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The Kaleidoscopic Differences of Gender in Relation to English Pronunciation Acquisition for University Learners in Algeria
The Case Study of Third Year Male and Female Graduates of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University in Mostaganem

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Abstract

Gender studies' proper has witnessed phenomenological growth in various disciplines to the extent of investigating pronunciation proficiency in either gender's oral performance. Although the last few decades have shown an imminent revolution in studying differences in male and female learners' pronunciation accuracy, much evidence-based research in the discipline of Socio-phonetics on EFL gender differences is required. In our context; thus, the investigation of differences as such was carried out through the assessment of third year EFL gender-mixed graduates' English pronunciation, all throughout their two-year tuition of Phonetics, according to different levels of its attainment with reference to phonetic features, accent and sound perception/production, including affective and socio-cultural factors that can either boost or reduce their proper attainment such as motivation, self-confidence, risk-taking, to name a few. Because gaining and sharpening one's phonetic and phonological capacities are essential elements within EFL pronunciation classes that may enhance learners' speaking skill, the present socio-phonetic study aims to reveal major dissimilarities among EFL learners in terms of phonological awareness and their speech phonetic properties. It also explores gender viewpoints about fluent or accurate production; as well as segmental and supra-segmental instructions and the type of strategies which they employ alongside their acquisition and learning. To this end, a mixed-method approach was opted for to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the data collected by means of a students questionnaire, two student exam worksheets and recordings of respondents' enunciation. To fit the adopted quantitative and qualitative research design and purpose, a great number of different participants took part in the study: amongst third year EFL graduates (n=115) who responded to the administered questionnaire were females (n=95) and males (n=20), in addition to more than one hundred students who took the oral exam. Final results show a degree of superiority that was fluctuating between male and female graduates with regard to their phonetic coding abilities and phonological awareness. There is also a certain male superiority in various aspects in their pronunciation acquisition, including socio-phonetic, socio-cultural, preferential and affective aspects; where the male graduates' enunciation of American English (GA) was approximately native-like and was achieved through their stronger self-confidence and fluency in interaction. Their female counterparts; however, demonstrated an imbalance and inconsistency in their British/American accents, production/perception of words; as well as countless mispronunciations.

ملخّص

لقد شهد مجال دراسات الجندر نموا ظاهريا في مختلف التخصّصات إلي حد البحث في إتقان النّطق في الأداء الشفهي لأي من الجنسين. يتطلّب تحديد فروق الجندر بين الجنسين لمتعلمي اللّغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية ذكورا وإناثا بحث دقيق وأدلة تجريبية من اجل الحصول على نتائج موثوق ومعتمد عليها. وليكون الأمر انتقائيا وليتم تفحّص المهارات اللّغوية والشّفوية لطلبة اللّغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية ذكورا وإناثا، يتمّ أخذ بعض الجوانب في الاعتبار. طبيعة البحث الحالي هي لفظية اجتماعية والّتي تلقي الضّوء على الجوانب الصّوتية، الفونولوجية، العاطفيّة، الشّخصية، الاجتماعيّة ثقافيّة وكذلك التّفضيلية التي قد تؤثّر على اكتساب الطّلبة الذّكور والإناث وتعلّمهم نطق اللغة الانجليزية، سواء كانت اللّهجة البريطانية أو الأمريكية خلال تدريسهم لعلم الصوتيات والفونولوجيا قبل التخرج لمدّة عامين.

Résumé

Le domaine des études du genre a connu une croissance phénoménologique dans diverses disciplines jusqu'à la mesure de l'étude de la maitrise de la prononciation dans la performance orale de l'un ou de l'autre sexe. Identifier les différences du genre entre les apprenants d'Anglais comme une langue étrangère masculins et féminins nécessite une évaluation minutieuse et des preuves empiriques afin d'obtenir des résultats crédibles et fiables. Afin d'être sélectif et d'examiner les compétences articulatoires et orales des apprenants d'Anglais universitaires masculins et féminins, un certain nombre d'aspects sont pris en compte. La nature de la présente recherche est socio-phonétique qui met en lumière les aspects phonétiques, phonologiques, affectifs, personnels, socioculturels, et préférentiels qui peuvent influencer l'acquisition et l'apprentissage des hommes et des femmes de leur accent Anglais, qu'il soit Britannique ou Américaine au cours de leur deux années de cours de Phonétique/Phonologie avant l'obtention du diplôme.

Dedication

I dedicate this research work to all members of my beloved family, my precious father and mother for their constant prayers, my supportive sisters and brother, and my dearly loved nieces and nephews.

To my dearest friends who supported me all along.

To my mentor and beacon of inspiration Professor ABDELHAY Bakhta.

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List of Abbreviations and Initialisms

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BEM: Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen

C: Consonant

CA: Communicative Approach

CBA: Competency-based Approach

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELF: English as Lingua Franca

ELT: English Language Teaching

EPD: Everyman's Pronouncing Dictionary

ESL: English as Second Language

F: Frequency

F0: Fundamental Frequency of Voiced Sounds

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

GA: General American

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

L3: Third Language

LCC: Language Cycle Construct

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

LPD: Longman Pronunciation Dictionary

MA: Master of Arts

NSs: Native Speakers

NNSs: Non-native Speakers

PCA: Phonetic Coding Ability

PhD: Doctorate in Philosophy

PLSs: Pronunciation Language Strategies

PWM: Phonological Working Memory

RP: Received Pronunciation

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLL: Second Language Learning

TD: Traveaux Dirigés/ Tutorial Class

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

TV: Television

USA: United States of America

V: Vowel

VOT: Voice Onset Time

VPM: Voicing-Place-Manner (of Articulation)

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The International Phonetic Alphabet Symbols' Chart

Consonants	Mono-phthongs	Di-phthongs	Triphthongs
[p] Pipe [paɪp]	[ɪ] Pit [pɪt]	[eɪ] Ace [eɪs]	[eɪə] Player [ˈpleɪə]
[b] Baby [ˈbeɪbi]	[e] Friend [frend]	[aɪ] Eyes [aɪz]	[aɪə] Flyer [ˈflaɪə]
[t] Test [test]	[æ] Glad [glæd]	[ɔɪ] Oil [ɔɪl]	[ɔɪə] Employer [ɪmˈplɔɪə]
[d] Dead [ded]	[ɒ] Knot [nɒt]	[əʊ] Old [əʊld]	[əʊə] Slower [ˈsləʊə]
[k] Kick [kɪk]	[ʌ] Shut [ʃʌt]	[aʊ] Oust [aʊst]	[aʊə] Flour [ˈflaʊə]
[g] Giggle [ˈgɪgl̩]	[ʊ] Wolf [wʊlf]	[ɪə] Earring [ˈɪərɪŋ]	
[s] Sense [sens]	[ə] Again [əˈgen]	[eə] Area [ˈeəriə]	
[z] Zest [zest]	[i] Rainy [ˈreɪni]	[ʊə] Tour [tʊə]	
[f] Fluff [flʌf]	[u] Situation [sɪtuˈeɪʃn̩]		
[v] Velvet [ˈvelvɪt]	[i:] Please [pli:z]		
[tʃ] Chest [tʃest]	[u:] Moon [mu:n]		
[dʒ] Judge [dʒʌdʒ]	[ɑ:] Heart [hɑ:t]		
[ʃ] Shine [ʃaɪn]	[ɔ:] Sport [spɔ:t]		
[ʒ] Pleasure [ˈpleʒə]	[ɜ:] skirt [skɜ:t]		
[θ] Thick [θɪk]			
[ð] There [ðeə]			
[h] Home [həʊm]			
[ʔ] That [ðæʔ]			
[m] Mime [maɪm]			
[n] Noon [nu:n]			
[ŋ] King [kɪŋ]			
[l] Little [ˈlɪtl̩]			
[w] Wind [wɪnd]			
[r] Rear [rɪə]			
[j] Yolk [jəʊk]			

General Introduction

Gender Studies has brought revolutionary claims both in public and academic domains around the 1960s and on. This field has, thus, has emerged in response to female revolution to search for equity in various arenas. Moreover, gender research conducted thereafter has demonstrated the sexist treatment which has affected females for decades. It has permitted researching numerous aspects in different fields from a gender perspective including socio-phonetics; as well as segmental and supra-segmental phonology.

Background of the Study

Males and females were born with different anatomical structures, and they tend to grow up picking up signals from their surroundings differently, adopting different habits, constructing different personalities, and expressing different behaviours and thoughts. Therefore, they both see and look at the world from different perspectives due to gender being a complex socio-cultural construct that includes role differences, behaviours, mental and emotional stereotypes and attitudes. The process of acquiring the two different gender characteristics of men's masculinity and women's femininity that are constructed by society takes place at the age of three (Oakley, 1972 and Freud, 1927). Still, societal bounds and men's dominating positions and views have limited women's accessibility to numerous rights, which drove the former to revolutionise with The Feminism Movement.

Feminism gave birth to gender studies, particularly investigating gender with relation to language variation and speech differences between men and women (Robin Lakoff, 1975). Lakoff's research followed Maria Cederschiöld (1900) and Otto Jeperson (1922) works in this respect. Feminism defied gender social inequality, stereotypes, male dominance and social marginalisation to liberate women from societal and masculine constraints and pressure through the three Feminist successive waves. The late Nineteenth Century marked the emergence of the first wave which highlighted the right to access public life and equality at workplaces (Lucretia Mott, 1848; Elizabeth Stanton, 1854 & Lucy Stone, 1854).

The second wave appeared in the period between 1960s and 1970s in order to maintain the first waves' principles and aims. It broadened its aspects moving towards fighting the stereotypes fixed against females and urged the government for proper and respectful social

and political status. In addition, women rose up to fight against violence and oppression which led to obtaining laws in support of women (Simone De Beauvoir, 1943; Betty Friedman, 1963 & Gloria Steinem, 1969). The 1990s served as the beginning of the third wave that faced discrimination and sexism at workplace, such as sexual harassment and glass ceiling in a world where women were seen secondary to men; confined to houses with no social or political rights (Gloria Anzaldua & Chela Sandoval, 1991).

By the 1986, there emerged The Feminist Theory as explained by Joan W. Scott which adopted the research conducted in this period as "Gender History" or "Women's History" in order to investigate the history of female development and studies. Nevertheless, the theory shifted and was replaced by "Gender Studies" much to the chagrin of Feminist historians including Scott herself. Furthermore, in the field of language variation with the very first research investigations in gender studies, Robin Lakoff (2004) dove into female speech characteristics and their dissimilarities with men's speech emphasising the lexical and para-linguistic terms in communication.

Accordingly, gender studies field in relation with language is occupying and is gaining a large space of empirical investigations that target linguistic variation change and dissimilarities of speech between men and women. For starters, in her most influential work *"Language and Women's Work"*, Lakoff (1975) identified some language approaches through which she scrutinised the gender differences between men and women since childhood; and she introduced four models: Deficit, Dominance, Difference and Discursive Approaches. Lakoff claimed that men exemplify dominance in speech being the strongest and most confident party as compared to females' inferiority in conversational skills.

Moreover, Deborah Tannen (1990) adopted the "Difference Approach" that concerns both sexes belonging to two different cultures and groups, and reflects their ways of speaking, where women's speech is viewed as emotional, intimate and supportive. Deborah Cameron (2003) puts forward the "Construction Model" that introduces gender differences as being constructed differently by their behaviours including their linguistic behaviour. This approach analyses gender from a sociological perspective. Further research was conducted to reveal more about the unknown correlation between gender and language.

The following element explores English as a Lingua Franca which is rapidly growing more among non-native speakers. English as a Second Language is thoroughly explained through Howard Gardner's (2006) "Acquisition Type Thesis", where he introduces the four stages that ESL learners go through in their learning process. Several similarities to the process of mother tongue acquisition are introduced and examined. Gardner also highlights

the major role of motivation, attitudes and culture in the language acquisition process. He argues whether male or female learners excel in foreign language performance in terms of positive attitudes towards and interests in L2 learning; thanks to their interest and cerebral capacities that make learning languages a flexible process to achieve. Still, further investigations are required in the field of gender with relation to other fields including Foreign Language Learning (Fakeye, 2010; Shoaib & Dornyei, 2005; Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Kamsaku & Kitazawa, 2001; Lietz, 2006, Rosen, 2001; & Wagemaker, 1996).

Moreover, additional research is carried out to discern, evaluate and analyse gender differences with relation to language, and the present study highlights some gendered factors including biological, phonological, cultural, social, personal and preferential ones. Women were and still are suffering from linguistic sexism and their speech is regarded inferior to that of men. Such stereotypes are culturally and socially bound due to the patriarchal society as shown and hinted previously. Men's speech is portrayed as assertive, innovative, and authoritarian; whereas women's speech is attractive, decorative, sensitive, reluctant and fixed (Cederschiöld, 1900; Jepersen, 1922; & Kramer, 1977).

Despite the lack of sufficient empirical evidence, the call for further research to uncover the truth behind such beliefs has been emphasised. While other sociolinguists direct attention towards the fact that male and female's speech rather than being superior or right is simply different (Cameron, 1986; Coates, 1985; & Swaker, 1975). Several aspects and components are involved when investigating gender as a variable which include affective factors of the learners in EFL classrooms.

The affective aspect in FLL contexts is found in almost every research that deals with FL learners' education and academic performance. Language learning is a field that involves the manifestation of numerous personality traits that might influence the income as much as the outcome. Therefore, emotional factors, such as motivation and attitudes, anxiety, inhibition, extroversion/introversion and self-esteem may serve the learners as means of success or failure. The fact of being a male or a female demonstrates that they do not exhibit the same performance and skills in class as action field experiments and findings has previously denoted (Papamihiel, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Alkhafaifi, 2005; Spender, 1982; French & French, 1984; Sadker & Sadker, 1985; Swan & Graddo, 1988; Karp & Yeols, 1976; Kramarae & Treichler, 1990; Latour, 1987; Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Edelsky, 1981 & West & Zimmerman, 1983).

It is worth mentioning that these affective factors' effectiveness is linked to one main aspect of research that may serve the present study which is pronunciation accuracy. Yet, the

variable gender is not well-researched with regard to pronunciation and the previously mentioned affective factors. Thus, further investigation is needed in order to reveal more of these differences between male and female learners. Motivation; though, has got most attention as it serves as a drive for learners to acquire proper; if not native-like; English pronunciation and the most notable reference for motivation in classrooms is Gardner (2003).

Besides, the most specific elements of investigation in the present study with regard to the gender variable are phonetic features and phonological skills in speech, which may differ in the attainment of English pronunciation by male and female EFL students. Most research in this arena does not highlight any significant gender differences except women's early-developed laryngeal organs that aid them in speaking and listening skills. In addition, female learners' tendency in experiencing better susceptibility towards change and innovation unlike other opposing views (Gauchat, 1905). With that being said, women's speech is associated with prestige, propriety and femininity, and anyone who used Standard English forms is associated with femininity. Whereas, men prefer the use of vernacular forms (Sweet, 1890, Montgomery, 1995; Labov, 2001; & Holmes, 2008).

From a biological point of view, voice quality makes individuals' voices recognisable as male or female; being breathy, husky, creaky, tense to name a few. Voice quality is also explained from a phonological point of view exploring gender differences in terms of pitch that rises or falls with regard to the speakers' attitude and loudness of utterances. Tempo refers to the speed or pace of uttered segments which is related to rhythm in connected speech. Furthermore, nasality is mainly associated with masculinity; in addition to correct articulation of vowels in terms of shape of lips, jaw or tongue movements.

Moreover, in phonology; segmental and supra-segmental instructions (Taver, 1994) witnesses a division in views and a clash of opinions on which features are best to be emphasised in pronunciation teaching over the other. The former aids learners acquire accurate pronunciation, a satisfying degree of articulation and increases segmental awareness (Sutter, 1976; Jenkins, 2000; Drewing & Rossitier, 2002). The latter; however, offers intelligibility in communication and native-like pronunciation (Morley, 1994; Celce-Murcia, 1996; Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994).

Still, a third party of experts (Hall, 1997; Bray, 1995; Fraser, 2000 & Roach, 1983) deems the separation of both instructions unfortunate and warns practitioners about dividing pronunciation teaching instead of placing equal attention on both for satisfying results and successful learning. Both features complete one another. With regard to gender differences in prosody; women tend to speak in a higher pitch, they may use different patterns to attract

listeners and guarantee conversational continuity and may lack confidence and kindness. Whereas, men attempt falling intonation to demonstrate certainty, power, and self-confidence (Daly & Warren, 2001 & Lakoff, 1975). Both instructions are emphasised in syllabi followed at university phonetics' classes.

In Algeria, English is a second foreign language after French, which is the first foreign language taught since elementary school, yet, the popularity of English is growing larger presently even among primary schoolers. Research findings with regard to gender differences in EFL learning showcase support in favour for both genders. Nevertheless, some findings have shown that female learners tend to outperform boys in language expression, memory, visual, verbal and listening skills; as well as understanding which consequently affect their scores and achievement (Bailey, 1993; Asher & Garcia, 1969; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Moving to stereotypes in EFL classes, female learners' ability to achieve better scores than their male classmates is thanks to various factors among which the instructor is highlighted. The level of interaction combined with teachers' treatment and demeanours in class may influence their learners' desire to learn. Empirical results shift between gender sides, as some support male learners as being more active, motivated and interactional; while others emphasise teachers' attention for boys because girls have better behaviour and abilities. Hence, gender-biased classrooms should come to an end (Spender, 1982 & Jane Sutherland, 2004).

Regarding phonetic features in socio-cultural and educational contexts, it is worth highlighting the field of socio-phonetics that was first pioneered by Labov (1974) and which focused on phonetic properties and acoustics of vowels at first; then it studied consonant variables. Socio-phonetic studies are mainly carried through digital services that analyse collected data. Such services have aided research and variationists to access accurate measuring of the pronounced sounds and variables. This work in particular is considered accurate and helpful in terms of evaluation of the socially structured variable in the sound system, its learning, storing and processing in both speaking and listening. Yet, this field remains inaccessible to many as it requires acoustic knowledge and time and may be unnecessary to some research that deals with some consonants. For the present research, acoustic phonetics is briefly introduced as more focus is placed upon articulatory phonetics.

Accordingly, pronunciation attainment as a main concept in and a main pillar of the present study has been regarded as an orphan in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts for decades. This conclusion comes with various research studies and action works that

proved the lack of attention given to pronunciation teaching and learners' speaking skills. In this respect, pronunciation has been in a fluctuating status that rose back in the past with the audio-lingual approach (1950s), and then retreated back to the state of being overshadowed by language building skills that left no room for pronunciation to claim its credit. Another major reason for its decline in EFL classrooms is teachers prioritising grammar and vocabulary attainment, in addition to their reluctance to teach the phonetic symbols and complicated phonological instructions and patterns (Bouhadiba, n.d.).

Thus, it is worth noting the importance of phonetic code teaching and practice as they determine the learners' success in acquiring the right pronunciation, and it is related mostly to the learners' phonetic coding ability (Carroll, 1964); as well as Phonological Working Memory (PWM) that guarantees the retention of phonological information through sub-vocal rehearsals and drills. Moreover, teaching pronunciation remained in the background due to personal and professional factors pointed out by Fraser (2002) including students' un-readiness, lack of teachers' know-how and their lack of confidence to teach it.

