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Detectable parallelism in the importance and the effects of perceived interactivity on students and internet users' attitude: the case of Morocco and Tunisia

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Abstract: *This article[1] aims at hypothesizing about existing correlations between interactivity and subsequent learning in Moroccan class and interactivity and consumers' purchase intent in Tunisia. On the one hand, it investigates whether and to what extent any sociolinguistic view to language will be needed or should be applicable to the classroom situation, whether students indeed constitute an entity that owes much of its language success to* ***the degree of sociability*** *among the learners and* ***the type of activity and interaction/interactivity*** *that take place during the learning process. On the other hand and in parallel to this classroom investigation, although the* ***importance of interactivity in website design*** *is well recognized in Tunisia, the attention paid to understanding* ***the impact of interactivity*** *on consumers remains mixed. This study, therefore, draws a coextending analysis to understand how the interactivity of web commerce sites can influence* ***the purchase intent*** *of consumers through cognitive and emotional involvement to the website. The results indicate that the active control, reciprocal communication and synchronicity lead to cognitive and emotional involvement of the users. The general framework for investigation is founded both on a Pragmatic-Linguistic Perception (PLP) to language and on a Stimulus -Organism -Response (SOR) paradigm highlighting, thus, how research on the area of perceived interaction/interactivity[2] may lead to answers to fundamental questions raised through research on teacher's feedback, interaction and subsequent learning in class on one hand and internet users' emotional and cognitive involvement and ultimate purchase intent on the other.*

I. Introduction

Within linguistics, earlier trends to language learning/teaching used to search for basic answers to dilemmas in language learning within the structural form of language. But with the introduction of sociolinguistics, basic answers have shifted to the functions language may serve in social groups. Mckay (2008: 282) uses the term sociolinguistics to refer to the relationship between language use and social factors. In her discussion of socio-linguistics, Mckay identifies macro (Language and society and Language and variation) and micro levels (Language and culture and Language and interaction) as larger areas of social analysis.

Regarding language and interaction, the exploration for example of how a specific social situation or role relationship affects language learning is a crucial point. A close investigation to interactivity as it occurs both in classrooms and websites may be of great relevance in this respect. Subsequently, a correlative hypothesis is highlighted. It promulgates that it is neither the form nor the function of the language that research needs to question, but the strong link between activity, interaction and subsequent learning (Gass, 1997:126).

Regarding other specific social situations, in the same vein, interactivity proves to be a major evaluation criterion whereby websites' merchants in Tunisia have gained considerable popularity in recent years. Despite the increasing use of commercial websites as a sales' channel, online retailers continue to face low conversion rate of purchase (Moe and Fader, 2004). The first suspect the problem lies in the usability problems and poor web design (Agarwal and Venkatesh, 2006). Among the various design features, interactivity stands out as a key factor influencing the responses of visitors to a website "(Agarwal and Venkatesh, 2002, Jiang and Benbasat, 2007). Specifically, consumers consider interactivity as a criterion for evaluating the success and quality of websites (Palmer, 2002; Saeed et al, 2003).

The crucial role of interactivity in the field of e-commerce has motivated both academics and practitioners to improve their understanding of the concept of interactivity and use it more effectively. Existing

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[2] Interaction and interactivity will be used interchangeably in this article and stand for: "the **extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate each other's communication needs**" (Ha & James,1998,p.461).

studies examining the effects of interactivity (eg Teo et al., 2003) may have provided a good general knowledge to practitioners, but have not attempted to investigate separately the components of interactivity. Indeed, interactivity is a complex multifaceted construct (Liu and Shrum, 2002) should be studied thoroughly.

Above raised problems have made it therefore important to investigate such questions as:
1- How can interaction be reinforced in class during an activity?
2- What does a pedagogical task or activity mean exactly?
3- What activities do Moroccan learners find most enjoyable?
4- What's the importance of perceived interactivity of the website in Tunisia?
5- What's the effect of the perceived interactivity on the users' emotional and cognitive involvement?

