

Exploring Students' Perceptions of using PowerPoint in Enhancing Their Active Participation in the EFL Classroom Action Research Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research is to examine the impact of PowerPoint in enhancing students' participation in the EFL classroom. Also, this study explores students' perceptions of using PowerPoint in the English class. An observer records the frequency of students' participation in the classroom by counting the number of students who were participating in comparison with the number of students who attended the class. The intervention continues for six sessions, 45 minutes each. A class of 40 students enrolled in the First Year Baccalaureate level participated in the study. The results indicate that students' level of participation augmented when PowerPoint is used. Besides, the vast majority of students perceive the use of PowerPoint in the classroom positively. The results of this action research will be disseminated to my colleagues and to all major stakeholders.

Introduction

PowerPoint has become one of the professional tools for improving teaching and learning both for students and teachers. Since the introduction of this pedagogical device in various educational settings, there has been a huge body of research arguing the efficiency of PowerPoint. Thus, As an EFL teacher, I noticed that my students are not engaged enough in my class. Their facial expressions signify boredom and a lack of interest in the subject matter. I introduced PowerPoint in my class hoping that it would enhance their participation. Certainly, students are a major stakeholder in the classroom, so knowing their perceptions about the use of PowerPoint as a pedagogical device in the classroom will drive me to reflect on my teaching practice in order to cater for each one's needs (Shishavan&Sadeghi, 2009).

The purpose of this action research is to examine the effect of using PowerPoint on enhancing students' participation in the English class. I also investigate High school students' perceptions of the use of PowerPoint in the classroom. The research questions addressed in this action research are the following:

- RQ1- To what extent does the use of PowerPoint enhance students' participation in the English class?
- RQ2-How do students perceive the use of PowerPoint in the classroom?

Literature Review

(Joshua , Susskind, 2001) examined the impact of using non-interactive computer assisted instruction on students' performance, self-efficacy, motivation, and attitudes. In an Introduction to Psychology course, half of the lectures were delivered in a traditional lecture format and the other half were taught using PowerPoint. The study suggests that students showed positive attitudes towards the course, and greater self-efficacy with PowerPoint. In the classes that began with power point lectures, students' motivation decreased after PowerPoint stopped going with lectures. Nevertheless, students' motivation declined after PowerPoint was added in the other class.

Recently, (Rajab, Ketabi, 2012) Examined the effects of preparing and presenting PowerPoint in EFL settings on students' use of cohesive devices. Sixty two BA students from the University of Asfahan were assigned into two groups at random. The course is " advance writing". Each class takes 90 minutes. One group is taught in a traditional teaching style, while the other group receives the PowerPoints of the same materials during ten sessions. The performance of the two groups is compared based on the use of cohesive devices. The results indicate that students in PowerPoint group have a better performance than students in traditional teaching style. The frequency of cohesive devices in PowerPoint group is 47.79 and the frequency use of cohesive devices in traditional teaching style is 27.79. In addition, results show that preparing and presenting PowerPoint slides have a major impact on students' writing achievement and their right use of cohesive devices.

A study by (Fedission, Braidic,2007) raises the question of how will the use of technological aids in the classroom increase student achievement and/or attitudes. Seventh grade students were tested on their knowledge of sentences and nouns. Seventh Grade Students were examined on their knowledge of sentences and nouns in a language arts classroom. The classes contain 28 males and 31 females. The classes were taught in a traditional teaching style in the first unit of the course, and using PowerPoint in the second unit. The results indicate that when employing PowerPoint as a teaching instrument, students' tests scores augmented, particularly for low-achieving students' and those with learning difficulties.

Lately, (Nguyen & Anh 2011) investigate students' attitudes towards PowerPoint presentations in the English lectures in the context of English language classroom. A survey was carried out on the students' attitudes involving classrooms observations and a thorough questionnaire for one class of English proficiency course. The results indicate that students favor PowerPoint presentations over traditional teaching style. Besides; students have more positive attitudes towards PowerPoint presentations, lectures and PowerPoint presenters.

Reviewing the current literature pertaining to the use of PowerPoint in educational settings reveals that using PowerPoint has impressive effects on students' achievement and motivation. The research results also show that students have positive attitudes towards using PowerPoint in the classroom

Research Methodology

"Action research is a form of *collective* self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of the own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out". (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988, P.5 cited in Cohon, Monion and Morrison, 2007, P.298)

As Cohon, Monion and Morrison (2007, P.300) argue "Action research starts with *small cycles* of planning, acting, observing and reflecting which can help to define issues, ideas and assumptions more clearly so that those involved can define more *power questions* for themselves as their work progresses."

