SCRUTINIZING THE ROLE OF GENDER IN EFL
LEARNERS’ SPEAKING FLUENCY

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Degree of
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Dedications

I dedicate this Work to:

My mothers, Fatoumata Traore, the woman who gave me birth
and Kadidiatou Traore, the woman who brought me up,

My fathers, Issa Traore, whose blood is running through me
and Dramane Coulibaly, whose teachings are guiding me,

My grandfather, Mamadou Traore, who has been my wisdom and advice,
      My family and everyone I ever turned to for help,

All those who believed in me,
      Those who gave me the benefit of doubt even when I had it all wrong,

And finally to my late Grandmother, Siga Kante,
      Who once told me that,
            “There is no stain motivated sweats cannot clean-up”

She was the first to believe in me, even when I did not believe in myself,
      I just would like to tell her today that I am almost there,

      May she rest in Peace.
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All those I ever learned from,
To my friends and playmates for the happiness they made me feel,

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This work would have been jeopardized,

I thank everyone who ever helped me, those I remember or have forgotten,

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to describe the relationship between gender and EFL learners’ speaking fluency. It aims at providing some insights into the roles gender can play in the attainment of speaking fluency, with an understanding of how it manifests in the classrooms among teachers and learners. We have five research questions serving as landmarks. We worked with 20 students (10 males and 10 females) from third year English LMD, aging from 20 to 24 years old, and 6 Oral Expression teachers (3 males and 3 females), all of whom were between 25 and 55 years old, in Larbi Ben M’hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi. For five months and half, we interviewed, surveyed through questionnaires, and observed our participants in attempt to give possible answers to our research questions. We managed to answer all the research questions. We found that females are more fluent than males as a group when we compared their mean scores; however, the most fluent participant is a male; we also found that females benefit more from the present teaching approach. Moreover, we identified individuals’ commitment, self-confidence and the after-class activities they engaged in as the possible reasons of level differences. The study shows that there is no significant relationship between gender and the attainment of speaking fluency. However, we restrain from drawing any kind of definitive conclusions. The dissertation revolves around two chapters: one presenting the theoretical background and the other displaying the results and significance of the findings. It provides some pedagogical recommendations going along with some suggestions for future researches.
List of Abbreviation

-AR: Articulation rate
-EFL: English as a Foreign Language
-ELT: English Language teaching
-ESL: English as a Second Language
-FL: Foreign Language
-MLR: Mean Length of Run
-MPD: Mean Pause Duration
-PTR: Phonation Time Ratio
-SPT: Silent Pause Time
-SR: Speech rate
-STD: Standard
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Résumé

ملخص
General Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Applied linguistics is in constant labour to make learning a non-discriminatory activity, in which all the concerned parties will be satisfied; along this quest, researches are conducted to identify the problems plaguing education. When it comes to EFL learning, the case becomes somewhat bewildering; with regard to English being the lingua franca of this century, EFL classrooms tend to become complex melting pots; a place where diversity is an omnipresent variable at work. Amidst those pots, teachers do sometimes stand as surpassed mediators, wondering how to make it up to a fair non-discriminatory teaching approach in a classroom where learners are different in all the possible ways. In that perspective, teachers, researchers, and course designers do all agree that differences should be first understood thoroughly before remediation could be a prospect. Thus, understanding before remediation has become the goal of many present and future researches.

1. Delimitation of the problem:

Nowadays, the problem of sexual dimorphism is present everywhere, and EFL classrooms are no exceptions to its problems related. Most of EFL classrooms, if not all, are mixed classrooms; learners of different genders are taking the same courses, the same way and sometimes even treated alike. This has given rise to some questions such as: is it fair to treat males and females alike? Will it not be discriminatory to judge both genders under the same assumptions? In trying to answer those questions, some researches explored the classrooms to find out who benefitted more, and who was favoured more in current teaching approaches in use. Many conclusions were made, and most of them were even conflicting; however, in the past years, the traditional belief
that one of the two genders is naturally a better learner in certain academic fields has received some major attentions. Gender is no more overlooked by researchers in EFL learning; as a recognised variable, it is being studied in relation to some aspects of ELT such as learning strategies, Beliefs about language learning, classroom interactions, and speaking strategies. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of literature to the regard of speaking fluency; not many researchers interested themselves in the relationship between gender and the attainment of speaking proficiency.

Therefore, building on the gaps of pre-existing studies on gender and foreign language learning, and bearing in mind that the attainment of speaking fluency in the target language is the prime goal of any second language learners, this study will examine closely the role of gender in doing so. Taking into consideration that gender should operate in a context to be stably defined, the study will process with two driving forces. First, the conclusion that one gender is more naturally proficient than the other will be overlooked; as (McCaughan, 2009) puts it “despite existing research on the topic [gender and language learning], it is not possible to conclude that superior ESL skills exist in either gender.” One should be aware that any difference between the two genders might be socially and culturally influenced; Loulidi (1990) wrote “Any claims involving innate sex differences would have to be assessed against the different environmental influences on gender: attitudes, expectations, societal norms and career opportunity” as cited in (Sunderland, 1992, p. 90). Second, speaking fluency will be analysed as an equivalent stand for speaking proficiency, since it is very rare to find a learner who is fluent in the target language and not proficient. Moreover, the two terms are often used interchangeably; as cited in (Iwashita, 2010, p. 32) “the word ‘proficient’ is often used interchangeably with words such as ‘good’, ‘fluent’, … it is not always clear what speaking proficiency entails; the term may be used quite differently from researcher to
researcher (Galloway 1987; McNamara 1996).” Hence, attempting to add new valuable missing pieces to the puzzle of gender and EFL learning, the present study will scrutinize the role of gender in EFL learners’ speaking fluency.

2. **Purpose of the study:**

The long-term goal of this study is to provide clear insights into the role gender may play in EFL learners’ attainment of speaking fluency, with an understanding of how gender differences manifest in the classroom among learners and teachers. This goal will go along with the following sub-objectives, which are to:

- Shed light on the relationship between Gender and the attainment of speaking fluency
- Determine which of the two genders benefit more of the environment presents in this context
- Be able to know the reason(s) why both genders have their actual speaking fluency level
- Finally, provide some useful solutions to palliate the problem of gender differences.

3. **Research questions and hypotheses:**

The study will address the following questions:

- Is there any relationship between EFL learners’ Gender and attaining Speaking fluency?
- Which of females and males benefit more of the teaching approach in this context?
- Which of them is the most fluent speaker?
- What are the reasons for the level differences?
- And how does the gender difference manifest in actual classrooms?

**Hypotheses:**

The study will be grounded on the following two hypotheses:

- The relationship between gender and speaking proficiency is not that significant to predetermine who will be a more proficient EFL learner.
- The learner’s gender predetermines her/his attainment of speaking proficiency in EFL learning.

**4. Population:**

The population of the study will be the students of third year (LMD) in the English Department of the University ‘Larbi Ben M’Hidi’, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria. A random sampling will choose the participants, who will be 26 in total, 20 students, among whom 10 females and 10 males, and 6 teachers, among whom 3 females and 3 males. Both teachers and students will take part in the study; students are the primary target, and teachers are optional participants, meaning they will count only if possible.

**5. Procedures and instruments:**

The participants (students) will be interviewed (a semi-structured interview). The first stage of the interview will be for the sake of mere talking; the answers will serve for the analysis of fluency; participants will be free in choosing the topic to talk about. The second stage will be for the sake of collecting their viewpoints about gender and language learning; questions of that part will be the same for all. After the analysis of their fluency, questionnaires will be given to them trying to know why they have their
current levels of speaking fluency (to see whether it is gender influenced or not). Questionnaires will be given to teachers too (their teachers mostly) to collect their views about gender difference in their class, how they feel about it and what they do about it in their pedagogy. Finally, some sessions of direct observation in the actual classrooms will close it. Some notes will be dropped about the teaching approach in use, the way the two genders react to it and the way interaction goes on. Bearing in mind the time constraint, the interviews will not be too long, the sample for fluency analysis will not go beyond sixty seconds of talk and the questionnaires too will be neither long nor too complex. The main goal of the research being to describe a certain situation, therefore, will follow a descriptive research perspective. Relying on numeric data and subjects identified beforehand will render it a quantitative study. Moreover, as fluency is going to be assessed objectively, it is going to be more positivist than phenomenalist. To analyse the features of speech fluency, the software Praat (developed by P. Boersma and D. Weenink, 1995) will be used; it allows a better analysis of voice records. As for statistical tools, the software SPSS will be used to analyse the findings of the questionnaires.

6. Structure of the study:

There will be two major chapters. The first Chapter will be theoretical with two sections; the first section will be about gender and the second section will be about fluency. The second and last chapter will be practical; it will contain three sections, yielding the details and results of the research.
CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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SECTION ONE: GENDER

Introduction

We do not need any special glasses to realize that humans are sexually dimorphic; anyone can see the differences between the two sexes. It is present everywhere and it is universally accepted even if we are not always aware of it. However, some phenomena are easier seen than understood. At a start, it was first referred to as sex, highlighting the reproductive capacities of either side. Then again, relying on mere biological aspects to stratify humans has given rise to so many debates and controversies; since humans are living with a culture in a society, neglecting the two latter in classifying them was just unthinkable and unreasonable. With the publication of “le deuxième sexe” of Simone de Beauvoir (1949; translated as the second sex, 1953), which was extremely influential in the formation of the feminist theory, the problem gave birth to another head even more capricious. The turn events took from then on, made it clear that the term sex was no more unanimous. A new terminology, gender, was put forward, privileging cultural and social attributes over biological ones. The new terminology seemed accepted, as it appeared in contemporary researches instead of sex. However, it was most of the time interchangeably used with the former; the term might have changed, but the definition sometimes seemed to have stayed the same. Reflecting on the aforementioned points, in this section, the concept gender will be put under scrutiny; we will see the different aspects it can take in a specific context.
1.1.1. Definition:

1.1.1.1. What is Gender?

The word gender was introduced in the late Middle English, from Old French ‘gendre’ (modern ‘genre’), based on the Latin word ‘gener, stem of genus’ which meant “birth, family, nation”; the earliest meanings of gender were “kind, sort, genus, and type” or “class of noun, etc. (which was also a sense of the Latin genus.)” In (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: Eighth Edition, 2010). At first glance, there seems to be no problem in finding a stable definition; however, when the word becomes a concept in a context, contradictions and debates arise. For instance, gender is defined as “the fact of being male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, not differences in biology.” (ibid., 2010) and as “the sex of a person or organism, or of a whole category of people or organisms (often euphemistic to avoid the word sex).” in (Encarta Dictionaries, 2009). It is hard to help the debates seeping through when even dictionaries do oppose one another in defining gender as a concept. Nevertheless, some scholars came up with some balancing definitions, dangling between biology and culture/society, trying to allay the problem of contradiction. The best example of this is (Ferraro & Andreatta, 2010, p. 257) who define gender as “The way the members of the two sexes are perceived, evaluated and expected to behave.”

To understand better what gender is and is not, we have to view it with its confusing interchangeable term, which is sex.

1.1.1.2. Gender vs. Sex

These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, even though they might contradict in some ways. The first striking difference about them is that gender is socially and culturally determined, whereas sex is biologically and physically
determined. Gender is not merely what nature endows one with, but mostly, it is what one’s culture and society make of him/her; “Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West & Zimmerman, 1987), something we perform (Butler, 1990).” Cited in (McConnell-Ginet & Eckert, 2003, p. 10). In that perspective, a man may be classified female as long as he behaves and thinks of himself as one; unlike sex, gender is not restricted only to two; transsexuals and homosexuals are also part of its continuum. According to J. Sunderland (2006, p. 28) it is possible to see gender as a social correlate of sex, but not to the extent to use gender to mean biological sex or the use of (the regrettable phrase ‘the two genders’). On the other hand, sex is all about the biological endowments, regardless to society or culture. “Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of sex.” (op. cit). However different or opposing these terms might be, it is important to know that gender can hardly exist without sex; no matter the society and the culture, gender roles and dues are determined according to individuals’ biological might. “Gender builds on biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and, indeed, it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant.” (ibid.).

Gender is a more suitable concept especially when it comes to our modern societies; nowadays, there are many humans, (those who are born anomalously with chromosomes disorder), who do not fit in the two biological sexes. Gender, being centred on cultural and social attributes, i.e. abstract attributes, makes it possible for everyone to fit in. Even though gender builds on sex, it is not a cause-effect relationship where one automatically feeds on the other. As stated in (McConnell-Ginet & Eckert, op. cit, p. 16) “if gender flowed naturally from sex, one might sit back and simply allow the baby to become male or female. But in fact, sex determination sets the stage for a
lifelong process of gendering as the child becomes, and learns how to be male or female”. In summing up the relationship between gender and sex, Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000, p. 3) cited in (ibid.) put it this way:

“Labelling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender - not science - can define our sex. Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place.” (p. 11)

In simpler words, gender refers to “femaleness or maleness in a social context” and sex refers to “femaleness or maleness in a biological context” (Microsoft Encarta encyclopaedia, 2009).

1.1.1.3. Masculinity and femininity

Understanding gender as a concept cannot go along without knowing masculinity and femininity. “Masculinity is the social definition of maleness, and femininity is the social definition of femaleness” (Ferraro & Andreatta, op. cit, p. 258). Every society has its own definitions and perceptions of what it means to be a male or a female. In some societies, females are meant to be housewives, they don’t work out, they never pass on their names to children, they don’t take part in decisions making; however, in some other societies the opposites are just happening. Masculinity and femininity make us aware that any study or investigation concerning gender should heavily rely on the society and culture where it is being contextualised, in coming up with an operational definition. As Wood (2001) puts it, “Gender is a social and symbolic construction. Individuals are born male or female but are taught how to be masculine and feminine.”
Cited in (Powell & Powell, 2010, p. 78). Yet again, we realize that gender is not only about the biological state of being, but much more, about social and cultural attributes.

1.1.2. Gender and Learning

1.1.2.1. Females and schooling

Talking about education in general, it has been only few centuries from now that females have been given the right to attend formal academic courses. In ancient times, schooling was not a female thing, only males were taking part in it; at that time, it was unthinkable to imagine a female teacher, scientist or writer. For example, “No woman attended Plato’s academy, or spoke in any of the dialogues written by Plato” stated (Meade & Wiesner-Hanks, 2004, p. 130). However, by the end of the 20th century, things were moving towards a tremendous change; there were few educated females, as their place in education was improving. “Should girls receive the same education as boys, and women teachers be renumerated like men? Should separate provision for the sexes be made on the grounds of equity or propriety?” (ibid., p. 144) those were among the many questions, about the place of gender in education, our contemporary modern civilisations had to answer. But that was then and this is now; today, education is for everyone. It is even hard to imagine, seeing our educational system nowadays, that there was once upon a time, when females were completely out of it. We have more female students than male; the same applies to even teachers. Owing much of their emacipation to feminism, today, females have the opportunity to be whatever they can be in the modern academia; they even sometimes outperform males.

