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

Presentation to the

CIES Conference

Miami- March 2020

Fathi El-Ashry, Ph.D.
Creative Associates International

The Context

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

- Textbooks are widely used by students and teachers.

- Textbooks are referred to as "the curriculum" itself.

- High-level controversy when it comes to textbook production, distribution and usage by educators and parents.

# Textbooks – Who is Responsible?

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

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

New Arabic Language Curriculum

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

- Languages at the top of Ministry's reform agenda.

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

- Scale up in 3 phases.

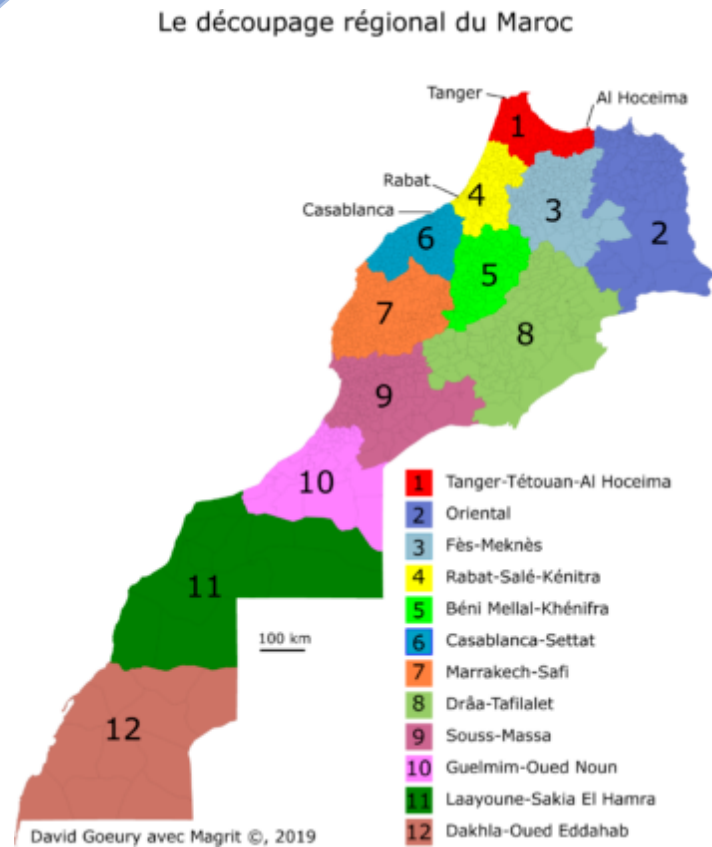- Grade 1-2 scale up in 2018-2019 school year.
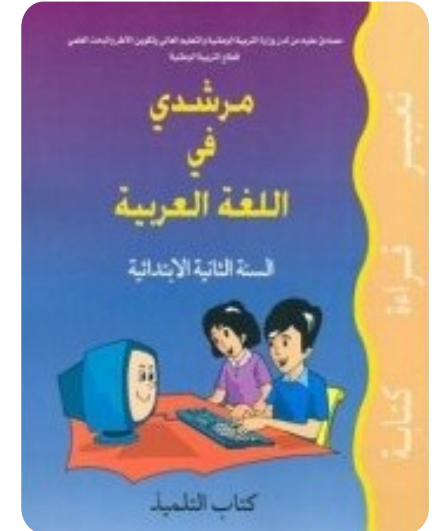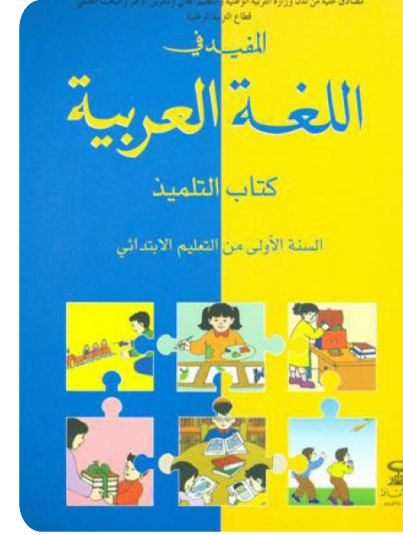
Authors' Training

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

Context of the Study

Le découpage régional du Maroc

1	Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima
2	Oriental
3	Fès-Meknès
4	Rabat-Salé-Kénitra
5	Béni Mellal-Khénifra
6	Casablanca-Settat
7	Marrakech-Safi
8	Drâa-Tafilalet
9	Souss-Massa
10	Guelmim-Oued Noun
11	Laayoune-Sakia El Hamra
12	Dakhla-Oued Eddahab