Another reason is highlighted by researcher Szypra-Kozlowska (2014) which can be a major indicator to the different circumstances in teaching and learning English as a Second or Foreign language. Apparently, EFL teaching is inferior to ESL teaching in terms of time constriction for learning, limited exposure to the target language, the absence of native speakers as direct and authentic sources for learning, instrumental motivation; great exposure to written English more often than oral, college qualifications for teaching English and instructors are non-natives. All these represent some of the factors that do not nurture the best environment for correct and proper acquisition of the English pronunciation.

Since English as a Foreign Language in Algeria is being taught by the seventh grade in middle schools and its learning is carried out all throughout the learners' academic career, pronunciation teaching might not be given the attention it deserves. Yet, for college students who are specialising in English, speaking the target language correctly is considered mandatory. Still, the field of phonetics remains challenging for the students to master or at least to be interested in. Therefore, a challenging task it is for the teacher to come up with the right methods, techniques and strategies to attract their learners to open up to English phonetics classes and embrace learning correct native-like pronunciation instead of the same tedious and passive methods of drilling that pulled pronunciation status down to the bottom. This field welcomes more innovation and openness to interest the audience.

Still, others argue the fact that acquiring correct pronunciation is not as imperative as to become the teachers' one top priority, because it can be mastered by learners on their own

through constant effort for practice and increasing one's awareness of sound systems (Suter & Purcell, 2006). In this respect, to fully achieve a near native-like pronunciation of English, speakers must bear in mind that pronunciation attainment requires a few principles including phonetic abilities and phonological awareness; as well as a blend of speech accuracy and fluency. Most of English instructors and speakers may favour one aspect over another. Usually, it occurs as follows; they either pay too much attention to accurate enunciation disregarding their tone and stress placement; or they speak fluently to convey a message despite sound articulation errors and slightly accented speech.

This conflict between accuracy over fluency or the other way around only drives learners to acquire pronunciation in an incomplete manner, which leads eventually to various speech errors that drive listeners away or embarrass speakers. One is not compelled to speak as perfectly and precisely as a native does, only balance their pronunciation accuracy and fluency to utter intelligible speech that conveys meaning and stabilises the flow of communication. For this matter, the most successful approach in English Language Teaching; thus far, is the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (Brown, 2001) that considers in an EFL classroom accuracy and fluency two complementary components for a better communicative competence. Furthermore, the CLT approach advocates the integration of computerised technologies that are recommended and welcomed by some researchers who wish to advance pronunciation teaching a notch ahead (Major, 1987).

As regards gender, this variable remains under-researched in relation to pronunciation accuracy and fluency between male and female learners. The little research carried out in this area though cannot lead to a general conclusion as there exists a shift between male learners' superior accuracy in EFL pronunciation and female learners' accuracy test performances (Hassan, 2001). Following the same line of thought, non-native speakers and instructors should be aware of the difficulties which their learners may come across during the process of pronunciation attainment and may change into obstacles that will require remedial methods to lessen their impact on speech or potential long-termed fossilisation of mispronunciations. Such factors include, age, mother tongue influence including regional dialects, exposure to the target language, phonological awareness, affective factors, phonetic aptitude and gender. Most of these features are researched and used as variables to identify the extent of their influence in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT).

Firstly, age has been widely researched in English Language Learning arena as well; where emphasis falls on the most common hypothesis of lateralisation by Lenneberg (1967) which explains how EFL learners' phonological capacities reduce with age, exactly by

puberty. This phenomenon is a neuro-biologically-based period that ends by the age of twelve after which EFL learners' language development; especially the pronunciation aspect; become challenging for older learners (Carroll, 2008). Nonetheless, other investigations reject calling these results conclusive as older learners may succeed in accurate sound production and distinction referring to brain's plasticity (Lund, 2003).

Mother tongue interference comes next as one of the possible hindrances in FLL contexts in reducing EFL learners' chances to speak a near native-like accent. These hindrances are represented through phonetic/phonological phenomena that include segments, such as vowels/consonant phonemes, syllable and beyond segments, such as word stress and rhythm. Mother tongue interference with the target language takes place when L1 sound patterns are transferred into L2 or replace non-existent sounds in L2 which may cause a foreign accent in addition to mispronunciations due to allophonic substitution, phono-tactic alterations and misplacement of stress. For instance, Algerian EFL learners at some point within their EFL classes have come across the interference of regional accents in their English pronunciation including the listed phenomena.

Overcoming pronunciation attainment difficulties come with the identification of speech errors committed by non-native speakers, then the application of remedial methods and techniques, such as the exposure to the target language, oral practices and drills. With technological devices at hand and the spread of English as a Lingua Franca, using English written and oral forms is growing by the second. In addition to technology, its use and access are almost possible regularly. Exposure to the target language and from a trusted authentic source as native speakers' accent models allow learners to retain correct pronunciation input and to achieve satisfactory output. Therefore, integrating the target language into one's activities, practices and life may facilitate the process for both younger and older learners (Lambert, 1956 and Gardner, 2006).

Additional difficulties and lacking components in EFL learners' training include phonological awareness whose absence develops slower learning rates if not complete impediment in phonological development or abilities. Phonological awareness is a basic step in the FLL process, which needs be acquired and sharpened afterwards in order to avoid future complications in achieving correct pronunciation (Stanovich, 1993). Moreover, this aspect calls attention to learners' phonetic ability to perceive and retain L2 sounds properly in order to be able to discern L1 sounds from the target language's (Daniel Jones, 2003).

Therefore, EFL students possess various degrees of phonetic capacity which may enable some of them to succeed in achieving near native-like pronunciation, while others may

achieve less or none. Additionally, several practitioners draw attention to affective factors that may hinder pronunciation attainment which can only be promoted by adopting self-improvement and self-accomplishment and believe in one's success (Morley, 1999). Thus, it is recommended to distance oneself from poor confidence, frustration and depression. That is, learners' success in pronunciation classes is not entirely dependent on the teachers alone who can only guide and set the mood.

With regard to the variable of gender, very little research is covered in this whole area of pronunciation attainment difficulties. Yet, for affective factors, female learners tend to display more self-confidence in their speaking skills and tend to work harder on their self-improvement, while male learners tend to acknowledge speech mistakes. This difference stems from females' motivation to speak better and more correctly (Aster & Garcia, 1969; Daif Allah, 1980 & Elliot, 1995). Speaking of which, in order to establish sound and continuous communication, speakers must attain a certain degree of intelligibility with one another which requires accurate and fluent speech.

In EFL classes based on CLT approach, the aspect of being intelligible in communication is highlighted and fluency is encouraged. This calls for both parties' cooperation for a motivating and balanced communicative atmosphere. According to Morley (1991), such speaking skill is referred to as "Intelligible Pronunciation" rather than "Perfect Pronunciation". Still, complications in conversations are more probable to occur if one's speech is packed with mispronunciations at the level of both aspects; segmentals and supra-segmentals. Non-native speakers can easily be judged from the way they speak and sound to native speakers of English. Paying attention to intelligibility setbacks by pronunciation class instructors is required to be attended to by identifying learners' main hindrances and designing remedial tasks that correspond to them. With relation to the gender aspect, research studies indicate that female speakers' articulation tend to be more intelligible than males, because of the former's under-frequency range characterised by clear vowels' articulation and lengthy segments (Bradlow, 2003).

Accordingly, English status in Arabic-speaking countries differ, in Algeria; however, English is taught as an L3 or a second foreign language where RP is the model accent to be introduced and taught to learners since middle schooling. Needless to say, English and Arabic are two distinct languages that originated from different families in terms of spelling, pronunciation and sound system, vocabulary and grammar. Such dissimilarities may cause Arab EFL learners hindrances in the learning process of the target language; if not corrected and treated sooner, they may turn to resilient fossilised speech articulation errors.

The main recurring obstacles for a correct pronunciation are fossilisation of mispronunciations, stress misplacement and shift, initial and final consonant clusters or affixes, problematic sounds, sounds substitution, prosodic interference, differentiation, under-differentiation, over-differentiation, phono-tactic interference and epenthesis. These major errors are explained and illustrated in detail in chapter two with relation to EFL learners' in general and Arab learners in particular along with a few gender related instances found in international experiments (Bowen, 1965 & Broselow, 1998). Moreover, a background on phonetics' sub-branches is required for a non-native speaker of English. To be aware of as such prior knowledge will assist them in smooth flow of comprehension of the science and to be familiar with each branch's purpose and objectives. As a first step towards proper articulation of English sounds, most of studies in this respect concluded that non-native speakers acquire English by being exposed to the target language at an early age. Their English articulation is almost similar to the native speakers' in terms of voice onset time, production mechanisms, accuracy, articulation strategies and accent to name a few (Pennington, 1989; Weeren & Thennissen, 1968; Suter & Purcell, 1980, Ur, 2006 & Gardner (2006).

With the common belief that along with imperfect perception of sounds comes incorrect pronunciation, modern researchers seek accurate results when analysing and evaluating non-native speakers of English. This way, they no longer rely on native raters during research studies' test to figure out how accented L2 learners' speech is. They have been replaced with modern technological devices that provide researchers with precise and rapid results. Moreover, children tend to be better perceivers of foreign language sounds due to their cerebral capacities that include quick sound discrimination, particularly allophonic variants. Nevertheless, they can be prone to slow or reduced perception ability while growing up.

Age still matters in both production and perception of sounds alongside more factors. Cross-gender analysis supports the claim that female speakers tend to be more intelligible in their speech than males do for better and more successful recognition and perception by the listeners (Bradlow, Tourretta & Pisoni, 1996; Hazan & Markham, 2004; as cited in Amano-Kusumoto and Hosom, 2011, p. 10). Other research; however, resulted in no significant dissimilarities in listening and perception if both genders are exposed to the same material. Such inconclusive results call for further research and scrutiny to validate or support previous findings emphasising socio-cultural factors than physiological ones; especially if either

gender employs different techniques and strategies for self-improvement. However, this factor requires a more thorough investigation in further research.

Accordingly, the obstacles that took place during input retention and output results and feedback have directed attention towards the integration of remedial solutions by both teachers and learners. These solutions are led by the application of learning strategies adopted by both parties. In the present research, a great deal of pronunciation learning strategies have been collected and exposed to EFL instructors and learners in order to improve both pronunciation classrooms and students' speaking, particularly phonetic and phonological capacities. Therefore, practitioners in the field spared no effort to gather the most used and appropriate strategies for learners to acquire the target language's pronunciation correctly and easily. These strategies are based on Kolb's Learning Cycle Construct (1984) which is still being advocated by various researchers for its practicability and success in achieving better scores after integration.

Research once more displays the most popular pronunciation learning strategies among EFL learners. At the top of the list, there are the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that are linked to memory and practice through songs and recordings. The least popular are phonetic codes' memorisation, loud repetition and imitation (Akyol, 2013). With regard to gender, little attention is directed towards male and female learners' usage of strategies. The few studies that investigated the matter, concluded that both genders employ strategies, but different from each other due to their different beliefs in pronunciation acquisition.

Various gender differences with relation to English pronunciation are selected to be investigated in the present research work. Such proposed dissimilarities and features for investigation are purely socio-phonetic and prosody-related (acquired from their social surroundings either in class, via media, or practised in conversations and classroom tasks). Moreover, these gender dissimilarities will provide a fresh view on gender differences to be given more attention to identify and investigate. The major features selected in this study include: the use of standard or non-standard forms in both gender's speech, and which is characterised by formal or vernacular aspects, as well as consistency in speaking the model accent of choice.

Second, phonetic/phonemic transcription is the art of decoding utterances through symbols which facilitates acquisition of correct and exact pronunciation of any non-phonetic languages including English and obtaining phonetic knowledge to read transcription on their own as well. Teaching phonemic transcription begins with the very first levels in EFL

classrooms, and any EFL learner is familiar with the IPA notation or English sounds' chart. The latter is not a popular method among teachers and is mostly feared by EFL learners, although it can serve as an effective remedial method in English pronunciation attainment.

Third, vowels' reduction is a natural feature used in connected speech in order to maintain musicality of one's English and avoid robotic speech manner in conversations or academic presentations. Yet, emphatic stress may take place in either gender's sentences, as well as full vowels' articulation for other purposes besides emphasis. As this may take place, it is worth noting that, the speaker may apply misplaced emphatic stress on contraction unconsciously or due to fossilised mispronunciations.

Fourth, t-glottaling is no longer a feature associated with the British accent or female speakers as mixed-speech that include various traits from several accents is growing fast and appears to be taking over most of English accents as a speech trait. T-glottaling is a main characteristic of prestigious female speech to be more precise and is largely apparent in RP more than GA as cross-gender research has previously shown.

Fifth, linking word boundaries and linking [r] are also noticeable aspects in English connected speech where in non-rhotic accents such as RP, post-vocalic [r] is silent, but when linking takes place, [r] is pronounced under the influence of a vowel phoneme that follows it in word boundaries. This is also considered one of native speakers' pronunciation features to acquire by EFL learners who desire to attain native-like enunciation.

Sixth, one debatable feature is the "Yod-dropping" which refers to the elision of palatal consonant [j] in words if preceded by coronal sounds mostly. This feature of dropping palatal approximant [j] has been recently and widely adopted by most young speakers regardless their accent. However, RP remains conservative with the use of palatalisation.

Seventh, formal pronunciation of word ending "ing" form is disappearing and appears to be replaced by the informal form "in". This phenomenon is referred to as "G-dropping. Still, most of researchers (Trudgill, 1974; Fischer, 1964 and Holmes, 1997) have come to conclude that female speakers mainly do not drop the "g" and consider it more prestigious compared to males who usually adopt the g-dropping in their speech, because it is a sign of masculinity.

Ninth, the aspect of aspiration in the production of fortis voiceless plosives [p – t – k] is to be investigated in non-native speakers' speech as well. It is an important feature in English native speakers' articulation. Despite that aspirated stops in initial position of syllables do not affect meaning; it remains a feature that improves EFL learners' speech production to sound more native-like; especially if aspiration occurs in stressed syllable. Such

phenomenon requires speakers to make more effort producing it to sound more prominent than the rest of unstressed syllables.

To conclude, other features are included such as dentalisation and affrication for more variability in the present investigation. All phonetic/phonological features listed above are included in order to analyse from a gender perspective and identify each gender's phonetic and linguistic traits and preferences. It is important to mention that there might be other features emerging along data analysis which are to be reported as well for further scrutiny.

Statement of the Rationale

Gender differences in relation to EFL learners remain under-researched where only numbered researchers have concluded that male and female learners may have very few differences with regard to their cognitive abilities in Foreign Language Learning (FLL). Within Algerian EFL classrooms at university, such studies are quite scarce; therefore, the present investigation attempts to expose a variety of proposed gender differences to be investigated in EFL pronunciation attainment and single out the most relevant and conspicuous ones. Thus, learning a foreign language is a process that necessitates an abundance of time and requires learners to retain and grasp information and sharpen skills in the long run. One of such skills that are integral in speech process is pronunciation of the target language; especially if the latter is non-phonetic where spelling does not reflect its pronunciation and vice-versa.

Consequently, the present study endeavours to identify the main gender dissimilarities if there are any as part of EFL learners' acquisition and tuition of Phonetics and Phonology. Being exposed to English, acquiring phonetic properties quicker and better by male or female non-natives indicates a degree of superiority in their speech as how close is their accent to the native speakers'. Various factors might be involved and perhaps overlooked in research; for instance motivation and anxiety in relation with speech performance, but not in relation with pronunciation efficiency. Socio-cultural, socio-phonetic and affective factors; as well as personality and preferences can shape either gender's pronunciation attainment and strategies employed to succeed in such a process.

Purpose of the Study

The present study has a diversity of aims in accordance with the various issues of gender differences which it intends to unravel. The main objective set for this investigation is to expose a number of gender dissimilarities in English pronunciation attainment for LMD3

EFL graduates at the department of English. Such an objective may appear over-researched in various disciplines; yet, empirical evidence is lacking in the field of Phonetics and Phonology and requires more scrutiny and further investigation. The present research aims to discover which gender possesses more phonetic/phonological features that might boost up their level and reveal them as superior to the other in terms of pronunciation accuracy and attainment. It also aims at raising awareness of the importance of phonetic/phonological instruction to EFL learners and how necessary it is to strengthen and lengthen the process of phonetic tuition; as it must be a collective effort and collaboration of other modules including oral and written expressions. It aims to shed more light on EFL graduates' opinions and attitudes towards their EFL phonetic tuition and speaking English accent properly either concentrating on native-like enunciation or intelligible communication.

Significance of the Study

Very little evidence is found with regard to investigating the different manners and tendencies of male and female learners in acquiring/learning a foreign language pronunciation. Therefore, the present research study attempts to pave the way to further research between gender and other disciplines, to bring about more results to the previous findings and expose all potential gender differences within Phonetics' classes, outside the classroom with regard to learners' own personality and strategies employed. It endeavours to convey the importance of Phonetics' tuition and instruction for EFL learners' pronunciation of non-phonetic languages as English. This calls for more empirical evidence within EFL classes where learners' capacities, efforts and performances must be highlighted in order to find out the main impediments in EFL pronunciation learning and instruction.

Pronunciation as a sub-skill of the productive skill "speaking" is facing an unstable status even at university's FL departments and classrooms, not only within elementary and secondary schools. As this might have occurred due to various social, psychological, or educational reasons, more awareness should be raised with regard to insufficient input of the target language and phonetic instruction; as well as fossilised mispronunciations. Such factors may be some of the most conspicuous impediments for EFL learners' proper pronunciation attainment to be smooth and remedied. Nevertheless, more interest in investigating gender dissimilarities in relation to pronunciation acquisition by EFL Algerian graduates growing as this area is still fresh within EFL classes. Male and female students are not different as beings only, but the differences may encompass their personalities, psyches, cognitive, and phonetic abilities; as well as attitudes to name a few. During their phonetic/phonological tuition;

pronunciation features are spotlit including which gender attempts to demonstrate a more accomplished performance in numerous aspects of English pronunciation as non-natives.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Three major research questions are formed to address the rationale being investigated and are listed as follows,

1. To which extent do gender differences impact Algerian EFL students' English pronunciation acquisition?
2. In what way do specific gender dissimilarities distinguish females from males in the process of pronunciation and its attainment?
3. What are the main areas and aspects that differentiate female from male learners throughout pronunciation acquisition tuition?

For a structured research work, the following hypotheses attempt to find answers to the three main earlier raised research questions,

- Various gender differences may provide another perspective on the fact that one gender may be superior to the other in correct and accurate pronunciation within Algerian university classes of English, such as interest in a certain model accent, pronunciation accuracy and more exposure to the target language.

- There may be some striking differences that distinguish males from female learners throughout pronunciation acquisition, including accurate oral production, perception of vocabulary, phonetic coding skills and self-improvement strategies adopted.

- In order to acquire proper pronunciation of a language, various features are listed as major and those include different areas: affective and socio-cultural aspects; as well as phonetic and phonological features highlighting fossilised mispronunciations, stress placement and tone.

The present research adopts a mixed-method approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Data is collected and analysed through multi-methods which serve a better data analysis process, where both quantitative and qualitative methods are

employed interactively. The mixed-method approach leads to a more reliable collection of empirical data gathered via various research instruments. The quantitative method serves as a means to orderly classify statistical data and facilitate the process of results' analysis. Additionally, qualitative data analysis is employed due to the incorporation of recordings and student narratives.