Interaction and pedagogical tasks in the literature

In emphasizing the important role interaction plays in language learning and development, and as quoted by Nunan (2009:80), Ellis(1984) puts forward that :

Interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner cracks the code. This takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production.

In order to probe corresponding answers to questions related to interaction and subsequent learning in class, differentiation between varied types of tasks, simple and complex sequences in communication, conversational strategies as well as main types of talk-in interaction are all worth mentioning.

In order to reinforce conversational interaction in class, Ur (1995:15) introduces the discrepancy underlying an open-ended task and a closed-ended one. She privileges open-ended tasks that have unlimited proposed answers to the closed ones that have one predetermined right result and that engender less interaction among the students. For her, open-ended tasks yield themselves to much more interaction.

In the recent years, research has shed light on task-based learning. In Nunan's (2009:4) view, real world tasks that do not involve the use of language at all and are non-linguistic are different from pedagogical tasks that imply necessarily the use of language and have to do with the transformation of life-like situations into the classroom and become pedagogical. He provides this definition to the notion of a classroom task:

A pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form.

Correspondingly, in a conversation that takes place in class, Nunan (2008) makes a distinction between simple and complex sequences of meaning where negotiation is a basic tenet. He points out to the difference between simple or one signal negotiation of meaning and a sequence that runs in a four-stage process starting with trigger that begins the sequence, followed by a signal that draws attention to a communication breakdown, then comes a response where the speaker attempts to repair the mis-communication. The follow-up is the closing step that puts an end to the negotiation (Nunan, 2009:80). The above mentioned interaction and pedagogical tasks are founded on important trends and psychology schools in language learning, socio-environmental e-learning theory and website as a potential commercial milieu. Below are few schools that have provided theoretical background for current investigation.

Stimulus-Organism-Response Model

Because website interactivity is important environmental stimuli for the online purchase process, environmental psychology is the appropriate theoretical ground for studying the effects of interactivity on users' reactions (Koufaris et. al . 2001). Derived from a behavioral psychology, several studies have been based on the stimulus -organism -response (SOR) paradigm as a theoretical framework to explain how atmospheric features and components of the website affect user behavior (Eroglu et al, 2003; Parboteeah et al, 2009).

In recent years, the issues of websites atmospheric elements have raised a growing interest of both academic researchers and practitioners. In the area of L2, research evokes particularly the importance of conversational analysis as will be briefly illustrated below and the importance it (CA) holds for SLA (second language acquisition) in general.

Conversational Analysis

Correspondingly, CA is an approach in applied linguistics that uses the transcription procedures and micro analytic techniques to answer major problematics regarding language learning. As an illustration, Markee (2008:355-371) provides the example of the recurrent use of Question-Answer-Comment (QAC) sequences during classroom talk which she breaks down into:

a- **Ordinary mundane conversation**: which is speech exchange system as it occurs in all talk-in-interaction, and which refers to the kind of every day chitchat that takes place between friends and acquaintances either face-to-face or on the telephone.

b- **Institutional varieties of talk**: which is more organized and applicable in more formal settings. This other variety of talk is different from the ordinary conversation for example debates, classroom talk, broadcast news interviews, press conferences, doctor-patient interactions, courtroom interactions, emergency calls on the telephone, etc..

Synchronicity Synchronization

This study is based on the conceptualization of Steuer (1992) who defines interactivity of a web site as "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form or content of a website in real time". By shopping online, consumers use two important aspects of the interactivity of a website to obtain relevant information and make a decision, namely technical interactivity and social interactivity (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). To give a more concrete idea of the two dimensions of interactivity, this study uses the active control and synchronicity synchronization as a manifestation of technical interactivity and reciprocal or two-way communication as a form of social interaction. Active control refers to the possibility for the user to choose the information and guide interaction (Lowry et al., 2006), while the reciprocal communication refers to the ability and opportunity to communicate with two or more entities. Finally, the synchronism dimension reflects the simultaneity between communication and the response received (Liu and Shrum, 2002).