1.1.2.2. Gender and Foreign Language learning

Before getting down to specifics, let us first jog our memories and acknowledge that even if females were not receiving academic education in the past centuries, some
of them (especially from aristocratic families) received courses in foreign languages. Most Princesses, Ladies and queens in Europe had to learn French as it was considered a refined language. However, it is not the intention here to imply that learning a FL has always been a female thing. It is also important to remember that it was compulsory for males to learn Latin as a FL since it was the language of academia. Now, bearing in mind that FL learning has taken a new dimension, let us see what has become of the place of females and males in it.

1.1.2.2.1. Males and Foreign Language learning

When it comes to males and language learning (FL in particular), we have two contradictory views. On the one hand, they are said to be the ones benefitting from the educational system. In classrooms for instance, males “appear to have more interactions with teachers, are called upon more often, and generally have more contact with teachers” (Berns, 2010, p. 451). In this first view, even though females have been welcome in modern education, the fact is that males are still getting all the attentions. On the other hand, males are pictured as the discriminated ones; however contradictory this view may be, it is founded on some solid arguments. According to (the Australian, 27 July, 1995: appearing in Alloway and Gilbert, 1997) “in a system dominated by women, boys are suffering while girls pull ahead” cited in (Carr & Pauwels, 2006, p. 23). Most teachers and students of foreign languages are females; and consequently, most males tend to think of languages as a female thing. That dilemma leaves us perplexed in trying to know the exact reasons of males’ failure to learn a FL. More will be said about this point when the focus will be on EFL.
1.1.2.2.2. Females and Foreign Language learning

At first glance, it looks like females have always been in such a congruence with foreign language learning. In theory, they are pictured as the model learners; they like learning languages and they do not have problems abiding by rules. Moris (1998) opines that “the reason for females success is, again, socially determined: Females follow instructions better, comply with rules, use learning strategies better, and aim to please teachers more than males.” as cited in (McCaughan, 2009, p. 83). They sometimes appeared to be discriminated, but despite, they are most of the time, the best language learners. Since females are more numerous than males in FL classes and do like learning languages, it is somewhat hard to draw definitive conclusions. We shall see how it turns out in the EFL context.

1.1.3. Gender in the EFL context

English is the most studied language as a FL ever since it became the lingua franca of this century. Learners from allover the world, from very different cultures, are studying English. In that respect, gender has always been present in the EFL context, and so many questions have been raised: Who is more proficient? How do they differ exactly? What are their thinkings towards the language?

1.1.3.1. Females vs. Males

There have always been myths around females and males. It is obvious that they differ, however, finding in what they do differ exactly was the core of the problem. The traditional belief is that one of them is a natural proficient language learner; to be more specific, females have had that privilege. Nyborg (1994) said, “Probably one of the first written accounts for females verbal superiority is found in an ancient Sanscrit book, suggesting that nine shares of speech were given to women and one to men.” (as cited
in Gruszka, Matthews & Szymura, 2010, p. 110). It is no secret that knowing many languages is a symbol of refinement, and that females always seek to be refined. Hence, some males became reticent in learning English, thinking it was a female thing. For example, a male stated, “English is more suited to girls because it’s not the way guys think” in (Carr & Pauwels, op. cit., p. 41). Contemporary researches have tried to substantiate those traditional beliefs. It was proven that “male and female students differ in their language learning beliefs” (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007, p. 79). Furthermore, some researchers turned their focus on to the brain, where mostly all the differences are supposedly nurtured. Gurian and Henley (2001) discussed five differences between female and male brains that influence learning, which are:

(a) Structural (females can use both sides of their brains in certain task, unlike males),
(b) Chemical (females secrete more serotonin vasopressin and oxytocin, meaning they connect with others more than males),
(c) Hormonal (Oestrogen and Progesterone are the dominant hormones in females and testosterone is the dominant in males, implying that hormonal differences play significant roles in the behaviours),
(d) Functional (males tend to use right hemisphere which directs critical thinking, while females are left hemisphere dominant which controls artistic activity and intuitive thinking), and
(e) Emotional (males channel emotional stimuli from limbic system to the brain system, whereas females process it in the upper brain where higher order processing occurs). Cited in (Powell & Powell, 2010, pp. 76-77)

They also stated, “The female brain has a greater capacity for memory and sensory intake and the male brain is predisposed to special tasks and abstract thinking.” (ibid.,
The implication of those differences in terms of education and academic performance could be as Jensen (2000) summarised:

(a) For example females generally outperform males in: fine motor skills, computation tests, multi-tasking, recalling the position of objects, spelling, fluency of word generation, those that require being sensitive to external stimuli, remembering landmarks, use of verbal memory, appreciation of depth and perceptual speed, reading body language/facial expressions.

(b) While males generally outperform females in: targeting skills, working vocabulary, extended focus and concentration, mathematical reasoning and problem solving, navigation with geometric properties of space, verbal intelligence, habit formation and maintenance, most spatial tasks. (ibid.)

However delightful those differences and implications were, they came with no surprise. It was for long ago believed that females excelled at artistic activities while males at scientific ones. Females and males are different in many ways, for sure, but we have to bear in mind that “it is the way we deal with differences that is most important” (Woods, 2001) cited in (ibid., p.78). Even though females tend to be most of the time more proficient than males, as Gruszka, Matthews and Szymura (op. cit.) maintained that “recent systematic analyses suggest that females surpass males in some, but not necessarily all, areas of verbal ability (Garai & Scheinfield, 1968; Halpern, 2004; Jensen, 1998)”, we cannot make of it a fixed and definitive fact and overgeneralise it. Gender has surely a role in EFL learning, depending on the culture and society where the variable is extracted from; however, “despite existing research on the topic, it is not
possible to conclude that superior ESL skills exist in either gender.” (McCaughan, 2009, p. 80).

Conclusion

Gender is an omnipresent variable in any social sciences; there is no need of a special knowledge to realise that. If it is not the variable under scrutiny, it will be forcibly an extraneous variable the researcher has to control (if efficient interpretation has to take place). In our present case, it is the variable under the focus, and so naturally, it was important to know what it is as a concept. However, it is not always straightforward to define it as a concept. Knowing the very exact relationship between gender and its sometimes problematic interchangeable term ‘sex’ is of great help to have a better understanding about it as a concept. It is important to remember that despite existing myths and beliefs about gender and FL learning, it is not practical to make any sort of conclusion without some investigations first. We live in a world in which learning a FL is almost inevitable as for females or males; therefore, we can no more afford the luxury of qualifying it as a female or male thing. Thanks to Feminism, males and females almost, if not equally, enjoy the same rights in almost everything; we are surely different in ways, but not to the extent to ascertain those myths about gender and language learning. From now on, we know that females and males do differ in many ways; however, as stated before, ‘the important thing is the way we deal with the differences’.
SECTION TWO: FLUENCY

Introduction

Languages are not learned just for the sake of mere learning; we learn a language to communicate with it. If that assumption is true, then any teacher will find it very hard to disagree with (Kormos & Dénes) when they say, “Speaking a language fluently is frequently the ultimate goal to be attained in mastering a language”. Fluency, however, being the dreamed goal of FL learning, is sometimes confused with some other concept in learning; and the way to measure it, when it comes to evaluations or research is not always very clear and convincing. In that respect, in this section, we will see what is fluency, what it should not be confused with, and delineate its aspects and features, just before closing up with the how (s) to measure it.

1.2.1. Definition

1.2.1.1. What is Fluency?

Fluency, introduced in English in early 17th century, from Latin ‘fluentia’ (from the verb ‘fluere’ meaning to flow), is “the quality of being able to speak or write a language, especially a foreign language, easily and well” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: Eighth Edition, 2010). As a concept, it can be defined either globally or narrowly. In its global sense, it is an interchangeable term of speaking proficiency; it “seems to mean global oral proficiency” (Bhat, Hasegawa-Johnson, & Sproat). In that sense, (Wood, 2010, p. 9) stated, “Fluency is often used as a synonym for effective spoken use of language. It is frequently used to mean ‘native-like,’ having a high overall degree of proficiency, or having a ‘good command’ on a language”. In its narrow sense, it is the “rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid and efficient translation of thought or
communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints or on-line processing.” (op. cit.). Fillmore (1979), as cited in (Cucchiarini, Strik, & Boves, 2000), identifies four different abilities that might be subsumed under the term fluency:

“(a) the ability to talk at length with few pauses, (b) the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned, and semantically dense sentences, (c) the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of context, and (d) the ability… to be creative and imaginative in… language use” (p. 989)

Let us not forget that fluency is not only about oral performances; “although it is obvious that fluency can be used to describe written performance (Lennon, 1990), most of authors restrict the use of the term to the oral modality.” (ibid.). Despite fluency is not such a difficult term to define, it is sometimes confused with Accuracy, another term in speaking proficiency.

1.2.1.2. Fluency and Accuracy

These two terms are very important facets of speaking proficiency; they are not interchangeable and they should not be confused with each other. Accuracy is the production of “error free” (Houssen & Kuiken, 2009) cited in (Vercellotti, 2012) utterances. It “refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 223). It is more grammar and syntax focused, in the sense that correctness primes over fluidity, unlike fluency which is smoothness focused. “Fluency refers to a level of proficiency in communication. The ability to produce written or spoken sentences… without pauses or breakdown in communication.” (Srivastava, 2014, p. 55). An accurate speaker might not be always fluent and vice versa. Fluency goes beyond accuracy, to add speed and pace to the utterance; not only
restricting to the appropriate use of grammar rules, but it also adds some finesse (intonation, rate of speech, controlled pauses…) to speeches to make it look native-like performance. According to (Binder, Haughton, & Bateman, 2002) “on a continuum from total lack of measurable performance to mastery, 100% correct is only a way there.” (p. 3)

Figure 1: Fluency in relation to accuracy

Nonetheless, we have to bear in mind that “Accuracy and Fluency are the two factors which determine the success of English language students in the future” (op. cit). For instance, a speaker who never makes grammatical mistakes, but hesitates a lot, makes too many pauses, lacks fluidity in his speech, is like a malfunctioning speaking robot; and a speaker who speaks very smoothly, with a very good pronunciation, but makes too many grammatical mistakes, is poor in syntax and lacks correctness, is just a ‘fluent fool’. This metaphor is to say that a proficient speaker has to be accurate and fluent at the same time, if true mastery is to be talked about.
1.2.2. Conceptions of Fluency

So far, there exist three notions of fluency. They are cognitive fluency, utterance fluency and perceived fluency.

1.2.2.1. Cognitive fluency

“It is the fluency that characterises a speaker… the speaker’s abilities to efficiently plan and execute his speech” as stated by (De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, & Hulstijn, 2013, p. 894); in other words, it can be equated with the Chomskian competence. It is concerned with the cognitive load a speaker has in a certain language that can allow him to function in various linguistic context.

1.2.2.2. Utterance fluency

“It is the fluency that can be measured in a sample of speech” (ibid.). It is the end product of a speech production; the physical part of a speech performance that can be objectively analysed. “Utterance fluency is a construct with several aspects” as noted by (Skehan, 2003) and (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005) cited in (ibid.). First, we have ‘breakdown fluency’, which can be measured by counting the number and length of filled and unfilled pauses. Second, we have ‘Speed fluency’, which can be measured by calculating speech rate such as number of syllables per second. Finally, we have ‘repair fluency’, which has to do with how often the speaker makes false starts, corrections, or produce repetitions.

1.2.2.3. Perceived fluency

“It is the impression that the listeners have of the fluency of a certain speech sample (or a certain speaker based on a sample)” (ibid.). Everyone has his own preferences; we might not perceive the same utterance the same, and we certainly do
not evaluate the same performance the same way. Consequently, perceived fluency is the most subjective of the three.

1.2.3. Features of fluency

We imply by features of fluency, the aspects that can be observed and taken into consideration to measure fluency, i.e. to decide how fluent a speaker is. More will be said about them in the coming part of measures; for now, we will just see what they are.

1.2.3.1. Pauses

Pauses are “commonly occurring features of natural speech in which gaps and hesitations appear during the production of utterances.” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 424); There are generally two classifications of pauses. “The first one is a physical and linguistic classification, and the second one is a psychological and psycholinguistic classification.” (Zellmer, 1994, p. 42). In the first classification, we have:

- Intra-segmental pauses, which are related to the occlusions of the vocal tract in normal speech production. They generally occur within a word.
- Inter-lexical pauses are those that occur between two words.

In the latter classification, we have the most famous two types of pauses:

- Silent pauses (or unfilled pauses), which correspond to silent portions in the speech signal. They usually mark instances of the speaker’s inspiration, or silent expiration.
- Filled pauses, which correspond to voiced sections in the speech signal. They mark moments of hesitations, repetitions or false starts; and they are signalled by some exclamations such as “er, uh, huh, erm, mm, …)

These two types of pauses generally occur between words.
1.2.3.2. Speech rate

The speech rate is the speed at which a speaker speaks. It may be influenced by many factors, for instance, the speaker’s familiarity with the language, the type of topic, and even the number of people present. (op. cit.)

1.2.3.3. Articulation rate

The articulation rate is “the number of syllables produced over a period of time, excluding any time devoted to pausing” (Towell, 1987) cited in (Stockdale, 2009, p. 9).

1.2.3.4. Mean length of run

The mean length of run “refers to the mean number of syllables found between filled and unfilled pauses in a speech turn” ibid., p. 10).

1.2.4. Dysfluency

Dysfluency is an antonym term of fluency. “In speech-language pathology… it denotes a situation-specific speech production disorder in which fluency of speech is disrupted by a lack of motor co-ordination in the muscles involved in articulation, phonation, or respiration” (Bussmann, 2006, p. 345). It is usually diagnosed in early childhood; as a speech pathology, we are more concerned with the mother tongue. Two symptoms are generally distinguished:

“(a) Tonic Dysfluency (stuttering), characterised by interruptions in articulatory movements due to spasm in the articulatory muscles; and (b) clonic Dysfluency (stammering) due to a quick sequence of contractions of the speech muscles that causes repetitions of sounds, syllables or words. Both symptoms can occur isolated or combined. Stuttering is more frequent in male than in female speakers.” (ibid.)
The term is also used in the context of second language; however, it is used with a general sense. “Dysfluency can also be used more generally to refer to any sort of breakdown in speech fluency” (ibid.)

1.2.5. Fluency measures

There are two approaches in measuring speaking fluency, which are the subjective approach and the objective approach.

1.2.5.1. Subjective approach

In the subjective approach, speakers are evaluated according to their perceived fluency. A rater listens to the speaker, it may be in real-time or a recorded sample, and then judges whether he is fluent or not. This approach is not encouraged in researches about fluency.

