Oral Aspects in French as a Foreign Language Teaching

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Article Info

Abstract

This study handles the specific aspects of oral communication at various linguistic dimensions within the context of teaching French as a foreign language. Oral language is prone to a particular organization at the prosodic, morphosyntactic, and discursive dimensions, which interact once speech is brought into play. In order to delve into orality in French, as the problematic of this study, and to draw its pedagogical implications, a linguistic review of some hypothetical utterances was first carried out. Then, an interview-based video retrieved from an open source was analyzed in terms of its specific oral aspects by excluding lexical and kinesic characteristics. The findings show the relevance of some oral features which bear a close relationship with each other. As far as the prosodic aspects are concerned, it is found that the filled pause, the false start, the contraction, the syllable lengthening, and most importantly the intonation, which plays a distinctive role when conveying meaning, are utilized in oral communication in French. The relevant morphosyntactic features of orality in the scope of French include the thematization, the omission of the first negative adverbial particle, the use of presentative structures, neutral demonstrative pronouns as well as that of bivalent indefinite/personal pronoun, and the recourse to direct speech or to various corrections/repetitions/reformulations. Concerning the specific discursive aspects of French, the findings reveal the use of phatic markers as pragmatic discourse organizers. Lastly, based on the findings, a communicative-linguistic activity in the form of a task was proposed for didactic purposes.

Keywords: Oral communication, prosody, morphosyntax, discourse analysis, French teaching.

Introduction

In human communication, although the emergence of writing dates back to around 3 000s BC respectively in Sumerian and Egyptian societies, oral language goes further back in time, i.e. approximately to 100 000 years BC (Riegel et al., 2009). In line with the earlier appearance of speaking among human beings, oral language has always been more dynamic, i.e. evolving more over centuries, and it has played a dominant role in human communication with regard to writing (Desmons et al., 2005; Martinet, 1998). Despite its major place in human communication, speaking as a linguistic skill is relatively neglected in Turkey within foreign language classrooms, in comparison with the pedagogy about grammar, vocabulary, writing, and reading. Hence, this negligence leads to proficiency and/or performance gaps for students in the framework of various linguistic skills.

In the light of the above-mentioned perspective, the present research handles the specific
features of oral language, differing the latter from the written one. On the one hand, this study aims to enhance the understanding of the notion of orality among Turkish students of French as a foreign language (FFL), i.e. it aims to improve their listening skills. On the other hand, it proposes classroom activities in the form of a real task in accordance with the task-based perspective (called perspective actionnelle in French), as outlined in the Common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2005, 2020). It should be noted that in the task-based perspective, language users engage in some linguistic and communicative activities/actions (either inside or outside the classroom) departing from a linguistic/communicative problem to be resolved in foreign language, such as writing an article in a school journal, participating in a poetry contest, guiding foreign tourists in the city, giving a presentation on an actual topic, creating a website/blog around a topic of interest, posting a comment on social media, broadcasting/podcasting/vlogging on television/radio/social media, etc. (Bertocchini & Costanzo, 2008; Cuq & Gruca, 2017; Germain, 1993).

The researches on the subject matter especially concentrate on the role of speaking in FFL classroom and on the particular aspects of oral discourse/interactions, but they also propose simulated or real in-classroom and online activities (see among others Abbadi et al., 2002; Bertocchini & Costanzo, 2008; Cicurel, 2011; Desmons et al., 2005; Germain, 1993; Guichon & Tellier, 2017; Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1998; Pacthod & Roux, 2004; Tellier & Cadet, 2014; Wattier, 2017). The above-mentioned researches firstly draw attention to the use of prosodic elements such as intonation, stress over syllables, voice pitch, speech flow, etc., or visual clues such as hand gesture, facial expression, gaze, posture, etc., which differentiate speech from writing. Secondly, they also mention some linguistic markers shaping oral discourse, which distinguish the latter from the written communication and contribute to the speaker’s subjectivity. Thirdly, some of the researches above propose classroom activities aimed to develop listening/speaking skills.

Yet, one may claim that these aforementioned specific oral elements are also required in writing. However, oral communication makes the use of such elements more delicate in terms of student performance, because speech is more spontaneous than writing, and it is more open to certain types of mistakes.

In sum, this study aims to find answers to the following research question: What are the specific aspects of oral communication in French? Taking this problematic as the starting point, it should also be stated that the specificities of oral communication might be treated in FFL classroom for developing students’ listening and speaking skills. For doing so, the oral characteristics of French will be considered within the framework of task-based perspective, i.e. at the end of the Findings section, a task composed of classroom activities will be proposed.