Cognitive and Emotional Involvement

The implication is defined as a person's perception of the relevance of an object based on inherent needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Recently, researchers have begun to extend the applicability of the concept of involvement in websites (Cho, 1999; McMillan et al, 2003). Existing research shows that interactions with the sites lead to cognitive and emotional effects on consumers (Eroglu et al, 2003;. Koufaris, 2002). Indeed, when consumer interactions with a website, cognitive involvement increased when exposed to indices such as site description of the goods, pictures, price, terms of sale, delivery and return (Eroglu et al., 2003). These indices help consumers achieve their business goals, that is, their utilitarian reasons (Babin et al., 1994). Consumers can also be emotionally involved with a website due to its characteristics such as color, animation, sound and site information (Eroglu et al., 2003). These features enhance the hedonic value of the shopping experience on the website (Babin et al, 1994; Mathwick et al, 2001

II. Methodology

Design

The study was divided into two phases:

1 / experimentation of interaction, task activity and type of interaction (Moroccan classes)

2/ experimentation of interactivity by on line questionnaire (Tunisian consumers)

The present study adheres to a mixed design modus operandi, it is both a qualitative and a descriptive one. A descriptive study may be used to elaborate on a theory, affiliate problems to current practice, gauge current practice or associate what others in similar situations are doing with corresponding practices while a qualitative one is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors, concerns, and in this instance learners' perceptions, teaching styles and methods of instruction. It is agreed upon that it involves focus groups, in-depth interviews, content analysis, ethnography of communication (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:116), as well as evaluation and analysis of any unstructured interviews or checklists.

Population Vs. Sample

The term population in a research context refers to all the members or objects of any defined group which might be taken or about which information might be given. On the other hand, the term sample refers to the members of that population selected to take part in the investigation (Mattew and Sutton, 2004) since it is impossible to include the entire target population. As mentioned above, two population samples are involved in the present study, teachers and students.

Students' Sample

The students chosen as a sample for this study come from different schools in the academy of Rabat-Salè-Zemmour-Zaer area in Morocco and belong to three different educational levels including common core, first year and second year baccalaureate.

The sample included both male and female students covering age categories ranging from 15 to 21 years. The following table shows information related to the learners' number, gender, educational level and age range in more detail.

As to internet users, to collect data we conducted an online experiment followed by a questionnaire. Specifically, we conducted a sample of 300 Tunisian Internet users who use the internet to book their holidays.

Table 1: Demographic information on learners

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
First year science Bac	30	16	14	0	21	6	2	1	0	0
First year literary Bac	33	15	18	0	19	9	3	1	0	0
Second year science Bac	28	13	15	0	0	15	9	2	1	1
Second year literary Bac	30	14	16	0	0	16	10	2	2	1
Total Number %	200 100%	67 33.5%	133 66.5 %	41 20.5 %	63 31.5 %	57 28.5 %	28 14 %	6 3%	3 1.5 %	2 1 %

The table also shows that a good proportion of learners' age category is situated at sixteen to seventeen years (60%) totaling 31.5% aged 16 and 28.5% 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 secondary educational levels have contributed in this research as table (1) demonstrates. Both science and literary students have been represented in this research with approximately equal student frequency proportions (science= 97; literary= 103).

Teachers' sample

A total number of forty teachers have contributed to this research throughout the whole process. It is divided as follows: the student sample described above belongs to classes run by six (6) among the teachers involved in the whole investigation. On the other hand, twenty teachers have received the researcher as an observer in their classes. This served for the filling in of the checklists while twenty other teachers have been individually interviewed.

Instruments and statistical measures

Instrumentation

This study has relied on different instruments to collect the data including students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires; interviews run with teachers and class observation grids.

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.

The teachers' interview

An unstructured diagnosis interview has been issued in this study the aim of which is to detect teachers' perceptions, practices and problems while teaching speaking in secondary schools.