David Goeury avec Magrit ©, 2019

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

Methodology

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

|	Grade 1		Grade 2	
	FGD	**Questionnaire**	**FGD**	**Questionnaire**
Male	9	64	23	76
Female	15	97	31	114
Total	**24**	**161**	**45**	**190**

Data Analysis

- **Percentages of teachers** responded to certain items on the questionnaire, and

- A **thematic approach** was used to:
  - look across all the FGD data to identify the common issues that recur, and to
  - identify the main themes that emerged relevant to the aims of the study.

Findings – EGR (G1)
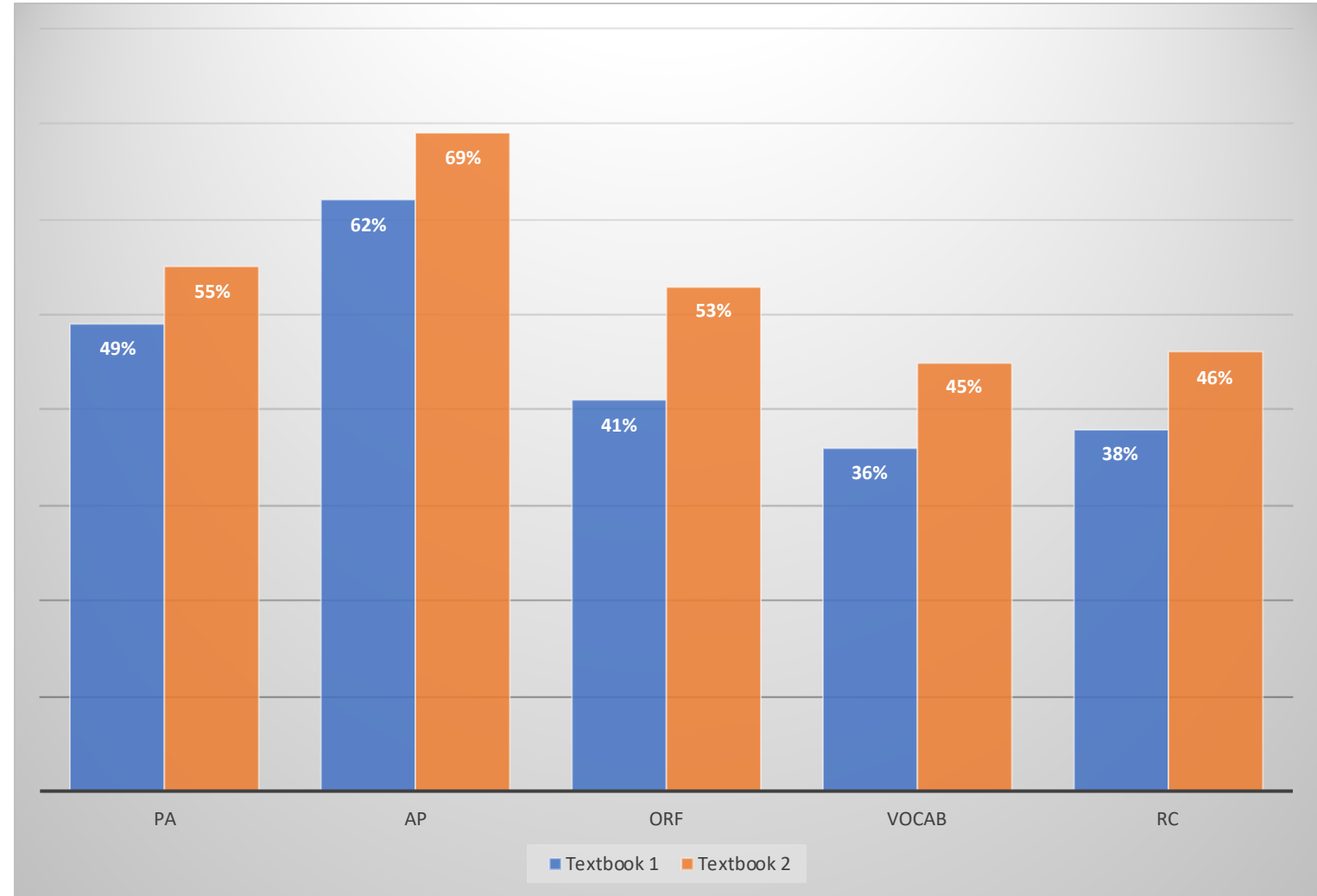
Findings – EGR (G2)
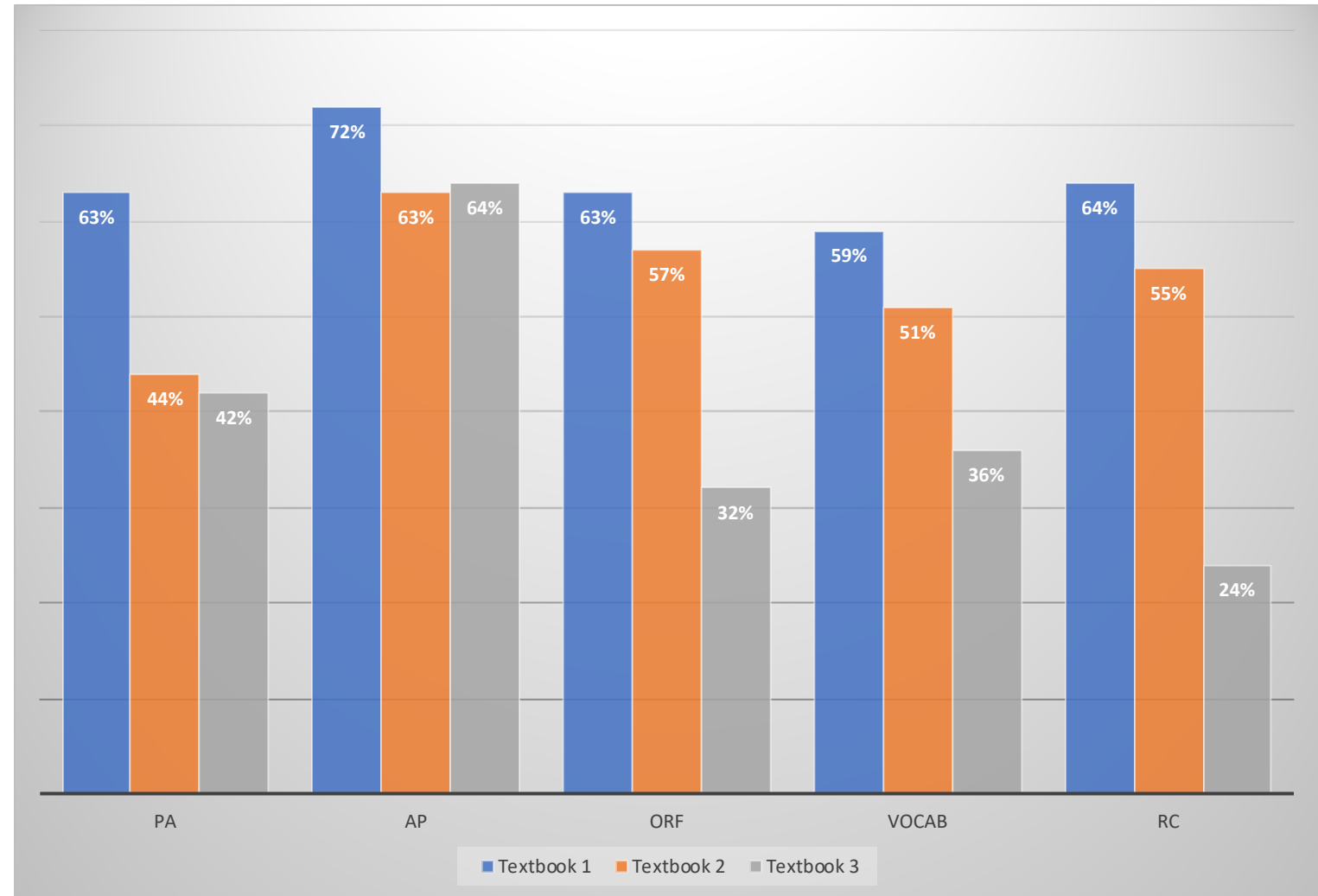
Findings – EGR in FGD

Phonemic Awareness activities are almost absent.