The research question at hand becomes relevant, as phenomena related to orality especially concern the phonological, morphosyntactic and discursive competences of students defined in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2005, 2020). Hence, the oral characteristics of French will be described below according to these competences. However, in this study, lexical/semantic specificities of the oral communication like words/expressions associated with different
linguistic registers (formal/informal language, slang, jargon, etc.) will be excluded (e.g. the use of the French word *bagnole* [jalopy] in daily life instead of *voiture/automobile* [car]), because the oral lexicon which presents a considerable amount of sociolinguistic and cultural variability requires a study of its own.

All in all, when considering the specific aspects of oral communication observed frequently among French native speakers, the prosodic (as one of the most important components of phonological competence alongside with pronunciation), morphosyntactic and discursive ones become relevant according to the theory about orality (see below the corresponding literature for each of them). Thus, as part of the theoretical framework of this study, we compiled in the following lines the specificities of each aspect, and we gave hypothetical examples drawn from the related literature (or adapted from it); the examples for each aspect illustrate the specificities of oral communication in French.

**Prosodic Aspects**

Orality can be described first by its phonetic/phonological but also prosodic components (Martinet, 1998). Apart from the phenomena related to pronunciation/articulation, oral language has some vocal characteristics also called paralinguistic or suprasegmental features such as tone, duration, and intensity, but also pause (empty of filled), each of these characteristics gives way to diverse prosodic phenomena (Martin, 2009; Rossi, 1999).

In summary, prosodic variations which are intrinsically absent from the written code include the following phenomena (Desmons et al., 2005; Éluerd, 2012; Martin, 2009; Rossi, 1999):

- The pitch (or the frequency) of the phoneme represents its tone (measured in Hertz, Hz); when the tone of a phoneme, of a word or of a group of word (or of segment of discourse) varies in an utterance, this variation witnessed in the melodic curve of the utterance is called intonation. For example, in French, assertive utterances’ intonation goes typically downward, or interrogative ones’ rise up at their ends.

- The duration of a segment of discourse unit is measured in second, and it determines the speech flow, i.e. the time taken for speaking. It can be relatively slow or speedy. Moreover, the speech flow also covers the phenomenon called prolongation (allongement in French) of a syllable in a word. This lengthening of a given syllable may stem from the process of thinking (as the speaker may take time when uttering words or may hesitate) but also from a deliberate communicative intention, i.e. it may fulfill a pragmatic value as a speech act (e.g. drawing attention to a point or asserting something in a weak/strong way) by indicating the speaker’s attitude towards what (s)he is saying at that moment.

- The intensity (loudness) of the voice (measured in Decibel, DB) may also be modified for stressing a segment of discourse; this phenomenon is called accentuation, and it undertakes different pragmatic functions, especially when the speaker wants to draw attention to the most important segment of discourse in the utterance. The accentuation proves to be closely linked to syntactic procedures such as thematization and focalization as part of the emphasis (to be explored in the following lines).
- Although it is essentially a phonetic issue, the liaison is not shown in the written code, contrarily to the phenomena like elision (contraction of two vowels between some words such as le + ami=l’ami [the friend]) or hiatus (encounter of two vowels that French tries to avoid as much as possible to secure euphony with certain sounds or letters like -s or -t, for example in the case of va + il=va-t-il [is he going?]). That is why we mention the notion of liaison here. The liaison designates the fact of pronouncing the final consonant of a word in order to tie it to the initial vowel of the following word. For example, in French, the liaison is typically observed between the final consonants -d and -s and the following vowel, such as les enfants (the children) or un grand homme (a great man).

- The empty pauses as well as the filled ones referred to as the hesitation pauses (where in French the interjection euh, i.e. er in English, is normally used to fill gaps between words) may occur between words, group of words or utterances; sometimes, they are not simply silent moments or moments of error, hesitation, or lack of concentration. Although they may formally correspond to period, question mark, comma, colon, semicolon, suspension points or empty spaces in the written code between words and sentences, their pragmatic function may be sometimes more delicate. They do not solely organize discourse segments rhythmically according to the meaning to be conveyed, but they may also have a subjective and an interactive value, i.e. they show the speaker’s subjective engagement into her/his utterance as a speech act within a communicative interest to pursue.

All in all, prosodic phenomena contribute to the significance at the semantic level and to the use of language at the pragmatic one by working in parallel with the syntax.