1.2.5.2. Objective approach

In the objective approach, speakers are evaluated according to their utterance fluency. A recorded sample is analysed with the help of modern technology. The features of fluency are measured by objective calculations:

- The speech rate is calculated by dividing the total number of syllables by the total time it took to utter them
- The articulation rate is obtained by dividing the total number of syllables by the phonation time
- The phonation-time ratio, by dividing phonation time by total time
- Mean length of run, the number of silent pauses divided by number of syllables
- Number of silent pauses per minute, is the number of silent pauses divided by the total time
• Mean pause duration, is the total length of silent pauses divided by the total number of silent pauses

• Number of filled pauses per minute, is the number of filled pauses divided by the total time

• Number of repair per minute, is the number of repetitions, restarts, and repairs divided by total time

• Mean syllable duration, is the number of syllables divided by phonation time.
  (De Jong N., 2013)

Conclusion

Fluency is one of the most important components, if not the most important, in speaking proficiency. It can be used as a legitimate stand of speaking proficiency, since it is very rare, sometimes even impossible, to find someone who is fluent in a language and a long way down in the scale of speaking proficiency at the same time. However, there is no whatsoever implication here saying that language mastery is completely limited to fluency only. We just have to bear in mind that, “If oral performance is to be assessed, fluency is a key area of ability which needs to be pinned down to specific proficiency criteria and levels.”) (Wood, 2010, p. 10). Fluency is not so problematic to define as a concept; as long as it is not confused with accuracy, which is a different term and level in speaking proficiency, it should be problem-free to be operationalized. There are however types of fluency (cognitive, utterance, and perceived), and some specific objective measures. Finally yet importantly, we have some aspects of fluency, all of which are detailed above. In this section, one just has to know that fluency is the priming goal of any foreign and second language learners.
# CHAPTER TWO: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

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2.2.1. Students’ questionnaire ................................................................................................... 44
Introduction

Now that we know what has to be known about gender and speaking fluency as researchable variables, we will see in this chapter how they correlate. The aim of the chapter is to give valid answers to the research questions we have; the hypotheses will be examined vis-a-vis the findings of the study, to see which of the research or the null hypothesis is confirmed.

In the order of the field investigation, the first section is about the interview and all its implications; the second is about the questionnaires, and the last third is about the field observation. To note that the forthcoming sections are the results of five months and half of research.
SECTION ONE: The interview and fluency analysis

The interview was thought of and designed as a subtle way of collecting students’ voice samples for fluency analysis; by the same occasion, it was possible to collect also some viewpoints about gender in the EFL learning context, viewpoints that really helped in the design of the rest of the research.

2.1.1. Participants and site

The population of the study is the students of third year English (LMD) in the University of Larbi Ben M’hidi; they are 275 students in total with 228 females and 47 males. The participants of the study are 20 students among whom 10 females and 10 males; the sample corresponds to exactly 7.2% of the population. Due to the high imbalance between the number of females and males, 7.2% gives some fair representativeness to males. The participants were chosen randomly in two separate lists: males apart and females apart. Those who declined to participate, mostly females, were replaced by some of their friends who volunteered to replace them; some also, mostly males, were nowhere to be found all the time (a month and few days) the interview lasted, as a result, they too were replaced by some suggested friends. Moreover, after the interview, two participants’ records did not meet the requirements of the analysis; the time needed for fluency analysis could not be extracted from their interviews due to the shortness. Since they could not be asked a second interview, at the risk of raising their awareness of the aim of the study and making them feel uncomfortable, two other females replaced them. In total, six participants were swapped; however, the balance was maintained between the two specialities (Civilisation and Linguistics); 10 (five females and five males) from each. The choice of the sample fell on third year students, for, at the last year of License, we suppose students already know enough about the language,
in the sense that we stop teaching them modules such as (‘Grammar’, and ‘Phonetics’) that teach the language; in simple words, they are better acquainted with English, and still have things to learn.

2.1.2. Description of the interview:

The interview is made of three main parts; each participants are interviewed on the same basis. The number of questions depends on the reaction of each participants; participants are given freedom of pace and thoughts in order not to threaten their faces.

Part One: Describing

In this part, the primary aim is to make the participant describe something; the choice of the thing to describe depends exclusively on the interviewee. The first choice the interviewer came with was to describe a favourite movie if the participant had any; however, before the interview begins, the interviewee is asked about his preferences, and after the discussion, the questions are instantaneously constructed about the chosen topic. This part is solely intended to collect voice samples for fluency analysis, and participants are not told so; the only thing they are told is that we needed their natural talk.

Part Two: The role of gender in Foreign language learning proficiency

The second part aims at knowing the participant viewpoint about who could be the best learners in FL learning between females and males. The questions are same for all participants in this part; however, they have the choice whether to answer or not. When an interviewee chooses to answer, a simple choice between the two is not enough; she/he has to give convincing argument, and of course according to her/his own experience as an FL learner. This part is intended to collect the participants’ place in FL learning according to themselves.
PART THREE: The possible cause(s) of level inequality between genders in EFL

In this last part, participants are asked about what might make a learner better than another according to her/his gender. Again, the participant is free to give any reason she/he thinks is reasonable. After the participant gives her/his views, he/she is asked whether society and culture or biology are responsible for shaping individuals’ learning outcome. This part is also intended to give some ideas to the researcher about what learners themselves think of the problem. The participant has to answer only if he/she can or wants to do so.

2.1.3. Results and interpretations:

All the participants have been successfully interviewed and the voice samples analysed. The results are displayed and interpreted in the forthcoming parts.

2.1.3.1. Results of the interview and analysis of the fluency:

There was no unanimity of choice in the topic to describe among the participants on the first part; however, only 4 student (all of whom are females), representing 20% of the whole, chose different topics instead of movies. The first one described ‘vampires’, the second described ‘how to be successful’, the third described ‘her mother’ and the last one described ‘the relationship between ‘boys and girls’. All the other students talked about their favourite movies or type of movies. Due to time constraint, the analysis was limited to 30 seconds of talk extracted from each voice sample. We used the software ‘Praat’ to help in the objective analysis of utterance fluency.

a. Females’ results:

Praat helped to identify the number of silent pauses and the time they take from the total time; however, it needed some configurations. For instance, to be able to identify
pauses, we configured it to 0.4 second as the minimum reference of silent pauses; which means that any silence equal or longer than 0.4 second will be marked as silent pause. (View figure 2)

**Figure 2:** The interface of Praat analysing fluency (F6)

In this figure, we can see the number of silent pauses (between the blue lines), the spectrogram of the record and the total duration (centre bottom); however, the time of pauses are not visible in this figure, since we need to zoom in the numbered part only to view its time.
Figure 3: Zoomed image of the first silent pause

Here we can see the time of the first silent pause (bottom, visible part).

Even though the pauses are very important to analyse fluency, another important thing is needed; the number of syllables has to be counted. Consequently, the records had to be transcribed, which can only be done manually. (To view in the appendices). The formulae of measure, detailed in the previous chapter, were used to temporally analyse the different aspects of fluency of each participant. The following results were obtained:
Table 1: Females’ fluency scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPT</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>PTR</th>
<th>MLR</th>
<th>MPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>F9</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first table displays the scores obtained by females in the temporal measures. The female participants are coded as F followed by the order of interview. SPT stands for Silent Pause Time, which is in seconds; SR is the Speech rate, AR (Articulation Rate), PTR (Phonation time Ratio), MLR (Mean length of Run) and MPD (Mean Pause Duration). The significance of these results will be discussed later on.
b. Males’ results:

The same Praat configuration was applied to males.

![Image of Praat interface](image)

**Figure 4**: The interface of Praat while analysing (M1)

Here again we can see the number of silent pauses, spectrogram and total duration; to note that we can even notice empty spaces in the spectrogram where silent pauses occur.

Males in the temporal analysis of fluency obtained the following results:
### Table 2: Males’ fluency scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPT</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>PTR</th>
<th>MLR</th>
<th>MPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coding principle is the same; to note that the number given according to the order of interview is independent for each gender.

**c. The native reference:**

Two native speakers were randomly selected, downloaded from the internet (YouTube). A female native, Jade Lake from Canada, in her twenties, who described ‘an important person in her community’; and a male native, Tommy Eddison from the United States of America, in his thirties, who described ‘what it feels like to be blind’ (he is blind). Their voice samples were analysed under the same bases, and they will serve as references in interpreting the scores. The following tables displays their scores.
Table 3: Jade Lake’s scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPT</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>PTR</th>
<th>MLR</th>
<th>MPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F0</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The references are coded with the number zero.

Table 4: Tommy Eddison’s scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPT</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>PTR</th>
<th>MLR</th>
<th>MPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 0</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.3.2. Gender in EFL learning proficiency

The participants were asked these questions: According to your experience, which of females or males are the most proficient learners in EFL? And, is this difference of level related to biology (gender determined), society or something else? They had to justify their answers whenever they could. They gave many insights; the most important points are as follow:

a. Females:

For some females, males are more proficient than females; that is because males are more likely to understand better than females. They are bold, and they participate more than females in the classrooms. They are more likely to adopt native accents, which will bestow on them teachers’ attention and favour. They get the chance to interact with native speakers via social networks (Skype as stated example), something females are not overtly allowed to do in their society; they talk in the Target language between them,
unlike females, and become more acquainted with it. Moreover, males are surpassing themselves trying to disprove the belief that females are better language learners than them. For some others, females are obviously more proficient than males. They are more flexible; males feel shy in the classroom because they are too few among too many females. Males are too busy with part-time works, whereas females are free and constantly ‘stuck at home’; they have all their times to study. A last point was that, since males are naturally more intelligent than females, they do not make efforts, and eventually females get better than them because they make effort to compensate that deficit. Only two females claim that females were biologically more capable in learning languages than males, purporting that the female brain catches ideas faster than males’; some claim society was the reason. However, most of them believe it depends on individuals’ commitment, that gender has nothing to do with being proficient or not. Nevertheless, the thing that attracted our attention the most is that many of them acknowledged the fact that there are too few males in their classrooms, that females feel secured among themselves while males feel somewhat shy.

b. Males:

Some males too believe that females are more proficient than males; most of those claim that it is because of biological predispositions. Females have an extraordinary capacity of memorising things, even those they do not understand; they pay attention to every detail. Their brain is endowed with multitasking; they are likely to imitate what they see and hear in movies and songs, because their environment easily affects them. Moreover, females feel in their world in classrooms, since most students are females. On the other hand, some others claim males are more proficient than females. They are smarter than females; they understand better and they learn language for knowledge not for prestige. They practice with friends outside classrooms. Some answers were even
philosophical; a male participant stated that females are better learners but that males are more of brilliant learners. Many believe it all depends on society; one of those claims that since females are more likely to get jobs more than them, they are obliged to surpass themselves to maximize their chances. Some also believe it depends on individuals. Males were brief about that point, too brief that some of them did not even give clear answers.

An interesting point about the interview was that some females and males gave identical views; they agreed about some points such as the large number of females, the lack of practice of females, social expectations and females’ biological predispositions. As stated before, here appeared only the most important points, those that were directly relevant to this study; for more insights, the transcripts are available in the appendices.

2.1.4. Interpretation and significance of the results:

At this point, we cannot still confirm any of the two hypotheses; instead, we can answer one the research questions, which was: Which of the two genders is the most proficient speaker? And which we will specify more to be: Which of females or males are the most fluent in speaking as EFL learners?

The results show that females are more fluent than males; the means of the females’ scores are slightly better than males’.
Table 5: Comparison of females and males’ means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F Average</th>
<th>M Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTR</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLR</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPD</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPT</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, where the decisive scores are highlighted in blue show that females appear to be more fluent than males. Fluent speakers have a high phonation time ratio, usually a high Speech rate and tend to have less silent pauses time (and mean pause duration), as mentioned in (Wang, 2008, pp. 22-23). As the table shows, this is exactly the case here. As a group, females outperform males; however, individually, the most fluent student is a male; he uttered 102 syllables in 30 seconds, and outperforms everyone else as his results show. The most fluent female, is just a bit behind him, with 99 syllables in 30 seconds.

Table 6: Scores the two most fluent participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPT</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>AR</th>
<th>PTR</th>
<th>MLR</th>
<th>MPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, these two participants have remarkable scores; they have very fine accents (American accent). The most fluent being a male, it is noteworthy to know
that the most dysfluent too was a male, with just 50 syllables in 30 seconds, a silent pause time of 8.73 seconds; (his results are visible in table 2).

Compared to natives, the participants are not too far behind; they have acceptable scores as a group. In fact, it is hard to believe, listening to their records, that all of them were non-natives; most of them sounded like natives with fine pronunciations. They made few grammatical mistakes and none of them got anxious in front of the recorder.

**Table 7: The participants’ means and native references’ scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F average</th>
<th>M average</th>
<th>F reference</th>
<th>M reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTR</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLR</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPD</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPT</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, we can see that the native female is more fluent than the male, but just very slightly. The female native uttered 110 syllables in 30 seconds and the male, 132 syllables. We can say that our participants are not bad at all, since their PTR and SPT are very close to the native references’. In addition, the two most fluent are even closer.

As for the second part, we can say that students themselves are conscious of their might and deficits. They clearly have ideas about their situation. However, it would be too precocious to interpret them now, since we do not have yet any confirmation of them; the coming sections aim at shedding light on them.
Conclusion

In this section, we managed to answer one of the research questions, satisfying by the same occasion a great need of the study. However, though we know who is fluent and who is not, we do not know yet what made them fluent. The results of the analysis show that females are more fluent than males. Nonetheless, we have to acknowledge the fact that the participants are somewhat fluent compared to native speakers, especially F4 and M2 who showed outstanding results. The confirmation of the hypotheses are yet to come in the next sections.
SECTION TWO: The survey (questionnaires)

Introduction

The primary goal of this section is to find out the reason(s) of differences in fluency level between the two genders, collecting by the same occasion their teachers’ perspective about gender and language learning. The findings and interpretations of the survey are delineated in this section.

There were two questionnaires, one for students and one for teachers of Oral Expression only, in the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’Hidi University. They were designed exclusively for the collection of information about gender and EFL learning.

2.2.1. Students’ questionnaires:

The students’ questionnaire was designed after the results of the interview were analysed; it aimed at finding whether gender had something to do in the gaps found between students’ fluency level. The results are detailed below in the coming parts.

2.2.1.1. Population:

The participants were the same we interviewed before; the 20 students were the only concerned. None of them dropped out of the study; they all consented to continue the study until the end.

2.2.1.2. Description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions parted in three parts. There were mainly two types of questions: multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was ethnographic in nature, in the sense that there were given spaces after almost each multiple-choice question for the applicant to explain or justify his choice. Those parts aimed at having a better understanding about the culture where participants’
genders are defined. In questions where the choice were more than one, participants were given the freedom to choose more than one choice, of course compatible choices. Moreover, some lines were given in case their choice was not in the choices beforehand, letting them the freedom and possibility to provide even new things that were not thought of during the design of the questionnaire. We did our best, so that the questionnaire be as valid, non-discriminatory and less face threatening as possible. There were three main parts, sometimes overlapping.

**Part one: Background information**

The aim of this first part was to collect information about the applicant; it is composed of five questions: one about Gender (Q1), one about Age (Q2), one about the years learning English (Q3), one about Personality (Q4) and one about their Current level in English (Q5).