The various aspects and factors tackled in the present research lead to the implementation of, for more credibility; three research instruments. The first tool is a lengthy questionnaire addressed to EFL learners who receive it during a period of a week of their studying schedule before the upcoming levels in accordance with the Covid-19 health procedures during the first semester. The questionnaire consists of four interrelated sections that target and investigate students' personal and phonological backgrounds. The second tool is two worksheets enclosed with their paper survey in order to be answered subsequently. The first worksheet includes written tasks that attempt to test the participants' phonetic abilities; as well as English spelling with relation to transcription. The second worksheet tasks represent the third tool which is recordings of their articulation. Thus, the informants are requested to read, recite and narrate in order to receive a collective answer for their pronunciation efficiency and speech features.

The target population selected for this study is Algerian EFL university learners, the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem to be precise, where groups of third year graduates from the department of English are selected to undergo the data collection process as participants. The reason behind such a selection is the fact that third year students are one year from graduation so their pronunciation skill is to be assessed. Moreover, it is required to find out if their two-year Phonetics' tuition is sufficient to teach them the right articulation of English and the necessary phonetic/phonological input.

Structure of the Thesis

The present research is comprised of five chapters divided into two theoretical chapters, one methodology and worksheet analysis chapter and; finally, one practical chapter and another for results' discussion and recommendations. The first chapter; therefore, covers the first part of the literature and introduces a brief guide to gender studies with relation to language in general and language teaching in particular. It highlights gender and sex differences as notions, the emergence of Feminism movement to emphasise the birth of Gender Studies as an independent discipline, gender and linguistic discourse, gender within

EFL classrooms and classroom interaction in terms of male and female learners' behaviours and their teachers' conduct.

The second chapter introduces more literature and experiments conducted to expose potential gender dissimilarities in relation to English pronunciation from different perspectives including socio-phonetic, phonological, socio-cultural, affective and personal. The same chapter exposes more elements and themes that intend to be investigated in field comprising the degree of exposure to the target language, phonetic features, accent consistency and mother tongue interference with prosodic patterns of English pronunciation. It also tackles the issue of the lack of learning strategies employment and highlights its significance in Phonetics or pronunciation classes.

The third chapter brings in the methodology of research opted for which is a mixed method approach. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative analyses interactively. The same chapter lays out the rest of research tools and their respective descriptions, error analysis elements employed and the whole research procedure. The third chapter also tackles the pilot study that assisted in the inception of the present research field work instruments. It concludes with a detailed analysis of phonetic coding worksheets and pronunciation recordings of EFL LMD3 male and female participants.

The fourth chapter is entirely practical. It displays the qualitative and quantitative analyses of learners' questionnaire. Statistics are illustrated through pie-charts and bars to represent the difference between male and female replies and choices. In addition to statistical information, there are explanatory tables which demonstrate data collected and analysed qualitatively. The questionnaire results analyses come in response to each questions' aims which target the selected participants' opinions and attitudes towards English pronunciation acquisition, learning and tuition.

The fifth and last chapter of the present study gathers and exposes all results from collected and analysed data into a discussion. The latter takes the form of a directory of all themes required for scrutiny which record the major gender dissimilarities between male and female EFL graduates selected as participants. The same chapter also provides another directory of recommendations for EFL instructors who namely teach Phonetics. These recommendations are self-devised and they intend to guide teachers and highlight for them the main solutions to possible obstacles which EFL learners may encounter; as well as incentives to create an inviting classroom and atmosphere. All such recommendations are based on their proposals and suggestions collected from their questionnaires replies. The whole research work concludes with limitations of the study and further research implications.

Introduction

The present chapter discloses groundwork notions regarding gender as a social construct, and how it is different from sex in terms of nature and nurture dichotomy. It tackles the origin of gender and its growth into a field of study that came as a result of Feminism in the 1960s. Feminism movement came as a response to gender inequality to demand for liberation from male control in three waves. Feminism's waves fought for social, economical and political statuses and rights equal to that of males. Therefore, gender studies came to existence and paved the way for more research to be done with regard to gender differences in various disciplines. The chapter further reveals the work of the first female researcher Robin Lakoff (1975) who scrutinised and exposed gender differences in language use between male and female speakers by introducing, along with Deborah Cameron and Deborah Tannen, four paradigms of gender dissimilarities in language.

Moreover, the target language English is briefly introduced first as a Lingua Franca that is spreading largely and rapidly around the globe, moving into the connection between the learning process of English as a Second/Foreign Language and gender. Accordingly, Robert C. Gardner's (2007) hypothesis that second language acquisition and development go through four stages for L2 learners is explained; as well as Gardner's (2007) key-elements in Foreign Language Learning that allow male and female learners to be better at the target language through motivation and positive attitudes. This chapter also comprises some selected factors that differentiate men and women's speech and expose them as two different entities in terms of linguistic, phonetic and socio-cultural behaviours.

The elements included explore the superiority of either gender's speech and linguistic competence, the affective aspects in either gender's personality that influence their behaviours in EFL learning, and the possibly detected phonological dissimilarities in terms of voice quality and segmental/supra-segmental instruction. The next element reveals how within EFL classrooms, male and female learners' views vary concerning successful performance, high/low scores and better achievement; because they exhibit different attitudes, abilities and employ diverse techniques. In addition to reviewing a few stereotypical instances along with possible empirical evidence that either confirm or falsify gender differences labels in classroom interaction.

I. 1. The Notion of Gender

Broadly speaking, gender corresponds to the social and cultural differences between males and females under which three spectra they fall; sex, identity, and expression. Most of English dictionaries define gender, aside from grammar-related definitions, as a complex socio-cultural construct manifested in the differences in roles, behaviours; as well as mental and emotional characteristics between the masculine and feminine parts constructed by the society (as cited in Guzeva Ykaterina Nikolayevna, n.d, p. 115).

Other definitions are presented by various scholars and theorists, but the idea to be conveyed remains the same. Irina Yukina (2017) defines gender as a socially constructed characteristic of sex. Olga Aleksandrova Voronina (2000) defines it as a social division often based on the anatomical field, but not necessarily concurring with it (p.09), and A.S. Nikitina (n.d) explains it as a total of verbal, behavioral, and personal peculiarities spiritually distinguishing men and women, that is subject to culture influence (as cited in Guzeva Yekaterina Nikolayevna, n.d, p. 115). The latter explanations of gender give it attributes, such as, social attributes, way of thinking and expression.

In other words, gender is a set of characteristics distinguishing males from females, particularly, in the case of men and women. Depending on the context, the discriminating features vary from sex and social role to gender identity and expression. Firstly, sex represents the biological features that distinguish a female's anatomy from that of a man. Secondly, identity encompasses social and domestic aspects and influences that surround the human being since age three. Thirdly, expression is the manner in which males and females express their masculine and feminine qualities respectively. Speaking of which, these qualities are typical to men or women, and how they act with regard to their self-expression.

From a more professional gender studies' outlook, the terms gender and sex were being discerned first by Ann Oakley (1972) referring to sex as "nature" and gender as "nurture or culture". She defined sex as, "The anatomical and physiological characteristics which signify biological maleness and femaleness", and gender as, "Socially constructed masculinity and femininity. Masculinity and femininity are not defined by biology, but by social, cultural and psychological attributes which are acquired through becoming a man or a woman in a particular society at a particular time", (as cited in Monique Biemans, 2000, p. 05).

The term sex has often been used to refer to the physiological distinction between females and males with gender referring to the social and cultural elaborations of the sex

difference that hinder females from taking part in major achievements and social positions, "A process that restricts our social roles, opportunities and expectations", (Jenny Cheshire, n.d, p.01). Additionally, gender identity is referred by Peter J. Burke & Jan E. Sets (1988, pp. 01-02) to femininity and masculinity defined by societal behaviours. Consequently, it concerns the person's surroundings, gender roles, attitudes, and stereotypes that affect them and drive them to act as either a man or a woman in society starting from a certain age.

According to Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (1927), by age three, a child develops a strong sexual attachment to the opposite sex parent and negative feelings appear for the same sex parent which is clear in resentment and jealousy. Therefore, boys learn to be masculine from their fathers and girls learn to be feminine from their mothers (as cited in Burke & Sets, 1988, p. 04). Another theory introduced by Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) is called "Gender Identity Development" and it also emphasises how a child can apply the appropriate gender label to the self at the age of three once hearing the labels boy or girl. This helps identifying themselves as male or female (p. 05).

Additionally, Oakley (1972) gives the distinction between the sex we are born with (nature) and the gender we acquire (nurture or culture). She defines sex as the anatomical and psychological characteristics which signify biological maleness and femaleness, and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity (p. 05). Yet, these two concepts cannot be detached from one another and according to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, society and culture shape our language; therefore, gender affects the speaker's language and expression. Nevertheless, not all gender theorists agree to such claims, among which Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1996) (as summarised in Deborah Cameron, 1999 and cited in Monique Biemans, 2000, p. 05) characterises three main paradigms for properly conceptualising gender and sex relationship, and they are "Homology", "Analogy", and "Heterogeneity".

Firstly, Homology, to some extent, is the equivalent of the essentialist view mentioned before that gender is determined by sex. According to some anatomical differences between males and females; for instance, differences in hormone distribution and brain anatomy, they have a direct effect on the behaviour of men and women. Socio-cultural differences can be; for example, the greater boys are aggressive compared to girls might be acquired socially. Still, they are related to the biological foundation that men are more physically aggressive than women.

Secondly, Analogy limits gender as a symbolic marker of sex given that gender roles for boys and girls are learnt at school in any given society and at a particular time. Thus, gender is considered a variable. In addition, the socio-cultural roles of women and men can

change through history or vary from one culture to another; and this can be a proper reference to Oakley's (1972) definition of both sex and gender.

Thirdly, Heterogeneity denotes that gender constructs sex. Furthermore, the biological sex difference has no consequences for the social, economic and political organisation of women and men in distinct groups. Accordingly, sex difference becomes significant there only when gender difference is. In other words, gender influences one's thoughts about biological sex; because according to Thomas Laqueur (1990), before the Eighteenth Century, people used to think that the female body was only an inferior version of the male's; then after the cultural shift, the former was regarded a distinct biological entity.

The above-summarised paradigms are not related to gender and language; yet they serve the purpose of identifying gender as a variable than a fixed dichotomy in which various influences might be taken into account for a different analysis. Presently, gender's coming of age with a revolutionary turn in the scientific research of language has encompassed several fields and disciplines.

I. 1. 1. Origin of Gender

Once the term gender surfaced, several views came to clash with each other. Researchers opposing it for the disturbance and revolution it brought along to the stability of scientific research, and others supporting it for the academic liberation it served and presented to female researchers and writers. From a movement that fought linguistic and societal stereotypes, it rose to the science today referred to "Gender Studies". Small beginnings have bigger endings, and gender's popularity keeps rising with the modern and up-to-date research studies and investigations conducted in the field to come up with empirical evidence for gender differences and equality.

Going back in history and according to Deborah Cameron (1998), research in this area was sparked off by the feminist movement in the 1960s when what they might contribute in linguistic sphere dawned on its members (as cited in Abolaji S. Mustapha, 2013, p. 455). From downright scientific willpower in order to achieve equality between the sexes, gender studies came to life and brought changes to several disciplines and branches.

Luise Von Flotow (2004) emphasises how gender studies had a conspicuous emergence and touched several disciplines and fields. She adds that gender studies have developed differently, achieving the greatest influence in North America. The era of feminism that began in the late 1960s affected academic and public life; as well as high and popular

culture has been influential in shaping the historical and scholarly context of its generation. Feminist work has entered and had an impact upon almost every academic discipline there is (as cited in Xiufang Xia, 2013, p. 1485).

Nevertheless, several sociolinguists, well before contemporary linguists, such as, Robin Lakoff (1975), were interested in and investigated language variation and gender. They date back to the Twentieth Century, among which Daryen Vandeputte (2016) collected biographies on them: M. Cederschiöld (1900) and Otto Jesperson (1922); whose works pioneered in the field and influenced recent ones. Furthermore, Margaret Thomas (2013) requests for a second reading of the latter's work, taking into account the culture and time in which it was conceived and produced; because it would provide useful insight for the case of feminism as she states that, "The chapter *"The Woman"* in his book *"Language, its Nature, Development, and Origin"* serves as a touchstone for feminist narratives of the history of the discussion of language and gender" (Vandeputte, 2016, p. 12).

Therefore, in her sense, Jesperson's book has been utilised as a guide for exploring gender differences in language. Yet, there is much more to be discovered about the preconceptions and stereotypes in female's communication and speech that are deemed as inferior to that of men. Hence, feminist linguists took a leap of faith in order to attest their claims of gender differences; as well as prove themselves worthy of equality in a male-dominated society where the Feminist Theory was given birth to.

I. 2. Feminist Theory and Gender

The Western feminist history has come in the form of three shapes or waves. Those waves came to existence in order to highlight women's long struggle in a society ruled by men, gendered superiority complex, and fanatic stereotypes. In addition, they supported gender equality in different matters of life. Such waves were led by female researchers and encouraged by many male theorists including Sigmund Freud. This Women Liberation Movement marked the appearance of three waves that gradually aided females to gain higher status in a male-dominated world.

First wave of feminism appeared around the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It concentrated on giving women access, as a category, to political, economic, and social features of public life from which they were blocked for a long time. The second wave of feminism in Western countries emerged between the 1960s and the 1970s

to continue the struggle initiated by the previous wave and pick up where they left off. It fought for broader aspects, for women to be given proper social and political status, and fight the overwhelming stereotypes. The third wave came into view in the 1990s and continued onwards. It was supported by a few influential men, and it addressed society to acknowledge women's ability to act autonomously and politically despite being crippled by society's sanctions (Lois McNay, 2000, as cited in Androuilla Vassiliou, 2010, p. 17).

Moreover, following the events of feminist waves, the term gender came to existence. Joan W. Scott (1986) explains that by 1986, the term had been already adopted by The Feminist Theory to refer to the social construction of sex differences. As some historians started using the term "Gender History", as well as, "Women's History", others looked at men and masculinity as a part of gender history that did not necessarily focus only on women. Scott along with other female historians intervened and did not welcome this shift and replacement of "Women's History" with "Gender History" only for the sake of including men (as cited in Joanne Meyerowitz, 2008, p. 1347). For those female historians, the very idea of including men in women's history left no space for female liberty and rise in a period of time when feminism started fighting for equality in all domains.

Following the same line of thought, women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s came in response to various discriminating and stereotypical actions. It attempted to show how women's differences from men were in various ways due to the artificial behavioural stereotypes that came with gender conditioning (as cited in Xiufang Xia, 2013, p.1489). In other words, since these stereotypes are artificial, not officially proven, fake and false views made for individuals to believe and embrace the fixed idéolised image of man, they can be diminished and corrected, fought and gender conditioning can be altered.

Pioneer of the field is Robin Lakoff (2004) and she defines women's language as, "A system of sex-linked linguistic signals; a set of features used by both sexes, but more frequently by women", (as cited in Dana Percec, 2008, p. 66). Additionally, Lakoff highlights the paralinguistic terms, which are non-lexical elements of communication. For instance, women's intonation; as well as gestures and facial expressions, are also different from men's. Women's language comprises a wider range of pitches being used with exaggerated expressiveness and rising intonation for declarative statements. As it is generally known that intonation falls at the end of declarative sentences, it rises exclusively in women's speech probably to indicate that their speech is not finished and it serves a narrative function. It is linked to women; because they enjoy narration of events and tend to preserve the continuity of a conversation.

While Dale Spender (1998) has got a different view having stated that women's subordination in language lies in the negative relation to it. In addition, the problem does not lie in the words; but the semantic aspect which controls their positive and negative connotations (p. 66). As a result, Spender refers to women's inferiority in the use of language, not on the lexical level but the semantic one. That is, females construct their linguistic utterances with a connotative background that affects how the listener perceives it whether negatively or positively.

With regard to women's inferiority in language, Thomas Elyot in the Governor (1531) put much focus on the lexical aspect and highlighted how gentlemen; as the educated literate group in society; differed in their use of language from women. The former's English being syllabic, clean, polite, perfectly and articulately pronounced, where they omit no letter as women often do (as cited in Costin-Valentin Oancea, n.d., pp. 187-188). Therefore, other views with regard to how female speech is different, correct or clean from males' is further examined and explained, particularly phonemically as the present study attempts to investigate.

I. 2. 1. Feminist Movements

The Western feminist history has come in the form of three shapes or professed waves. The feminist movement, therefore, launched a blow of suppressed persecution for quite long ages against gender stereotypes and declared themselves free of male domination in every way in their society. First-wave Feminism took place around the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and its demands concentrated on giving women access, as a category, to political, economic and social features of public life from which they were blocked or secluded. Second-wave Feminism in Western countries, in the 1960s and 1970s, carried the torch of liberation and attempted to fight for broader aspects, such as for women to be given proper social and political status; as well as fight the overwhelming stereotypes in their society. Third-wave Feminism emerged around 1990s onwards, and was supported by some male figures including Freud. It demanded a man-controlled society to acknowledge women's ability to act autonomously and politically despite being crippled by society's sanctions (McNay, 2000).

I. 2. 1. 1. First Wave

More thoroughly, the first wave started by the end of the nineteenth century and lasted until 1920. It marked the gap between new female generation and old female generation in terms of the search for personal fulfilment. The major leaders of this wave in the United States are Lucretia Mott (1848), Susan B. Anthony (1852), Elizabeth Stanton (1854) and Lucy Stone (1854). It all started out when women realized how home duties and housework were neither exclusively female tasks, nor were having careers and salary earning exclusive to men. They aspired for attaining higher education as well. The wave also marked women's strife for equality at workplace, and in social and domestic arenas. Furthermore, this precise period brought gender differences in social rights and thanks to the ratification of the 19th amendment of the United States' constitution, women gained the right to vote. Therefore, Women superficially gained political equality that was not exactly reflected by society.

This step, however, managed to boost women's confidence to fight for more freedoms in a world where they were considered secondary to men. Afterwards, women made their way through sexism and male-dominated jobs at workplaces. Again thanks to opportunities, such as, World War I, the Great Depression and the availability of lower-paying jobs; because of gender discrimination. By the time of World War II, women were familiar with working outside their houses as many men left to fight in the war, and the demand for labour led women to join the workforce. This wave, in particular, marked female obtention of political and social rights (as cited in Karima Merchant, 2012, pp. 03-05).

I. 2. 1. 2. Second Wave

The second wave period ranges from the 1960s to the late 1980s. It primarily gave much attention to gender inequalities in the legal system; as well as influencing cultural and societal discrimination. It fought for sexual freedom, against violence and marital oppression. This wave; similar to the previous one; had female leaders, mainly Simone De Beauvoir, Betty Friedman and Gloria Steinem, was led to success and each one of the leaders emphasised a critical issue on their way to fulfilling female liberation. De Beauvoir (1949) referred to "woman" as "the other" in relation to "the man" in a male-dominated world forwarding the argument advanced by feminist writer Virginia Woolf. She meant by that that "woman" is the other in the context of their role at home, at work, and even their sexuality.