**Morphosyntactic Aspects**

Orality also presents some morphosyntactic modifications, i.e., those including the sequencing of discourse segments and the use of some words (Chiss et al., 2001; Delatour et al., 2004; Desmons et al., 2005; Éluerd, 2012; Riegel et al., 2009; Schott-Bourget, 1994):

- The thematization is a prosodic but also a syntactic variation frequently encountered in oral discourse. It refers to detaching/dislocating at the beginning of an utterance a discourse unit to which the speaker draws attention. The same element is generally accentuated at the prosodic level. In French, the subject and the object may be placed thematically at the beginning of an utterance, e.g. in PAUL, il est malade (PAUL, he is sick). Here, Paul constitutes the topic of the utterance (i.e. what the speaker talks about), whereas il est malade forms the commentary (i.e. what the speaker says about the topic). A highly frequent use of thematization for French speakers is the one concerning MOI, je... (ME, I...); the thematization attracts the addressee’s attention to a topic, but it also marks the speaker’s subjectivity. Nevertheless, in the example PAUL, je l’ai vu dans la rue (PAUL, I have seen him on the street), the topic Paul is reprised as the object of the utterance as l’.

- The focalization resembles thematization in terms of emphasis, and it is observed in cleaved constructions such as C’est... qui/que (It is ... who/which). For example, in C’est
PAUL qui décide (It is PAUL who decides), there is a strong prosodic accent on Paul which corresponds to the commentary (together with c’est), i.e. the information given about the theme (qui décide); it is Paul and not for example Mary who decides.

- The negative adverb ne used together with pas in standard, formal and written French is phonetically weak; therefore, it is omitted in oral communication. For example, instead of Je n’arrive pas à trouver mon passeport (I cannot find my passport), French speakers usually say J’arrive pas à trouver mon passeport (I can’t find my passport). In consequence, all the negative charge is orally bestowed upon the accentuated adverbial particle pas in French (although the negation depended uniquely on ne in old French, where pas was absent).

- The phenomenon called contraction is also brought into play for ensuring linguistic economy. When the last syllable of a word (or an entire word) is truncated, this phenomenon occurs. As for the lexical truncation (for example, the use of the word resto instead of restaurant [restaurant] in French), the contraction has evidently phonetic implications, but this shortening of words may also affect the syntax of an utterance. In fact, all is about the linguistic economy; the phonetically weaker phonemes tend to disappear in oral, also giving way to syntactic variations. Here are some examples:

  i. J’sais pas (I don’t know [I dunno]) instead of the formal Je ne sais pas (I do not know),
  ii. Y a un homme dans la rue (There’s a man on the street) instead of the formal Il y a un homme dans la rue (There is a man on the street),
  iii. T’as compris (You’ve understood) instead of the formal Tu as compris (You have understood), etc.

- The use of the impersonal introducers such as il y a (there is/are), c’est (this/that/it is) and voici (here is) called presentative (présentatif in French) is also frequent in oral with regard to written communication.

- The use of the neutral demonstrative pronoun ça (that) is another feature of orality.

- When speakers talk, they sometimes make linguistic mistakes; thus, they recourse to repetitions, reformulations or corrections. Usually, these operations performed at the phonetic and/or the syntactic dimensions are neither accepted nor tolerated in writing.

- The formal register builds interrogation upon the inversion of the verb with the subject separated by a dash in writing, e.g. Allez-vous au ciné? (Are you going to the cinema?); however, in daily, common and informal registers, French speakers have a tendency to ask questions either with the aid of rising intonation (e.g. Vous allez au cinéma? [You are going to the cinema?]) or with the intermediary of the interrogative adverb est-ce que added at the beginning of the question (e.g. Est-ce que vous allez au cinéma?, which does not have a direct translation to English but having exactly the same function and meaning as the previous ones). Linguistically speaking, the question obtained by rising intonation seems simpler and more natural, for the question has exactly the same words with the same order compared to its assertive equivalent, but a simple modification of
tone at the end suffices to alter meaning.

- The indirect speech constructed on the subordinating conjunction que (that) is relatively absent in oral and tends to be replaced with direct speech. This is possibly due to modifications for transforming a direct speech to an indirect one, which poses a challenge for speakers. To elucidate our point with an example, in a written direct speech sentence like Paul a dit: “J’ai visité ma mère.” (Paul said, “I have visited my mother.”), the sentence is endowed with punctuation. In its oral version, both the principle and the subordinate clauses stay the same, and the punctuation is replaced with prosodic elements (intonation, pause, etc.). However, if the direct sentence is transformed into an indirect one, some modifications should be executed: Paul m’a dit qu’il avait visité sa mère (Paul said that he had visited his mother). First of all, as the reporting verb is conjugated in past simple, the subordinate clause is prone to some transformations: Present perfect of the direct speech becomes past simple. Secondly, the addition of the subordinating conjunction and the modification of the possessive adjective are required irrespective of the tense of the reporting verb.