**Part two: survey to find out the reasons of fluency level**

This part aims at finding out the reason why the participants had differences in their fluency level, why each of them had their current level, and if ever gender had a role to play in there. Six questions made up this part; information such as their stay in an English speaking country (Q6), their means to improve their English (Q7-8), the opportunity they have to practice in relation to their gender (Q9-10-11).

**Part three: Further information about participants’ perspective of English**

This part is composed of five questions, with the aim of collecting the respondents’ perspectives of English as a language (Q12), preferences of learning strategy (Q13) and teacher’s gender (Q14), assiduity in following teachers’ instructions (Q15) and perspective about accuracy and fluency (Q16).
2.2.1.3. Analysis of the results:

Before analysing the responses yielded by the questionnaire, we analysed first the questionnaire itself for reliability. The Cronbach Alpha was run for reliability test on SPSS.

**Table 8**: Cronbach’s Alpha result (reliability statistics) (students’ questionnaire)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourteen questions (only those which could be coded) out of the 16 were analysed; the Cronbach’s Alpha score varies only from .00 (meaning zero consistency in measurement) to 1.0 (meaning perfect consistency in measurement). Our questionnaire scored .31, which means that 31% of the variance in the score is reliable; therefore 69% is error variance. Thirty-one percent is not very good; however, it is acceptable and somewhat realistic.

**PART ONE**: Background information

**Q1- Gender**

**Table 9**: Students’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have 10 females and 10 males, which means all the participants specified their genders.

**Q2- Age of participants**

**Table 10: Age of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean = 21.40                        Std Deviation = .94

![Figure 5: Age of students](image)

The majority of participants are aged between 21 and 22, with 55% and 25% of the whole; and only very few between 23 and 24. The youngest female is 20 and the oldest
and the oldest is 22; for males, it is 20 and 24. The mean age is 21.40 years old with a standard deviation of .94.

**Q3- How long have you been learning English as a Foreign Language? (University, and private tutoring, if any)**

All the participants have been learning English as a foreign language at the level of University for 3 years by the time of the study; none of them mentioned to have taken private courses, and none of them was repeating the year or ever repeated any year before.

**Q4- How would you define your personality?**

**Table 11: Personality of students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extrovert</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of them, 60% are extrovert; we noticed that the only shy is a male; however, we have more extrovert males than females (7 vs. 5), more introvert females (2 vs. 1) and more bold females than males (3 vs. 1).

Q5- What is your current level in English?

Table 12: Students’ fluency self-assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little below average</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Students’ personality
Figure 7: Fluency level

Seventy percent of them assessed themselves as good; we also noticed that some students assessed themselves as very good; moreover, none of them chose ‘a bit below average’ or ‘bad’.

Part two: Survey to find out reasons

Q6- Have you ever been in an English speaking country?

Table 13: Visit of an English native country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit of an English country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the participants admitted to have never visited or stayed in an English speaking country prior to the study.

Q7- What do you do to improve your English?

Table 14: Students’ activity to improve their English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch English movies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice with friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to English songs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the above</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Students’ Activity to improve
Most students, 55% use all the proposed activities to improve themselves; to notice that none of them limited to ‘classroom activities only. Furthermore, some participants suggested some other activities such as reading, writing and listening to audio books.

**Q8- How often do you have access to (your choice (s) above)?**

**Table 15:** Students’ degree of access to their improvement activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of access</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9:** Students’ degree of access

Eighty-five percent of the participants always have access to their activities, with only 15% accessing them sometimes; however, none of them has a seldom access.
Q9- Did you ever have a problem to access (your choice(s)) because of your Gender?

Table 16: Students’ gender as a problem of access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender as a problem of access</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Students’ gender as a problem of access

An overwhelming majority, 95% answered no; only one participant, making up 5% of the whole, has a problem of access because of gender.

Q10- How often does your teacher call upon you?
Table 17: Students’ interaction with teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of interaction with the teacher</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: Students’ interaction with the teacher

Most of the participants answered sometimes; however, those who answered always are also considerable; moreover, few answered seldom.
Q11- Does your society have any expectations of you being *male/female* in learning English as a FL?

Most of the participants said that their society had no expectation of them, regardless their gender. Some said they were expected to succeed, especially females. Further details will be given on this question when we will be interpreting the results.

**Part three: further investigation**

**Q12- English is a (n) ..................... language to learn.**

**Table 18: Level of difficulty of English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English as a language to learn</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the participants answered ‘easy’, with no exception; they all view English as an easy language to learn.

**Q13- What kind of learning strategy do you use to learn English?**

**Table 19: Students’ learning strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy to learn English</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive strategies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 12: Students’ strategy to learn

The answers were somehow balanced in this question; equal numbers of students, 35%, chose memory strategies and social strategies; and the other 30% opted for cognitive strategies.

Q14- How often do you follow the instructions of the teacher?

Table 20: Students’ degree of compliance with the teacher’s instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of compliance</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 13: Students compliance with instructions

Sixty-five percent answered sometimes; we were somewhat surprised to see that only 15%, the minority, answered always; the rest answered seldom.

Q15- What kind of teacher do you prefer?

Table 21: Students’ preference of the teacher’s gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference of teacher’s gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 14: Students’ preference of teachers’ gender

The majority, 80%, has no preference of the teacher’s gender; as the figure shows, only 5% prefer female teachers; 15%, however, prefer male teachers.

Q16- In speaking, being fluent is more important than being accurate.

Table 22: Students’ perspective about accuracy and fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency is more important than accuracy</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 15: Students’ perspective about fluency and accuracy

Fifty-five percent believe being fluent is not more important than being accurate, as 45% believe the opposite.

2.2.2. Teachers’ questionnaire

We were able to include teachers too in the study. Their participation was optional; however since time allowed it, we could afford to collect some of their views.

2.2.2.1. Population

The target population was the teachers of ‘oral expression’ at the University of Larbi Ben M’Hidi; we had about 10 of them. We sampled six of them, three females and three males. Three of them were the teachers who were teaching ‘Oral Expression’ to the 20 students participating in the study by the time it took place; they were two females and one male. The other three were chosen randomly.
2.2.2.2. Description of the questionnaire

The teachers’ questionnaire was designed to collect teachers’ perspectives about gender as a variable in EFL learning; since those teachers were frequently teaching about and assessing fluency in their classrooms, we had hoped their views would give us a better understanding. The questionnaire was composed of 15 questions; it was also ethnographic in nature. It contained multiple choice questions (close-ended questions), open-ended questions, scale questions and rating questions. And of course, lines were given wherever necessary for suggestion or explanation. The questionnaire was divided into two parts:

**Part one: Background information**

In the first part, we needed information about the respondent himself/herself. This part has five questions: one about gender (Q1), one about age (Q2), one about the degree held (Q3), one about the years of teaching (Q4) and one about the places of teaching (Q5).

**Part two: Gender and EFL learning**

This part aims at collecting teachers’ views about gender in their classrooms: how they see it, how it affects their pedagogy and what they do about it. It has 10 questions. Questions are asked about the composition of their class (Q6), about their consideration of gender (Q7-10), about the quality of their students in terms of gender (Q8-11), about their degree of interaction with females and males (Q9), about the skills they consider most (Q12), about the aspect they focus on in their evaluation (Q13), about the way they group students in group works (Q14) and about who they might consider as most proficient EFL learner.
2.2.2.3. Results and analysis

For reliability test, Cronbach’s Alpha was also run on the teachers’ questionnaire.

Table 23: Cronbach’s Alpha result (Reliability statistics) (teachers’ questionnaire)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.66</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 11 questions that could be coded, out of the 15, were tested. The questionnaire scored .66; implying 66% of the score in the variance is reliable, with 34% of variance error, which is a very good score. The questionnaire has consequently consistency in its measurement.

Part one: background information

Q1- Gender

Table 24: Teachers’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the six teachers returned their questionnaires, and none of them forgot to tick his/her gender.

Q2- Approximate age
Table 25: Teachers’ approximate age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Teachers’ approximate age
The oldest teacher was between 50 and 55 years old and the youngest was between 25 and 30. We noticed that there were more, 33%, young teacher between 25 and 30 than the others.

**Q3- Degree held**

Five teachers, 83.30%, had a Magister degree and two of them were studying in the Doctoral school. One, 16.70%, had a Bachelor (BA) degree.

**Q4- How long have you been teaching?**

The shortest period was 5 years, a female, and the longest was over 30 years, a male; the other two females had respectively 8 years and 21 years. The other two males had 6 years and 20 years of teaching experience.

**Q5- Are you teaching elsewhere apart university?**

None of them answered that question, meaning none of them was teaching elsewhere apart from university.

**Part two: Gender and EFL learning**

**Q6- How is your classroom? (In terms of culture)**

**Table 26: Teachers’ classrooms cultural composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom composition</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unanswered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 17:** Teachers’ classrooms cultural composition

Almost all the teachers had a homogeneous classroom; 83% of them answered so. Only one teacher did not answer that question.

**Q7- Did you ever consider gender as a determinant variable in your class?**

**Table 27:** Teachers’ consideration of gender in their class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender consideration</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 18: Teachers’ consideration of gender in their class

The majority of teachers, 83% admitted to consider gender in their classroom as a determinant variable; only some 17% answered no.

Q8- Your best students are?

Table 28: Teachers’ best students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always males</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always females</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit of both</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 19:** Teachers’ best students

Half of the teachers, 50%, answered females as their best students; 33% answered ‘a bit of both’ and only 17% answered males as best students.

**Q9- How often do you interact with male and female students?**

**Table 29:** Teachers’ degree of interaction with male students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of interaction</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seldom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30: Teachers’ degree of interaction with female students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of interaction</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20: Teachers’ degree of interaction with female and male students

We noticed here, as we can see in the histogram, that teachers interact more with females students than females; five always against three for females and one sometimes against three.

Q10- Do you take into consideration gender differences in planning your lessons and activities?
Table 31: Teachers’ consideration of gender in their lesson planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration of gender in lesson planning</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Teachers’ consideration of gender in their lesson planning

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers surveyed, did not consider gender in planning their lessons; and only 33% considered gender in doing so.

Q11- Which of your students follow your instructions better?
Table 32: Teachers’ students who follow instructions better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who follow instructions better</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 22: Teachers’ students who follow instructions better

Fifty percent of teachers said females followed their instructions better, and the other 50% said both; however, no teacher answered males alone.

Q12- Being a teacher of oral expression, which skill (s) is the most important for you?
All the teachers chose Speaking as the most important, something that was expected since they were all Oral Expression teachers. Some teachers also mentioned listening and reading as important; however not as Speaking.

**Q13- What aspects do you focus more on when evaluating students’ oral performances? (Rank according to the order of importance, from 1 to 4)**

Fifty percent ranked fluency as first aspect, and the other 50% ranked lexical richness as first aspects. The other two aspects (phonology (pronunciation), and grammatical accuracy) only came in as second, third and even sometimes as last aspect to be focused on.

**Q14- How do you group your students in group works?**
Table 34: Teachers’ technique to group students in group works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique to group students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to their level</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to their gender</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let them choose</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 23: Teachers’ technique to group students

Fifty percent of the teachers let their students choose, and the other 50% group them randomly; they do not take into consideration the level and gender.

Q15- According to your experience so far, which of males and females are the most proficient in EFL learning?
Some teachers said males and some others said females; the question was an open-ended one, and unfortunately, some did not answer. The results will be further detailed when we will be interpreting the findings.

2.2.3. Interpretation and significance of the findings

Both students’ and teachers’ questionnaires were initially set forth to serve only one purpose, which is to investigate the role of gender in EFL learners’ attainment of speaking fluency. We have seen the results and their analyses, now, let us see what they may signify for our research.

2.2.3.1. Students’ questionnaire

The students’ questionnaire yielded some very valuable information about our enquiry. We have had some possible answers for two of our research questions: Is there any relationship between gender and EFL learners’ speaking proficiency? And, what are the reasons for the differences of level?

Many of the participants do believe gender is not responsible for EFL success; in fact, they said so when they were given lines to justify their answers. Furthermore, the results show that gender has never been a problem for the participants in accessing study supports; only one out twenty claimed her gender prevented her from doing whatever she wanted to learn. Many claimed their society had no expectation of them because of their gender, even though some females said they were expected to succeed in language learning. When we attempt to match the results of the questionnaire with those of the interview, we can say that in our context here gender has no significant effect on EFL learners’ speaking proficiency. In fact, the participants, notwithstanding their gender, had almost similar answers, when we were investigating the reasons for their proficiency. The majority assessed themselves as ‘good, fluent’; however, what attracted our attention
was that only very few, three students, assessed themselves ‘very good, very fluent’ and three others as ‘somewhat good’. Those who claimed to be very fluent were actually the ones who scored best in the fluency results, and those who chose ‘somewhat good’ were not very good. They have similar learning strategies, even though some males claimed in the interview that females relied only on memorization. None of them ever visited an English speaking country, and yet, they all think of English as an easy language to learn. There is no big difference in their personalities and the majority has the same age (between 20 and 22 years old). Even though females interact and follow teachers’ instructions more than males, a factor we can relate to the large number of females in classrooms, we do believe gender has no determinant role in EFL learning; at least in our context here. Basing our assumptions on the results, we can say that the research hypothesis has been confirmed. As for the reasons for the differences in level, we have thought of many possible reasons. Individuals’ commitment was the first the results suggested; females are good, not because of their gender, but instead because most of them are more committed to learn; they always follow teachers’ instruction, and always interact with them. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all males are rebellious; we cannot afford putting forth such an unjustified claim; there are males who are as committed, if not more, as females. Another reason is the degree of self-confidence, since the students who were extrovert, and assessed themselves very fluent and fluent were actually those who scored best. The last reason is the activities they resorted to and the degree in which they access them. Those who scored best have the same activities which are practice with friends, social networking and movies in English (dubbed or subbed) and they admit to always access them.
2.2.3.2. Teachers’ questionnaire

The teachers’ questionnaire aimed at attesting what the students have said; we hoped to have further insights from those who were teaching and evaluating them.

