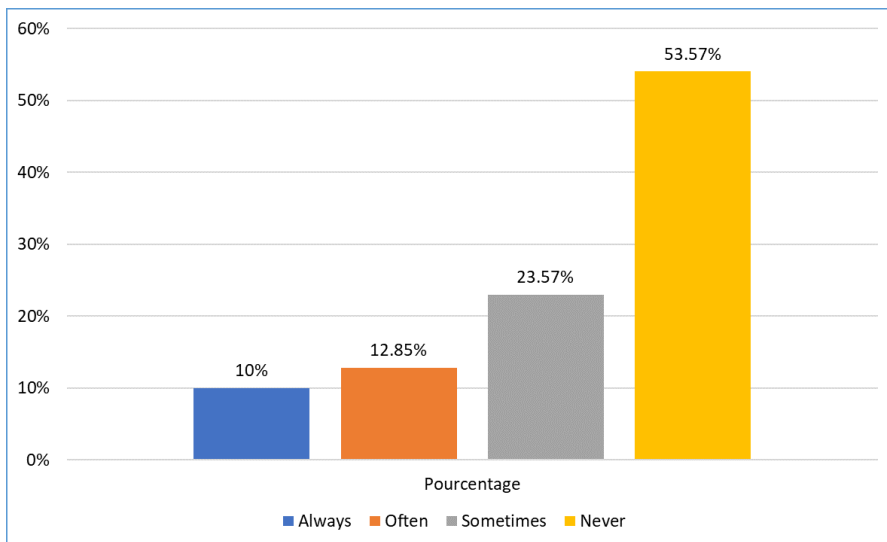
-78.57% work in an urban area, 14.28% in a semi-urban area and 7.14% in a rural area.

-42.85% of teachers are beginners who have less than 5 years of experience, 20% have between 6 and 10 years of experience, 28.57% have between 11 and 20 years of experience and 8.57% have more than 20 years of experience.

The results obtained show that we are faced with different profiles of teachers which will allow us to have crossed views on the subject of research.

## 4.2. Speaking

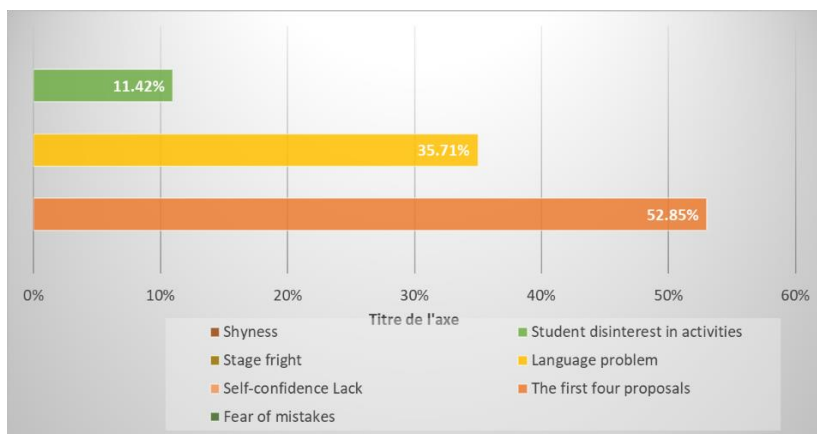
The graph below shows that a minority of learners participate in class during the oral activity as 53.57% of teachers say that their learners never participate in oral sessions. According to 23.57% of respondents, students tend to participate from time to time and 12.85% believe that students often participate in speaking. Only 10% of teachers confirmed that their students always participate in speaking.



**Fig. 1.** Frequency of student participation in the oral activity

Through the question related to the obstacles that hinder oral expression among learners, we were able to arrive at the following observations:

- 52.85% of teachers say that shyness, stage fright as well as fear of making mistakes and lack of self-confidence hinder the student's speech.
- 35.71% think that it is rather the lack of language potential that is at the origin of learners' resistance to the act of speaking.
- According to 11.42%, the problem is due to the lack of interest of learners in the activity proposed in the oral session.