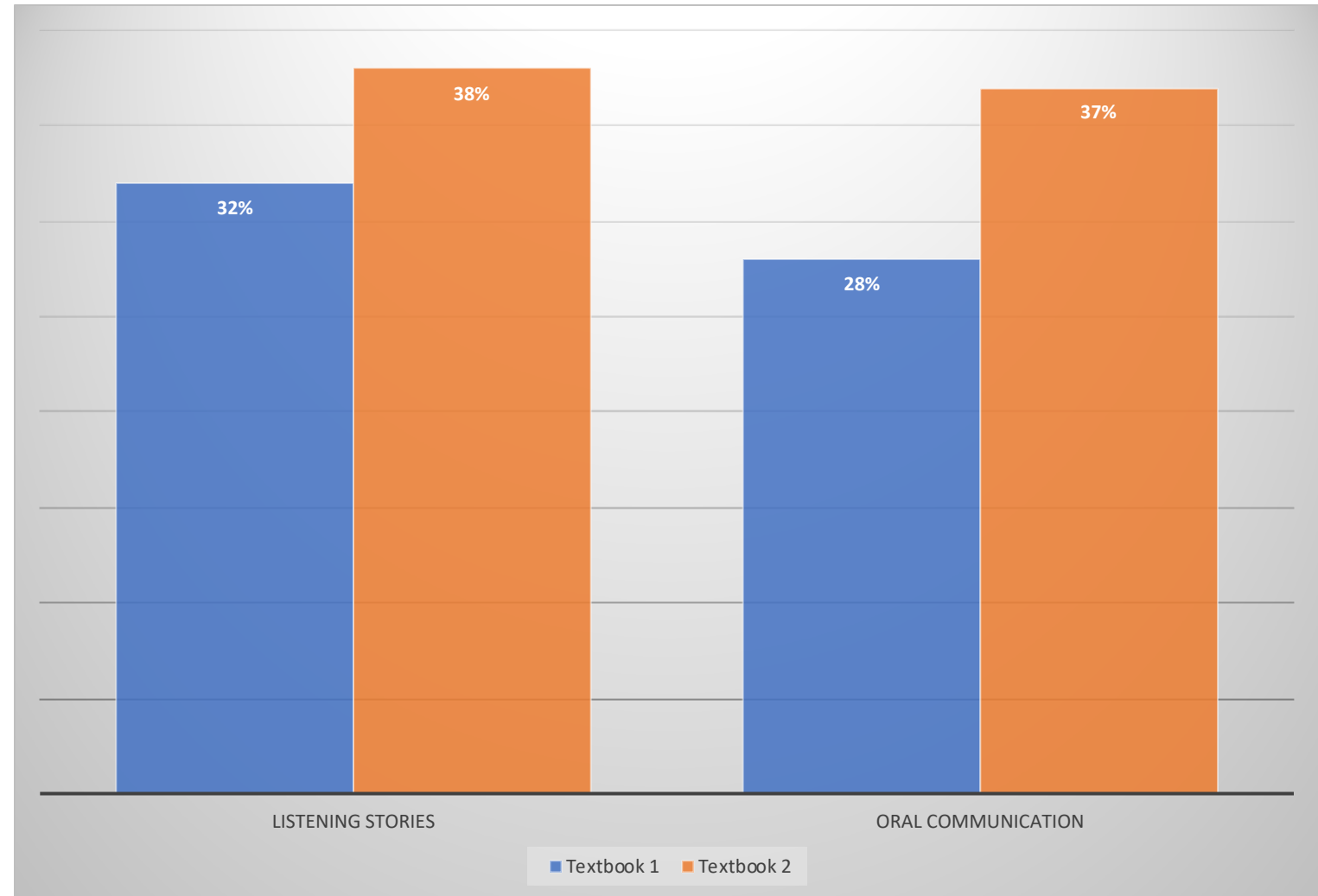Alphabetic Principle's activities are not varied.

The ORF activities are not clear and not varied.