- The indefinite personal pronoun on in French represents respectively two referents in English: people and we. In the formal written communication, this pronoun refers to people and indicates a habit/routine/generality: On s’amuse avec ses camarades (People have fun with their friends). However, French speakers use it also for referring to we (nous in French) in oral; this usage brings about its own syntactic as well as semantic changes: On s’amuse avec nos camarades (We are having fun with our friends). As it turns out, the morphosyntactic aspects cited previously do not fully cover the specificities of orality. Yet, they are taken into account more or less according to their relevance in FFL teaching.

**Discursive Aspects**

By taking into account the vast span of research discourse analysis invests in, the theory of enunciation and the textual linguistics become more relevant in terms of exploring the specific aspects of orality. In Benveniste’s (1966, 1974) enunciative theory, discourse means enunciation, where language is subjectively taken over by the speaker; in other words, enunciation automatically requires the subjective implication or the personal engagement of the speaker towards her/his utterance as a concrete linguistic ground through which it is possible to spot the linguistic marks of this engagement. These linguistic marks are coined as shifters by Jakobson (1963/2003). For example, the personal pronouns I/we and you (the third person pronouns are purely textual, as they require a previous textual referent, i.e. they are not shifters), the demonstrative words (also called deictics, e.g. this) or the temporal adverbs (e.g. today) only acquire a meaning within the immediate communicative context (Benveniste, 1966, 1974). Enunciative marks also include utterance modalities such as subjective adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc. (Sarfati, 2005). For example, when someone uses the modal adverb frankly, that person shows herself/himself as the guarantor of what (s)he is saying. All in all, modal words demonstrate in the utterance the speaker’s subjective engagement in the discourse/enunciation.
In textual linguistics, connectors may build up various semantic relationships between the clauses of an utterance or between utterances themselves, such as cause, consequence, opposition, condition, purpose, etc. This is particularly the case of conjunctions (e.g. parce que [because]) or connecting adverbs (e.g. par conséquent [therefore/in consequence]). Yet, these argumentative connectors do not present a particularity in oral, as they also occur frequently in writing. The connectors or markers of interest from an oral point of view are those structuring pragmatically the discourse; they are designated as conversation organizing markers (marqueurs de structuration de la conversation) (Adam, 2020; Riegel et al., 2009).

Indeed, these markers are discourse organizers which aim to pragmatically orientate the addressee, i.e. they show the positive or negative reaction of the speaker to what happens previously in the communicative context. As their semantic/argumentative value is weak, these markers are pragmatic discourse organizers rather than argumentative connectors which semantically unite two clauses. These markers are divided into two categories (Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2002; Riegel et al., 2009):

- In the first category, we find the essential pragmatic discourse organizers such as the coordinating conjunction mais (but), the adverbs alors (then) and ben (well), and the interjection bon (ok/well). The markers in question may express approbation, but they often show the reaction of the speaker towards a previous utterance/act/situation/circumstance that (s)he opposes, disapproves of, about which (s)he wants to give an emotional response, such as surprise, complaint, anger, contempt, etc. For example in Bon! C’est fini? Ben/mais/alors, qu’est-ce que tu fais là? (Ok! Is it finished? Well/But/Then, what are you doing there?), the use of markers is not argumentative but rather pragmatic, for they indicate the opposition and the reaction of the speaker to what is actually happening in the immediate communicative situation.

- The second category encompasses the use of some interjections, adverbial constructions, and colloquial filler words or sentences like Hein/n’est-ce pas (right/Isn’t it), tu vois (you see/you understand), tu sais (you know), quoi (I mean/in brief/that’s all), etc. They firstly ensure communicative contact with the addressee, i.e. they verify if the communicative channel is open; furthermore, either they may indicate lack of knowledge about something, or they are formulated by the speaker to seek for an agreement/approval/adherence from the addressee’s side to a previous utterance or to what had previously happened in the immediate communicative context of the interlocutors. These markers are called phatics (phatèmes in French) (Riegel et al., 2009). In utterances like Je te l’avais déjà dit, tu sais, ce mec est fou, Hein! (I had already told you, you know, this guy is crazy, right!) or On ne peut rien faire, quoi! (We cannot do anything, I mean!), it is possible to observe this kind of pragmatic fillers which target the addressee’s adherence to the content of the utterance.

The specific and relevant features of the oral communication in French were theoretically examined and illustrated with examples drawn from the corresponding literature in the previous lines. This study is important, and it contributes to the field from our point of view for three reasons: First of all, it aims to sensitize French learners to oral features neglected
most of the time in the classroom and in course books. Secondly, it aims to analyze the French orality in its naturalistic setting through real interviews, contrarily, for example, to most of the French course books conveying listening and speaking skills through simulated dialogues where the majority of the oral features examined above are absent. Lastly, it links the oral aspects of French-to-French teaching in the classroom, as it proposes a task-based activity on orality to the pre-service French teachers.