Statistical measures

Operationalization of different research instruments and application of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software to the data collected revealed highly significant findings. The independent variables investigated have been retained to highly impact the process in multi-form ways. Many other intervening variables were also detected in parallel.

Results on activities with highest correlations

Following is a table summarizing the results related to students' answers as to what activities they find most enjoyable in EFL classes.

Table (2): Learners' perceptions on activities they find mostly enjoyable

type of activity	A	U	S	R	N	M	T	q	p
1-Guided readings	95 47.5%	54 27%	28 14%	10 5%	9 4.5%	4 2%	200 100%	**784**	,000
2-Dialogues	98 49%	51 25.5%	33 16.5%	5 2.5%	5 2.5%	5 2.5%	200 100%	576	,000
3-Conversations	71 35.5%	63 31.5%	41 20.5%	16 8%	7 3.5%	2 1%	200 100%	**792**	,000
4-Songs	78 39%	41 20.5%	43 21.5%	15 7.5%	16 8%	7 3.5%	200 100%	**772**	,000

5- Life-like situations (chats, phone calls…)	66 33%	51 25.5%	52 26%	17 8.5%	7 3.5%	7 3.5%	200 100%	**772**	,000
6- Games	85 42.5%	37 18.5%	39 19.5%	13 6.5%	21 10.5%	5 2.5%	200 100%	**780**	,000
7-Choral activities	49 24.5%	48 24%	39 19.5%	22 11%	37 18.5%	5 2.5%	200 100%	**780**	,000
8-Physical activity like hiding/finding objects ,etc	59 29.5%	28 14%	40 20%	24 12%	47 23.5%	2 1%	200 100%	**792**	,000
9-Round table talks	90 45%	35 17.5%	32 16%	18 9%	24 12%	1 0.5%	200 100%	**796**	,000

***p<.05 (all cases) ; * q= 784; 576; 792; 772; 772; 780; 780; 792; 796 (respectively**

Students' perception estimations are characterized by a tendency to highly favor activities **involving peer interaction, action and audio/video activities**. Thus a total of 74.5% of students are either always (49%) or usually (25.5%) in favor of an activity entailing at least a peer-interaction with a high significance p level (.000). Guided reading is also favored by a total of 74.5% of students (always 47.5% ad usually 27%) with a high chi-squared value (q= 784) and high p value (.000). Other activities students seem to enjoy according to the above table include games (61%) with a high corresponding q value (q= 780), songs (about 60%) with a high q value (q=772), round table talks and class conversation. This also joins the above mentioned type of activities students prefer in class since a significantly higher proportion favor these activities which can be carried out with smaller sized classes and during group work sessions. The overall remark is the high chi-squared values and the highly significant p values (.000) in all such cases.

Results on teaching material, type of activity and type of interaction according to teachers' interviews

Table (3) Teaching material, type of activity and interaction

Teaching material, type of activities & type of interaction	**Communication aids**	**1**.Textbook & Black board: 45% **2**. Visual aids: 33% **3**. ICT: 19% **4**. Extra curriculum material: 3% T= 100%
	Types of activities	1.Role play: 35% 2.Discussions: 30% 3.Dialogues: 15% 4.Conversations: 10% 5.Songs: 6% 6.Drills : 2% 7.Games : 1% T= 100%
	What Type of interaction	**1**. Pair-work acts: 60% [see causes as ranked by Ts below] **2**.Group-work acts: 38% **3**. Individual work: 2% [**Causes of favoring pair -work**: large sized classes, omission of group sessions, time constraints] T= 100%
	The use of ICT	**1**. No, never : 60% [see causes as ranked by Ts below] **2**. Yes, sometimes: 30% **3**. Neutral: 10% [As cited: no multimedia rooms, no training, no electricity, no time] T= 100%

The general estimations in the table above reveal a noticeable low proportion of teachers are making use of extra-curriculum communication aids (3%) while a growing higher proportion of teachers (33%) are resorting to visuals gradually however. As to the type of activities employed, there is a remarkable low use of conversation (10%) in comparison to other forms as has been revealed through other instruments. There is also a scarcity in the use of games and songs, while students' answers concerning these types of activities are, on the contrary, highly favorable (table 2 above). Concerning the type of interaction activity, pair-work is the prevalent one (60%) at the expense of a rather lower use of group-work activities. As articulated by teachers, group work interaction is less resorted to due to large sized classes, omission of group sessions, and time constraints.