Strangely, teachers too believe that gender is not a determinant variable in EFL learning success. Despite our teachers were of different ages, between 25 and 55 years old, and with very different teaching experiences, from 5 years for the youngest to over 30 years for the oldest, they seemed to agree on the same points regarding their students. The majority claimed females were their best students, that females followed their instructions better and that they interacted more with female students. Some teachers mentioned that since most of their students were females, they found themselves interacting more with them. To notice that all the teachers have homogeneous classrooms in terms of culture. Concerning teachers themselves and their pedagogy, the majority of them admitted not to consider gender in designing their lessons; however, the overwhelming majority do consider gender as a determinant variable in their classrooms. This implies that they treat all the students alike vis-à-vis their lessons and evaluations notwithstanding their gender. When it comes to evaluation, teachers are more interested in fluency and lexical richness than pronunciation and grammatical accuracy. Perhaps this could explain the reason why in the interviews, students were mispronouncing words and making grammatical mistakes more than they stuttered or lacked the words to express their ideas. Finally, for some teachers, females are the most proficient learners; for them it is because they are more committed than males, and even some of them pointed out the problem of their being more numerous than males. Some others opted for males as the most proficient; for them males were ‘more practical than females’ as quoted one female teacher; some of the few males they have in their classrooms were always the best or among the best.
Conclusion:

The results of the collected data allowed us to confirm our research hypothesis, which claimed that the relationship between gender and speaking proficiency was not that significant to predetermine who would be a more proficient EFL learner. We also answered two of the research questions. We found that there was no significant relationship between gender and EFL learners’ speaking proficiency. Some possible reasons were individuals’ self-commitment, self-confidence and the activities they took part into to improve their English. Teachers’ responses also added some more confirmation to the results beforehand. Notwithstanding the fact that we have found some valuable insights about the reasons behind the differences in level and about the assiduity of females, we think it is too soon to exclaim hooray. To add more validity to our results, we have decided to meet with both students and teachers while they undertake their routine. There have been some classroom observations; the results and interpretations will follow in the coming section.
SECTION THREE: Classroom observation

Introduction:

The classroom observations were thought of to answer the two last research questions. We wanted to see by ourselves what the case in their everyday classrooms was really. The result was fruitful, and the details are to follow.

2.3.1. Description of the classroom observation

The observation took place a month after the questionnaires were distributed. By the time we started, some few students had not still returned theirs. There were five sessions of observation, during Oral Expression sessions; our participants were divided between five groups, and three teachers. One session of one hour and half with each group. We took note of everything that went on in the classroom from the moment we settled in to the moment we left.

2.3.2. Results and analysis

First session: group 3 (SL)

It was a pioneering session where students had to start a new type of presentation. We sat at the back of the classroom. There were 33 females and 1 male at the beginning of the session; however, four females and three males came in later on to make it 37 females and 3 males. A group of four females went in front of the class; it was a group of storytelling. The girls had good pronunciations; we could understand all what they said. However, two of them had slow paces; they hesitated somewhat, but overall, they did fine. When they finished, the teacher, a female teacher, asked for students’ appreciations and comments. As there was no quick volunteer, she gave some feedback. A moment later, a male intervened and commented; another student, female this time,
commented. All the time the comment time lasted, only one male, the same one, talked; the rest were all females. A second group presented; they were five females, among whom one of our participants. They were good on the whole, even if some did hesitate and self-correct. Our participant was the same as when we interviewed her; she was good, confident and just fluent; to note that we are talking about F4 here. After that, the teacher gave some feedback; and trying to relax the atmosphere, she even made some jokes from time to time. No male participated this time; only girls commented. The session lasted an hour and some twenty minutes.

**Second session: Group 2 (SL):**

At the start, there were 31 females and 3 males. It was the same presentation session. The teacher, a male teacher, asked for a volunteer to present; before a volunteer finally committed, he explained things first. After a while, a male student, one of our participants, volunteered. He told his story in a captivated way, with some music he brought in. He had a very good pronunciation; in fact, he even switched accent while impersonating different characters. A female student was the first to comment, and then the teacher gave some feedback; the teacher himself acknowledged that the male student was fluent. A second volunteer, a female took the stage. She was good too, and fairly fluent. The teacher commented and asked a girl to talk. After that, there were three other individual presentations, all females; they were all average or good; only the male who presented participated from time to time, all the others were females. Before the end of the session, the male who presented, asked to leave, making it 2 males among 31 females. The session lasted an hour and some minutes.
**Third session:** Group 4 (SL):

There were 23 females and 15 males. The teacher started by distributing some handouts about storytelling. There were a small discussion before presentations started. The teacher, the first female teacher, gave some feedback. The first group presented, a group of four girls. Most of them were good. Students commented, males and females. Another group presented. And they commented again. The session was a bit short, just one hour; however, basically, it was the same in nature as the previous.

**Fourth session:** Group 1 (LLC)

There were 32 females and 7 males at the start; however, later on, a male came in and the teacher dismissed two females. The teacher, a female teacher, asked a male student to start. He presented; he was reading from a paper and his pronunciation was not so good; he was also not fluent. The teacher gave feedback and said he will have a second chance to present again. The teacher called a female student to present; she came up with excuses, but still ended up presenting. Her pronunciation was acceptable; she was also reading from a paper and she was not fluent. The teacher intervened since she stopped for a very long time. She left and the teacher asked another one to present. Despite she praised her, another took the stage at her stead. She presented; this one was very good; very native-like pronunciation, fluent and she was not reading from any paper. There was no comment time between presentations. Eight other students presented one after the other, among whom two of our male participants. They were all acceptable; our participant M2, who scored best in the fluency analysis, was very good; he told his story in a relaxed way. The session lasted one hour and half.
**Fifth session:** Group 2 (LLC)

There were 22 females and 8 males at the start; however, the teacher, the same female teacher, later on dismissed a female to make it 21 females. With no delay, Two females presented one after the others; they were acceptable. The teacher commented a bit, and then the third female presented too. The two last females were reading from their papers. Students were just listening. At a point, a student asked a question in a form of complaint; the teacher tried to justify her choice of methodology. Other students intervened; the discussion went on for quite a while. The whole class took part in it; a male student defended the teacher. After things cooled down, the teacher asked for a volunteer to resume the presentations. No one volunteered, and so she started calling names, none of whom was ready to present. Finally, two females saved the day. They volunteered to present. However, they turned out to be performing role-play instead of telling a story. The session lasted one hour and some minutes.

**2.3.3. Interpretation and significance:**

The results of the observation gave us the opportunity to answer the two last research questions, which are: Which of females and males benefit more of the teaching approach in this context? And, how does the difference manifest in the actual classroom?

The first thing that attracted our attention is that in all the five groups we observed, there were an overwhelming number of females and almost no males; only ‘group 4’ had over 10 males. We have seen that teachers interacted more with females, since most of the time they were volunteers; teachers were likely to ask female students more than males. Male students who were given speech were those who volunteered. In a classroom where we have 37 females and only 4 males, it would be just logical to say that females benefit more of the atmosphere than males do. They can talk with no
embarrassment in front their friend females, especially in a classroom where the methodology is to make student tell stories in front of their classmates. As for the first question, females benefit more of the current teaching approach in our context here. We have also noticed that in all the five groups, the male students sat all next to one another except in group 4 (SL) where they were a bit numerous. The presentation groups they formed were all females or all males. Obviously, students themselves are conscious of their gender, at least the way they were socialized. The manifestation of gender in the classrooms we have observed is that students are creating their own educational strata, and unconsciously, teachers are letting it pass. As a last point, we can also confirmed that the students who scored best in the fluency analysis, were not trying and impress an interviewer with the recorder by exaggerating their accent and speed; that was how they speak; we have had the opportunity to observe that in the classroom and during the conversations we have had after the sessions.

**Conclusion:**

We were able to confirm and see by our own eyes the points mentioned in the interview and questionnaires. The classroom observations gave us answers to our last research questions. We understand now why some people referred to language classrooms as females’ world; most teachers are female and almost all the students are females too. The aim of this research being to describe the gender phenomena in EFL, we will not make any rushed conclusions; we have only had some possible answers to the questions that were troubling our minds.
2.4. Pedagogical recommendations:

“Teaching is perhaps the noblest job of our time”, A wise man once said; the noblest, we cannot say, but without doubt, it is a very noble job, at least as long as the teacher teaches from the heart and with passion. We call for teachers to be the change in their classrooms. EFL classrooms are not females’ world; they just look like it. Teachers, whether female or male, should not stay indifferent in front of gender differences in their class. The first step is to consider it in the planning and design of lessons; females and males (individuals in general) do learn differently, therefore a balanced lesson will do the greatest good. When it comes to grouping, the group should be as mixed as possible; females and males together in groups, so that they learn from one another and maybe they will motivate one another. Letting the students choose their group mates will probably always end up with only homogeneous groups, as we have seen in the observed classrooms. Moreover, in the classrooms, teachers should not leave males alone in their corners, same for females. They have to sit side by side; a good teacher will always find ways to involve in the class discussions those who never talk (most of the time males). By paying attention to them, asking for their viewpoints or making them talk, of course in a subtle gentle way, isolated males will feel at ease in the classroom and you might as well as earn their interest and attention. As a personal experience, being a male student, most male students sit at the back, do not participate because they think the teacher is not interested in them, or because they do not want to make mistakes in front of ladies. We should try to make them feel important in the class, show them that languages are not only for females. It does not matter if they refuse to cooperate, most of the time they do; what matters is that we never stop trying; constant labours always pay off. We did not notice any problem with fluency in our context; the only problem is the way gender is materialised in the classrooms. Being four among
forty in the class, it is not always evident for males to be fully at ease in these conditions; what they need is a slight push from teachers. Gender will always be present in EFL classrooms, there will always be differences between our students; however, “It is the way we deal with differences that is most important” (Wood, 2001) cited in (Powell & Powell, 2010, p. 78).

2.5. Limitations of the study:

We have faced many setbacks in this research; frankly at the beginning, the project was believed to be unrealistic; we have almost believed so ourselves. It was somewhat pretentious planning to take on three different research methods (interview, questionnaire and observation) single-handedly. The first major problem was with the interview; we found some difficulties in finding quiet places for the interviews. However, once all the data gathered, came the hardest part, the part of transcription. We had to listen to 20 records, ranging from 3 minutes to 6 minutes, and then transcribe any audible sound in them. After the transcription, we had to analysed 30 seconds of each records; in there, we dealt with syllables, which means we had to count the syllables of each, ranging from 70 to 102 syllables; the reason why we could not go beyond 30 seconds. We analysed the records using the calculations for fluency measure all by ourselves. It took a month and some days, but eventually we pulled it through. The second was the questionnaire; some respondents took too long before returning them; the analysis of the questionnaires did not take much time though. Finally, the observation; for a month, we have been dropping notes sessions after sessions; it was hard, but we managed to do it. We were afraid of not being able to make it in time, so we started the research a month and half earlier; a precaution that fruitfully paid off.
2.6. Suggestions for future studies:

Speaking proficiency is a very vast concept; we could handle only one aspect, which is fluency, at a time. It will be very fruitful if future researches focus on the other aspects, and why even not on the entire aspects together if it is a research with large resources and enough time. As for gender, there is still a need for further research about gender in the classroom. We explored it somewhat, but unfortunately not too deeply, since it was not our main focus. Future studies could focus more on how gender manifests inside EFL classrooms. Gender is something permanent and in constant change, so it has to be fully understood and controlled if possible.
General Conclusion

Gender is an omnipresent variable, and EFL classrooms are no exceptions to its existence. Consequently, it has to be understood first before any remediation measure could be thought of. In this regard, our study took place in the Larbi Ben M'Hidi University, in Oum El Bouaghi. We worked with 20 students of third year LMD and 6 teachers of Oral Expressions. The research is built on two chapters: the theoretical part (Chapter 1) which contains a detailed section about gender and its literature, and a detail second section about fluency; and the practical part (Chapter 2) with three sections (one about the interview, questionnaire and the observation). We have found that females were more fluent than males, and that gender has no significant role in EFL learners’ speaking proficiency. Even though females were more fluent than males, this does not mean that we are going to confirm existing myths about gender and education; not at all, since females outperformed males only in group. The most fluent of all the participants was a male; yet again, this does mean that we are going to replace females with males in those myths; these have never been our intentions. We have found that it all depends on individuals, not their gender, but their commitment, after-class activities and self-confidence. Even though males are very few in EFL classrooms, some of them do feel at ease; we have seen that and some other aspects of classrooms by our own eyes. All the research questions were answered by the results of the data collected. We conclude by saying that one’s gender does never predetermine one’s chance of success in foreign languages learning; it all depends on what individuals do. Gender has a role, for sure, but it is not very significant. Teachers just have to learn to deal practically well with the difference in their classrooms. Some pedagogical recommendations were also suggested.
REFERENCES


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Appendices

Appendix one: the transcript of the interviews

Appendix two: students’ questionnaire

Appendix three: teachers’ questionnaire
Appendix I

The transcript of the interviews

[Transcript directions: commas “,” represent short pauses (very short pauses usually) semi-colons “;” represent long pauses, colons “:” represent stretching of the letter or word they occur after, periods “.” are very long pauses, unfilled pauses, usually marking the end of a turn, and with a falling intonation, the asterisk “(*)” in front of a word means the word is not correct, the question marks “?” represent a rising intonation, exclamation marks represent “!” represent stressed utterances]

Interview with F1 (in the courtyard of the university)

Idr: first start by telling us your name.

F1: My name is Khiari Rhim

Idr: um-huh, now I’m gonna ask you; are you interested in mythology and legend and stuff?

F1: yeah I’m very interested in those stuff.

Idr: why?

F1: er, I just believe that, er, they’re based on true stories, true facts etc.

Idr: And what’s your favourite character in those stories?

F1: let’s say vampires

Idr: um, interesting. What do you like most about them?

F1: er, I like, I like the fact that, er, they have to live for eternity, and they are immortal, no one can kill them, er; they’re, er, blood drinker. I believe that in certain point in time, there were people who drink blood in order to survive, I mean cannibalism etc. so I think
that all of those things makes them seem real to me and, er, at least, they were exist, they, uh, they existed in certain point in time.

Idr: very good. And now the second thing I’m going to ask you [paused due to an interruption of a passing car] your point of view about the two genders, I mean according to your experience which of two, whether females or males are better learners in the foreign language classroom

F1: er, well, I believe that when it comes to learning, er, I think that boys are more likely to understand and to, er, be good learners than girls; this is my point of view, but from my experience, from my three years here in university, I saw that many boys, er, many boys could easily develop their abilities at speaking, fluency, their skills etc.

Idr: so now, the last question, if I ask you right now; do you think that difference of level and stuff is related to biology and culture, I mean, to, like to the place you live in, or it just, it depends on the commitment of each individual?

F1: er, I can’t say neither of them, but it depends, uh, somehow, it depends on the culture, the culture affects those variables, but, er, the person

Idr: ok, that’ll be enough, so thank you

F1: welcome
Interview with F2 (in a classroom)

Idr: First, can you tell us your name?

F2: I am Sarah Deliliah

Idr: well, do you have any favourite movie in particular?

F2: oh yeah, actually, I have this movie that I adore, it is called dark shadows

Idr: Dark shadows,

F2: Starring Jonny Depp

Idr: good, can you describe it or tell me about it?

F2: yeah, it’s some sort of the fairy tale, like depicted on a, on a movie, it’s, it has this Gothicism, Gothicism, gothi, gothi, oh my God [followed with a laughter] this Gothicism in it; it’s, it has this dark atmosphere, this, uh, I don’t know, this mysterious character, this complication in events, it has, er, you know, like legends and myths, like vampires, and, and witches, and werewolf and all those sort of things, er, I just like it; it’s, it’s adorable

Idr: good, now I’m moving to the second stage. Of course you are a female and you’re, you’ve been studying with males

F2: yeah

Idr: so, according to your experience, in your point of view, which of the two is the best learner when it comes to second language or foreign language learning?