Secondly, Betty Friedman (1963); called the mother of the movement, came to support previous claims. She added in her book *"The Feminine Mystique"* that women identified themselves as the other in a subconscious manner, because socially-constructed societal norms influenced them. By restricting them to housework, they were wasting their potentials.

Thirdly, co-founder of Ms Magazine, Gloria Steinem (1969) aided women to have their voices heard via media with regard to issues like abortion, and other daring strides; such as the oral contraception pills approval, President Kennedy's presidential commission on the status of women, and no fault divorce. Laws gave women in the 1960s much freedom, independence, and confidence. This second wave has given birth to many acts and laws in support of women, which allowed them to gain higher status in society.

I. 2. 1. 3. Third Wave

Third wave of feminism movement is viewed as a continuity of the second one, and it began in the early 1990s and is believed to be still in existence in the present day. Leaders Gloria Anzaldua and Chela Sandoval prominently continued leading the movement in face of legal and social discrimination; especially, at workplace with regard to gender and race. In 2011, Bureau of Labour Statistics showed how women's representation in leadership positions increased. The third wave has mainly targeted the following issues, eliminating racial and social prejudice, fighting against gender violence, ensuring reproductive rights, and raising awareness to eliminate instances of rape, glass-ceiling, the gender wage gap, sexual harassment and unfair maternity leave policies.

As a result, each of the waves contributed in promoting women's status in society, gave them voice through mass media and raised awareness with regard to legal issues. Furthermore, it granted them more empowerment to keep fighting for their equality and autonomy. Not to forget their long-awaited independence in a world ruled by men (as cited in Karima Merchant, 2012, pp. 11-12). Accordingly, Scott (1986) states that the term gender has been adopted by feminist movement since the beginning of its inception and took it in as a representation of their cause,

> Now, however, it [gender] had lost its ability to startle and provoke. In everyday usage, gender has become a synonym for women, for the differences between the sexes, for sex. The word gender had crept into women's history without necessarily transforming the field. It appeared

often in predictable studies of women or… of differences in the status, experience and possibilities open to women and men,

(as cited in Joanne Meyerowitz, 2008, p. 1352).

Hence, Scott addresses gender's superficial role and uses another expression to refer to it after female historians attacked her dysfunctional and unearthly de-constructionalist view on gender in her essay. She explains first the deterioration of gender studies once being overused and displaced the field of Women's History. It became subsequently an equivalent of women, sex and the differences between the sexes.

It is worth mentioning that; despite other claims that Scott's study of gender disregarded its reality and abstracted the inequality between the sexes, her essay has influenced the fields of women's history and gender history. It played an important role in creating the shift from social to cultural history as well, from the study of demography, experiences, and social movements of oppressed and stigmatised groups to the present study of representations, language, perception, and discourse.

I. 3. Gender and Language

Despite that the field of Gender Studies has recently occupied a great deal of empirical analysis within various disciplines, gender and language and the different variables between men and women in speech keep creating a centre of attention among researchers who are eager to get a hold of tangible findings to distinguish such variations. Several investigators; on one hand, come to see the popularity of Gender and Language Studies as an outcome of Feminist Movement's involvement which came as a defining turning-point in gender studies and differences in language between the sexes. Others, on the other hand, deem studying the relationship between gender and language which has existed well before the modern women's movements that emerged around the 1970s (Jane Sunderland, 2006, p. 10). Thus far, four main approaches in gender and language studies are introduced and summarised next for a more coherent and focused view on the field being discussed before moving forward to the phonological aspect.

I. 3. 1. Gender and Language Approaches

Again, Lakoff (1975), among other researchers, has presented various paradigms of gender differences. However, four of them are the most well-known and widely highlighted in this arena. These paradigms are: Deficit Model, Dominance Model, Difference Model and Discursive Approach.

First, Deficit Model classifies women as disadvantaged speakers because of their gender-role socialisation in which they use language forms that transmit uncertainty and bashfulness like hitches, such as, "sort of" and "kind of"; as well as tag questions. Second, Dominance Model relates language differences between men and women to power. Women are seen with a subordinate position in conversations, less access to political and economic resources; in addition to a less powerful position. They are reflected in interactions and their speech connotes hesitation, respect, and lack of authority.

Third, Difference Model comes as a reaction to the previous two models. Language differences between men and women are explained by analogy to cultural differences. That is, in the process of growing up, boys and girls interact in sex-peer groups from which they learn conversational strategies. Boys tend to form hierarchical groups in which competition is essential; and girls have a more organised groups directed towards cooperation. This difference is consequently reflected in their language. So, boys' language is more competitive and assertive; by contrast, the girls' is more cooperative and supportive.

Fourth, Discursive or Construction Model is a recently developed approach. It came as a response to the previous ones; not to diminish their importance in the field of language and gender, but to highlight the blind spots in them. According to Deborah Cameron (1995), the earlier approaches induce overgeneralisation and stereotyping, as in what a woman does and what a man does. Men are competitive and women are cooperative respectively. She believes that this is caused, because gender is seen as fixed, and linguists have tried to answer the question: what are the language differences between men and women? Consequently, the differences are related to their unequal qualities or their different socialisation.

I. 3. 1. 1. Deficit Approach

The approach or model listed was first introduced by the linguist Robin Lakoff (1975) in her influential work *"Language and Women's Place"*, in which she discussed and examined women's language compared to men's. She, therefore, identified several differences

in the way they both use language by giving numerous examples in terms of vocabulary and grammar; such as, the use of hedges and tag questions that reflect their reluctance and lack of self-confidence. In addition to employing empty adjectives, polite forms, the use of intensifiers, hyper-correct grammar and pronunciation, and direct quotation. She deduced that, compared to men's stronger and confident language, women's language is colourful and ladylike.

Besides being very careful and conscious about their social image, women's language is considered second-rate; because it reflects their personal and social inferiority (as cited in Lakoff, 1973). By contrast, in a study conducted by William M. O'barr and Bowman K. Atkins (1980), they noted that the linguistic women-specific features given by Lakoff needed be modified; because they were not based on sex, but rather on their social position, and instead of calling it "Women's Language", they proposed a different expression "Powerless Language" (p. 406).

I. 3. 1. 2. Dominance Approach

The second approach was proposed by Lakoff as well with related features from the previous model, for instance, hedges, tag questions, question intonation in declarative sentences and apologies which denote hesitation and indecision in their language or speech. By providing examples associated with the features listed above, she indicated the diverse variances between men and women and called it "Dominance Approach" drawing attention to men's domination and superiority over women in any conversation.

In other words, men tend to control the flow of whichever conversation with female speakers who exhibit poor linguistic and verbal responses. This allows men to lead the course of their discussion. Similarly, a study done by Don H. Zimmerman and Candace West (1975) showed that men interrupted women more frequently and women in return were interrupted more than men. This was related to powerful/powerless social positions. Furthermore, Mary Talbot (1988) critisised this approach calling it, "manifestations of a patriarchal social order" (as cited in Ishrat Akhter, 2014, p. 05); that is to mean, the previously-listed features provided by Lakoff reflect social patriarchy rather than specific gender characteristics.

I. 3. 1. 3. Difference Approach

At most times, this approach was seen associated with the Dominance Approach, and it was first coined by Deborah Tannen (1990) who emphasised the idea that men and women act and speak from two different cultures. Others call it "The Two-Culture Model", and instead of examining male-female conversation from social perspectives; what should be taken into consideration is the cross-cultural aspect that actually puts men and women into two separate groups. Tannen proceeds with six sections in her theory and they are listed as follows,

- **Status vs. Support**: which means men speak in order to gain social status; whereas women have the tendency to support and comfort in their conversations.

- **Advice vs. Understanding**: which is concerned with the fact that women will probably seek comfort and sympathy for their problems, where men will take the chance to search for solutions.

- **Information vs. Feelings**: while men build message-oriented conversations to convey information, women see conversations as a means for building relationships and strengthening social links. Daniel N. Maltz and Ruth Borker (1982) also provide an example in which they claim that such conversational differences cause misunderstanding and miscommunication between the sexes; because, for example, women regard questions as part of conversational maintenance; whereas men consider them requests for information.

- **Order vs. Proposal**: men tend to use direct orders to command others, whereas women favour the use of polite forms and requests or suggestions.

- **Conflict vs. Compromise**: usually men resort to conflicts in order to demonstrate how powerful and dominant they are, while women are inclined to avoid quarrel and rather compromise to keep away from tension and conflicts.

- **Independence vs. Intimacy**: men take decisions without consulting anyone to demonstrate autonomy; but women more likely seek intimacy and sharing.

From the viewpoint of today's researchers and sociolinguists, the major drawback in Lakoff's work is its lack of any empirical basis. Rather than collecting corpora of male and female speech, Lakoff made claims based on her own intuitions and anecdotal observation of her peers' language use. Many of these claims have, not surprisingly, proved debatable. Still, despite criticism of Lakoff's methodology, the set of features she somehow arbitrarily

selected as markers of women's speech style continue to figure in research on sex differences. Hence, because of the importance of *"Language and Woman's Place"* at a time when the field had yet to establish itself, several later researchers apparently felt inclined to begin their own investigations with the so-called "Lakoff's Hypothesis" (Deborah Cameron, Fiona McAlinden & Kathy Oleary 1988, as cited in Daryen Vandeputte, 2016, pp. 16-17). Consequently, despite opposing views with Lakoff's findings and what she has come to conclude in her work, it is still considered by supporting linguists as a stepping stone to other recent gender and sociolinguistic features' investigations.

I. 3. 1. 4. Discursive /Constructive Approach

This recent approach is put forward by Deborah Cameron (2003) who demonstrates, as a feminist, how some gender stereotypes may alter prior to responses and shifts in the economic climate. Furthermore, Jack W. Sattel (1983) asserts that this discursive element goes beyond the binary; claiming that in order to understand masculinity, what should be emphasised is not its contrast to femininity; but rather the asymmetrical dominance being grantedly given to men in society. That is, giving more scrutiny to inherent societal behaviours and structures. The discursive approach, according to Cameron, considers sociological factors when analysing gender differences.

On the contrary, the Constructive Approach finds people's identities, as female or male, are being constructed by their behaviours, among which their linguistic behaviour is included, and gender is seen as an activity or performance rather than a feature. She adds that, "There is not men or women's language; they are specific speech styles socio-culturally associated with masculinity and femininity". That is, men and women's surroundings, be they home, work, school or society, greatly affect their linguistic expression. The actual question that should be asked comes to light: how do individuals use linguistic resources to produce gender differentiation? (as cited in Monique Biemans, 2000, pp. 06-08).

These approaches had immensely contributed to the examination and analysis of language from a gender standpoint. Additionally, in an interview with Deborah Cameron (2010), she was asked why the study of gender and language was important. The answer was "having gender and speaking a language (or languages) are both very basic to our sense of who we are as human beings; so the question of how (or if) the two connect seems to me quite a profound one" (as cited in Blake E. Hayes, 2010, p. 05).

In other words, gender differentiation is essential to analyse, and gender influences the language and speech styles spoken by men and women. These two are interrelated in her opinion, and they shape one's personality and identity; but how it occurs is quite an intriguing process that needs more scrutiny. Hence, another discussion with regard to gender and language correlation in language learning contexts is viewed subsequently.

I. 4. Gender and English Second/Foreign Language Learning

Living in a globalised world, English is acknowledged as a rapidly-dominant Lingua Franca in almost all domains. It has become a necessity to learn English for either personal and communicative purposes or more professional ones. Therefore, English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) is a term commonly used to refer to the use of English as a means of communication among non-native speakers from all around the globe. Sean Sutherland (2008) defines ELF as,

> How non-native speakers use English with each other in the absence of native English speakers. Rather than focus on how proficient non-native speakers' speech for mistakes… ELF research looks at how proficient non-native English speakers communicate effectively with each other (as cited in British Council, 2007, p. 44).

As a result, ELF research is parallelly rising with the increasing number of non-native speakers of English as it overlooks how many mistakes they make in grammar when they can communicate effectively. This point highlights the importance of fluency among them rather that accuracy. Moreover, Henry Widdowson in Jenkins defines the language content of ELF as follows,

> The modified forms of the language which are actually in use should be recognised as legitimate development of English as an international means of communication. The functional range of the language enables its users to express themselves more freely without having to conform to norms which represent the socio-cultural identity of other people
> (as cited in British Council, 2007, p. 44).

Widdowson refers to the inconsistency and alteration made in spoken English by non-natives as the modified forms of English that actually contribute to the growth of English as an international medium of communication. In addition, the flexibility of English allows its

users to speak it more comfortably and free of its linguistic norms. This latter is in fact due to the fact that non-native speakers prefer to imprint and convey their socio-cultural identity on their speech. That is, non-native English speakers disregard the accurate rules for correct grammar; for instance, adding "s" for plural to uncountable nouns, such as, "informations" and "advices", as long as their conversation is maintained and meaning is conveyed. This idea leads to the exposure of the constant debate about how accurate or fluent a non-native speaker of English should be.

Additionally, Robert C. Gardner (2007) hypothesises that in Second Language Acquisition and development (Henceforth SLA), at least four stages can be identified and they are comparable to those involved in the development of one's first language. In the sense that the SLA process does not immensely differ from how any individual acquires their mother tongue. Moreover, he presents a schematic representation of those stages which is illustrated below.
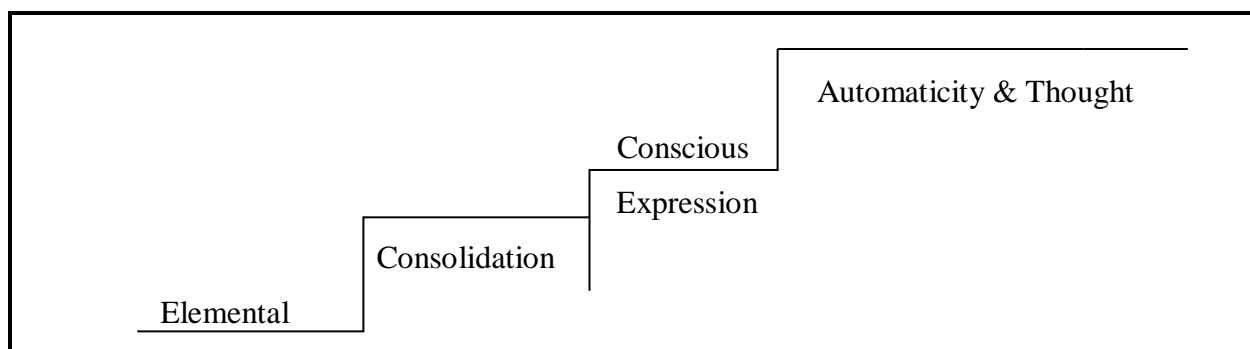
Figure 1. Stages of Language Acquisition and Development (Gardner, 2007, p. 04)

He introduces the first and initial stage as "Elemental", in which the individual is learning the fundamentals of the language; such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and so on, or what Wallace E. Lambert (1955-1956) calls "Vocabulary Cluster". This is similar to the development of one's mother tongue. For instance, when a toddler learns new terms and starts joining words together, and also mispronouncing some words with subsequent auto-correction. Correspondingly, second language learner experiences the same steps while recognising equivalents and similarities with their L1 and memorising declarative common sentences.

The second stage is called "Consolidation", where the young child begins to realise that language is a system where some structures are correct and others are incorrect. They also

naturally develop rules for pluralisation, sentence structure, understanding idioms and figures of speech, and so on. Similarly, second language learner recognises common and different structures and elements between their mother tongue and the target language. They also learn some expressions which can be meaningful while others can be meaningless and so forth.

The third stage is referred to as "Conscious Expression", which means that the learner becomes conscious of how he/she is using the language. So, the individual can convey ideas, but not without carefully considering what is about to be expressed. For a young L1 learner; in this phase in particular, speech hesitations, such as um, err, and uh are demonstrated and utilised where the individual is attempting to search for the right words or forms of expression to get his point through. Now for an L2 learner, the same phenomenon takes place in which they give the impression that they are searching their mother tongue for help to express the idea in the second language.

The last stage is identified as "Automaticity and Thought"; which refers to the ultimate and final stage in language learning; where thought and language are combined and the latter becomes automatic in most contexts. That is, language and self become interrelated and the learner is speaking properly and almost accurately. Here Lambert's Cultural Cluster comes to motion (Gardner, 2007, p. 04-05), which is explained in the second chapter exactly in the element of target language exposure.

To conclude, Gardner expresses a conclusive fact which is that his analysis is not considered definitive; but it serves as a means to highlight what is meant by learning a language. He asserts that, "Language learning refers to the development of knowledge and skill that permits varying degrees of communication with others while acquisition involves making the language part of the self" (p. 05). Put differently, language learning enables the individual to improve their linguistic abilities and deliver degrees of successful communication; whereas language acquisition allows the individual to succeed in fully mastering the language and culture, and allows oneself to be fully integrated within it. Nonetheless, motivation is an element difficult to detach from all stages, whether for language learning or acquisition.

I. 4. 1. Motivation and Gender in Language Learning

Gardner (2007), after investigating different aspects of Second/Foreign Language Learning (Henceforth SLL/FLL) and defining achievements in the sense of performance on objective tests of grammar, written and oral production, reading comprehension and so on, he

says, "What amazes me is that motivation has been found to be implicated at all stages" (p. 06). Consequently, motivation and attitudes as an essential affective aspect in language learning is discussed more thoroughly with regard to the learner's personality and preferences in most studies conducted with relation to education and academic performance. Therefore, when discussing motivation to learn a second language in educational contexts more profoundly, Gardner proposes to consider that from two points of view. He points out to both "Educational Context" that refers to any school subject, and "Cultural Context" which is not relevant to most school subjects. He explains that learning a second language at school as a subject differs from the rest in the fact that the former involves taking elements of another culture.

First, "The Cultural Context" is defined in terms of one's attitudes and beliefs, personality characteristics, ideal expectations, and so on. Gardner clarifies this point with the example of North America; where it is generally accepted that Europeans are better at learning languages than North Americans. Now the point is that whether it is true or not, it can greatly influence the North Americans' beliefs about their own success.

Second, "The Educational Context" has got quite an important role to play in the learners' motivation, either boosting or reducing it. It refers to the educational system where the student is enrolled and, consequently, to the classroom situation mentioned above. The elements that need be highlighted are the expectation of the system, the quality of the program, the interest, the enthusiasm and skills of the teacher, the adequacy of the materials, the curriculum, and the atmosphere (p. 06-07).

Additionally, Gardner once more mentions components from his original research that influence the L2 learners' motivation and the most significant ones are: integrativeness and attitudes. The first applies to the individual's interest in learning the target language in order to interact with native speakers and learn more about the community, "i.e. an integrative orientation and favourable attitudes towards the community" (p. 07). Gardener indicates the general use of the term "integrative" and refers to it sometimes as Openness or Openness to Cultural Identification. When EFL learners identify themselves as part of that culture and believe that their interest may lead them to success, better achievements can take place.

The other characteristic is attitudes towards the learning situation, which applies to the influence of the educational contexts on the learners' attitudes that make an impact on the learner's level of motivation. Subsequently, both contexts go hand in hand and do not operate separately. That is, the cultural context may affect the student's attitudinal reaction to the

school environment and probably the educational context may have a role in the student's level of integrativeness (p. 08).