Research Methods

Sample

The action research study was conducted at Rahali Farouki High school in El kela District. The school has an average enrollment of 2000 students, and 70 teachers working in the school. The school has two Data Shows. Students are not often exposed to using PowerPoint in the classrooms. The participants are 40 students enrolled in the 1st Year Baccalaureate level, science stream. The class comprised 14 females and 26 males. This project was carried out according to the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) guidelines by obtaining consent from participants, including my students as well as the headmaster.

Intervention

In an attempt to study the effect of using PowerPoint on enhancing students' participation in the EFL classroom, I decided to use it during six sessions. Each session lasted 45 minutes. In fact, Students have never been exposed to this extensive use of PowerPoint in the classroom. They were exposed to images, graphs, language games and video worksheets. Also, I tried to involve students by doing presentations about a particular topic of their own choice.

Measures

I used two research instruments so as to measure the impact of using PowerPoint on increasing students' participation in the classroom. Initially, my colleague observed students' engagement in a systematic way by counting the number of students' participation in each class. He duplicated this every session. Actually, launching a structured observation allows me to generate numerical data from the observations. The observer notes down the incidence of the factors being studied. (Cohon, Monion and Morrison, 2007, P.398). A Likert scales questionnaire was administered to students right after the intervention. Likert scales "provides a range of response to a given question or statement". (Cohon, Monion and Morrison, 2007, P.326).

Procedures

First year Baccalaureate students received 6 sessions of 40-50 minutes each using PowerPoint. The lessons being taught covered all the skills that students were supposed to study at that level. In the course of the intervention, I asked a colleague of mine to observe and record the frequency of students' participation by means of a structured observation schedule in order to measure their participation. This continued for six classes. In fact, my colleague was of great help to me, since it was impossible for me to teach and record students' participation simultaneously. His observation led to a quantitative data of students' participation. Furthermore, and more importantly, I assigned students to do presentations about topics of their own choice. In that way, students would be familiar with this technology as a pedagogical device, be able to enhance their speaking skills and motivate other students to get interested in the subject matter. In the last part of the intervention, a questionnaire was administered to students. The questionnaire's statements concentrated on students' perceptions of the use of PowerPoint in the EFL classroom. It is composed of 19 (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) statements.

Results

Students' Participation

The table 1

The recorded frequency of students' participation in the EFL classroom.

Class	The number of students who attended the lesson	The amount of time spent using PowerPoint	The frequency of students who participated during a lesson.
1	32	40	13
2	35	43	15
3	34	39	29
4	36	43	25
5	39	35	30
6	40	36	31

Table 1 displays the recorded frequency of students' participation during each lesson. As clearly manifested in the table below, the level of students' participation enhanced with the usage of PowerPoint. (13) Students participated in the first session while (40) ones participated in the last class of the intervention.

Students' attitudes and perceptions.

Table 2

Student perceptions of PowerPoint usage

Item	Students' Perception of the use of PowerPoint In the EFL classroom.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel excited when PowerPoint is used.	80 %	14%	5 %	1 %
2	I feel interested when the teacher uses PowerPoint in the lesson.	77 %	11%	12 %	0 %
3	I feel motivated when the teacher uses PowerPoint	65 %	28 %	5 %	2 %
4	I have more chance to participate when PowerPoint is used	18 %	70 %	09 %	03%
5	I lose interaction with the teacher when PowerPoint was used	60 %	30 %	2%	08 %
6	I learn better when the teacher uses PowerPoint	55 %	40 %	3 %	2 %
7	PowerPoint helps me improve my listening skills	61 %	30 %	2 %	7 %
8	PowerPoint helps me to improve my Writing skills	40 %	30 %	21 %	9 %
9	PowerPoint helps me to learn vocabulary	77 %	23 %	0 %	0 %
10	. PowerPoint helps me to learn grammar.	90 %	7 %	2 %	1 %
11	PowerPoint presents the material in a well organized way	57 %	30 %	5%	8 %
12	Using PowerPoint is better than the blackboard	61 %	19 %	12 %	8 %
13	Using PowerPoint is better than the prescribed textbook.	99%	1%	0%	0%
14	PowerPoint helps me concentrate on the lesson	90 %	6 %	2%	1%
15	Power Point draws my attention to the lesson	100 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
15	Using PowerPoint is not difficult	100 %	0%	0 %	0 %
17	PowerPoint is boring	73 %	9 %	12%	6%
18	I enjoy doing a presentation using PowerPoint	96%	4%	0%	0%
19	I really enjoy looking at the graphs , pictures ,images..... presented on PowerPoint	80 %	24 %	16%	0 %