F2: when it comes to second or foreign languages, er, let’s say, mostly girls are more, how to say it, girls are, I don’t know; they are more flexible like, more flexible than boys. They talk, like they [said something in French] but boys, they find this difficulty, and I
think it because of something; I think it is because of they are shy or something in the classroom; when we have like 40 girls and 4 boys in one classroom, they are just, even if they know how to pronounce(*) and how to spell things, they just keep it to themselves, they go really, and in a bad manner, like they keep thoughts to themselves and they don’t pronounce(*) well just because they are shy; this is my point of view. And about girls, it’s like, it’s becoming a habit now; when you go into the classroom, it’s like

Idr: you are between friends, because mostly they are all girls

F2: mostly it’s all girls in the classroom, and it’s becoming like a sort of a ha, it’s a common thing; or she is a girl, she knows how to speak English, she must know how, but if he is a boy, I don’t know, maybe and maybe

Idr: ok

F2: but this, wait! This doesn’t mean that there are some boys who do not know how to pronounce(*) English, er, for example, if you take English as a foreign language, there are some boys who really, are really good at it.

Idr: ok, thank you

F2: you’re welcome
Interview with F3 (in a classroom)

Idr: well, first, tell us your name

F3: I’m Sonia

Idr: er, Sonia, since you are a student, you know we constantly ask ourselves the same question, How to succeed? How to be successful? And now, I’m asking you this question.

F3: actually, er, it is a problem that lot of us think that why we can’t live such, live such successful life. So we may be struggling, but it is easy; so if you want to succeed in your life, you have to be careful about what you do; so you, you have to do anything that lead you to success

Idr: anything?

F3: anything, yeah, but legal things; [laughter] ok, the first one, er, you try to get up from your bed at the morning and say it is a great day, so, to, to live a successful life, you need to, to live successful day; In addition to that, er, look to every, er, actor, musician, er, and: of course, they, they encounter a lot of problems, but even, even they, er, even though they succeed because they did what you, they want

Idr: now we move to the second stage. What do you think about gender in EFL learning, I mean which of the two genders is the most proficient one, whether females or males according to your experience as a learner?

F3: as a learner, I think that, er, males are more, er, flexible than females, because as we know that females are shy, er, everywhere, because, er, so as:, as I say, as I see in my classroom, er, we have a lot of girls and, er, we have little of boys, but I see that boys talk and participate more than girls, because they have experience, something like that.
Idr: now, the last question. According to you, is this difference related to the fact of being, uh, a man or a woman in the culture, I mean this is so because they want to work to get success or they are being successful just because they born man or woman? According to you

F3: according to me, I think that it is a matter of personality

Idr: commitment, so the gender does not matter

F3: does not matter; everyone can do whatever he wants; so I don’t think that gender is a problem her

Idr: ok, thank you

F3: welcome

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**Interview with F4** (in the courtyard)

Idr: well, would you tell me your name

F4: my name is Sana

Idr: ok Sana, do you have any favourite movie?

F4: I’m not a big fan of movies, I do prefer watching animes
Idr: animes, great, er, do you have any favourite anime?

F4: yep, one, it’s called Kimi ni todoke, it means from me to you

Idr: can you describe it?

F4: it’s a Japanese anime, yeah, it’s a sojo, sojo means romantic, it’s about a girl, who is kinda like me, she is shy she doesn’t talk to people, she is unsociable, er, people see her as, as a ghost or as a cursed girl, like, there are rumours about her, er, rumours about her, they think that when you see, when you look at her eyes more than five minutes you’re gonna be cursed; one day she meets a guy named Kazihaya, he is looking to, for the way to the school, he doesn’t, de didn’t find it so the girl shows him the way and he smiles at her, so she is so happy cause it’s the first one who smiles at her, as I told you before everyone who looks her is just apologised, no one speaks to her, and then the guy falls for her, and she doesn’t know, she thinks that he is just acting nice and kind, by time she falls in love with him too and it’s a really good story

Idr: yeah, sounds like a good story

F4: yeah ok

Idr: now we move to the next question, according to your experience of course, do you think that boys are better learners when it comes to foreign language or vice versa?

F4: well, I’m not sure if, er, you mean the three years I’ve been studying English?

Idr: yes, according to your experience

F4: yes, in my first year girls were better than boys, well, in my class, in our department when you see closer you’re gonna find that boys are better learners than girls; like

Idr: so boys are better than girls
F4: yes

Idr: according to you, now do you think that this: fact of being better than girls is related to the simple fact of being male? I mean to be a boy, or is it culturally socially determine? Or if there is something else, tell me, give me your reasons why boys are better

F4: why boys are better than girls

Idr: yes

F4: er, well, since I was little, people say that girls are better than boys at studying, in anything, I mean in motivation, stuff like this

Idr: yes

F4: so I guess, what I think right now is boys are trying to be better and they are

Idr: surpassing themselves to be better

F4: yes, they want to show themselves and to show that they are better than girls, not only working outside or

Idr: but also in language learning

F4: and also in language learning

Idr: ok, thank you

F4: you’re welcome
Interview with F5 (in a classroom)

Idr: well, would you tell me your name?

F5: My name is Narimen, third year students

Idr: ok, er, Narimen, do you have someone, in particular, in your life who is influencing you, I mean like your idol or someone?

F5: er, absolutely yeah, my mother

Idr: can you tell me a little bit about her?

F5: yeah, of course; she is my idol in my life, I: prefer, to, her advice; I want to be; she is the most important person. I don’t know why, but, er, she is my friend, she is my:, my intimate, she is my:, I can say that it is the most important and the most [a word I could not comprehend] person that I have advice and take advice from her; er, I don’t know if other people, especially girls follow the same and think that their mothers are their idol person, but particularly and usually I:, I’m:, I don’t say, I love her, and that doesn’t mean that because I love her she is idol, no, but, er, she has something secret, let’s say, uh, some strategies that makes me curious about her, so that I: feel, I don’t know, comfortable and, I want to follow her.

Idr: ok, very good; now, the second question

F5: uh huh

Idr: what do you think about females and males in language learning context, I mean which of them are the best learners?

F5: [laughter] ok

Idr: according to your experience of course
F5: of course, er, I don’t know, but, there is, if I said boys there is argument, if I said girls there is something to prove it; but particularly, I think that men, maybe in some aspects, they, er, they acquire foreign language better than girls, but in other things, I think that girls are more better than boys, er, if you take an example of patient, girls are more patient than boys, so that foreign language need to be patient, to search, to focus on something to be in detail, to go deeper, so girls are maybe, not all of them, but most are very patient so that they go deeper and they need to search, they are curious; I don’t say that boys are not, because [laughter] I’m afraid that my friends, they will kill me, but [laughter] I said that girls are:, another hand, you have that boys also need to, they are clever; yes they are

Idr: naturally?

F5: naturally, naturally, they are clever, intelligent

Idr: more than girls?

F5: more than girls; girls are making efforts, make effort to be intelligent, but boys naturally, they are clever and intelligent, so this, one, er, one thing, one way that help, er, this boy, but I think that boys, they don’t this, this way in an intelligent way

Idr: maybe because they are not interested in the subject matter, what do you think?

F5: the subject?

Idr: like for example learning English

F5: uh huh

Idr: maybe they are not interested in that, that’s why they do not make much effort

F5: no, I’m absolutely positive, because boys are always, they must, most of boys like the language, the, er, I don’t say the word, they need, they want to acquire language
Idr: prestige,

F5: prestige

Idr: they want to be prestigious

F5: yeah, they need prestige, but they don’t use it like girls

Idr: ok

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**Interview with F6 (in a classroom)**

Idr: Well, would you tell us your name?

F6: ok, my name is Boutheina

Idr: ok, Boutheina, can you, do you have any favourite movie

F6: yeah, I do; it’s Cast away, uh, the actor is Mel Gibson

Idr: is it Arabic or

F6: no, it’s an English movie;

Idr: ok, can you describe it?

F6: ok, it’s about a man who leaved(*) his country in a flight, but the flight made an accident, er, he fell in island, he lived four years in this island trying to have a normal life, if we can say, so he; he changed his life, and one day, he: made a boat and decided to go back to his land, and then, he saves, he saved his life with himself.
Idr: so the story is a little bit like Robinson Crusoe

F6: ok

Idr: any way, now we move to the second question

F6: ok

Idr: according to your experience do you think that boys are better learners or girls are better, I mean natural learners when it comes to foreign language?

F6: um, er, I think the girls are better, are the best!

Idr: ok, convince me

F6: ok, before that, we can say about the social, social factors, for example, the boys have many schedule to apply, they have, I don’t know, uh, works

Idr: so they are busy

F6: yeah, they are busy all the time, but the girls have to stay in home, uh, so they have to make themselves free time

Idr: to study?

F6: yeah, also by nature, I think the girls have like, er, their brain is:, how we can say it, er, can catch the ideas faster than the boys, we have that one, when we can’t focus on two things, but the boy cannot

Idr: ok, so for you, it’s on one way social and on the other, biological

F6: social and biological, yeah

Idr: ok, thank you
Interview with F7 (in a classroom)

Idr: would you tell us your name?

F7: my name is Soumia

Idr: ok, Soumia, do you have any movie, favourite movie in particular?

F7: yes, I do, I love Twilight movie

Idr: can you describe it?

F7: yes, this movie is composed of four parts; the first one is about how the hero and heroin met, and how they started to develop their love story, er, the second one is when they start to face, er, some troubles, since he is vampire and she is a human being, and, the, er, the disaster that could be caused of that, so, er, the third one is: the hero will be absent for the, on most the whole part; the fourth one is how, how they get married and what are the, er, the consequences that, that marriage caused, er, then they get, give birth to the third heroin and that’s all

Idr: ok, good, now the second question, what do you think about think about gendering in the classroom? I mean according to your experience are boys or girls best learners when it comes to foreign language learning?

F7: for me, boys are better

Idr: Why?

F7: first, according to me, boys are good in performing, I mean at the level of performance of the language, because they have some skills, er, to talk like native speaker, that’s what attracts teachers to them, so when they get teachers attention, they could express themselves more, they can
Idr: so girls do not get teachers’ attention much?

F7: look, for us in our society, girls are talkative, you know, so their dialect will seem at the level of English speaking; boys are better because they’re not so talkative in their language

Idr: so they talk more in English

F7: yeah, so they get to talk better

Idr: so, this difference is related, or socially and culturally, not biological

F7: yeah, social and cultural, for me

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**Interview with F8** (in a classroom)

Idr: first, would you tell me your name?

F8: yes, my name is Fatine

Idr: ok, Fatine, do you have any favourite movie?

F8: yes, I have a favourite movie which is edge of darkness

Idr: can you describe it?
F8: yes, edge of darkness is a great movie actually, er, the character is Mel Gibson, he has a daughter, and that daughter, is, lives far from him and she works in a company and that company, er, it’s illegal company, understand, and then, er, when she:, one day when she came to home[cut] at home, er, she looks very very sick and when he decided to take her to the hospital, when he opened the door, er, some people killed his daughter, and then he wants to find those people who killed his daughter; and now actually his daughter was sick, er, [clacked the fingers looking for the words] nuclear substance,

Idr: radioactivity

F8: yes, and then, he became sick like her, in the same way

Idr: infected

F8: yeah, by her, by his daughter, sorry, and then when she died, he started to look for those people, and you know, he keep looking to take revenge, this is it, and he was keeping, er, looking for those people, till he found them and he killed who killed his daughter and then he died in the end

Idr: good movie

F8: [laughter] it’s Mel Gibson, so it’s a good movie

Idr: [laughter] of course; now we move to the second question, according to your experience, do you think boys are better at foreign language learning or girls?

F8: er, in my experience, during the classroom, actually, I guess both of them, but boys are likely to learn this foreign language more than girls

Idr: how’s that?

F8: er, because in their daily life, they are likely to:
Idr: to practice

F8: yeah, to practice it more than girls, you know, you are a boy and you may use the internet, for example, to talk

Idr: with foreign language

F8: yeah, using skype, but, we, we can’t do this

Idr: so, you are telling me that being a female in a society like this, will prevent you from getting exposed to the language, I mean the access

F8: yes

Idr: ok, nice, thank you

Interview with F9 (in the courtyard)

Idr: first would you tell us your name?

F9: my name is Sarah Hadjress

Idr: ok Sarah, according to you what kind of relationship should be between a boy and a girl?

F9: you mean relationship of love?

Idr: yes, maybe
F9: er, it comes after marriage

Idr: why? Tell me your point of view

F9: so, it’s something that depends on our religion, that it is something forbidden to make a relationship for example between girl and a boy, I mean boyfriend and girlfriend, er, something that we cannot discuss, er, because we believe that our God, er, wants the best for us, so you got me, for example, er, if we see it, or if we think deeply in this point we may say that this kind of relation out of marriage will lead to catastrophic or unethical, er, results, for example child, children who are born from forbidden relations will live like a bad life because they will be irritated with others, they will make jokes on them, they will be psychologically, er, hurt, so:

Idr: so the relationship, I mean love should come only after marriage

F9: marriage

Idr: ok

F9: yeah

Idr: now we move to the second question, according to you, I mean according to your experience which of boys or girls are best learners when it comes to foreign language learning?

F9: so according to me boys are better in learning foreign languages than girls, this is like, scientific researchers find that girls are biologically more capable of learning a foreign language than girls

Idr: than boys

F9: yeah
Idr: but? Explain, go on

F9: er, it is something related to the speech apparatus and exactly the vocal tract

Idr: vocal tract

F9: the vocal tract, yeah, er, including the glottis the vocal cords the alveolar and so on and so forth, the component or these components in boys are more strong and more helpful to make boys learn, or speak foreign language more fluently, better than girls

Idr: so it is related to biology

F9: um-huh, also it is related to the cultural side, for example, the cultural side or the entertainment, for example boys are more watching TV and listening to songs and something like that, which will help them to get the language which is more likely to a native speaker language

Idr: uh-huh

F9: not like girls

Idr: ok, thank you

F9: never mind
Interview with F10 (in a classroom)

Idr: first, would you tell us your name?

F10: I’m Saouadi Sarah

Idr: ok, Sarah, what type of movies do you like the most?

F10: I prefer Indian movies

Idr: why?

F10: because, I don’t know, they like to exaggerate in their, er, events and something like that, one guy can defeat ten men at the same time [silence]

Idr: and?

F10: and when you watch a movie, you don’t understand, I mean, you don’t understand the climax of the movie, you have to watch the movie till the end, so they leave everything till the end, so you can understand

Idr: what’s going on

F10: yes

Idr: ok, now we move to the second question, what do you think, according to your experience, do you think boys are better than girls when it comes to foreign language learning or vice versa?