Furthermore, Gardner conducted another research on students from Barcelona to compare the results with those of French learners. The outcomes were similar and they indicated that the highest variable that affected language learning was motivation, followed by language anxiety; which means the more anxious the student is, the lower the English grade. The highest variable was "Integrativeness" that indicated how students with openness towards the target language community achieved higher grades and results. The next one was "Instrumental Orientation" that concerned those students who possessed materialistic purposes for learning English, and they achieved higher score than those who saw it less important. The last variable which was not quite high and did not count as important as the above-mentioned variables was "Parental Encouragement".

What is worth mentioning is that motivation and attitudes towards learning a foreign language are two significant variables that cannot be detached from one another; because they function together and successful language learning process is achieved by combining them both. As Gardner and Lambert (1972) mention, "his [the learner] motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other groups, in particular, by his orientation towards the learning task itself" (as cited in Majed Drbseh, 2015, p. 236).

Similarly, Veronica Lifrieri (2005) advances that "attitudes are necessary, insufficient indirect condition for linguistic attainment only when paired up with motivation properly due to attitudinal tendencies related to the levels of the students' engagement in language learning and to attainment" (as cited in Drbseh, 2015, p. 236). Thus, success in language learning is greatly determined by the compatibility of both motivation and positive attitudes of the individual towards the target language learning and its community respectively.

With regard to gender, an investigation was carried out by D. Fakeye (2010) concerning the connection between attitudes and achievement by male and female students; where gender presented no significance worth mentioning (as cited in Mohamed Zainol Abidin, 2012, p. 122). By contrast, females' scores were slightly higher that the male students' exactly in Amel Shoaib and Zoltan Dornyei's (2005) investigation results which indicate that gender can be an important variable in second language learning. Therefore, they come to the conclusion that female learners exhibit more interests, positive behaviours and performances compared to male learners (p. 124).

Following this brief introduction of motivation and attitudes towards EFL learning and the great emphasis given to this significant key-element; still, numerous researchers give less

importance to the variable of gender when emphasising learners' attitudes in English educational contexts. Probably the reason behind overlooking gender and abstracting it from field studies is due to the fact that it is ineffective to their results, or it could be due to the widely acknowledged fact that female learners tend to exhibit more passion, interest, and positive attitudes towards learning foreign languages.

When addressing the issue of gender and Foreign Language Learning, Susan M. Bacon and Michael D. Finnemann (1992) claim that women are more motivated, more open to authentic input and have a more positive attitude to target language speakers; while male students tend to believe that learning grammar was the most important part in language learning and that practising with audio-visual material is crucial (as cited in Borbala Rieger, 2009, p. 30).

In *"The Psychology of Gender Differences",* attention is drawn to a fact that girls have got better language ability than boys which is the main feature in possible gender differences of both genders. Similarly, Xiong Dan (n.d.) thinks that in the research of teaching in accordance with their aptitude, "the female's observation is more keen, precise, and thorough" (as cited in Xin Xiong, 2010, p. 311). Accordingly, A. M. Clements (2006), Kamsaku and Shigeru Kitazawa (2001) and Mack (1996) declare how after a long time of "psychometric testing[1], observation and imaging techniques, it has been revealed that females' brains in general process language activities more easily and much earlier and faster than males who by contrast more readily excel at spatial, mechanical and gross motor skill tasks (as cited in Hawkar Omar Ali, 2016, p. 76). That is in a nutshell, female learners not only possess a superior cerebral capacity over males in FLL, they also seem to surpass their scores at school due to their positive and open thinking which lead them to obtain better school achievements.

Having said that, one of the few researchers who came to mention the existence of gender differences with regard to motivation, aside from Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert (1972), is Firdevs Karahan (2007) in the Turkish EFL context through the use of a questionnaire administered to one hundred and ninety students (Ninety-four females and ninety-six males). They had moderately positive attitudes, especially, female students who had the highest rate (as cited in Atef Al Tamimi and Munir Shuib, 2009, p. 35).

People take for granted how female learners outnumber male ones in schools, and because they score better grades than male learners; not quite sufficient research or studies have been conducted in this regard. The gender gap in L2 acquisition generally and

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[1] Psychometric tests are designed to test a person's mental state, personality, and thought processes.

particularly the speaking sub-skill: pronunciation aspect is yet to be scrutinised more sufficiently. Petra Lietz (2006), M. Rosén (2001), and Hans Wagemaker (1996) have observed the existence of a gender gap in other different countries around the globe favouring women over men when it came to language learning/acquisition ability.

Accordingly, several other researchers in the field of language acquisition found that gender can reflect a significant impact on how learners acquire/learn any given language. Therefore, in her article on individual differences in second language acquisition, Shahila Zafar and K. Meenakshi (2012) listed several researchers whose investigations brought important gender/sex differences in language acquisition to light. For instance, Hu Zhuanglin (1989) and Diane Larsen –Freeman & Michael H. Long (2000) agreed on the fact that in the process of mother tongue acquisition, females excel males at an early stage (p. 640).

Generally, men and women are born with distinct linguistic advantages and privileges; for example, females learn how to speak earlier than men, learn foreign languages faster and better than males. Moreover, Joseph B. Boyle (1987) and Doreen Kimura (1992), state that women tend to be superior to men in almost every aspect of language learning except listening and vocabulary. Besides, women with higher levels of estrogen during their menstrual cycle exhibit higher levels of articulatory and motor ability (p. 640). Still, the research carries on granting each gender more findings that will decide which of them is superior to the other in Language learning skills.

I. 4. 2. Major Gendered Factors Influencing Language Learning

With regard to research in language varieties, sociolinguists have discovered that various factors influence an individual's language learning; which could be their age, environment or social class and in this case, the variable of gender. Moreover, the present study intends to shed some light on some possible gender differences specifically in pronunciation acquisition of English by non-native learners. Therefore, for decades, linguists have been debating language and articulatory, acoustic and auditory differences from a gender lens claiming that such dissimilarities might be related to their sex, phonetic/phonological ability, cultural and social influences, personality and individual preferences to name a few.

I. 4. 2. 1. Society and Culture

From a perspective of cultural and societal influences, much can be said about the so-called inferiority of females' language compared to the superior speech of males (Lakoff, 1972). Several sociolinguists and gender theorists accentuate the issue and tend to inequalise women's linguistic skills and rather denote femininity in artistic and second-rate references. For instance, Dennis E. Baron (1986) claims that the biblical myth of the creation of woman from Adam's rib largely contributed to female's language being considered as less perfect or secondary (as cited in Zbigniew Kloch, 2000, p. 46).

Others explain how gender is projected onto inanimate objects and animals, and how stereotypes about men and women's attitudes, behaviours and ideas affect such decisions with regard to attributing the right personal pronouns to objects or animals. The example provided is that of a ship, "God bless her and all who sail in her", wondering why not "God bless it and all who sail in it"; because it is more logical for being an object, or "God bless him and all who sail in him" as a reference to masculinity. Accordingly, Dale Spender (1980), among others, suggests that cars and boats are seen as female; because they are objects of status that have been traditionally under the control of men; as well as the physical attractiveness of these objects (as cited in Penelope Eckert & Sally McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 08).

In other examples, they personify objects as female because of the qualities attributed to women; such as, "Mother Country" and "Mother Tongue"; because of the idea of a matriarchal figure obtaining, sustaining and caring for its people, and for "Mother Nature" as a nurturing and protective force. As for objects personified as male, they provide the example of "Father Time" who is often pictured as stern, authoritarian and inhumane (p. 13).

Moreover, addressing female writing, in her book *"Gender, Language and Discourse"*, Ann Weatherall (2002, p. 18) mentions a few notable examples of how changes began overwhelming society since the "Feminist Movement" spread the notion of gender to fight sexism in language and academic writing. Among which she introduces Mary Daly's (1978) examples, re-fusing (from the meaning of rejecting something to merging and blending it), and re-membering (from the meaning of recalling something to belonging or returning as a member) of the self. The latter, has the tendency to use slashes and hyphens to shift word meaning and her subversive use of words' functions as a means to mobilise language and to give it attention by challenging taken-for-granted beliefs about the social and moral order. By contrast, some feminist sociolinguists; such as Deborah Cameron (1985) and Jennifer Coates (1986) criticise and find the very idea of women being linguistically sensitive and status-

conscious stems from the bias towards women as housewives and mothers. They call these concepts suggestive and circular in their definition which ought to be proven first (Weatherall, 2002, p. 133).

Additionally, other linguists, for instance, Cederschiöld (1900), one of the oldest sources in Gender Studies, and Jesperson (1922) view women as the conservative part resilient to changes and who fears innovation and who rather prefer to keep the traditional language forms. Men, by contrast, are more innovative and initiate to change more often (Vandeputte, 2016, p. 44). Yet, it is not acceptable to generalise these findings where Eckert (1989) calls for more empirical evidence before deciding which sex is more linguistically innovative giving account to various variables that play influential impact. She states,

> Not only is it a mistake to claim that women are more or less than men, but at this point of our research it is a mistake to claim any kind of constant constraint associated to gender. It is above all, this mistake that characterizes much current work on sex differences in variation (p. 45)

Marjorie Swacker (1975) points to the fact that sex was overlooked in previous research and investigations though it was an important linguistic variable; because research was made apart from a sex/gender lens, it was meagre. So, she conducted her own experiment testing thirty-four informants with little variation; where she concluded that men spoke for longer intervals than women did. This conclusion came as a contrast to the general opinion. Her experiment, mainly, made things clearer about the little research carried out on sex-specific speech patterns that do exist but are less estimated (as cited in Vandeputte, 2016, p. 12). Nevertheless, the sex variable is less irrelevant to the present work where only a few anatomical differences are to be mentioned in the subsequent part concerning phonetic/phonological aspects in gendered speech.

Following the same line of thought, in a society dominated by male authority, women's speech tends to be portrayed as weak and inferior to that of men who occupy high status positions. Yet, others cannot deny the fact that women's language is prone to changes and is more novel than that of men. Cherish Kramer (1977) declares how English speakers and linguists are no exception, that men's speech is forceful, efficient, blunt, authoritative, serious, effective, sparing and masterful. By contrast, women's speech is weak, trivial, ineffectual, tentative, hesitant, hyper-polite, euphemistic, and is most of the time gossip and gibberish (as cited in Susanne Karlsson, 2007, p. 06).

Moreover, in mixed-gender interactions, women are said to be less direct than men, and they use a greater number of indirect questions which are regarded as more polite and less

imposing. Women also use affiliative language strategies; such as showing support and agreement (Coates, 1989, as cited in Damien Healy, 2009, p. 93). Differently explained, female verbal communication is seen as subordinate to male's which makes it less powerful and less assertive due to women's subjective and reluctant nature. It remains a reminder that female language is lacking and socially inadequate from a male point of view.

With regard to the use of vocabulary, there are terms that are not used by men because they sound more feminine or vice-versa. In Sociolinguistics, it is called "Gender-lect" which is a variety of speech, i.e, "a register or socio-lect that is specific to either males or females", (Gender-lect, 2015, as cited in Vandeputte, 2016, p. 06). Although this notion was not coined by Deborah Tannen (1990) herself, it rather gained more popularity when she used it in her "Gender-lect Theory" in which she stated that men and women have a different way of conversing without being either right or superior over the other, they are simply different (p. 06). That is to mean, women represent a different being from men in the way they think and speak. Thus, it is interesting to study, investigate and scrutinise these dissimilarities more thoroughly without prejudice, where results do not have to regard either sex superior or inferior to the other.

Following the same idea, Cameron (1998) explains that,

> Men and women are members of culture, and they learn the suitable ways of speaking and a large set of gendered meanings (behaviours/acts), that are attached to different ways of speech. They produce their own behaviour in the light of those meanings
>
> (as cited in Ahmad Alharahsheh, 2014, p. 872).

Therefore, men and women's actions and demeanours along with the way each sex was brought up determine their manners of speaking, which is a basic and detachable cultural influence. The environment that surrounds men and women inside and outside their society creates their gendered speech.

In a different culture like the Arabic countries, men and women use different terminology where in Jordanian society; for example, social norms determine men and women's speech. It is inappropriate for a woman to use a man's speech style, because it is socially unacceptable and she should speak in a way that reflects her femininity. To act, speak, reply and discuss quietly and in a reserved manner. The same applies in Algeria, where there are certain terms that are socially wrong for women to use in public; as well as raising her voice, laughing out loud, and using vulgar or obscene expressions.

I. 4. 2. 2. Personality and Preferences

From a personal and preferential tastes' standpoint, gender is explored by psychologists almost in every aspect of the human behaviour; because personal traits and preferences of both sexes differ in great measures. Despite that they have already brought forward inconclusive and un-generalisable findings that require further investigation, what is more relevant to the present study is the influence of personality and affective factors; such as motivation and attitudes, on the learners' pronunciation performances in an EFL context as male or female.

It is also implied that different personalities are what brings variety to the world. Psychologists like Skinner and Freud have dedicated their lives to unlock such secrets and phenomena; however, personality traits differ from one human being to another. Even results of studies vary every single time they are conducted. Several scholars seem to agree with Madeline Ehrman (1996) when she implies that there is clearly a relation between personality and strategies of language acquisition; because people tend to choose and perform any given skill once they are comfortable with it (as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 643). Among these personality traits that may affect L2 learning there are,

1- Extraversion vs. Introversion
2- Self-esteem
3- Inhibition
4- Risk-taking
5- Anxiety
6- Personal Beliefs

Once these characteristics are defined next, they will be part of the factors that contribute either in aiding male/female learners in acquiring good pronunciation of English or the contrary. Moreover, these elements are included in the research tools for the field work of the present study.

- **Extraversion vs. Introversion**

The trait of being either an extravert or an introvert was popularised by the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung where; on one hand, extraversion tends to carry manifestation of outgoing, energetic, social and talkative behaviour. On the other hand, introversion is manifested in a more reserved, shy, isolated and solitary behaviour. This pair is considered as

a continuum where both exist in one person; but it is low extraversion opposite high introversion or vice versa.

Nevertheless, in the field of language acquisition, some scholars; such as Hans Eysenck (1967); view extraversion incompatible with it due to neuro-chemical phenomena in the human brain and an introvert would do better in that; language acquisition that is. Whereas most of the researchers (Stephen Krashen, 1985; M. Swain, 1985; S. H. McDonough, 1986 and Vivian Cook, 2001) argue that an extravert learner can be well suited to language learning due to their preference of communicative approaches, their interactions in the language and an increased amount of input would maximise the language output (p. 643).

Badran A. Hassan (2001) had a test on Arabic-speaking Egyptian college students to identify the effect of extraversion/introversion factor on their pronunciation accuracy. The results show that extraversion/introversion indeed is positively correlated with accurate pronunciation of English, where male students outperformed the female students and extraverted students were more accurate and successful in their English pronunciation acquisition (as cited in Shahrokh Jahandar, Moretza Khodabandehlou, Gohar Seyedi & Reza Mousavi Dolat Abadi, 2012, p. 02).

R. J. Rossiter (1975) highlights the positive connection between oral proficiency in English and extraversion, by contrast, Madeline Ehrman and Rebecca Oxford (1990) found no reliable or important differences between both genders in language performance. Moreover, the results of Badran A. Hassan's (2001) research study; on extraverted and introverted learners' performance in pronunciation accuracy, deny such results and in actuality introverted Arab learners did poorly in their oral interview test. Yet, he pointed out the fact that this matter still needed further investigation to come to a reliable conclusion. As related to gender, Deborah Bush's (1982) study results demonstrate that male extraverts have higher scores in their oral performances in an interview than do females, but the findings are not conclusive and need more scrutiny (p. 07).

- **Self-esteem**

Generally, educators have the tendency to agree that learners with higher self-esteem and self-confidence succeed in learning. Afterwards, several studies conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1972); as well as Dean Bradley and H. Shore (1976) came to the conclusion that it was an important factor in SLA. Similarly, Richard Clement and Kimberley Noels (1998)

refer to the significance of confidence in their model "Willingness to Communicate" in a foreign language, where more willingness reflects better communicative ability among other factors; because it cannot cause successful learning alone (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 643).

Self-confidence and positive evaluation grant learners success and higher scores in language learning. Research on gender differences in FLL and several linguists note how female learners display a great deal of confidence in their linguistic competence for language learning and regard themselves positively. Whereas male learners show less self-assurance with their linguistic abilities to master a second language; as well as the result from other studies that show boys' slight inhibition by girls' greater aptitude and confidence, which might be a reason of their underachievement (Robert Powell 1979 and Robert Powell & Julia D. Batters, 1985, as cited in Paula Lopez Rua, 2006, p. 105).

- **Inhibition**

This characteristic can deliver killing blows to the language learning process as it builds barriers, shuts interaction and blocks retention of the information. Inhibition grows with the embarrassment of making mistakes caused by the teacher or the peers. According to Douglas H. Brown (2000), language teaching approaches over time have managed to create contexts in which learners may feel free to speak out, take risks and try out their new acquired/learned language features (as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 643).

Therefore, the issue of classroom interaction and achievements rely mostly on the teachers' right implemented approaches; as well as their behaviours inside the classroom. Learners' inhibition by an embarrassing remark from a teacher or a peer may devastate them, accelerate the self-shutdown towards learning; and might lead to a drop-out. Consequently, the educator loses their ability to control the course of their classroom and risks the loss of more students on the way. The variable of gender probably is not widely researched with regard to this aspect here; so, no reliable results can be added to this element so far.

- **Risk-taking**

In Collins Dictionary, risk-taking is defined as taking actions which might have unpleasant or undesirable results. In an educational context, J. Rubin and I. Thompson (1994) refer to it as "the ability to make intelligent guesses". Therefore, risk-taking in EFL classes is different from its general use, and it allows learners to experience initiation and self-

dependence on one's personal thoughts and actions in school. Nonetheless, some reasons create fear of taking risks by the learners which L. M. Beebe (1983) describes as follows,

> In the classroom, a bad grade in the course, a fail on the exam, a reproach from the teacher, a smirk from a classmate, punishment or embarrassment imposed by oneself. Outside the classroom, fear of looking ridiculous, fear of the frustration coming from a listener's blank look, fear of the alienation of not being able to communicate, and thereby get close to other human beings and fear of losing their identity (as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 644).

Therefore, these reasons that seem to surround the learner with confusion and fear inside and outside the classroom are taken into consideration as factors that lead learners to avoid learning English properly and acquiring correct pronunciation especially. In addition, B. Dufeu (1994) suggests that teachers should provide a comfortable and cooperative atmosphere for the learners to make steps forward. However, not all students are willing to take risks depending on their personalities and choices (p. 644). The variable of gender also is not found in research studies related to this aspect here; so, no reliable results can be added to this element as well.

- **Anxiety**

It comes as another crucial aspect of personality and a significant affective aspect that may cause negative results in FLL contexts. It is a feeling that is associated with worry, nervousness, and vexation which blocks the learner from achieving satisfactory outcomes. For so long, anxiety; among other affective factors, has been a leader in FLL impediment preventing learners from acquiring/learning the necessary information or performing properly; as well as full retention of segments in pronunciation acquisition. For that, Zafar Iqbal Khattak, Tanveer Jamshed, Ayaz Ahmad & Naveed Miraz Baig (2011) reported, "Anxiety experienced in learning English Language can be debilitating and may influence students' achievements of their goals". Therefore, anxiety can be either self-caused or caused by outer factors which drain the learners from all their possibilities to achieve higher scores in their education, in addition to losing any chance to perform well in class or gain knowledge properly.