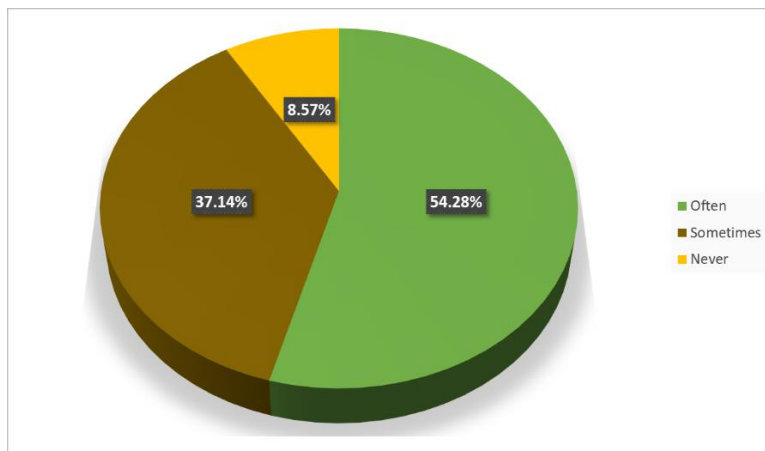


**Fig. 2.** Barriers to speaking out

### 4.3. Status of theatre in the classroom

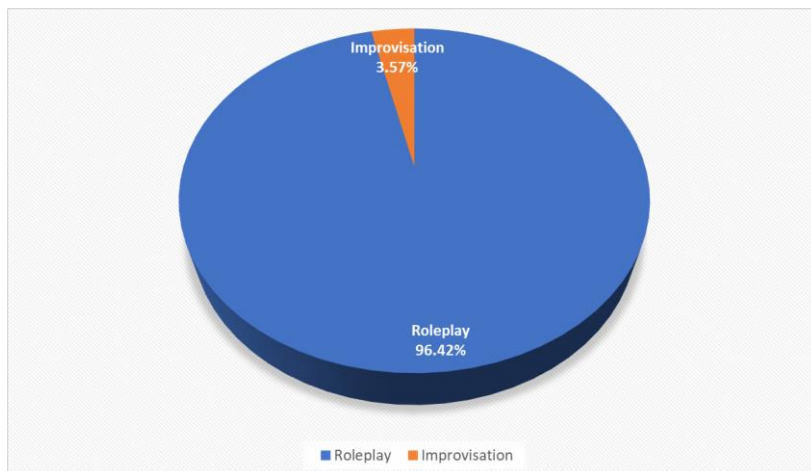
The graph below explains that 54.28% of teachers often use drama during oral activity, 37.14% use it occasionally and 8.57% never use drama to teach oral in class.

We deduce that most teachers are aware of the important role that theatre plays in teaching/learning the language in general and oral language in particular.



**Fig. 3.** Frequency of use of theatre in oral sessions

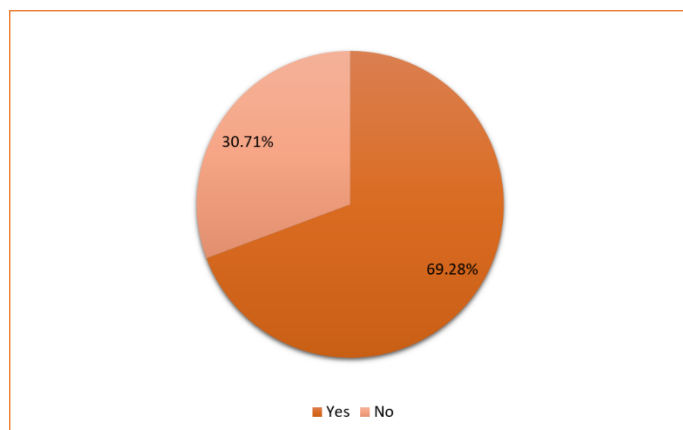
From the answers to the question on the theatrical activities that teachers offer to their learners, we noticed that the majority of respondents chose the first option, i.e. they tend more towards role-playing than improvisation or another type of theatrical activity: 96.42% use role-play, while a minority (about 3.57%) offer improvisation exercises.



**Fig. 4.** Theatrical activities used in oral sessions

### 4.4. Relationship between theatre and speaking

Looking at this last graph, we see that according to 69.28% of teachers, theatrical play is a means that will allow the learner to express himself orally in different subjects and can, therefore, solve the problem of speaking orally, while 30.71% refute this idea.