**Method**

This study is *qualitative* (Bryman, 2012), for it aims to analyze the linguistic content of oral communication in French through utterances produced by native speakers. To delve into the problematic *specific aspects of oral communication in French* and to draw the didactic/pedagogical implications from orality in French, the research was designed within a two-step procedure: First of all, the oral elements were analyzed and categorized through the data consisting of street interviews obtained in a natural setting with 4 French native speakers on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic; the interviews in question were derived from *YouTube as an open source* (Agence France-Presse [AFP] News, 2020). Secondly, after the analysis, an activity setting up a real communicative situation was provided in accordance with the task-based approach, as recommended by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2005, 2020).

**Data Collection and Participants**

Our problematic consists in determining the *specific aspects of orality*. For doing so, we analyzed a *2-minute video-recorded audiovisual document* of oral interviews obtained from an open source (YouTube) and conducted beforehand with 4 *adult French natives* who were passing by on the street and gave spontaneous statements about the coronavirus pandemic (AFP News, 2020). During the interviews, the interviewees as participants give answers to the following question: *What do people in the streets of Paris think about the coronavirus?* The choice of videotaped interviews for didactic/pedagogical purposes may be justified with the following arguments: The topic is more or less actual, and as the interviews are given orally and spontaneously, they include various features of orality. They are consequently prone to didactic/pedagogical treatment in FFL classroom.

Thus, the essential data is based on the interviewees’ (as participants) opinions. The interviews as audio-visual documents provide us with a natural oral setting and also a possibility of drawing didactic/pedagogical implications of orality in terms of listening and speaking skills in classroom. This natural setting lays out a lot of phenomena related to orality, as shows our analysis of the interviews. With this in mind, the *validity* of the research (Babbie, 2014) is ensured, as the data derived from the interviews with 4 French passers-by reflects a variety of spontaneous oral features, which constitute the object of analysis and the starting point for the elaboration of task-based activities geared towards French classroom.

**Data Analysis**

As oral French constitutes the main focal point, we carried out a *conversation analysis* having its roots in *ethnomethodology* within the framework of *qualitative* research methods; i.e. the linguistic examination of utterances falls within the limits of *qualitative conversational...*
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**analysis** of an audiovisual document, where prosodic, morphosyntactic and discursive phenomena (or categories) more or less specific to oral communication were taken into consideration altogether (Bryman, 2012; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2013; Sarfati 2005). More specifically, in order to reveal specific aspects of orality within the utterances of the interviewees (as participants), the relevant segments of their *oral interventions* (see Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1998) were analyzed through *prosodic, morphosyntactic* and *discursive* categories by underlining the close relationship between them.

To proceed into the analysis, we transcribed the interviews and annotated the phenomena related to orality. The transcription of oral was mainly adapted from Bertrand et al.’s (2008) *Enriched Orthographic Transcription* for the utterances in French and the prosodic elements. As to the morphosyntactic and discursive phenomena, they were annotated between arrowheads < > for a segment of utterance underlined. Table 1 shows below the conventions of transcription and annotation which we opted for. As far as the *reliability* of the analysis (Babbie, 2014) is concerned, the opinions of two experts in the field of French teaching were taken to verify the appropriateness of transcribed/annotated oral categories or phenomena arising from the interviews.

**Table 1.** Transcription and annotation conventions based on oral phenomena

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral phenomenon</th>
<th>Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word transcription</td>
<td>All words are transcribed orthographically (not phonetically) with lower case (except stressed ones) and without any punctuation figuring in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elision of vowels</td>
<td>Apostrophe x’x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction or non-pronounced segment of discourse</td>
<td>Between parentheses (x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison</td>
<td>Low line between words x_x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomprehensible or inaudible discourse segment</td>
<td>Asterisk x*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper noun</td>
<td>Between dollar signs $x$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False start</td>
<td>Hyphen x-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant empty pause</td>
<td>Three dots between brackets […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accentuation</td>
<td>Noted with upper case X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable lengthening</td>
<td>Colon x:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intonation</td>
<td>Rising with upwards arrow x ↑ and falling with downwards arrow x ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee</td>
<td>Interviewee number between number signs #Ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment of utterance subject to morphosyntactic and discursive variation</td>
<td>Underlined x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of morphosyntactic and discursive phenomena</td>
<td>Between arrowheads &lt;x&gt; after the underlined segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one phenomenon</td>
<td>Plus sign x + x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English translation of an utterance</td>
<td>English translations are given between percent signs %x% without annotation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before proceeding into the analysis of orality, it should be emphasized that lexical features (such as the choice of a specific word, idiom or language register) and kinesics (e.g. body movements related to limbs, such as hand gesture, facial expressions, etc.) were left out of this study, as the characteristics of the oral system in French being our central focus.