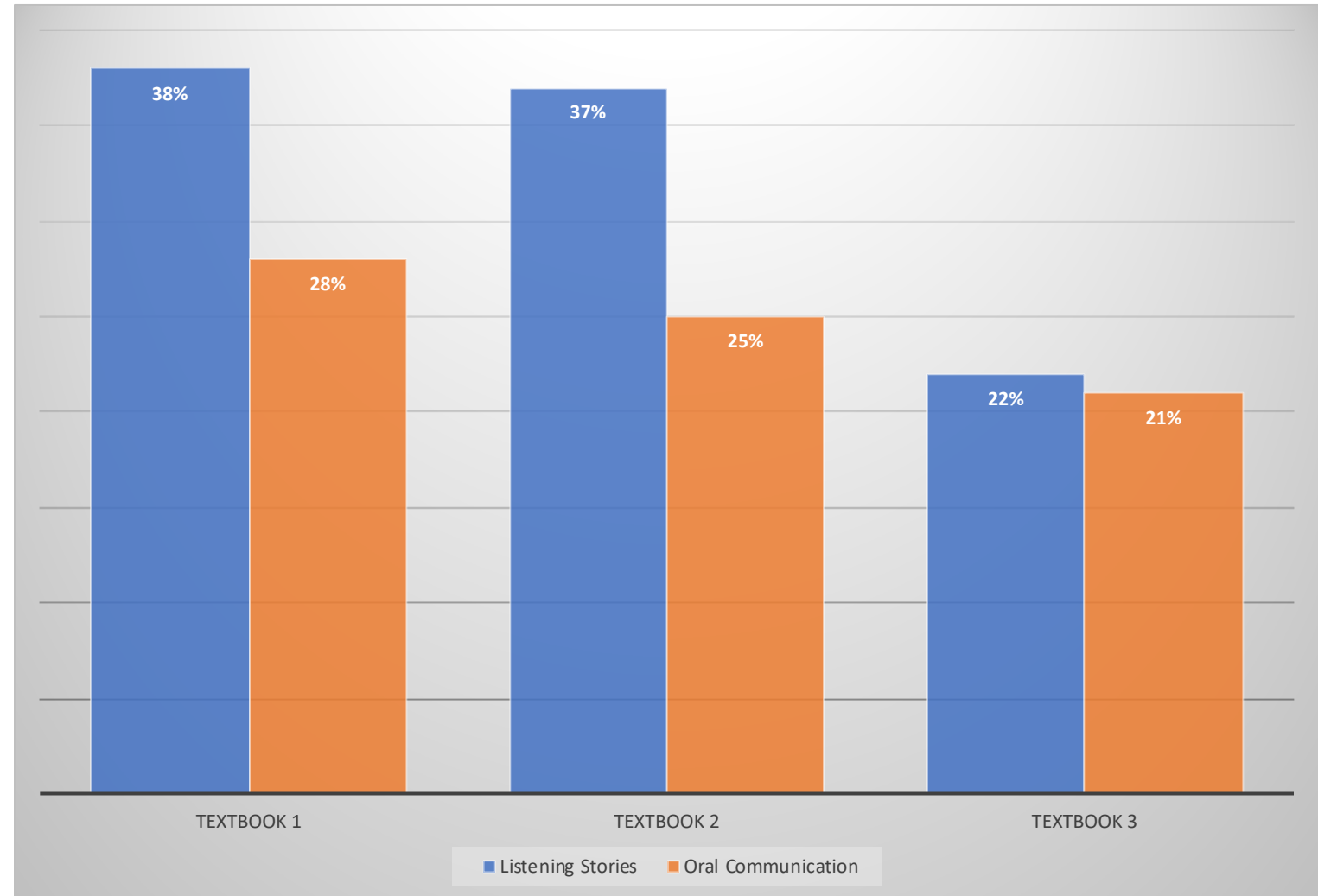Vocabulary strategies are not enough and sometimes are not clear.

Reading Comprehension strategies are very limited.

Unstructured sequence of the activities in the reading lesson.

Findings – Listening and Speaking (G1)

Findings – Listening and Speaking (G2)