**Fig. 5.** Theatrical play and speaking

37.85% of respondents who answered "yes" to this question think that theatre can solve the problem of speaking by promoting interaction in the classroom, helping the learner to get rid of stage fright and shyness and allowing him to have self-confidence. 16.42% chose the second proposal (helping the learner to get rid of stage fright and shyness) and 15% believe that by having more self-confidence that the learner will succeed in speaking in class.

## 5. Results

The first graph shows that most learners have difficulty expressing themselves orally as most of them never participate during the oral activity. There are many barriers to speaking among learners (fig.2). Based on the respondents' answers, we can distinguish three types of problems: psychological problems (shyness, stage fright), linguistic problems related to insufficient language potential and didactic problems that manifest themselves through the learners' lack of interest in the activity proposed during the oral session.

Through the third graph, we see that most teachers attach importance to the use of theater during oral activity. This leads us to say that teachers are aware of the important role that theatre plays in the teaching/learning of the language in general and oral language in particular.

In class, the teacher can use different theatrical activities to work on the oral one, namely: role play and improvisation (fig.4). However, we notice that the most used activity is that of role-playing. Improvisation still seems unknown and little practiced [5] because this exercise is mainly based on imagination and creativity, which may block the learner instead of developing his oral language skills.

The last question leads us to affirm that theatrical play is an important means of resolving the obstacles that hinder speaking in the classroom in the sense that it allows learners to express themselves orally in different subjects. Indeed, this exercise promotes interaction between students and therefore guarantees their engagement in the learning process. It also helps them develop their personality.

## 6. Discussion

Learners encounter several difficulties in speaking; Few of them manage to express themselves easily and correctly.

Teachers' responses indicate that theatre is a tool that promotes oral speaking. With this in mind, the teacher can use, during the oral session, several kinds of theatrical activities, including role-playing and improvisation. These two activities allow the learner to appropriate the techniques of expression and to use them in different communication situations. They are also two important exercises to develop one's creative mind through the stimulation of imagination and body expression.

Improvisation is an invitation to travel [5]. Nevertheless, it is an exercise that requires preparation and effort on the part of the teacher since it constitutes a "free" role play that is mainly based on spontaneous expression [5]. This justifies its minimal use in language class.

In role-playing, access to speech involves working on the body and voice while approaching a text. Theatre thus provokes expression through the establishment of well-defined situations. During the staging, the actor's work consists in the creation and invention of a scenic language that is based on the regulation of his expressiveness and the awareness of the emotions conveyed by the text [3]. This awareness of the emotions transmitted by the text allows the learner to distance himself and control his own emotions. He fades away by giving voice to the embodied character, which helps him to express himself with ease. From this passage from self-distancing to involvement in the text, a desire for expression was born.

The acquisition of a second language is not limited to the simple knowledge of syntactic rules and vocabulary but goes beyond it towards the encounter with the "other" [6]. The learner builds new links with the target language while creating new relationships with other actors but also spectators. Thanks to these different relationships: actors/spectators, teachers/learners, learners/learners, the student manages to assert himself and to be received in a symbolic space that is the stage [3].

## **7. Conclusion**

Our study emphasizes the importance of oral teaching through theatre at the level of the qualifying secondary cycle. It aims to solve the problem of speaking during the oral activity in order to get the learner to express himself easily.

Theatre is a means that allows students to express themselves orally by developing both verbal and body expression. The appropriation of the language is achieved through action, in this case theatrical play, which promotes the active participation of the learner. He asserts himself in his corporality and performs a creative work by embodying the text played through voice, gestures and speech. The game is "a pedagogical tool" that allows the student to develop his oratorical skills.

With this in mind, the teacher is called upon to use theatre as a means of teaching oral language in language class in order to get the learner to express himself orally around various subjects.

Finally, we believe that the integration of theatre into the teaching/learning process requires the adoption of a new approach that requires changes in the so-called "traditional" method of work, ranging from the layout of the class to the teacher/learner relationship. The establishment of theatrical and artistic training for teachers is considered essential.

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