Zheng Ying (2008); for instance, introduces a list of various causes of classroom anxiety that not only include learner-based issues, but teacher's involvement in the educational setting has got a major role in the development of such a negative factor, 1)

Personal or Interpersonal, 2) Learners' beliefs about language learning, 3) Teachers' beliefs about language anxiety, 4) Teacher-learner interaction, 5) Classroom procedures, 6) and Language testing (as cited in Djamilah Mohamed Sadiq, 2017, p. 01-02).

In the course of language research, several definitions of classroom anxiety have been put forward to clarify the truest interpretations of this factor. Peter MacIntyre and R. C. Gardner (1994) believe that language anxiety is, "The feeling of tension and apprehension specially associated with Second Language Learning contexts including speaking, listening and writing". Similalrly, Michael B. Horwitz and Joan Cope (1986) define it as, "A distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". Likewise, D. J. Young (1999) proceeds defining it as, "Worry and emotional reaction aroused when learning or utilizing second language," or "A complex multifaceted experience, a feeling which comes flooding into our whole selves, affecting many different aspects of our being" (as cited in Mohamed Sadiq, 2017, p. 02).

Therefore, all what previous research on classroom anxiety points at is the threatening presence that engulfs the learner in a reluctance-atmosphere that impacts their mental states and achievements; by causing low focus, bad experience in Foreign Language Learning and poor performance in class. Additionally, several researchers have conducted experiments in order to pinpoint the main factors that lead to such a high level of anxiety that impacts learners' capacities or hinders their improvement. Such studies; carried out by Lindy Woodrow (2006), C. T. Chao (2003), and Phillip Bailey, Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie & Christine Daley (1999); explain this as a cause of fear of interacting with native speakers, giving oral presentations or performing in front of their peers. Nevertheless, several variables played a part in the high level of anxiety; such as age, academic achievement, prior experience with foreign languages in high school and expected overall average for current language courses. Gender was not an important variable that discerned male from female learners in terms of anxiety.

Accordingly, anxiety presents a constantly current hindrance to the majority of EFL learners encompassing various fields and skills. For the present study's purpose, the speaking skill is being investigated in order to discern most of the obstacles, which EFL learners may encounter in acquiring correct pronunciation of English both inside and outside their classes. Therefore, several researchers, such as Horwitz and Cope (1986) explain how anxiety affects the speaking skill most; as well as their EFL teachers' behaviours and questions addressed to

their students which could possibly breed more anxious feelings in language classes (Kenneth E. Williams & Melvin Andrade, 2008).

Similarly, Hussain Elkhafaifi (2005) claims that anxious students, even though possess the knowledge and answers, tend to evade participation in oral activities. In addition, there is another study conducted by M. L. Price (1991) focusing on highly anxious students of French and through interviewing them the following reasons are put forward, 1) Fear of speaking the target language in front of their peers, 2) Fear of making mistakes, 3) Being laughed at by others, 4) Learners' perceptions that their French language skills are weaker than those of other students (as cited in Mohamed Sadiq, 2017, p. 02-03). It is only shown that learners' linguistic and academic performances fall into degradation when they are being entirely consumed by anxious feelings of embarrassment and possible mistakes.

With regard to investigating anxiety in an FL classroom from a gender perspective, in a study carried out by Aida (1994), female learners scored slightly high results than male learners. By contrast, Alkhafaifi's (2005) study results show that females are found to be more apprehensive than males in general anxiety. Furthermore, different studies conducted in different contexts and with various purposes come with a variety of results where females outmatch their male counterparts or just surrender to their apprehension and fear of underachievement.

Still; on one hand, such results depend entirely on tests and skills; for instance, male learners tend to outdo their female classmates in mainstream classrooms and peer interactions (Papamihiel, 2001), and men tend to be low-foreign language achievers that might be, according to Oxford and Ehrman's (1993) hypothesis, due to superior strategy use by females. Moreover, the opposite takes place when females achieve better in ESL classrooms and individual tasks (Papamihiel, 2001), where they tend to worry more about academic achievement (as cited in Jean T. Wilson, 2006, p. 102).

On the other hand, other researchers, such as Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie (1999) and Jean-Marc Dewaele (2002) found no significant correlation between gender and general anxiety or gender and communicative anxiety in either French or English as Foreign Languages. Though Alkhafaifi (2005), in his study conducted on American students of Arabic, noticed that female students experienced high levels of anxiety in general Arabic; yet, no significant differences were spotted in the listening skill (p. 138-141). As a result, Jean T. Stephenson Wilson's (2006) study shows that gender is a third best predictor of anxiety where female learners actually experience a high level of anxiety in EFL classroom (Cheng, 2002,

Alkhafaifi, 2005 and Papamihiel, 2002). Nevertheless, the tendency of their high anxiety skill remains unclear and under-researched (p. 303).

- **Personal Beliefs**

This is another key-element in Foreign Language Acquisition (henceforth FLA) and these beliefs are defined as "implicit theories", "self-constructed representational systems" and "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of learning and teaching" (C. M. Clarke, 1988; Mia Victori & Walter Lockhart, 1995 and F. Rust, 1997; respectively, as cited in Evan Bernat & Rosemarie Lloyd, 2007, p. 79).

In other words, personal beliefs can be considered as thoughts or assumptions made up by students towards something specific; in this case it is the process of foreign language acquisition/learning. These beliefs can be either negative or positive towards learning any given language or how they perceive themselves as successful or poor learners. Personal beliefs control students' type of learning strategies that they opt for to obtain better performances and achievement.

Therefore, C. E. Weinstein (1994), R. G. Kern (1995) and M. Peacock (2001) assert that beliefs are quite stable within the learner, strongly held and resistant to change afterwards. Additionally, such beliefs are prone to change only in accordance with several personality-related factors, and they differ across language learners in terms of individual divergence like gender, age, nationality, learning style and personality type (A. L. Wenden, 1999; Benjamin Rifkin, 2000 and Eva Bernat & Inna Grozdenko, 2005, as cited in Bernat & Lloyd, 2007, p. 80).

Now what actually matters for the present research work is analysing beliefs from a gender lens with relation to English pronunciation acquisition. The results vary from one research study to another; for instance, L. L. Siebert's (2003) investigation on foreign language learners from the same university; yet, from different nationalities and backgrounds showed that male learners have exhibited more positive attitudes and beliefs towards rating their learning abilities quite highly. As well as, agreeing that it took less than five years for perseverant learners to acquire a foreign language. By contrast, female students had lesser percentages and lower beliefs (p. 80).

Nonetheless, in other investigations, such as Bacon and Finnemann's (1992), their results showed; to the contrary, that female learners possess a higher level of motivation and

strategy use in authentic oral and written input; besides a higher degree of social interaction with the target language; in their case it was Spanish (p. 80). Another investigation conducted by Tercan Lioglu (2005) at a Turkish university, demonstrated that no difference in beliefs was worth noting; yet, she raised the possibility of other interfering variables other than gender, to be more effective. Therefore, regarding the inconsistent findings varying from few international research studies almost encompassing different learners' nationalities and languages; still, it is regarded superficial and needs further analyses without generalising the findings.

- **Motivation and Attitudes**

Various studies in the field of foreign language learning arise with the most common result that motivation and positive attitudes towards a certain language guarantee a great deal of success. Motivation, as one of the main drivers for personal effort and gain, generally tops most of studies related to language learning, where it could lead to either achieving goals once established in the learner's psyche, or driving their minds away once absent. Motivation is proved to be a crucial component for fruitful results in the fields of teaching and learning, and it has different consequences from both genders.

As cited in Majed M. H. Drsbeh (2015), several schools of thoughts define the term motivation differently and from various perspectives, as cognitive, constructive and behavioural schools, regardless their distinct definitions, the term "needs" is highlighted by all three schools, and once these needs are fulfilled, it feels rewarding and it must be interpreted in a social context (Brown, 2000, (p. 238). Nevertheless, motivation falls under categories, and researchers; such as Gardner, & Lambert (1972), Krashen (1988), and Clare Burstall (1975) who pioneered in analysing the cases of motivation in FLL settings, provide various definitions and explanations among which the following were selected;

Zoltan Dörnyei and Istvan Otto (1998) define motivation as, "The dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (as cited in Angelica Sandoval Pineda, 2011, p. 171). In other words, motivation functions as the main cognitive force that enables a person to act and make favourable decisions to achieve certain goals or, in this case, achieving accurate pronunciation of English.

Gardner (1985), in his earliest research works in EFL/ESL learning, defines motivation as, "The combination of effort, plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, plus favorable attitudes". In addition, Gardner and L. M. Lysynch (1990) define motivation as a construct made of certain attitudes, the most important of which is group-specific (i.e., the learners' attitudes toward the members of the target speech community and their language). Accordingly, motivation is the internal drive to fulfil a task at hand and to succeed in achieving goals; and thus, motivation as explained by Gardner is attitudinal-related. In other words, motivation could be expressed through certain attitudes, more of positive ones and, mostly, personal and intrinsic; as well as integrative in order to accomplish higher scores or desires.

Following the same line of thought, In EFL/ESL learning, motivation has got two major types; "Integrative Motivation" and "Instrumental Motivation". Introduced by Gardner (1985) as an orientation, he gives a clear distinction between them. Firstly, integrative orientation towards language learning alludes to "Sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group". Differently stated, integrative motives reflect all the positive attitudes, desires, and expectations of the learner towards the target language; but closely to the target population, culture and society, as if the learner desires to be integrated within that society.

Secondly, instrumental orientation accentuates "The practical value and advantages of learning a new language". That is to say, the learner does not wish to be integrated into the language-speaking community, and simply seeks to achieve a more professional goal; such as, scoring higher points to attain a certificate, or to get a job, even to travel for business or for personal gain. Other researchers, for instance R. Ellis (1986), Young (1986) and Brown (1987) share the same arguments as Gardner's; however, in a different context, they report that several Arab students possess a strong instrumental motivation to learn languages, for success in exams, and for higher wages (as cited in Gardner & Lysynch, 1990, p. 239).

Gardner (2007) discusses how motivation goes in degrees when learning languages. In his article, he explains how language is generally an integral part of growing up, and people are automatically motivated to use it for communication and participation in one's environment. Nevertheless, it is not the same case for foreign/second languages, particularly, those learned at school. Learning extra languages imposed by school might be regarded as unnecessary and; therefore, motivation can play an important role in learning/acquiring second/foreign languages (p. 02).

Contrary to others who attempt to define motivation, Gardner (2007) refrains from defining it other than calling it a complex phenomenon and adds a list of cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics of the motivated individual. For example, "The motivated individual is goal-directed, expends efforts, is persistent, is attentive, has desires (wants), exhibits positive effect, is aroused, has expectancies, demonstrates self-confidence (self-efficacy), and has reasons (motives)" (p. 02). That is, the very definition of motivation is demonstrated through a motivated individual to learn a foreign/second language for certain goals, who spares no effort to learn properly, is perseverant and pays attention, wants something and shows various positive attitudes, is enthusiastic and is self-confident as well.

Gardner continues explaining how motivation to learn a foreign language is not a simple construct, and while people keep considering the same types, he introduces other two types and calls them "Language Learning Motivation" and "Classroom Learning Motivation". Furthermore, the first type refers to the motivation to learn and acquire a second language and a few mentioned models; such as the Socio-educational Model (Gardner, 1985), the Social Context Model (Clement, 1980), the Self-determination Model (Noels & Clement, 1996), and the Willingness to Communicate Model (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998), etc. Still, all these models agree on the fact that this type of motivation is a valuable attribute to the individual.

The second type is the motivation found inside the classroom, or any specific institution; where the focus falls on the learner's perception of the task at hand and is immensely state-oriented. As well as a few factors associated with the language class that may influence them; for instance, the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials and facilities and the student's personal characteristics. This type is represented in the Socio-educational Model of second language acquisition, and it is emphasised by Dörnyei's Tripartite pre-actional, actional, and post-actional motivation known in Language/Educational Psychology (p. 02-03). Not to forget to mention that these two types may be seen similar; but they seem to operate on the individual at any time as long as both are effective. Lastly, gender is still under-researched in this area as well despite the few instances mentioned earlier about female and male learners' motivation in FLL, let alone pronunciation accuracy.

I. 4. 2. 3. Phonological Dissimilarities

Investigating gender differences, for decades, has encompassed all linguistic features. With regard to the present research, phonetic/phonological features are being spotlighted and scrutinised from a gender perspective in relation to English pronunciation acquisition. These differences explored in earlier times will provide the present research with sufficient experience and proof to indicate and, may as well, uncover more empirical evidence on the phonetic/phonological dissimilarities between male and female learners of English, particularly, in Mostaganem.

More studies in phonology show less effect of sex differences in language use despite other contradicting experimental results. For instance, Xiufang Xia restates what is commonly said that phonological processing in males was shown to be located in the left part of the brain and in females to involve both left and right parts of the brain (2013, p. 1488). Nevertheless, in another research done by Joan Swann (1992), it is presupposed that female learners show superiority to male learners in subjects like English language and literature (as cited in Mojtaba Maghsudi, Elham Sharifi and Sharareh Abedi, 2015, p. 163).

Moreover, Ivan Illich explains that, "Differences in phonology, intonation, syntax, vocabulary, prominal and nominal references distinguish masculine from feminine speech" (1926, p. 132). In the sense that gender differences do exist between males and females' speech which bring singularity to each, and these differences encompass most of speech and language elements including at the phonological and syntactical levels.

Accordingly, in his research on boys' and girls' English differences, Xin Xiong (2010) discusses the ability differences between schoolboys and schoolgirls putting emphasis on language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. He found out that female learners excel in English learning with regard to all four skills. He indicates how, from a physiological point of view, the female's pronunciation organ developed earlier than males'; which leads to their mature ability in listening, speaking and experiencing. Moreover, due to the fact that female learners tend to be patient and careful in nature, they are interested in reading than male learners who fall behind in speed. The former gender also has got better susceptibility; so, females do express themselves better as well (p. 311).

Following the same thought, dialectologist Louis Gauchat (1905); after concluding a study on the dialect of Charmey, a village in Switzerland, presented observations that revealed how women used more advanced pronunciation compared to men, and women were to be considered "an innovatory force" rather than "a conservative force" (as cited in Suzanne

Karlsson, 2007, p. 08). This conclusion comes in conflict with previously-stated views that see women as less creative and they tend to shape women as the conservative and ignorant gender.

That being said, other experts in the field of dialectology refer to another important point of difference between the genders, which is the standard accent. For instance, Peter Trudgill (1974) points out the issue of social norms in terms of standard speech which apparently some men may associate with femininity, and even suggest that middle class speech can carry feminine connotations. The example of school is given where middle class speech is highly supported; because it is full of women or female workers. Similarly, in accordance with some examinations of historical context, the use of Standard English is associated with femininity as well; for instance, in the Victorian era, "speaking properly" became associated with being female and a lady.

Even renown phonetician Henry Sweet (1890) himself considered dropping the sound /h/, in heart and house, by a woman far worse, which indicates the stereotypical association of proper pronunciation with females (as cited in Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff, 2003, p. 104). Therefore, speaking in a suitable and accurate manner is more ladylike and feminine which leads to the conclusion that women are the prestigious gender. As Martin Montgomery (1995), William Labov (2001), and Janet Holmes (2008) note that women's speech generally reflects the formal dialect or prestige form; whereas, men use the vernacular form to a greater extent (as cited in Damien Healy, 2007, p. 93). That is, any woman heard dropping certain sounds is regarded as improper and informal.

So, despite the various types of research conducted on gender differences with regard to speech or pronunciation and the results shown previously, Jesperson (1922) explains that no matter how the number of these dissimilarities may multiply by an attentive observer, they will be merely isolated instances that with regard to the phonetic point of view, there are very few and less significant differences because both sexes speak the same language (as cited in Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003, p. 359).

Now from the latter viewpoint, some phonetic and phonological aspects are discussed in the following element with relation to the sex of the individual. As for phonetic differences in pronunciation, everything is explained thoroughly in the second chapter of this study.

I. 4. 2. 3. 1. Verbal Ability and Voice Quality

In Phonology, the term "Verbal Ability" has been quite confusing to be defined decisively as sometimes it refers to laryngeal qualities or a specific phonation type; for example, breathy or harsh voice. At other times, it is broadly defined as the total vocal image of a speaker, including pitch, loudness and phonation types. David Abercrombie (1967) and John Laver (1980), view the latter definition more commonly used (as cited in Monique Biemans, 2000, p. 19-20). Accordingly, voice quality is described on the basis of two aspects: time frame and settings. Peter Roach (2002) puts voice quality in this way,

> Speakers differ from each other in terms of voice quality (which is the main reason for our being able to recognise individuals' voices even over the telephone); but they also introduce quite a lot of variation into their voices for particular purposes; some of which could be classed as linguistically relevant. A considerable amount of research in this field has been carried out in recent years and we have a better understanding of the meaning of such terms as creak, breathy voice and harshness; as well as, longer established terms as Falsetto (this term is used in musical terminology and is attributed to male voices, usually very high).

(p. 86-87)

Since the present investigation deals with gender differences in relation to the acquisition of English pronunciation and the factors that distinguish both genders from one another; in this process, voice quality and its derivatives are to be introduced briefly as no spectrogram analysis is involved due to the lack of experience in the field of Auditory Phonetics and necessary material to carry out the experiment. Furthermore, this study does not focus on the biological differences between male and female students, only differences related to articulatory phonetics, pronunciation acquisition; as well as personality, societal and educational contexts.

Going back to voice quality's former aspects, they mainly refer to the long-term extra-linguistically used supra-segmental speech characteristics (as cited in Biemans, 2000, p. 21). That is, voice quality is bound to the physical differences that involve pitch, loudness and tone in speakers' voices, but are modulated, which go beyond segmental features. Moreover, because voice quality has got several characteristics, Laver (1994) classifies and distinguishes them into different groups called settings.

First element is phonatory settings. They refer to habitual configurations of the laryngeal system; such as vocal cords and adjacent parts. Second one is articulatory settings. They are habitual configurations of the pharynx, lips, jaw, tongue and velum; for example, lengthening of the vocal tract, rounding the lips, or a nasal voice. Third element is tension settings. They are the habitual configurations of the degree of muscular tension throughout the vocal tract. It concerns lax and tense phonation of sounds or voice. Fourth component is prosodic settings. They refer to the habitual configuration of voice pitch, loudness, and tempo characteristics; for instance, speaking in a soft or low voice, and speaking very fast or slowly (Biemans, 2000, p. 23). Therefore, only voice quality features relevant to this investigation are tackled next excluding phonatory settings.

Various researchers make a distinction between two articulatory settings that prove relevant to gender differences and which are nasality and articulatory range. The former setting, in Laver's opinion (1980), is predominantly an auditory aspect. It means that it relies often on the listening skill of the addressed auditor. Nasality takes place when the velum; that acts as a valve in the laryngeal area, is open or lowered so can air escape through both nasal and oral cavities. According to David W. Addington (1968), from a personality viewpoint, nasality seems to be stereotyped as masculine and is associated with negative personality traits in English; such as being stupid, lazy, ugly, and uninteresting for a man; and stupid, boorish and unartistic for a woman (Biemans, 2000, p. 30).