Findings – Listening and Speaking in FGD

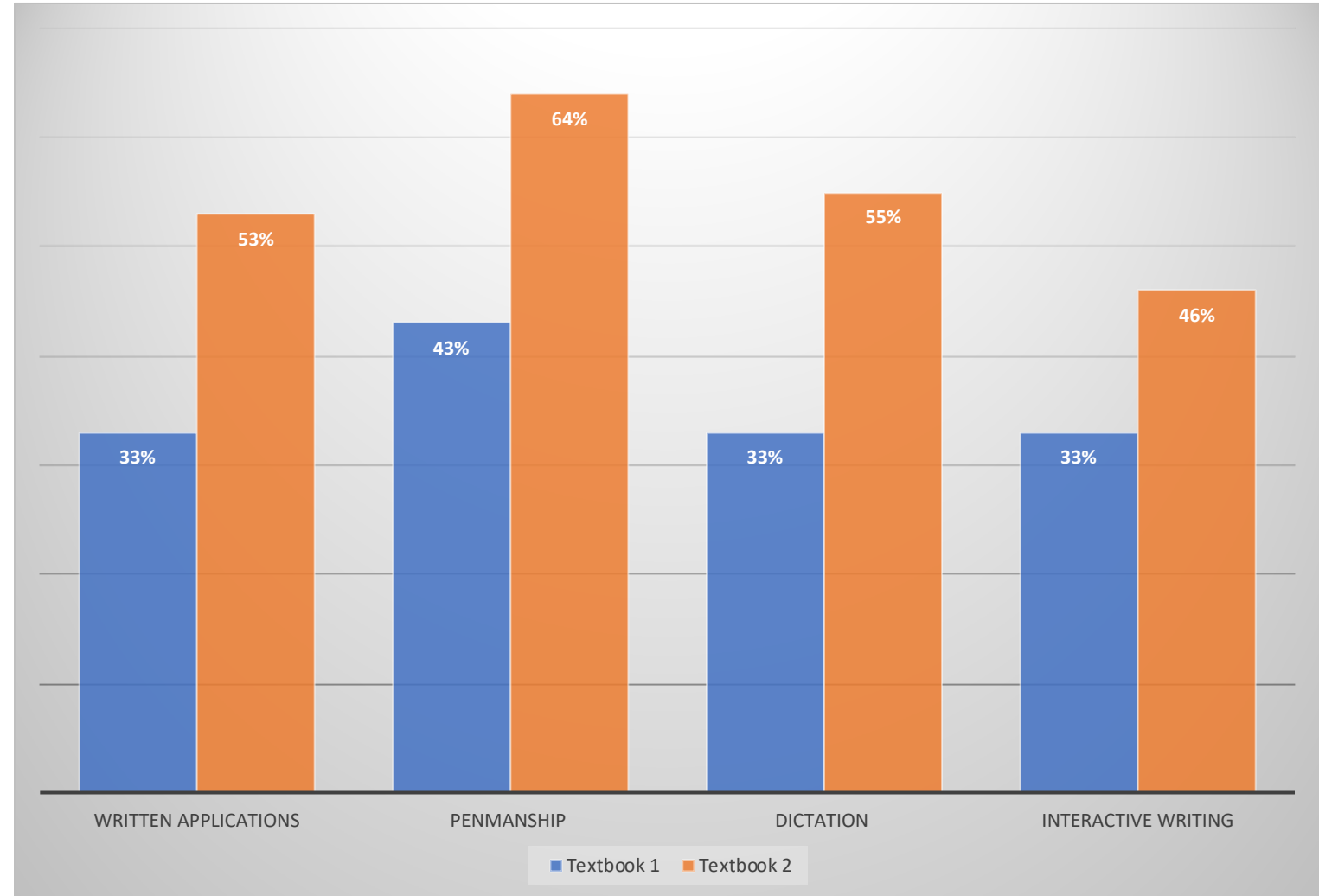Pictures of the stories/oral communication are not usable:

They are not clear enough to the young learners;