**Findings**

Our analysis of the interviews at the prosodic, morphosyntactic and discursive levels is presented in the following lines. All these levels cooperate actively to convey meaning, i.e. interviewees organize their utterances at the morphosyntactic level bearing a close relationship with prosody, but they also implicate themselves pragmatically when giving their opinions about the pandemic, i.e. the topic in question: *What do people in the streets of Paris think about the coronavirus?* Yet, only the relevant parts to our problematic will be transcribed for carrying out analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>ça &lt;neutral demonstrative + shifter&gt; m’ &lt;shifter&gt; inquiète quand MÊME ↑ hein ↓ &lt;phatic&gt; comme t- comme un peu tout l(e) monde MAIS; ↑ &lt;pragmatic organizer&gt; […] voilà ↓ &lt;elliptic + syntactic recapitulative&gt; MOI &lt;thematization + shifter&gt; j(e) &lt;shifter&gt; viens d(e) la campagne on nous dit PARTOUT faites attention: n vous êtes à Paris &lt;shifter + direct speech + present continuous&gt; mais ça &lt;neutral demonstrative + shifter&gt; peut &lt;modal verb&gt; arriver chez nous &lt;shifter&gt; à la campagne aussi ↑ &lt;implicit interrogation through intonation + post-commentary as delayed topic&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

That worries me anyway, right?! A little bit like everyone, but... That’s it. Me, I’m coming from the countryside, and people are telling us everywhere, “Be careful, you are in Paris.” But, this may also happen back at home, in the countryside as well?%

Here, the neutral demonstrative pronoun ça (*that*) as a shifter refers to the topic in question. As the pandemic becomes more and more serious at the time of the interview, I₁ (each interviewee will henceforth be referred to with a subscribed number as specified in Table 1) firstly expresses her concern with the argumentative adverbial locution *quand même* (*anyway*), stressed and endowed with a raising intonation; then, she shows her emotional response towards the situation and seeks for agreement with the intermediary of the phatic word *hein* (*right*) through a falling intonation, as if it was an implicit question. The recourse to the prepositional group *comme tout le monde* (*like everyone*) constitutes an argumentative pathos to persuade addressee by appealing common sense and empathy. With this in mind, we can claim that the stressed and upward toned *mais* (*but*), as a pragmatic organizer, repeats this pragmatic attempt for emotionally responding to the situation and seeking for agreement via an implicit question: *What could be done in such a situation?* In brief, I₁ takes a pragmatic position through her utterance. After a brief but relevant pause, she sums up the situation with a conclusive *voilà* (*that’s it*) which functions as a recapitulative word rather than a presentative one. It is elliptic (see Éluerd, 2012) because it implies more than the word *voilà*.
itself: *This is how the situation is.* Moreover, the use of this word adds conclusiveness to the utterance, which is also justified through falling intonation.

After exposing the subject matter, I₁ proceeds to the thematization of herself via the subject pronoun *moi* (me) carrying a prosodic accent; therefore, she engages subjectively in her utterance. Thereafter, the recourse to present continuous, to direct speech and to modal verb highlights orality. However, the last part of the utterance is more interesting: *mais, ça peut arriver chez nous, à la campagne aussi (but, this may also happen back at home, in the countryside as well)*. First of all, I₁ seems to assert her opinion but the rising intonation at the end transforms suddenly her potential assertion into a question. Indeed, this clause exemplifies very well the tendency for obtaining in the easiest way possible the linguistic economy that speakers strive for. In addition to this, the prepositional group *chez nous (at home)* is repeated at the end with *à la campagne aussi (in the countryside as well)*. On the one hand, as both prepositional groups co-refer to the same reality, the second one constitutes a textual anaphora (see Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2002; Maingueneau, 2007). Nevertheless, the latter also introduces a typical oral feature called *post-commentary*, where the theme is exposed after its commentary at the end of the utterance (see Riegel et al., 2009). In sum, the syntactic sequence of topic followed by commentary in thematization is reversed to obtain the symmetrical structure of commentary followed by topic; hence, the denomination *post-commentary*. It should be noted that the post-commentary is not necessarily a delayed theme/topic; it may also amplify a commentary by bringing out extra information.

