Moroccan Teachers’ Perspectives Toward New Arabic Language Textbooks in Elementary Schools

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The Context

• In Morocco, the book sector represents less than 1 percent of all industrial transactions.

• Textbooks are widely used by students and teachers.

• Textbooks are referred to as “the curriculum” itself.

• High-level controversy when it comes to textbook production, distribution and usage by educators and parents.
Textbooks – Who is Responsible?

• Ministry of Education
  a) issuing specifications for the textbooks and teacher guides;
  b) releasing a call for publishers;
  c) reviewing the authored materials and giving permission for printing and distribution.

• Private Sector
  a) authoring, publishing, and distributing textbooks and teacher guides;
  b) same publishers remained in the market 2002-2020;
  c) the market awaits an open competition among all the professional publishers operating in the country.
New Arabic Language Curriculum

• New strategic vision 2015-2030 to reform education and training.

• Languages at the top of Ministry’s reform agenda.

• New Arabic language curriculum experimentation in 90 schools in 8 provinces.

• Scale up in 3 phases.

• Grade 1-2 scale up in 2018-2019 school year.
Authors’ Training

- Early grade reading methodology;
- writing, listening and speaking components;
- story writing techniques;
- sharing NPR piloted instructional materials;
- textbook and teacher guide’s specifications.
Context of the Study

- The 2018-2019 school year
- Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers
- 90 schools in 4 regions (8 provinces)
Research Questions

• To what extent the instructional materials embrace the principles and components of the EGR?

• What are the teachers’ views of the quality of stories and oral communication activities?

• What are the teachers’ views of the quality of the writing activities?
Methodology

- A mixed-method approach
  - Quantitative and Qualitative analysis
- Convenience sampling
  - Teachers from experimental schools
- Data collection
  - Focus group discussions protocol
  - Textbook and teacher guide Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

- Percentages of teachers responded to certain items on the questionnaire, and
- A thematic approach was used to:
  - look across all the FGD data to identify the common issues that recur, and to
  - identify the main themes that emerged relevant to the aims of the study.
Findings – EGR (G1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Textbook 1</th>
<th>Textbook 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOCAB</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings – EGR (G2)
Findings – EGR in FGD

- Phonemic Awareness activities are almost absent.
- Alphabetic Principle’s activities are not varied.
- The ORF activities are not clear and not varied.
- Vocabulary strategies are not enough and sometimes are not clear.
- Reading Comprehension strategies are very limited.
- Unstructured sequence of the activities in the reading lesson.
Findings – Listening and Speaking (G1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Textbook 1</th>
<th>Textbook 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Stories</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings – Listening and Speaking (G2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Listening Stories</th>
<th>Oral Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEXTBOOK 1</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXTBOOK 2</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXTBOOK 3</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings – Listening and Speaking in FGD

- Pictures of the stories/oral communication are not usable:
  - They are not clear enough to the young learners;
  - Many pictures do not reflect the content of the stories;
  - The prediction strategy is hard to implement using these pictures;
  - A few stories need revisions in terms of the values we should convey.
Findings – Writing (G1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Textbook 1</th>
<th>Textbook 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Applications</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penmanship</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Writing</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings – Writing (G2)

- **WRITTEN APPLICATIONS**
  - Textbook 1: 51%
  - Textbook 2: 46%
  - Textbook 3: 32%

- **PENMANSHIP**
  - Textbook 1: 66%
  - Textbook 2: 58%
  - Textbook 3: 37%

- **DICTATION**
  - Textbook 1: 54%
  - Textbook 2: 50%
  - Textbook 3: 38%

- **INTERACTIVE WRITING**
  - Textbook 1: 38%
  - Textbook 2: 36%
  - Textbook 3: 19%
Findings – Writing in FGD

“Writing activities do not help except penmanship.”

“Dictation is dealt with as an extension of penmanship – does not help writing directly.”

“Interactive Writing” either does not exist in the textbook or not clear.

“Writing applications (embedded grammar) do not exist (in one textbook).”
Recommendations

• READING:
  • Putting the reading lesson’s activities in a methodological order;
  • Include PA activities in the textbook, along with the TG;
  • Diversify the activities in both AP and ORF to reflect differentiated instruction/cooperative learning;
  • Use multiple reading comprehension strategies (pre-reading, during reading, and after reading)
• **Interactive Writing:**
  • to be included in the textbooks with multiple topics related to the unit theme
  • connected to listening, speaking, and reading content;
  • one topic per unit (5 weeks).

• **Writing applications (grammar):**
  • grammar activities should be included but in an embedded way;
  • connected to the listening, speaking, and reading content.