Measurement of variables

➔ **Effect of site interactivity on cognitive and emotional involvement:**

a. Effect of reciprocal communication range on the emotional and cognitive involvement of the user

The regression analysis that we conducted to verify this relationship shows that reciprocal communication interplay of cognitive involvement of the user in browsing the website significantly with a correlation coefficient = 0.341 R^2 (Sig 0.00). It therefore helps to explain 34.1% of the variance of cognitive involvement. Standardized beta coefficient assigned to it is positive amounting to 0.58. This shows that the reciprocal communication leads to cognitive involvement of the user. This variable also significantly influence the emotional involvement of the user with a correlation coefficient = 0.356 R^2 (Sig 0.00). Analysis of the coefficient R shows that the influence of reciprocal communication on the cognitive and affective involvement is significantly positive as indicated in the following table.

Table (4): Test results of the influence of reciprocal communication on the emotional and cognitive involvement:

	β	R	R^2	Sig	T
Reciprocal communication → cognitive involvement	0.584	0.584	0.341	0.000	12.491
Reciprocal communication → emotional involvement	0.356	0.356	0.127	0.000	6.628

b. Effect of the active control on the emotional and cognitive involvement

The regression analysis that we conducted to verify this relationship shows that the influence of active control cognitive involvement of the user in browsing the website significantly with a correlation coefficient = 0.289 R^2 (Sig 0.00). Thus, it explains the frequency of 28.9% of the variance of emotional involvement. Standardized beta coefficient assigned to it is positive amounting to 0.53. This shows that the active control leads to emotional involvement of the user. We find the same result with respect to the relationship between the active control and emotional involvement. Indeed, the results show that the active control also has a significant effect with a correlation coefficient = 0.182 R^2 (Sig 0.00) on cognitive involvement. Analysis of the coefficient R shows that the influence of the active control over the emotional and cognitive involvement is significantly positive.

However, it appears that the active control has a greater effect on cognitive involvement compared to the emotional involvement comparing the correlation coefficients reveals that R^2 cognitive involvement which is equal to 0.289 is higher than affective involvement (0128). Being able to control the content of the site to which the user is exposed then promote emotional and cognitive involvement thereof.

The results of the effect of active control on the emotional dimension and Cognitive involvement of the user are shown in the following table.

Table (5): Test results from the influence of the active control over the cognitive and affective involvement:

	β	R	R^2	Sig	T
Active control → emotional involvement	0.427	0.427	0.182	0.000	8.208
Active control → cognitive involvement	0.537	0.537	0.289	0.000	11.067

c. Effect of the synchronicity on the emotional on the emotional and cognitive involvement

The regression results that we conducted to verify the influence of synchronization on the cognitive and emotional involvement of the user in browsing the website indicates that this relationship is significant. The correlation coefficient is equal to 0.6214 R^2 (Sig 0.00) for cognitive involvement and is equal to 0.532 for emotional involvement. Analysis of the coefficient R shows that the influence of synchronicity on the emotional and cognitive involvement is significantly positive as shown in the following table.

Table (6): Test results from the influence of the timing dimension of cognitive and affective involvement

		β	R	R^2	Sig	T
Synchronicity	**Cognitive involvement**	0.621	0.621	0.385	0.000	13.752
Synchronicity	**Emotional involvement**	0.532	0.532	0.283	0.000	10.928

III. Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

Among the highest values registered concerning students' perceptions for the activities **(see tables 2 & 3 above**), there is a remarkable tendency to favor activities that entail student- student interaction such as pair work, group work and students' listening to audios or videos and interacting with their peers. These needs not only stress the importance of interactivity in class but also reveal a confirmation checking to the relevancy and usefulness of the sociolinguistic and conversational analysis (CA) theories to language learning which have been sketched out earlier. In other words, results show that students seem to be extremely concerned with the

conversational interaction that is conducted in class among interlocutors. Joining these findings and regarding language and interaction particularly, other research findings have stressed how sociolinguistics adopts a micro level of social and linguistic analysis (Cameron, 2001; Mackay, 2002 ;Williams, 2008).