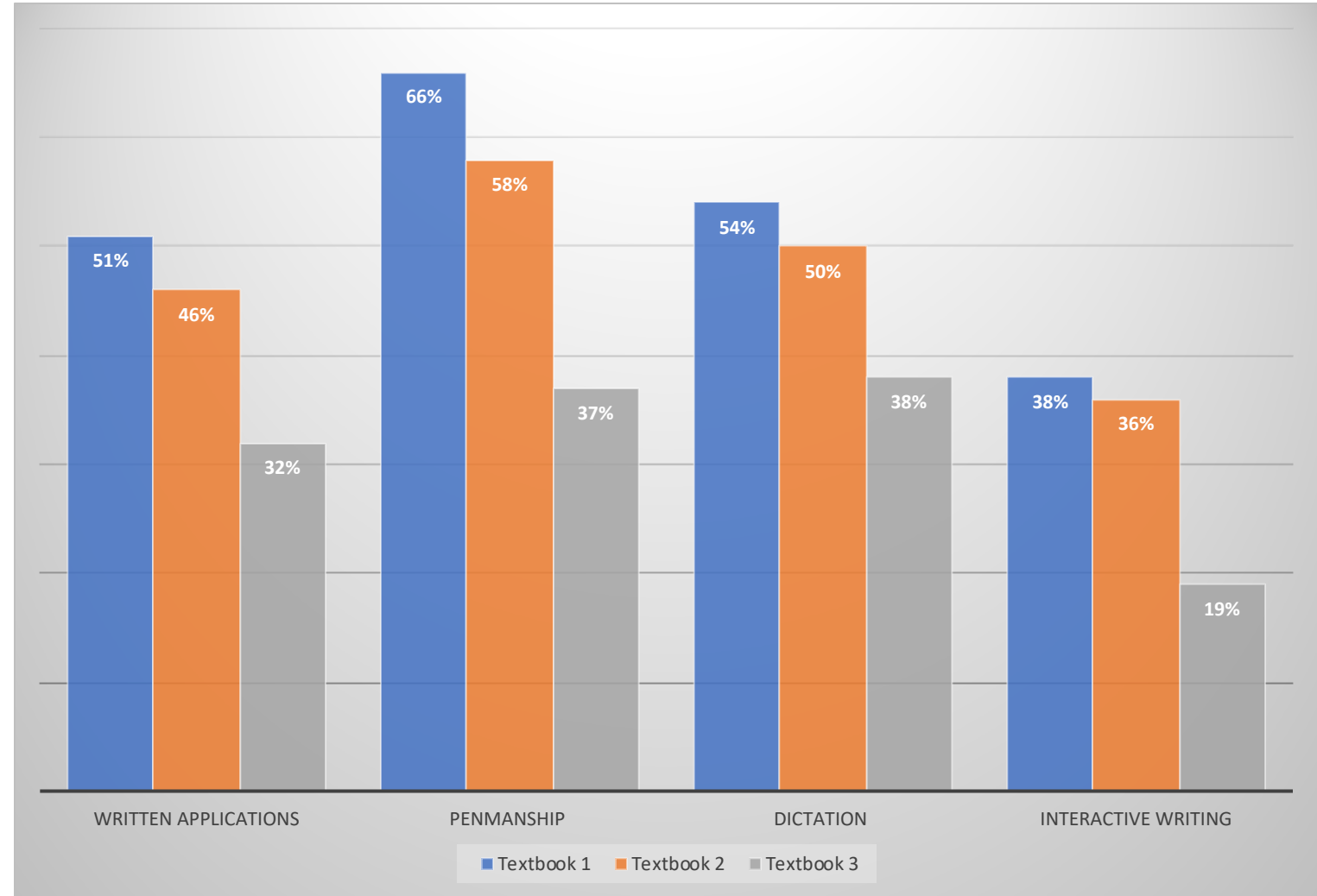Many pictures do not reflect the content of the stories;

The prediction strategy is hard to implement using these pictures;

A few stories need revisions in terms of the values we should convey.

Findings – Writing (G1)

Chart: Grade 1 Writing findings comparing Textbook 1 and Textbook 2

Category	Textbook 1	Textbook 2
WRITTEN APPLICATIONS	33%	53%
PENMANSHIP	43%	64%
DICTATION	33%	55%
INTERACTIVE WRITING	33%	46%

Findings – Writing (G2)

Findings – Writing in FGD

Writing activities do not help except penmanship.

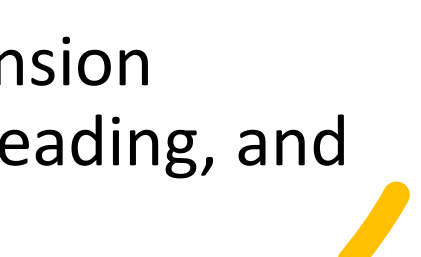Dictation is dealt with as an extension of penmanship – does not help writing directly.

"Interactive Writing" either does not existin the textbook or not clear.

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

Recommendations

- **READING:**
- Putting the reading lesson's activities in a methodological order;
- Include PA activities in the textbook, along with the TG;
- Diversify the activities in both AP and ORF to reflect differentiated instruction/cooperative learning;
- Use multiple reading comprehension strategies (pre-reading, during reading, and after reading)

Recommendations (cont.)

- **Interactive Writing:**
  - to be included in the textbooks with multiple topics related to the unit theme
  - connected to listening, speaking, and reading content;
  - one topic per unit (5 weeks).
- **Writing applications (grammar):**
  - grammar activities should be included but in an embedded way;
  - connected to the listening, speaking, and reading content.