Firstly, the articulatory range setting is comprised of three types introduced by Laver (1994); which are labial range (lips), mandibular range (jaw), and lingual range (tongue). With regard to gender differences and articulatory range, what is highlighted is the peripheral articulation of vowels. Koopmans-Van Beinum's (1980) experiment shows that female speakers produce larger vowels than men do. Peripheral articulation features a wider shape of the lips, jaw and a spreader movement of the tongue. The larger the articulatory range is, the more precise the articulation is too and vice-versa.

Secondly, the prosodic setting includes the elements pitch, loudness and tempo (beat or rhythm). As far as gender studies are concerned with phonetics, the abovementioned elements are relevant to the study in the sense that, pitch refers to a perpetual impression of voice height and it can have a clear link with the physiology of the speaker (p. 33). It refers to the tone of the speaker as well; the way it rises and falls or steadies in accordance with one's attitude towards a situation or a behaviour. It could also be linked to the physical building of the larynx and vocal cords. In addition, loudness, as stated by Glare and Rietveld (1975), is "related to the amount of effort a speaker puts into producing a speech, and such effort results

in a larger intensity when uttering", (Biemans, 2000, p. 39). In other words, loudness refers to how weakly or strongly men and women produce utterances, and as long as much effort is given into articulating any sound, it gives it a louder phonation.

Accordingly, several studies and experiments were conducted to figure out which gender speaks louder, among which Lou Boves (1982) and Tien Lens's (1992) survey came to the conclusion that men appear to speak louder than women (p. 39). As for tempo, the third element in prosodic settings refers to the speed or pace of words and syllables uttered; besides being generally referred to as the rhythm of speech. It is examined through two aspects which are: continuity and speech rate.

The former refers to the use and absence of pauses, prolongations and linking; and the latter refers to the amount of speech that the speaker produces in a certain period of time (Biemans, 2000, p. 40). Tempo's attributes, however, cannot be essentially gender-related except for a few stereotypical differences concluded in experiments. For example, in Cherish Kramer (1977) and Tien Lens's (1992) investigations, Dutch and American students thought that women speak faster than men do. The following table illustrates the communication parameters and different voice quality descriptions and vocal inflections between male and female voices.

Table 1. Male and Female's Voice Quality (as cited in Davies & Goldberg, 2015, p. 07)

Supported by research literature	Communication Parameter	Received as more Female/Feminine	Received as more Male/Masculine
Best supported by literature	Average speaking pitch (fundamental frequency) Speaking pitch range	180 – 224 Hz 145 – 275 Hz	107 – 132 Hz 80 – 165 Hz
	Vocal tract resonance	Smaller vocal tract Higher resonances	Larger vocal tract Lower resonances
	Vocal inflections (Intonation)	More upward gliding, greater range of inflections	More level intonation, and more downward glides
	Voice quality	Mild breathiness	Clear and resonant voice quality
Less supported	Articulation (production of	Precise and light	Less precise (e.g.:

by literature	speech sounds)		"goin' not going"
			More forceful

In one of the few theses dealing with voice quality from a gender perspective, Monique Biemans (2000) discusses gender variable or influence; but farther from biological traits and just goes towards social influence. As mentioned earlier and as illustrated on the above table, men have a lower but clearer and more resonant, creaky and tense voice than women who have got a high-pitched, breathy, less creaky and less tense voice. Apart from biological differences, little research has been conducted on social gender influence, pointing to the example of Margaret Thatcher who was supposed to have had speech therapy to lower her voice as to sound more authoritative and less feminine (from David Graddol and Joan Swann, 1989). Therefore, it is shown how voice quality variation has a strong effect on the way the listeners perceive and shape the personality of the speakers (p. 02). She worked on incorporating both aspects of gender in order to get a complete picture of the analysis. Furthermore, four fields were taken into consideration; socio-linguistics, phonetics, gender studies and social psychology.

Following the same line of thought, in her thesis, Biemans (2000) emphasises the social gender component over the biological one; because the mean pitch of female speakers varies roughly between 170 and 210 Hz; whereas that of male speakers varies roughly between 90 to 140 Hz. Nevertheless, the case when a female speaker whose anatomical construct permits her to speak around an average of 210 Hz, this will require her a great deal of effort to maintain a lower pitch level around an average of 170 Hz when speaking. That is, the social gender component influences the pre-existing differences between the sexes; in addition to the influence of different cultures and different languages (Renée Van Bezooijen, 1995 and Claria, 1999 respectively) (as cited in Biemans, 2000, p. 10-11). According to John Christopher Wells (1982), some of the socio-physical features that distinguish male from female speakers exist in terms of slower tempo and smaller intonation range for the former and tentativeness with a wider pitch range for the latter (as cited in Hanna Richterova, 2013, pp. 05-06).

I. 4. 2. 3. 2. Segmental vs. Supra-segmental Instruction

Pronunciation teaching/learning process is generally outlined by and comprised of two major components: segmental features that refer to the smallest units of sounds; vowels and consonants; and supra-segmental features that refer to prosody or intonation, stress and rhythm patterns. The constant debate over how supra-segmental features' teaching serves the goal of mutual intelligibility between all speakers of English or teaching segments comes first for basics; because it is fundamental to EFL teaching and pronunciation acquisition; can only be put to an end when opposing and supporting views come to the conclusion that both features of instruction are equally important to pronunciation teaching by being equally introduced and taught.

MaryAnn Florez (1998) defines both instructions, "Segmentals is the basic inventory of distinctive sounds and the way that they combine to form a spoken language and supra-segmentals transcend the level of individual sound production, extend across segmental and are often produced unconsciously by native speakers", (as cited in Ramesh Nair, Rajasegaran Krishnasamy and Geraldine De Mello, 2006, p. 34). Peter Roach (2002) describes the supra-segmental instruction in his little encyclopaedia as the following,

> The term supra-segmental was invented to refer to aspects of sound, such as intonation that did not seem to be properties of individual segments (i.e. the vowels and consonants of which speech is composed). The term has tended to be used predominantly by American writers, and much British work has preferred to use the term prosodic instead (p. 75).

Therefore, the terms supra-segmental and prosody are used interchangeably when referring to elements of phonology that exceed the teaching of small units of sounds and their articulation aspects. Prosodic features of a language involve longer sequences than a sound and what comes beyond a segment, such as syllable, pitch, stress and rhythm. In EFL classrooms, conflicting views on which instruction should be emphasised more has grown to distance both types of instruction between supporters and opposers of either.

Several phoneticians and experts among which Janet Anderson-Hsieh, T. Riney, and Kenneth Koehler (1994), John Morley (1994), and Marianne Celce-Murcia (1996) state that prosody patterns actually frame the utterance and guide the listeners' attention to the information which the speaker considers important to convey. Others including Richard W. Suter (1976) and Jennifer Jenkins (2000) come to the conclusion that the majority of pronunciation issues and complications can be attributed to the difficulty in uttering segments

and segmental teaching should be prioritised. In opposition, Christiane Dalton and Barbara Seidlhofer (1994) see that, "Once the prosodic features are in place, the necessary segmental discriminations will follow" (as cited in Jahandar et al., 2012, p. 05).

Most of surveys on which of segmental or supra-segmental teaching is preferred or should be opted for indicates that learners do value instruction in segmental production more than training in supra-segmental features, because in their opinions, learning English vowels and consonants, on one hand, helps them to develop their pronunciation patterns more accurately and increased their segmental awareness. It even enhanced their self-confidence when speaking English. On the other hand, supra-segmental elements facilitated understanding native speakers' accents, but learners did not find it useful in acquiring pronunciation (as cited in Joanne Rajadurai, 2013, p. 07).

Martha C. Pennington and Jack C. Richards (1986) prioritise teaching supra-segmentals to non-native learners over segmental instruction; because the latter do not characterise native-like pronunciation and is not seen as the basis of intelligible communication (Rajadurai, 2013, p. 01). Still, Rajadurai's experiment on eighteen-year old students in Malaysia shows more promising results when having training on segmental phonology as more than 75% of the participants total found this training more helpful and constructive than learning stress and intonation. It was; mainly, because they had got no intention in changing the way they sound and their speech rhythm while others failed to acquire it at this age (pp. 04-05).

The researcher also highlights this point by raising the question "intelligibility to whom?" if most of non-native speakers are not likely to be conversing with native speakers of English and only among non-native speakers' communities. Therefore, intonation is not as essential to them as English sounds and segments, and how to correctly produce and perceive them in order to sound correct, to convey the right meaning, to understand and be understood.

Still, some pronunciation studies have entirely emphasised the supra-segmental instruction. According to Tracey Derwing, Murray J. Munro, and Grace Wiebe (1997), in the study they conducted on ESL learners who were studying for around ten years and participated in a speaking improvement course focused only on stress, rhythm and intonation. The learners then had an intelligibility pre-test before their twelve-week course by thirty-seven listeners. After the course took place, the results showed an improvement; not only, in intelligibility, but also comprehensibility and accentedness and thirty language learners managed to alter their pronunciation in a reading task (as cited in Abbes Pourhossein Gilakjani & Mohammad Reza Ahmadi, 2011, p. 124). Other studies and experiments as such

have come out with the same result in which most of participants who are looking for pronunciation improvement give so little regarding learning prosody compared to learning segments and isolated words (T. M. Derwing and Marian & J. Rossiter, 2002; and Andrea G. Osburne, 2003; as cited in Grant Taylor Eckstein, 2007, pp. 21-22).

In order to solve non-native speakers' pronunciation obstacles and achieve better and more intelligible communication, Jahandar et al. (2012), based on their research results and joining other experts' opinions including M. Celce-Murcia and Janet M. Goodwin (1996), insist on the extensive segmental instruction and on emphasising more on the distinction between short and long vowels and their clear enunciation, as well as diphthongs and triphthongs, the relationship between one phoneme and another, the complex relation between phonemes and graphemes in English orthography and the function of consonant clustering and assimilation (pp. 03-04).

Helen Fraser (2002) insists on providing would-be-teachers adequate attention and teacher training in English phonemics and phonology; for instance, IPA symbols for transcription, the articulation of English phoneme and basic English intonation patterns. For more efficiency and usefulness in pronunciation teaching is to offer understanding of the psycholinguistics of speech production and perception; as well as, the influences of one's native language and literacy on their interpretation of speech (as cited in Nair et al., 2006, pp. 37-38). That is, various factors may impede proper acquisition of FL accents and pronunciation including the ones previously mentioned. Therefore, FL teachers are required to take into consideration and set the right objectives in their classes and instructions.

The issue of prioritising one feature over the other was highlighted by several researchers including Alan T. Hall (1997), E. Bray (1995) and Wong (1993); yet, Fraser (2000) describes the separation between segmental and supra-segmental aspects of pronunciation teaching "unfortunate". Indeed both features go hand in hand by introducing phonemic units to syllabic units transforming them into words and sentences; then prosodic and rhythmic patterns should be an appropriate procedure to follow rather than prioritising one and marginalising the other within a communicative approach to teaching pronunciation.

Accordingly, these opposing views are put together by Peter Roach (1983) who states that a reasonable aim would be to establish a degree of segmental/supra-segmental balance through learner's choice to either sound as close as possible to a native speaker or not. Thus, results are better and satisfactory when two types are used equally rather than one alone. That is, combining both features would allow a higher chance in acquiring accurate pronunciation and would guarantee successful teachability of any foreign language.

Thus, instead of prioritising one type of instruction over another while both segmental and supra-segmental features complete one another, numerous phoneticians and researchers (Peter Roach, 1983) advocate establishing a certain balance between them. Either by following a bottom-up or top-down approach teaching these features, and the best suggested solution so far is asking for the learners' opinion to decide the appropriate instruction to be followed and which might meet their needs.

I. 4. 2. 3. 3. Prosodic Features

Stress and intonation, as well as rhythm; that refers to the musicality of the language; combined make the major components of supra-segmental features of speech. As Peter Roach (2002) finds these elements causing disagreement and misunderstandings in their definition, he states that stress refers to the qualities given to a syllable that make it either strong or weak in its articulation. Additionally, he points at how shifting stress from one syllable to another affects the linguistic function of words like "import" as a noun where stress falls on the first syllable and in "import" as a verb, stress falls on the second syllable. These stressed syllables are discernable only when produced louder and stronger than the rest (p. 73). As for intonation, he provides two descriptions that present intonation as a quite vast area that needs more attention in EFL classes; it is somehow related to grammar and is quite important in "conversational discourse". So, he states,

> In its more restricted sense, it refers to the variations in the pitch of a speaker's voice used to convey or alter meaning, but in its broader and more popular sense, it is used to cover much the same field as "prosody", where variations in such things as voice quality, tempo and loudness are included (p. 39).

It is worth noting that the term prosody is similar to supra-segmental and is used interchangeably by British phonologists and phoneticians, where the same elements exist including stress, intonation and rhythm, but it is a term used more in Britain that may comprise other elements, such as pitch, tempo and loudness. Thus, Pennington (1989) defines prosody as, "The patterns in individual words of stress, pitch, tone and rhythm and the international patterns of longer utterances". Prosodic features cannot be detached from segmental instruction and they aid EFL learners in understanding pitch and experience native-like pronunciation.

As several instructors believe that prosodic features are not teachable; because they refer to intonation as "the problem child of pronunciation teaching" (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 74). Therefore, there is no denying the fact that not only pronunciation teaching has been marginalised and pushed to the background of EFL classrooms, some of its elements, such as supra-segmental features, were pushed to the background of the background (as cited in Amparo Lazaro Ibarrola, 2011, p. 5354). Yet, this fact cannot be applicable 100% on our Algerian classes; because supra-segmentals have been integrated into the syllabuses for decades, but it requires going beyond rising and falling pitch movements; as well as more practice than theory. That is, Algerian students are taught the basics of prosody and rhythm but little practice is taking place due to; mainly, time constraints and the only practice they get to do is pronouncing sentences aloud with the right intonation, or brief conversations.

Paul Tench (1996) identifies six functions of intonation that need be taken into account when EFL teachers are introducing and teaching intonation. These features centre on the proper use of intonation in order to set the right mood concerning learning the right level of voice pitch and tone with relation to one's attitudes and to avoid accentedness if desired. The six functions are listed and briefly explained as follows,

1- The first function is the organisation of intonation a speaker wants to present, that is the speaker needs to present their information in pieces that are manageable for the listener and to decide which information should be made prominent.

 2 - The realisation of communicative functions. Speaker needs to convey the purpose for saying something and intonation is used to distinguish between statements, questions, requests, and so on.

3 - The expression of the speaker's attitude. Intonation is used to convey the mood or attitude to the audience or message; for example, angrily or politely.

4 - The use of intonation to signal syntactic structure. Intonation identifies many syntactic patterns in speech; such as defining and non-defining relative clauses, transitive and intransitive verbs.

5 - The use of intonation to make separate units of intonation hang together to form the text of discourse and is called textual function.

6 - The identification of speech styles or genres, such as, level of formality and number of participants to identify the rises and falls. (As cited in Analeen Moore, 2011, p. 15)

David Crystal (2003) highlights the necessity to introduce basic phonetic knowledge to FL Learners as a background of English pronunciation acquisition; for instance, the difference between syllable-timed and stress-timed languages. On one hand, in stress-timed

languages, such as English, German, and Dutch, stressed syllables fall at regular intervals throughout an utterance. Rhythm then occurs to maintain the equal and regular beat between stressed syllables; because unstressed syllables are produced more quickly due to vowels' reduction in connected speech. In syllable-timed languages on the other hand, such as French, Spanish and Tamil, syllables are produced equally in timing and are nearly equally stressed where vowel reduction does not take place.

Speaking of prosodic features with regard to gender, Lakoff (1975) says that women usually answer a question with a rising intonation pattern rather than falling intonation. In this way, they can show their gentleness and sometimes this intonation shows a lack of confidence (as cited in Xiufang Xia, 2013, p. 1485). As in contrary, men like to use falling intonation to show that they are quite sure of what they are saying it. This also demonstrates their self-confidence and power sometimes.

Nicola Daly and Paul Warren (2001), after thorough analysis of Caroline G. Henton's (1989) study data, come to the conclusion that there is a greater pitch range in the majority of female speakers' voices in the cases analysed; therefore, they attribute it to reading tasks. They add that less intonation takes place in storytelling, and they associate their great pitch range with a social rather than a biological reason. They also argue that women were using pitch patterns to attract and keep the listeners interested for more conversation involvement, and to show more impersonal orientation (as cited in gender, language and discourse, Weatherall, 2002, p. 52).

In analysing intonation in a gender analysis of linguistics, Zeine Crazbekova (2015) admits how intonation differences between both genders exist and can be identified by feminist-minded people; therefore, women tend to use more varied intonation patterns that can be characterised by exclamatory and interrogative intonation, and which is pronounced in a rising tone. It is due to women's emotionality and friendly nature. By contrast, men's speech is marked by smooth and downward intonation. They convey dominance, confirmation and sound categorical and stiffness (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

I. 5. Gender Differences in English Learning

EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language, and it is called as such in countries where the second official language is not English. This latter is often called second foreign language as in the case of Algeria whose second language is French and English comes in third place thanks to its widespread use and international status. Regardless the fact that

several researchers agree that in EFL contexts and for the purpose of teaching, the model accent "Received Pronunciation" is imposed by the Ministry of Education. EFL instructors are required to have a certain command over Phonetics (both theoretically and practically) and Contrastive Phonetics of L1 and L2; besides pedagogical, psychological and didactic preparation for teaching English to different kinds of learners and levels.

Effectively, learners of any foreign language automatically experience the urge to discover their abilities and skills, and through time they determine their learning styles and Language Learning Strategies (LLS) that suit their personalities and meet their learning needs. Following the same sense, several theorists and researchers conducted studies to investigate gender differences in the frequency of language strategy use in FLL contexts. For instance, Robert L. Politzer (1983), Rebecca Oxford and Martha Nyikos (1989), Y. P. Chang (2003), and R. Lan (2005) conducted similar investigations about the frequent use of language strategies in ESL/EFL contexts, French, Spanish and German courses in the U.S.A, EFL/ESL learners, high school students, and elementary school pupils respectively.

Results were all similar in which female learners surpassed male learners in the use of LLS. They significantly have used cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, memory and social strategies more often than males have (as cited in Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh, Mohamed Amin Embi, Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff and Zamri Mahamod, 2009, p. 400).

However, exceptions to these results occur in different contexts and settings too, as all previous researchers associated such results in females' superiority in LLS with the possibility of biological and socialisation-related causes or women's greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills and conformity to norms both linguistic and academic. Eventually, Eleanor Maccoby & Carol Jacklin (1974), Robert E. Slavin (1988) and Larsen-Freeman & Long (1999) back up the conclusion of SLA studies that females are better than males in both second and first language acquisition (as cited in Ma Teh et al., 2009, p. 404). This element is thoroughly explored in the second chapter that tackles pronunciation learning strategies employed by male and female learners.