I₂ begins with the bivalent pronoun *on* (referring both to *people* and *we*). After a brief pause, he recapitulates the fact of washing hands with a clarifying post-commentary in the form of presentative *c'est tout (that's all)*. Then, he corrects his false start and reformulates his previous utterance by implicating himself more via *je me lave (I wash)*. The speech is accelerated for this reformulating utterance to gain time. Thereafter, he lists a number of public spaces where people wash hands by beginning with the generic term *public (public)*, stalling the enumeration for a brief moment with the pause filler *euh (er)* and moving toward the more specific terms (*pool, theater, shop*). Here, the syntax stays in perfect harmony with the prosody, for the last syllable of each item in the list is prolonged. In the utterance *donc, c'est juste une petite, euh, changement d'habitude (so, it is just a small, er, habit change)*, I₂ makes an error while spelling *une petite (a small)* which should have been *un petit*, as the
word *changement* is a masculine noun. Lastly, the pause filler *euh* (*er*) which precedes the stressed group of words *changement d’habitude* (*habit change*) does not result from hesitation, but it pragmatically prepares the accentuation of this group of words.

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**I**<sup>3</sup> enunciatively puts himself as the guarantor of his utterances, and he pragmatically prepares, through the prepositional group *pour être honnête* (*to be honest*) and the discourse organizer adverb *ben* (*well*), his argumentation *là-bas après* (*there after all*) and the examples listed after the reformulation connector *c’est-à-dire* (*in other words*). When I<sup>3</sup> conveys information about the strict measure examples taken in Milan for the pandemic, the speech flow is again increased, as it was the case for the previous example with I<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, I<sup>3</sup> firstly justifies (or exemplifies) his opinion by resorting to the presentative *il y avait* (*there were*); then, when he talks about Paris, the intonation rises at the end of the contracted presentative *y a pas du tout* (*there weren’t any [measure] at all*), and transforms the latter into an implicit question directed to the addressee to denounce the current situation in Paris and to seek for agreement at the pragmatic level. Hence, I<sup>3</sup> indirectly criticizes the Parisian authorities for not having taken measures. As illustrated in this example, even a simple increase of intonation may have an impact on the pragmatic functions of utterances.

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**I**<sup>4</sup> sait très bien qu’en étant dans les transports: *euh* <filled pause> on est à proximité des _ <repetition> autres personnes ↓ donc euh <filled pause> donc on (ne) <absence of *ne* > peut rien faire quoi <phatic> %We/people know very well that while being in transportation vehicles, we are nearby other persons; so, we can’t do anything, I mean.%

The colloquial filler *quoi* is very frequently utilized by French speakers at the end of their utterances. It usually undertakes a double pragmatic function: First of all, it sums up what the speaker has just said; thus, it increases the assertive value of what has been said. Furthermore, it may also be considered as an implicit question to seek for agreement from the addressee’s side (and to convince her/him). In consequence, it signifies simultaneously *I*
mean \textit{(in brief)} and \textit{isn't it true} (like the meaning of the interjection \textit{hein}). However, the assertive pragmatic value of \textit{quoi} prevails over the interrogative one, for the concomitant intonation always falls down.

Our linguistic analysis of the video leads us to the proposal of a \textit{task} about orality, aimed at improving the listening and speaking skills for the level B2 (advanced/independent speakers) which turns out to be more relevant to our point of view, for the level in question simultaneously underlines the elements of coherence, i.e. the semantic and logical organization of a discourse, and of cohesion, i.e. the linguistic markers of coherence in a written or oral text (Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2002; Maingueneau, 2007). Furthermore, the B2 level is also of particular importance when taking into account \textit{argumentative speech} (where ideas are justified with arguments) as part of task-based activities in classroom (or during the oral part of the exams called \textit{Diploma in French Language Studies} -or DELF for short in French- for the obtainment of B2 level), due to the fact that it requires preparation on the students’ side in terms of putting into action a coherent progression and a cohesive linkage of linguistic elements during speech.

The title of the task may be for example \textit{Record a video and broadcast it on the internet, where you will speak in French about your life during the pandemic}. For the elaboration of the task, we would like to refer to a workshop that we participated in about the issue; it was conducted by a French teacher trainer, Martine Emorine, in the French Teaching Department of Istanbul University on May the 4\textsuperscript{th} 2011. According to Emorine (2011), the elaboration of a task is organized around four criteria to follow: setting general objectives, defining linguistic/communicative skills (but also intercultural ones, e.g. any form of contact with the French culture, activities requiring extralinguistic skills such as the ability to make research on the Internet, etc.), dividing the task into steps, and determining evaluative modalities. A possible design for the progression of the given task is exemplified below in Table 2.