F10: it doesn’t, it’s not like that, I mean, it depends on the language itself, I mean when it comes to English for example, I think that girls are better than boys

Idr: ok, give me your opinion and reasons

F10: I mean, uh [silence]
Idr: according to your experience, because you are studying with boys and you’ve done so the two past years, so

F10: I don’t know, sorry

Idr: no, it’s ok, take your time, why do you think boys are better than girls?

F10, no, I said Girls are better than boys? [laughter]

Idr: [laughter] ah yeah, sorry, why do you think girls are better than boys?

F10: I don’t know

Idr: just like that?

F10: [laughter] just like that, I don’t know

Idr: ok, thank you

**Interview with M1** (in a classroom)

Idr: first, can you tell us your name?

M1: Abderahim

Idr: ok, welcome Abderahim, first, do you have any favourite movie in particular?

M1: yes, I do
Idr: tell me about it

M1: there was a movie that was released last year, it’s called Pain and gain

Idr: Pain again?

M1: pain and gain

Idr: pain and gain

M1: yes

Idr: ah good, can you tell me a little bit about it? because I never watched before

M1: ok, it’s: a movie which is based on: a true story that happened like a decade before, in Florida; er, there was like, er, a bodybuilder who was obsessed about money, he wants to get rich, he wants to have the American dream

Idr: so, it’s about bodybuilding and dreaming

M1: bodybuilding, and; it’s more about, the movie, it’s more about telling the story of criminals

Idr: ah

M1: but they were bodybuilders, bodybuilders, right, er, so he has his mate, like they were friends from childhood, he tried to convince him that we can have a better life and stuff, er, like a few weeks after, a good client of his introduces himself to the gym, and he signed in, in the gym, and he was like a personal trainer; while he was training, the other client was like describing himself, talking about his money, he was rich; they started him and his friend, they started planning on kidnapping him and make him sign on some papers to take his wealth, right

Idr: sounds cool
M1: yeah, they join, er, after three days before starting the practice, starting like doing the plan, they joined another one [a word I didn’t comprehend], another one came to join the rock, Dwayne Johnson,

Idr: yes

M1: he joined him, they kidnapped him, they made a plan, where he is going, what he is doing, they kidnapped him, they took him to the basement of his house and starting like torture him

Idr: laughter

M1: yes, and: they put a band on his eyes in order to not see him, he recognised him from the smell, because, when he was training, he used to smell the perfume, it’s long, so in the end

Idr: any ways, I have some ideas about the movie now

M1: yes

Idr: now we move to the, the next stage, for example, if I, if someone or me for instance asks you

M1: yes

Idr: what do you think about gender and language learning? For you, which gender is the best one, boys, I mean female or male?

M1: for me, it’s; based on my experience it’s female

Idr: well, convince me

M1: well, it’s about, er, their different perspective on: on the language; both females and females have different perspective on the language; one has a perspective and the other
one have another one, like for instance, females they use the language to communicate with each other, they like to talk, express their feelings, reveal their problem and stuff, man are like much action oriented, yes, their activities are based on, even their talk, behind, when men talk, you find behind every conversation a problem that needs to be solved or an action that needs to be made

Idr: very good

M1: yes, when females talk, it’s another thing, they talk more, they talk more so that they, you know, practice makes perfect, right?

Idr: they try to use the language

M1: yes, they have larger vocabularies and stuff

Idr: so, if I’m following you, you are trying to tell me that the fact of girls being better than boys is not genetically and biological related, it’s all the perspective

M1: in language it is, it is both psychological, let’s say socially as I described right now and both biologically, because, yes, I had an information that there is a protein in the brain, that is called fox p2 in the brain, that is responsible for language acquisition and conversation, in the brain, and when they did the research, they did the research on rats and on human beings; they isolated baby rats from their mothers, right, they kept on vocalising and making sounds, when they returned them back to their mothers, the females were silent, but the males still making these voices; when they checked his brain, they found a higher level of Fox p2, right, the same case with human, they found that females have higher level of Fox p2 in their brain than males do, that’s why they say that females speak more than males
Interview with M2 (in a classroom)

Idr: well, tell me your name

M2: my name is Mohamed Lamine, that’s it

Idr: ah, ok, so let’s start, so: do you have a favourite movie? And I’m guessing that of course you do, so can you tell me about? Do you have one?

M2: yes, I do have a favourite movie, it’s: Scarface

Idr: so can you tell me what the plot was

M2: well, er, mainly it’s about a Cuban refugee, a political refugee that comes from Cuba to America, then he turns, er, he turns out to be a drug lord, he moves up the stairs of criminal activities, he turns out to be a drug lord eventually, and at the end of the movie he dies, so it’s basically, a, er, a movie about a drug lord that runs, that runs a cartel of drug inside Miami, it’s all about this character

Idr: I guess the kind of movie it was, and now, we move to the second stage

M2: ok

Idr: I would like to know, according to you

M2: yeah

Idr: which of the two gender are the most proficient one? I mean between females and males in the context of foreign language learning

M2: well, regarding my experience, because I spent, it’s not that much, but I spent two years here in this department, so, to me, I think that males are more capable, er, considering, er, concerning the:; studying English as a foreign language because males are able to understand, because the methods they use is more efficient than females,
because, because females, the way I see them, just tend to memorise, even though some modules or some things that shouldn’t be memorised; they use just memory, cerebral potential of memorising things, so I think it’s males who should be qualified as the first ones who are

Idr: the most proficient

M2: the most proficient

Idr: and now you are telling me if I’m following that, no, first let me ask you that

M2: ok

Idr: do you think that proficiency is related to biology? I mean to the fact of being male or it’s the way they go about, I mean what they do

M2: no, it’s not related to biology, because, I’ve seen women understanding lectures and even behaving or showing that they understood the lesson better than males

Idr: so it’s all about the self-commitment

M2: yeah, it’s all about the methods and how they see things, and how they should deal with things

Idr: ok, so thank you for your insight

M2: you’re welcome, you’re welcome
Interview with M3 (in an amphitheatre)

Idr: well, tell me your name

M3: my name is Abdelkader

Idr: well, the first thing is, I’m gonna ask you about, do you have a favourite movie?

M3: yeah

Idr: which one?

M3: er, actually I forgot his name, but; the name of the movie, the problem is the whole theme of the movie, it was about a man who was; having, having dinner with his family, a woman and two kids, er, they were er, they were females, and, er, two criminals came to the house and they killed his wife and two kids, and, they thought they killed him but they didn’t kill him, actually he survived; and; after that, he was like thinking, after a while he was recovered and stuff, and he was thinking what the state of the government or the government or the law did to those two criminals, actually he discovered that they didn’t do anything, because, they were, er, like, they gave some money to the judge and they avoided any kind of going to prison or anything, they were like innocent, and you know what he did, after five years, he was like, er, looking for the life of all the members who were involved in that situation, which is, er, giving innocence to those criminals, and; he spended(*) five years to know where they go, what they drink, the precise time and the location of each one of them and after that he started killing each one of them, and; even the police, they put the man inside of a cell and they told him now you are inside you can’t kill people, and he told them it’s impossible because I’m already killing them, he put a bomb in places that he could kill the prime minister the judge, the lawyer and everything, and he was a kind of a man without heart because they took his heart away from him and I really was admired by his work because even inside of his cell, he
could’ve like, kill people outside, because it was well planned, that’s what I admire in his personality

Idr: well, sounds like a good movie, perhaps I’m gonna look forward to watching it, now the next stage, I’m gonna ask you, what do you think about gendering in the classroom? I mean according to your experience which of the two gender, I mean whether females of males are better learners of foreign language

M3: well, I’ve seen that there is a large amount of girl inside of our classrooms and we are just few boys

Idr: that’s a good point

M3: yeah, and that was a good, good identification, er, noticeable thing, because I noticed that few boys, they were present in the classroom, they better than girls in what? First they were better in pronunciation, second they were better in talking about a free topic inside of class and outside class too, because we were interested in English itself, we like to have a personality that is not ours, because we wanna hide from the reality which is a very tough reality, which is in Algeria, and society and stuff, and I noticed that girls are good in memorising things, I don’t mean memorising, but maybe understanding after the session and they were not good in pronunciation, I haven’t seen that yet, and:, that’s it

Idr: ok, the last thing is, you described and you gave me your point of view, now I’m gonna ask you the last question

M3: ok

Idr: for example for you, boys are clearly on top of girls in some domains concerning language

M3: yeah
Idr: Is that related to being females or males? I mean to the fact, the social cultural and biological fact of being a man or a woman, or is it just related to the self-commitment? I mean to the work you do.

M3: No, uh, as an experience, I have seen that girls or females get jobs more than males in our society, it’s because we are not that lucky, it is not about lucky but they are that kind of, they are more committed to jobs.

Idr: So boys surpass themselves in order to get a chance to get a job.

M3: Yeah, this is the struggle.

Idr: Ok, thank you.

M3: No thanks.

**Interview with M4** (in a classroom)

Idr: First, can you tell us your name?

M4: Mohamed.

Idr: Well, Mohamed, I do believe that you have a favourite movie.

M4: For sure.

Idr: What is it?

M4: My favourite movie is Lucy.
Idr: Lucy?

M4: it’s a newly; it’s a new film

Idr: uh-huh

M4: the general theme that:, the things that captivated me in this movie is about, you know, I am, I am, I adore the Darwinism and Darwin evolution theory

Idr: so you are a fan of science

M4: yes, because that movie includes a lot of scientific approaches, that, that investigates the human nature and the capacity of the human being or the humankind, at that movie, you know, we as human beings, we just use 10% of our mental capacities, and in that movie, the protagonist or the hero, and she is Scarlet Johnson, when she was, er; at a certain point of time, er; they, she had an operation and they put something in her stomach and then she became to be, er, stronger and stronger to the extent that she, you know, she; she was able to use 100% of her mind, especially in her intelligence, and, and:, and that’s why she, you know, she, she became too strong and she control, you know, everything in muscle, she, even if she looks to a tree, she will tell you about the percentage of the oxygen in that tree and how does it came to existence, and many things, you know she became, er, something extraordinary, something, you know, as a superman as [a word I could not comprehend] proposing his theory

Idr: good, now we move to the second question,

M4: yes

Idr: what do you think about gender and language proficiency? I mean according to your experience, which of the two genders is the most proficient one? Female or male?
M4: um, according to my modest point of view, to be honest, you know that in our classroom, er, the rate of women is much more higher than

Idr: yes, of course

M4: the boys, you may find forty girls and just two or three girls, three boys, but you know, I think according to my own experience, me and my other friends, I mean boys, we are always the best in competency and even in participating in the classroom, you know, there are, there are certain element in girls that are competent and work on their proficiency and their fluency, but it’s precisely, or let’s say, it depends from one person to another, but generally speaking boys are much more competent and flexible in learning and acquiring the language because, you know they use it even with their friends in their environment, they watch a lot of movies and they hear music every day, so that they are, you know, they used to do so, and even in the classroom, you know that man always has the superiority that make him feel not shy and express himself in a way or another

Idr: good, now that difference, for you, is it a chance of being born as a female or a male? Or is it just a matter of who is more persistent or perseverant to get or to go to the opportunity?

M4: to be honest, you know, for me it’s not just as you say, a matter of chance or something like that, we are all human beings

Idr: so it depends

M4: men or women, it depends on individuals

Idr: the gender doesn’t matter?

M4: yes, doesn’t matter, because you may find a boy but he applied feminism, you may say that he is a feminist, I am a feminist, and you may find a girl and she is, she applies
masculinity, it depends on their hopes and their, you know, their philosophy, own philosophy to what extent they really want to catch a language, to be able to contact and to increase their level in learning a foreign language

Idr: ok, thank you very much

M4: thank you

**Interview with M5** (in a classroom)

Idr: well, would you tell us your name?

M5: well, my name is Ali

Idr: ok, well, Ali, do you have any favourite movie?

M5: yes of course, I do

Idr: which one?

M5: the favourite movie in my opinion is the gladiator

Idr: Gladiator?

M5: yes
Idr: can you tell me about it?

M5: Gladiator is a character who plays the role of a former fighter, a former sword keeper, er, then he got, er, deceived, and he got, as if:, he was betrayed by some close friends, er, and he, he:, he didn’t get mad but, er, and only that encouraged him to be more stronger and, and, and have a big enormous great will to revenge her murdered wife and murdered daughter, finally he dies and this is what is sorry about the story, but I like it somehow, so it’s: a touching, so touching so amazing movie I’ve ever watched

Idr: it’s a kind of sad ending

M5: yes

Idr: anyways, so we move to the second stage, now according to your experience what do you think about gender in the classroom? I mean for you which of females or males are the best learners when it comes to foreign language learning?

M5: well, for a guy like me, I of course kind of, er sexist who has some preference of some gender to some other, of course I like boys their accents, their activities, er, their, their dedication to learning, er, as a matter of fact not all boys are in the same level but I tend to be liking boys more than girls, because boys you know the accent they have, the way they act, more explicit more, more good, more, look, I don’t like much of girls but I like some of them, not of course not like boys

Idr: ok, now the last question

M5: yes

Idr: do you think that this difference in level is related to the fact of being a male or a female or is it just independent to gender

M5: er, of course not, because knowledge itself is not referred to gender itself
Idr: so everyone can be good

M5: yeah, and the proof of my thought is that you’ll find scientists who are female and scientist who are male, but you know, the reason, a point of thinking, as if you want to imitate about something that, why most of scientists nowadays in the field, in any field anyway are male, ok, males, more than women, I believe that, the, you know Einstein, John Hanks, all the great scientist, so of course, I think each gender has its own ability, its own capacity but I think male has more

Idr: ok, so thank you

**Interview with M6** (in a classroom)

Idr: well, would you tell us your name?

M6: my name is Nasri Mohamed

Idr: ok, Mohamed, do you have any favourite movie in particular?

M6: yeah, actually I do [cough] my favourite movie is called Pirates of the Caribbean

Idr: ah yes

M6: you recognise it, it’s a movie about the pirate name Jack Sparrow, who is, it has actually many parts, me I love the first part where Jack Sparrow the main character seeks, his boat the black Pearl, he is kind of always drunk, character funny, er, adventure and that’s why I like that movie

Idr: good, so it’s a kind of fantastic movie

M6: yeah, fantastic epic
Idr: well, now we move to the second question

M6: yeah

Idr: what do you think about gendering in the classroom? I mean for example according to your experience do you think that boys are better at foreign language learning or girls?

M6: well, let me put it this way, I think that girls are better learners than boys but boys are more brilliant in studying than girls

Idr: good point

M6: let me explain that, for instance, we find that girls have social factors affecting their growth, they are affected by music cinema and extra factors, they are too affected, not like the boys, not like you and me, they are too affected by those factors, they put too much attention on those things, that’s why they put emphasis on the language on the behaviour and on the, and: even in the classroom they put emphasis on the teacher, the way he act, the way he speaks, they listen, they see, they do everything, but the boys not so much, I think that if they see they do not hear, if they hear they do not see, and they are too distracted

Idr: so they cannot focus in the classroom

M6: yes, we have too much in our minds but we have a brilliant element in the classroom, as you know, they have this way of learning that they make others feel, not feel seem

Idr: so what you are telling me is that girls are predisposed to be the best

M6: yes

Idr: but still they do not invest much

M6: yeah, they don’t invest
Idr: in the opposite, boys are being the best

M6: being the best

Idr: so is it related to biology or society?