Similar empirical evidence is provided by other research studies to support the importance interaction holds in the development of language learning. An example is presented by Lourdunathan and Menon (2005) who argue that an interaction strategy training can indeed foster habits of interacting in group discussions as has been empirically evidenced in Malaysia. They examine how interaction strategy training like cooperative learning behavior skills, knowing and trusting each other, accepting and supporting one another, resolving conflicts constructively and taking turns are strategies that should be taught to learners together with instruction and that an effective use of these strategies requires a certain threshold of language proficiency.

The study also shows that students can have more confidence to use the more difficult interaction strategies such as clarification if they had adequate language support from the teachers. Finally, the study recommends that effective strategy training includes cooperative learning and peer support so that the students are encouraged not only to clarify themselves but also to contribute more to the group discussions. Similar findings are reported in Pawlak's study (2000) where he examined the facets of classroom interaction and their influence on the development of language skills. His study highlights such facets of classroom as turn taking, initiative, topic and activity management and how these do impact classroom language a great deal.

Parallel to these results concerned with classroom interaction in Morocco, other results pertinent to website users (**see tables 4,5 & 6 above**) confirm how interactivity is one of the most important components of the atmosphere websites (Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Khalifa et al, 2004.). It is a major feature of the web as it gives users the opportunity to participate in the modification of site content in real time (Steuer, 1992). Thus, interactivity allows easy navigation of the user within the site, it is then considered, depending on the type of Eroglu et al. (2001) as a highly relevant factor.

The test results have indicated that the perceived interactivity has a positive effect on involvement with the site. Indeed, these results have shown that the three dimensions of perceived interactivity ie the active control, reciprocal communication and synchronicity are all positively related to the involvement of the user. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the three dimensions of the same variable would influence strongly and positively cognitive involvement of the user to the site in relation to the emotional involvement.

These results go in the same direction as advanced by Coyle and Thorson (2001) proposals; Fiore et al (2005); Hopkins et al (2004) and Klein (2003) who consider interactivity seen as a history of other mental, psychological and experiential built.

IV. Conclusion

Given these results, it seems of utmost importance to conduct more investigation of classroom interaction in Moroccan classes to differentiate among the types of interaction, the training strategies for its implementation and the corresponding social roles students play, and the effect of this on their achievement and their learning process as a whole.

A resulting argument could be that any improvement of social and linguistic interaction among Moroccan students and the training strategies of its implementation may also lead to the improvement of their learning and achievement. A concluding idea is that students constitute an entity that owes much of its language success to the degree of sociability among the learners and the type of interaction strategies taking place during the learning process and that group sessions for instance constitute an excellent opportunity for the learners to develop these strategies.

In parallel, this study also examined the construct of perceived interactivity of the site, by studying these effects on involvement with the site in Tunisia. In the same way, the analysis of the impact of perceived control of navigation on the involvement of the user in browsing the web site showed that it positively affects their cognitive and emotional involvement. Being able to control the content of the site to which the user is exposed then put it in his confidence and promote emotional and cognitive involvement to the site. The reciprocal communication seems in turn encouraging to the involvement of the user. The results indicate that reciprocal communication has an impact on the cognitive and affective involvement. Finally, synchronicity also promotes the involvement of the user to the site. Indeed, the reactivity of the commercial site and its ability to avoid waiting times appear to be critical in fostering the user's emotional and cognitive involvement.

Both investigations, therefore, have detected important existing correlations between perceived interactivity and subsequent learning, emotional and cognitive involvement.

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