\textbf{Table 2. Example of a task design}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Linguistic/Communicative Objective</th>
<th>Specific Linguistic/Communicative Skill</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Retrieval of the specific oral traits in an authentic (not conceived in advance for pedagogical reasons) audiovisual document in French with background noise, various speech flow rates, gestures/facial expressions, sometimes overlapping utterances, etc.</td>
<td>Students watch a video in classroom for identifying specific oral traits. The teacher gives a lecture about orality, followed by a collective discussion about the topic.</td>
<td>Formative evaluation (where students receive feedback from the teacher for the entire process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Research about oral phenomena (prosodic, morphosyntactic and</td>
<td>Students make research about the topic in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Concerning the authentic audiovisual document (video) to listen to in classroom, which also provides the starting point for the achievement of the task, it should address students’ already acquired competences but also introduce new linguistic/communicative elements (lexically and culturally). At the same time, it should not exceed 5 minutes (the video we analyzed lasts approximately 2 minutes) for not disrupting student concentration; moreover, the video may be subjected to a linear listening (to retrieve orality aspects as linguistic elements) after a global (like skimming in reading) and a specific listening (like scanning in reading) (see Bertocchini & Costanzo, 2008). In brief, the listening phase aims to sensitize students to orality.

As far as the speaking skill is concerned, the pedagogical goal is to enable students, within a real argumentative monologue (then, debate), to orally make use of pragmatic discourse organizers together with argumentative connectors in French language by adhering to its prosodic and morphosyntactic particularities (see also Council of Europe, 2005, 2020; Wattier, 2017).

### Conclusion and Discussion

This study took as its departure point the specific aspects of orality compared to written communication. A theoretical review of the issue displays a considerable amount of research about the analysis of specific oral traits and their pedagogical implications in FFL classroom, as well as activities recommended to this end (see among others Abbadie et al., 2002; Bertocchini & Costanzo, 2008; Bertrand et al., 2008; Cicurel, 2011; Desmons et al., 2005; Emorine, 2011; Guichon & Tellier, 2017; Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1998; Pacthod & Roux, 2004; Tellier & Cadet, 2014; Wattier, 2017). Our results match the findings of the above-mentioned

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Use of appropriate prosody in French</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Students make a presentation in classroom as an argumentative monologue. Then, they discuss the topic with their peers through Q&amp;A session, group debate, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative monologue</td>
<td>Use of appropriate morphosyntax in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Use of appropriate vocabulary in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group debate</td>
<td>Use of argumentative connectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of pragmatic discourse organizers in French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elaboration of the video</th>
<th>All the previous skills combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students record the video at home and broadcast it online.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
literature as far as the phenomena specific to orality are involved. Yet, this study tried to emphasize the interconnections between the oral phenomena examined.

The data collected through real interviews reflects more or less the natural conditions through which the oral communication in French is established. With this in mind, we can claim that speech has its own modalities compared to writing which essentially and mostly constitutes the model for representing a foreign language in classroom. Yet, the communication in a foreign language mostly occurs through oral channel, i.e. people listen or speak more than they write something for example. Thus, in order to make students acquire listening and speaking skills, foreign language teachers (but also course books) may emphasize more the particular aspects of orality (here for French), which become more relevant within speech through real/naturalistic audiovisual documents, i.e. language teachers may analyze French orality (within real audiovisual documents) together with their students to raise awareness among them and to improve their corresponding skills through classroom activities. In the above-mentioned perspective, this study mainly revealed the recourse to specific oral procedures by the interviewees (as spontaneous speakers) during speech. These relevant procedures are mentioned in the following lines.

It should be pointed out that kinesics and lexical aspects in oral communication were left out of this study for methodological reasons. Hence, the analysis was rather focused on the prosodic, morphosyntactic and discursive peculiarities of orality. These peculiarities were firstly examined within the theoretical framework. Thereafter, our analysis of an interview-based video allowed us to bring out some close interplay between the intonation/accentuation, the morphosyntactic sequencing and the use of some discursive markers. We contend that the interplay between intonation and meaning, the use of thematization, indefinite or personal pronoun on, neutral demonstrative pronoun ça, filler euh, presentative constructions with c’est, direct speech, phatic words such as hein/quoi, and the omission of the adverbial particle ne should especially be highlighted in this respect.

When a linguistic and communicative competence-based approach is adopted (see Béacco, 2007), it would be seen that the concept of orality requires the consideration of two fundamental phases within a pedagogical point of view: Firstly, language teachers select an audio-visual document on which they manage classroom activities. Yet, the document chosen should be subjected by teachers to a linguistic scrutiny as part of pre-pedagogical analysis (see Moirand, 1979) and elaboration of classroom activities. Here, the main goal is to detect particular oral features which will be highlighted in classroom, i.e. as part of the listening skills. The second phase is reserved to pedagogical activities for enhancing speaking skills based on oral features. For this purpose, we proposed a task which may raise teacher/student awareness about orality.

All in all, this study may be expanded in future to other discursive genres specific to oral language (such as televised debates, daily conversations, telephone communications, oral communications within public services, oral presentations, etc.). In that way, the FFL course contents and course books may be revised.
Conflict of interests

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