Going back to the question I raised previously about how students perceive the use of PowerPoint in the English class, the vast majority of students displayed positive attitudes towards the use of PowerPoint in the EFL classroom. 80% of students "feel excited when PowerPoint is used". 70% of respondents stand the chance to participate more when PowerPoint is used. Nevertheless, 60 % claimed that interaction with the teacher fades away because of PowerPoint usage. Regarding students' learning, a good number of students agreed strongly that PowerPoint helped them to learn the English skills. Giving students the opportunity to do presentations and share them with their classmates was a crucial part of the study, so 100 % found it pleasurable to do a PowerPoint presentation. By and large, students' perceptions of using PowerPoint were positive, with the exception of 60% who agreed strongly that PowerPoint hinders students from interacting with the teacher. I will try to analyze this point in the discussion part

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this action research was two folds. First of all, it was meant to find out the impact of PowerPoint on enhancing students' engagement in the classroom. Secondly, this study intended to explore students'

perceptions of the use of PowerPoint in the lesson. With respect to students' engagement, the findings suggested that owing to the systematic incorporation of PowerPoint in the EFL classroom over six sessions period, the students' level of engagement augmented gradually. The number of students who participated in the first session (13) was very small in comparison to the number of students who attended the lesson (32). This low frequency of participation can be attributed to the fact that students hadn't been exposed to this extensive use of PowerPoint in the classroom. Another factor that might have hindered students from participating fully in the lesson is the presences of the observer in the classroom. Students were unwilling to participate because of this intruder. On the other hand, as students become accustomed to the use of PowerPoint and to the observer, their frequency of participation increased till it gets (31) in a class which is composed of (41) students. This study thus backs up the abovementioned advocates for the usage of PowerPoint in educational settings, including that of EFL.

Positive perceptions about using PowerPoint as a pedagogical instrument were pronounced. The vast majority of students claimed that the use of PowerPoint in the classroom is a source of excitement, motivation, learning and attraction. These findings duplicate those of (Joshua, Susskind, 2001; Nguyen, Thi Quynh Anh, 2011; Shishavan, Sadeghi 2009). What was sticking about this research is that 60 % of students perceived that they lose interaction with the teacher when PowerPoint is used. Also, when I was going over the papers of the questionnaire, I found something remarkable too. A student wrote "PowerPoint is there, but where is the teacher? We don't know when we should look at the teacher or at the PowerPoint". It can be inferred that the teacher loses connection with the students once PowerPoint is turned on. Indeed, the moment I turned on PowerPoint, I felt that my students' concentration was divided between two points: the teacher and the screen. Students didn't know where they should direct their attention. What's more, as clearly shown in the table 100 % of students strongly agreed that PowerPoint draws their attention to the lesson. It can be deduced from this finding that 0 % of attention is directed towards the teacher. So, PowerPoint interferes between the teacher and the students' relationship to the point that it monitors the whole class. Overall, PowerPoint is a good instructional tool if the teacher uses it effectively, or else it will be just a source of distraction and a barrier to interaction between the teacher and the students.

Limitations

There were two limitations of this action research. First, six sessions were not sufficient to enhance students' engagement in the EFL classroom. Besides, the presence of the observer might have influenced the results of my study.

Further Research

The current research opens the door for the chance to follow a line of investigation on the strategies to minimize the divide of students' attention between the teacher and the PowerPoint screen in order to attain the aim of language education.

Sharing the findings

The findings of this study will be communicated with the Moroccan association of teachers of English in the next regional conference in Marrakesh. A Power Point presentation will be used to present the outcomes of the intervention.

Implications

The results of this study demonstrated that using PowerPoint in the classroom could enhance students' engagement. So effective integration of this technology as an instructional tool in any educational setting could bring about meaningful results. This can't be achieved without proper training and intelligent use of technology.

References

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