M6: society

Idr: society

M6: society, and: biology I don’t know about that

Idr: society

M6: social factors

Idr: ok, thank you

Interview with M7 (in a classroom)

Idr: Well, would you tell your name?

M7: my name is Houssan Eddine

Idr: ok, Eddine, do you have any favourite movie?

M7: yes I do have a favourite movie, it’s Malcolm X

Idr: um, can you describe it?

M7: sure, it’s: an inspiring movie, about a black man named Malcolm X, er, at first it wasn’t his name, but he was suffering from racism and he was taught about Islam, so he was given this teaching about Islam, and, er, to teach, about the real meaning of life, and that racism is bad; and he went to ‘Mecan’ and learned about the real religion and tried to, his best to teach people about Islam and antiracism, so it was great in my opinion
Idr: ok, good, now we move to the second question, according to your experience what do you think about gendering in the classroom? I mean, for you which of females or males are the best learners when it comes to foreign language learning?

M7: when it comes to foreign language learning, I think it really depends, because their brain is not the same, of the girl and of the boy; for example how the girls brain work, it can do multitasking, it can do many things at the same time, for example she can talk to you while hearing what others are saying, and for the boys they can focus only on one thing, so the girls can multitask, for example read a book while hearing some thing, so that will be beneficial in learning a foreign language, so that’s the advantage they’ve got, but the boys when focusing on something they can do it better, so it really depends, and the level will be different, so in some cases the girl will be better and in some other the boy will be better

Idr: ok, I got your point, so thank you
Interview with M8 (in a classroom)

Idr: erm, first would you tell us your name?

M8: my name is Mohamed

Idr: ok, Mohamed, what’s your favourite movie?

M8: my favourite movie is Titanic

Idr: ok, Titanic

M8: yeah

Idr: can you describe it?

M8: it is romantic movie, er, that shows, er, us the aspects of love, it is a story about, er, the meeting of two persons, the one is rich person, she is girl, the second is poor person, who lived, in a poor city; er, it is a great movie that earn a lot of gains, Oscars and etc.

Idr: ok, now we move to the second question, what do you think about gender in language learning context? I mean according to your experience which one, I mean which of females or males are the best learners, the most proficient one?

M8: well, for me, er, I think that, er, boys learn language for the sake of understanding and getting information through experiences whereas girls think that they learn language to show their prestige

Idr: and what has this got to do with proficiency? I mean are trying to say that in this case girls will be more proficient than boys or boys will be more proficient than girls

M8: no, I think that it depends on the brain itself, because we don’t know about the capacity, abilities that all the persons have, yes, so I think that it depends on the brain

Idr: so any of them can be proficient
Interview with M9 (in a classroom)

Idr: first, would you tell us your name?

M9: my name is Mohamed Azzouz

Idr: ok, Mohamed, do you have any favourite movie?

M9: yes

Idr: which one?

M9: it’s pirates of the Caribbean

Idr: good one, can you describe it?

M9: well it’s a movie full of action and:, it’s quite funny, and: I specifically love Jonny Depp because he is like this crazy captain of the ship and the pirate, you know, it’s a very enjoyable, and: the quality of the images and those cinematic things are very good; and I love pirates honestly [laughter]

Idr: ok [laughter] so it’s a good movie, now we move to the second question, according to your experience do you think that in foreign language learning, boys are more proficient than girls or girls are more proficient than boys? Of course according to your experience
M9: yes, honestly boys are smarter but girls are, they use more efforts

Idr: um, so they are more persistent

M9: yes,

Idr: they commit themselves more

M9: exactly

Idr: convince me

M9: well, the boys they learn new words, they usually understand better in modules like linguistics, they understand but they are careless, their problem is apathy

Idr: what about girls?

M9: girls, they can get a better point and better marks but: honestly, they don’t understand better

Idr: so you think that boys are smarter than girls and girls are more persistent

M9: exactly

Idr: than boys

M9: yes

Idr: ok, I can understand now, so thank you
Interview with M10 (in a classroom)

Idr: first would you tell us your name?

M10: yes, my name is Attabe Eddine

Idr: ok, Eddine, what’s your favourite movie?

M10: I have a lot, but not exactly, I like those films in last areas like pirates of the Caribbean or something

Idr: can you describe it?

M10: I like it because it describe life of old centuries, and always I like them, I like their gestures, their style of wearings, always, also, er; it’s more funny, and, it give us a great point about how, how the old centuries were living and passing their lives, and;

Idr: ok, good, now the second question, according to your experience, do you think that boys are better than girls when it comes to foreign language learning or girls are better than boys when;

M10: I think boys,

Idr: uh-huh,

M10: I think boys are better

Idr: convince me, of course according to your experience

M10: because, we always see that boys are very smart than girls

Idr: uh-huh
M10: boys can describe anything by his knowledge, he knows many things than girls, we see in our lives here, girls always, they use the same thing, but boys always bring new things, new ideas, bring rules

Idr: how is that gonna help in learning a foreign language?

M10: in what way?

Idr: I mean having a very good knowledge about things, being able to describe things and bringing new things, how will that help in learning a foreign language?

M10: for boys?

Idr: yes

M10: maybe, they give them, er, erm, how can we say it

Idr: so they will be more creative

M10: yeah,

Idr: they will come up with more new strategies

M10: yeah,

Idr: than girls

M10: exactly

Idr: ok, the last question, do you think that this is related to social factors or cultural factors of being in female or male in your society of course, or is it related to biological facts of being a man or a woman

M10: I think it is society, society makes us like that

Idr: so it all depends on society
M10: yeah, it all depends on society

Idr: ok, thank you

Native references:

F reference (Jade Lake) (30 seconds)

“An important person in the community where I live in Victoria is Ralph Schneider; Ralph is the current leader of the liberal party, they were elected about two years ago, and ever since then, he’s been managing the affairs of, sorry he’s been managing the affairs of the Saanichton Municipality for the past ten years, so Ralph, uh, campaigned his way into victory with his encouraging words and positive action”

(Available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7OTV7-w87s)

M reference (Tommy Eddison) (30 seconds)

“Over the years since people are trying and trying to explain colour to me and I just don’t understand it, I think the best way to show you is to try and explain it to someone who’s never heard before, what the ocean sounds like or what the birds sound like and that’s what colour is for me, because somebody who’s never heard doesn’t know what those things are, has no concept, none, and, and people are trying to explain the sense with another sense, it’s like this smells, maybe that’s a particular colour, what? So you’re gonna tell you’re gonna explain what”

(available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59YN8_lg6-U)
Appendix II

Students’ questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire is for the undertaking of a survey about the role of Gender in EFL speaking proficiency, with the focus on fluency. The data collected throughout the investigation will only serve as empirical evidence in this study.

You are kindly invited to take part in the survey by completing this questionnaire. Your responses will be strictly confidential, and your anonymity is guaranteed. Please be as accurate as possible; answer the questions by ticking (V) the right box(es) or filling in the gap(s) if required, as said by the questionnaire. There is no wrong or right answer, all is needed here is your personal opinion. Your help will be gratefully welcome. Thank you in advance for your generous cooperation.

Mr. Traoré Idrissa

Department of English

University Larbi Ben M’Hidi

Oum El Bouaghi
PART I:

1. Gender

   years old
   
   □ Female
   □ Male

2. Your age: ....................

3. How long have you been learning English as a Foreign Language? (University, and private tutoring, if any)

   I am learning English as a FL for ......................... now.

4. How would you define your personality? (You may tick two compatible boxes)

   □ Extrovert
   □ Introvert
   □ Shy
   □ Bold

5. What is your current level in English?

   □ Very good, fluent
   □ Good, acceptable
   □ Somewhat good
   □ A little below the average
   □ Bad, not fluent
PART II:

6. Have you ever been in an English speaking country?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, specify how long your stay lasted ..............................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................

7. What do you do to improve your English? (Tick your choice or choices)

☐ Watch English movies
☐ Social networking
☐ Practice with friends outside classroom
☐ Listen to English songs
☐ Classroom activities
☐ All the above

Other (s). Please specify..........................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
8. How often do you have access to (your choice (s) above)?

☐ Always

☐ Sometimes

☐ Seldom

9. Did you ever have a problem to access (your choice (s)) because of your Gender?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why? Explain……………………………………………………………………………………………

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10. How often does your teacher call upon you? (Whether you ask to speak or not)
11. Does your society have any expectations of you being male/female in learning English as a FL?

What are they? Explain………………………………………………………………………
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PART III:

12. English is a (n) ………………….. language to learn

☐ Easy

☐ Difficult
13. What kind of learning strategy do you use to learn English? (Tick your choice or choices)

☐ Memory-related strategies
☐ Cognitive strategies
☐ Social strategies

Explain……………………………………………………………………………………………..
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14. How often do you follow the instructions of the teacher?

☐ All the time
☐ Sometimes
☐ Seldom

15. What kind of teacher do you prefer?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ No preference

16. In speaking, being fluent is more important than being accurate.

☐ Yes
☐ No
Thank you, once again
Appendix III

Teachers’ questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is for the undertaking of a survey about the role of Gender in EFL speaking proficiency, with the focus on fluency. The data collected throughout the investigation will only serve as empirical evidences in this study.

You are kindly invited to take part in the survey by completing this questionnaire. Your responses will be strictly confidential, and your anonymity is guaranteed. Please be as accurate as possible; answer the questions by ticking (V) the right box(es) or filling in the gap(s) if required, as said by the questionnaire. Your help will be gratefully welcome. Thank you in advance for your generous cooperation.

Mr. Traoré Idrissa

Department of English

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Oum El Bouaghi
PART I:

1. Gender:
   - □ Female
   - □ Male

2. Approximate age:
   - □ 25-30
   - □ 30-35
   - □ 35-40
   - □ 40-45
   - □ 45-50
   - □ 50-55
   - □ 55-60

3. Degree held: .................................................................

4. How long have you been teaching?
   
   For......years now

5. Are you teaching elsewhere apart university?
   - □ Middle school
   - □ High school
Part II:

6. How is your classroom? (In terms of culture)
   - □ Heterogeneous
   - □ Homogeneous

7. Did you ever consider gender as a determinant variable in your class?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

8. Your best students are:
   - □ Always males
   - □ Always females
   - □ A bit of both

You might want to explain…………………………………………………………………………………………
9. How often do you interact with male and female students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Always</td>
<td>☐ Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Sometimes</td>
<td>☐ Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Seldom</td>
<td>☐ Seldom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do you take into consideration gender differences in planning your lessons and activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. Which of your students follow your instructions better?

☐ Males

☐ Females

☐ Both

Please, explain if possible.................................................................

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12. Being a teacher of oral expression, which skill (s) is the most important for you?

(You may choose more than one box)

☐ Writing
13. What aspects do you focus more on when evaluating students’ oral performances? (Rank according to the order of importance, from 1 to 4)

- Lexical richness
- Fluency
- Grammatical accuracy
- Phonology

14. How do you group your students in group works?

- According to their gender
- According to their level
- Randomly
- Let them choose

15. According to your experience so far, which of males and females are the most proficient in EFL learning?

Explain……………………………………………………………………………………………………
Thank you again
Résumé

Cette étude est une tentative pour décrire la corrélation qui existe entre le sexe des apprenants de l’Anglais comme Langue Etrangère et leur facilité d’élocution. Il vise à apporter de nouveaux aperçus sur les rôles le sexe peut jouer dans l’obtention de la compétence orale, avec une nette compréhension de la manière dont il se manifeste dans les classes entre professeurs et étudiants. Nous avons cinq questions de recherche qui servent de repère pour notre étude. On a travaillé avec 20 étudiants (10 hommes et 10 femmes) âgés de 20 à 24 ans, et 6 professeurs d’expression orale (3 hommes et 3 femmes) entre 25 et 55 ans, dans l’Université de Larbi Ben M’ hidi à Oum El Bouaghi. Pendant cinq mois et demi, on a interviewé, enquêté à travers des questionnaires, et observé nos participants en essayant de trouver des réponses possibles à nos questions. On s’est débrouillé de répondre à toutes les questions. On a découvert que les femmes étaient plus fluides que les hommes en tant que group quand on a comparé les moyennes de leurs résultats ; cependant, le plus fluent des participants est un homme. On a aussi découvert que les femmes bénéficiaient plus de la méthode d’enseignement présent. De plus, on a identifié l’engagement des individus, la confiance en soi, et les activités d’après-classe ils prenaient part à comme raisons possible de leur différences de niveau. L’étude montre qu’il n y a pas de rapport important entre le sexe et l’obtention de la facilité d’élocution. Cependant, on s’est abstenu de tirer quelconque conclusion définitive. Le mémoire est construit sur deux chapitres : l’un présentant l’historique théorique, et l’autre présentant les résultats et interprétations des trouvailles. Il présente aussi certaines recommandations pédagogique, allant avec des suggestions pour les recherches à venir.
ملخص

هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لوصف العلاقة بين الجنسين والتحدث بطلاقة بالنسبة لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، كما تهدف إلى تقديم بعض الروايات حول الدور الذي يلعبه الجنس في تحقيق طلاقة النطق مع توضيح كيفية ذلك. تتنوع لائحة الأسئلة لقيادة هذا البحث قد قودنا هذا البحث مع 20 طالبًا (10 إناث و10 ذكور) من السنة الثالثة ل.م.د تتراوح أعمارهم بين 20 و24، و6 معلمًا للتعبير الشفهي (3 إناث و3 ذكور) والذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 25 و55 عامًا، بجامعة العربي بن مهدي، إم الباري. لمدة خمسة أشهر ونصف، بحثنا واستطعنا من خلال الاستبيانات، ولاحظنا مشاركونًا لأجل إيجاد أجوبة محتملة لأسئلتنا وقد تمكنا من إيجاد حلول لكل الأسئلة. لقد تبين لنا أن الإناث هن أكثر طلاقة في النطق كمجموعة عندما قارنا معدلهم مع ذلك؛ المشارك الأكثر طلاقة كان ذكر وجدنا كذلك أن الإناث تستفيد أكثر من نهج التعليم الحاضر علاوةً على ذلك، حددنا التزام الافراد، ثقتهم بأنفسهم، والنشاطات التي يقومون بها بعد الانتهاء من الدرس كسبب ممكن لاختلاف المستويات. تظهر الدراسة أنه لا يوجد سبب ذو معنى بين الجنس وتحقيق التحدث بطلاقة ومع ذلك، لا نتسب أي من الاستنتاجات النهائية تتحاور هذه الظروفة حول فصلين: الأول يستعرض الخلفية النظرية والأخر يعرض النتائج واهتمامها ويعرض بعض التوصيات التربوية والمرفقة ببعض الاقتراحات المستقبلية.