Additionally, in one of the research papers that treated the issue of gender differences in English learning, Wang Qian (2015) mentioned a variety of gender dissimilarities between male and female senior students from both theoretical and practical or empirical research. In theory and in accordance with research based on psychology, it has been shown that the partial side of the two brain hemispheres of men and women is different in development, speed and level of specialisation. Consequently, women tend to be better than the opposite sex with regard to language expression and short-term memory which is all related to

development of the left hemisphere. By contrast, men develop the right hemisphere; so, they tend to be better than women in spatial perception, analysis, comprehensive ability and experimental observation.

In addition, in terms of anatomical construction, women's pronunciation organs develop much earlier than men's. Thus, female learners exhibit good verbal and hearing abilities; as well as expression, their auditory and perception skills. It is natural for female learners to obtain better grades in English; because their listening to the target language is usually sensitive consciousness which makes them conscious listeners and quite attentive to instruction. In addition to their advantage of intelligence that indicates girls' success in obtaining higher scores in English (p. 67).

Moving from theory to empiricism, most of research works show that female learners' memory is significantly better than that of male learners in foreign language learning including short and long-term memories, mechanical memory, and understanding. As Y. Jia (1996) points out that learning a foreign language is related to memory and girls' skills in memory activities are stronger than boys'. Despite the stereotypes about females being able to have low abstract logical thinking, experiments show that female students do not possess inferior abstract logical thinking, and they are capable of thinking in images better that the opposite sex. This is still extra credit to be better learners of English as a Second/Foreign Language (Qian, 2015, p. 67).

On one hand, males display a better command over logic memory where they give more importance to the understanding from the point and pay more attention to the memory of materials with the objective reality and experience of contact, by analysing the internal relation between memory materials. On the other hand, girls are better at image, emotion and motion memory where they can react to cause some exciting and painful memory materials according to some sort of emotion or representation; as well as their mechanical memory which enhances their word memory in FLL (p. 67-68). Male learners are good at analysis of memory materials in a more logical way, whereas female learners succeed in FLL; because they integrate emotion and visual abilities which facilitate the process of learning.

Other research including John Bissell Carroll's (1967) and Walker & Perry's (1978) report that there are no significant signs or results to support gender differences between male and female students' achievements and scores in college, except one previous study by John B. Carroll and Stanley M. Sapon (1959) who came to the conclusion that kindergarten girls have a slight foreign language superiority over boys (as cited in Hassan, 2001, p. 07). Further studies are to be put forward and be discussed more thoroughly in the second chapter that

tackles the issue of acquisition of English pronunciation in terms of phonetic and phonological levels by both genders.

The element of superiority in this topic is highlighted in terms of LLS, as well as their gender differences with regard to both production and perception of English sounds. In addition, Lucy E. Bailey's (1993) conclusions indicate that female learners may outperform males in school socio-culturally, but not verbally (p. 08). It is worth mentioning that females tend to be initiators in learning foreign languages which is an aspect reflected in higher scores achievements as mentioned earlier and superior performances in generally all features of FLL especially pronunciation (James J. Asher and Ramiro Garcia, 1969; Joseph P. Boyle, 1985 and Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; as cited in Badran, 2001, p. 09).

I. 6. Gender and Classroom Interaction

A teacher's both pedagogical demeanour and success in class are measured by how highly their students, behave, participate and interact all throughout the lesson. Before being a teacher he/she is an educator and pedagogue, which strictly refers to their behaviour inside the classroom and the understanding of their students' psyche. Taking into consideration, not only time management or lesson plans, but also their students' affective motives and behaviours; as well as their needs, academic achievement, and how their teacher interacts with them on a constant basis. It is widely noticed how educational approaches constantly alter in accordance with the learners' needs and their academic improvement and betterment.

That is why recently, the main applicable approaches so far; that have proved beneficial to a flourishing classroom; are both the Communicative Approach (Henceforth CA) and the Competency-based Approach (Henceforth CBA). Both approaches target students' capacities and experiences in class and promote student's fluency and autonomy in EFL classes. Who is better than the teacher to achieve classroom harmony by acquiring high-achieving students and satisfactory results? One of the key-elements for such an accomplishment is smooth and sound classroom interaction between learners and their teachers. Still, stereotypes in educational settings exist based on some empirical research that has targeted the issue of female learners' high interaction compared to their male classmates or in some possible cases the other way around.

Teachers tend to believe that they usually treat their students equally; still, classroom observations suggest otherwise. For instance, Spender (1982) has conducted a study investigating the amount of her interaction with boy or girl learners believing that she

interacted more often with female learners. However, videotaping her classroom and analysing her own behaviours and actions during teaching in class has shown the contrary. She reported,

> Sometimes, I have… thought I have gone too far and have spent more time with the girls than the boys. But, the tapes have proved otherwise. Out of ten taped lessons… the maximum time I spent interacting with girls was 42% and on average 38% and the minimum time with boys was 58%... It is nothing short of substantial shock to appreciate the discrepancy between what I thought I was doing and what I actually was doing (p. 59; as cited in Ebru Bag, Leyla Marti, and Yasemin Bayyurt, 2015, p. 60).

Following the same line of thought, more research studies conducted for a similar purpose; that is comparing teacher-student interaction from a gender lens; in various fields and contexts, such as Joan Kelly (1992), Susanne M. Jones & K. Dindia (2004), Jayne E. Stake & J. F. Katz (1982), Frank Merrett & Kevin Wheldall (1992), Michael Younger & Molly Warrington (2000) and more recently Vibeke Grover Aukrust (2008), support the same result that indicates that boys' more frequent interaction with their teachers outweighs the girls'. Despite the fact that, not only boys participate more often and interrupt their teachers, they misbehave in class more than girls do, as they receive more responses and reprimands from their teachers (pp. 60-61).

Accordingly, Muhammad Shahid Farooq's (2000) study that observed a Japanese teacher came out with the result that the teacher did pay more attention to male learners than female ones; yet, argued that such a characteristic treatment came as a result of the perception that girls possessed more academic abilities and a better behaviour in class. By contrast, male learners needed such special attention; because of their immature and unquiet behaviours (p. 62). After the analysis of data collected by Bag et. al (2015), the results showed no special treatment towards any gender by both teachers in Turkish classrooms. Yet, they promote critical self-awareness and teacher's training to be familiar with gender bias in class best and attempt necessary precautions (p. 62).

Additionally, Joanna Wolfe (2000) lists a considerable number of researchers' results on gender-biased classrooms; for instance, Karp and Yeols (1976), Eakins and Eakins (1978), Edelsky (1981), D. Spender (1982), West and Zimmerman (1983), J. French and P. French (1984), Myra Sadker and David Sadker (1985), Latour (1987), Swann and Graddol (1988) and Kramarae and Treichler (1990), where even at an early age in educational classrooms,

male students speak more often than female ones, and this unequal classroom participation continues in higher educational settings; as well as faculty interactions outside the classroom. Another important point is that even if female students speak up, listeners are more likely to remember comments and remarks made by male learners or ascribe comments made by women to male speakers. This inequality and gender-biased interaction is mainly explained by some researchers through the fact that female speakers are more likely to be interrupted in their speech and participation and also corrections (p. 492).

Accordingly, Alison Kelly (1988) came to a similar conclusion after so many attempts to prove otherwise and said,

> It is now beyond dispute that girls receive less of the teachers' attention in class […]. It applies [to] all age groups. […] in several countries, in various socio-economic groupings, across all subjects in the curriculum, and with both male and female teachers (as cited in Helene Decke-Cornill, n.d., p. 78).

Therefore, it is commonly agreed that teachers, both female and male, tend to give inequitable attention towards their learners. Namely, female learners are almost being reprimanded only for their intellectual capabilities; whereas, male learners are reproached for their mis-demeanours, but hardly for their intellectual competence. Closely related, Jane Sutherland (2004) states that the issue of differential treatment of teachers towards their students remains unexplored; mainly, due to relative success of female learners, which rendered gender research in classrooms less interesting (p. 79).

By contrast, in an empirical research carried out by Naser Rashidi and Sahar Naderi, in Iran, it has actually been deduced what almost all what other researchers agreed on; yet, others observed some patterns between students and their teachers that are worthwhile mentioning. For example, in terms of different behaviour of both genders, female teachers were more interactive with both genders; while male teachers interacted more often with boys. Female teachers were more direct, supportive and gave their students more complements and appreciated their effort; whereas, male teachers used display questions that made them more dominant and reduced the chance of interaction with their students.

Therefore, male students participated all the time, initiated contact with their teachers and used more humour and gave more feedback. By contrast, female students did not ask questions as often as did the boys. Thus far, they were more conspicuous in answering their teachers' enquiries, and the latter were longer and more sophisticated than those of male speakers (pp. 34-37).

In a nutshell, empirical research; yet again, pushes stereotypes in educational settings away to prove otherwise through hard evidence results. It opens up another doorway for more research to come up with new findings that may lead to other findings and innovations in EFL contexts, and conduct more research on gender-biased behaviours in class from all FL skills.

Conclusion

Concisely, gender studies did not get its acclaimed position without difficulty or struggle. Thanks to the Feminist movement in the 1960s, attention was directed towards gender research that brought changes to numerous disciplines and fields of research and gave birth to gender studies as an independent discipline especially in language variation. Gender differences at the present time are being investigated from various lenses including foreign language learning through the pioneering work of Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen. More research and empirical evidence came to light with regard to gender and language and most of relevant works are tackled including linguistic, biological, social, cultural, affective and phonological aspects; as well as classroom interaction and stereotypical views in educational contexts. Not to forget female and male performances in EFL classes and their achievements that deem one gender more superior in FLL than the other. As the present chapter displays several points connected to gender and language learning, the next one explores gender difference more thoroughly with relation to English pronunciation attainment.

Introduction

As the present study falls under the frame of a socio-phonetic research dealing with gender differences in relation to English pronunciation acquisition in an Algerian educational context, the science of socio-phonetics is briefly introduced as an entryway to the second chapter where some of its main pros and cons are mentioned regarding acoustic analysis. Moreover, pronunciation acquisition is explained through a detailed overview concerning the target language English and pronunciation's struggle in EFL teaching settings being overrun by communication's fluency, and being neglected by EFL instructors who seem to lack incentive to teach it and their students who lack readiness to learn it. In addition, Chapter two comes with an introduction to Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska's (2012) categorisation of teaching pronunciation between EFL and ESL contexts followed by a personal review of English teaching in Algerian educational contexts in contrast to ESL contexts.

The present chapter also tackles the teachability of pronunciation that comes as a challenging task for both teachers and learners alike, and which requires much effort, motivation and readiness to acquire properly. Moreover, this chapter explains the fruitful combination of pronunciation accuracy and fluency in EFL classrooms thanks to the CLT Approach rather than favouring one aspect over another, which only leads to incomplete and distorted communication. Still, gender variable seems to be under-researched concerning this area with a few instances that require more back-up and empirical investigation. It attempts as well to explore the major hindrances that prevent non-native learners from attaining proper or native-like English pronunciation, and which call for a counter- or remedial methods to overcome any possibility of foreign accents or mispronunciations including age, mother tongue interference, phonological awareness and affective factors to name a few.

Articulation is closely related to speech intelligibility that requires the speaker to be fluent and accurate equally in order to ensure uninterrupted communication flow. Moreover, English and Arabic relation is put forward for distinction purpose in terms of phonetic segments, common points and similarities as well, followed by collected main speech or pronunciation hindrances encountered by EFL learners, particularly Arab learners. Some of the main obstacles that may lead to those hindrances are the sound production/perception correlation, how both genders tend to produce and perceive L2 sounds and if such differences occur under physiological or socio-cultural factors. Therefore, for correct and successful

sound perception and production to take place, L2 learners may incorporate certain strategic techniques that are exposed in this part as well.

II. 1. A Brief Introduction to Socio-phonetics

Socio-phonetics is the field that merges Sociolinguistics and Phonetics, and which brings about empirical evidence regarding the relationship between phonetic aspects and social constructs. The term was first used in 1974 where the field began focusing on phonological variables and coding, then the auditory analysis was carried out by ear; namely, consonantal variables. The very first phonetic research is that of William Labov in "Martha's Vineyard" who analysed the pronunciation of [aʊ] as in "out" and "house" and [aɪ] as in "while" and "might". He noticed that the inhabitants tended to pronounce these diphthongs with a more central starting point [əʊ] and [eɪ]. It was at that time that data has all been judged by the human ear until recently where digital programmes; such as, PRAAT[2], are accessible for more accurate measuring (as cited in Danielle Turton, 2012, pp. 03-04).

The very first recorded use of the term "socio-phonetics" was in researcher Deshaies Lafontaine's (1974) dissertation on Canadian-French variation based on the Labovian or variationsist sociolinguistics. It is composed of "socio" and "phonetic" to refer to the emphasis on phonetic features in sociolinguistics rather than lexical or syntactic ones. Moreover, it is a field that interests both sociolinguists and phoneticians (as cited in Paul Foulkes, James M. Scobbie, and Dominic Watt, 2010, p. 703). Therefore, Foulkes et al. (2010) consider the socio-phonetic work as, "The aim of identifying and ultimately explaining the sources, loci, parameters, and communicative functions of socially structured variation in speech" (p. 704).

In this view, the goals of socio-phonetics include accounting for how socially-structured variation in the sound system is learned, stored cognitively, subjectively evaluated and processed in speaking and listening. That is, socio-phonetics scrutinises all speech variations that are socially-structured and uncovers any factors and changes that occur in speech with regard to social structures. Foulkes et al. (2010), moreover, demonstrate one of the socio-phonetic studies that deal with linguistic variants and types of speaker or speech, such as the case of coda (post-vocalic) or rhotic [r] in North America, Ireland, and Scotland

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[2] It is a free computer software package used for speech analysis in Phonetics, which was designed and developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink of the University of Amsterdam. It supports speech synthesis including articulatory synthesis.

where they found out that the speech of members of higher socio-economic groups typically produce audible consonantal rhoticity more than those of lower groups (William Labov, 1972, Euan Reid, 1978, Suzanne Romaine, 1978, and Jane Stuart-Smith, 2007; as cited in Foulkes et al., 2010, p. 705).

Additionally, in her lecture, Danielle Turton (2012) lists some pros and cons of acoustic analysis. It is favoured for its accuracy, its ability to consider change in progress at very fine-grained stages, it can also closely look at gradient and categorical changes and which can be demonstrated on a graph using a spectrogram. As for the cons, acoustic analysis is found to be too time-consuming, it requires some phonetic knowledge in this specific branch of acoustics and it can be unnecessary and unreliable for some sociolinguistic studies that deal with certain consonants like [θ] fronting and liquids (p. 11).

Turton also highlights the recent research in socio-phonetics which concerns articulatory phonetics' studies through the ultrasound demonstration as acoustic evolution is growing unreliable. Moreover, this scientific study's foundations were first laid by William Labov, Malcah Yeager, and Richard Steiner (1972) in their research on variation and change in American vowels. Since then, the term "Socio-phonetics" has been associated mainly with acoustic vowel analysis until recently, it began to include instrumental analysis of other types of speech sounds and phonetic features (as cited in Maciej Baranowski, 2013, p. 01).

Still, the present research deals with various gender differences related to English pronunciation acquisition by EFL graduates, and it does not cover investigating these changes acoustically as explained in the study's limitations. How EFL students produce and perceive English sounds is analysed presently only socio-culturally, phonetically, phonologically and educationally. This means that acoustic phonetics is superficially tackled and articulatory phonetics mostly covers the whole work as more attention is placed upon articulatory phonetics. The present work tackles socio-phonetic features from an articulatory perspective.

II. 2. EFL/ESL Pronunciation Acquisition and Gender

For long decades, pronunciation has walked a lonely path of strife to recognition, and has been labelled with different expressions related to its marginalised status in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLL and FLT respectively). Being constantly overshadowed in this field by the intensive teaching and instruction of other skills of language building, such as grammar, spelling and vocabulary; not only has it gained an acclaimed

reputation of being a struggling sub-skill to teach, but also having been drilled to exhaustion in the past which has caused its fading in EFL classrooms.

Pronunciation is defined differently by various experts in the field which invokes a sense of significance in FLL, among which, Dalton and Seidlhofer (2001) affirm that pronunciation is the production of significant sounds in two senses: it is part of a code of a particular language, and it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use (p. 03). In other words, correct and sound articulation cannot be detached from the linguistic aspects of a language, and it is important to attain the right meaning in daily language use.

According to Professor Peter Roach, it is not helpful to call pronunciation the act of producing sounds of a language referring, at the same time, to what really matters to people presently which are the standards of pronunciation and its learning. With regard to the former, speakers are to decide which official accent to adopt and no deviation from it is acceptable once the decision is made in terms of consistency. As for the latter, Roach states that, in the field of teaching Phonetics, it is essential to separate the act of pronunciation from the pronunciation taught, as learners tend to do it through either the imitation of native speakers or the correction from their teachers (2002, p. 61).

Michael Wei (n.d.) emphasises the gravity of discarding pronunciation from EFL classes by stating that,

> As we know, pronunciation is an integrated and integral part of language learning. It consists of elements much wider than sounds, consonants and vowels. It includes the elements of rhythm and intonation which support the communicative process. That is to say, anyone who wants to get communicative competence has to study pronunciation"
>
> (as cited in Narmeen Mahmud Mohammad, 2014, pp. 47-48).

Wei emphasises the fact that EFL teachers must be aware of the importance of pronunciation teaching elements including the supra-segmental instruction. Segmental features of pronunciation indeed serve as a base to EFL learners' tuition that guarantees good foundation and beginning. Still, in order to lessen one's accented speech, more focus is given to prosodic elements as well to complete their learning process wholly.

Language and pronunciation attainment is getting more tangled with various disciplines and is getting a wider range of research; for example, in Psycholinguistics and Second Language learners' cognitive abilities, several studies based on Carly's (1980) research, have been called forth and instructors have come to apply plenty of models including the Phonetic

Coding Ability (henceforth PCA) and Phonological Working Memory (henceforth PWM). Accordingly, Carroll (1981) introduced PCA as an ability to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between these sounds and the symbols representing them, and to retain these associations in memory. Therefore, Carroll (1962) states that any learner possessing low PCA ability will undoubtedly encounter trouble, not only in remembering phonetic material or word form, but also mimicking speech sounds (as cited in Xiaochen Hu, Herman Ackerman, Jason A. Martin, Michael Erb, Susanne Winkler and Susanne M. Reiterer, 2012, p. 01).

PWM; however, centres on the retention of verbal information over short periods of time and comprises both a phonological store; that holds information in phonological form; and sub-vocal articulatory rehearsals; that are capable of refreshing the memory trace to prevent its decay. That is, the second model prevents the fading of segmental and supra-segmental features retained by the brain in the process of L2 pronunciation acquisition. It is also regarded as a language learning device, where PWM has got a circuit that functions for the purpose of overlapping with cerebral networks engaged in speech perception and production to maintain the retained phonological information (G. Hickok, B. R. Buchsbaum, C. Humphries & T. Muftuler, 2003; Francisco Aboitiz, Ricardo R. Garcia, Conrado Bosman, & Enzo Brunetti, 2006; G. Hickok & D. Poeppel, 2007; H. Ackermann, 2008; Susanne M. Reiterer, Michael Erb, Wolfgang Grodd, & Dirk Wildgruber, 2008; D. J. Acheson & MaryEllen C. MacDonald, 2009 and Daniel J. Acheson, Massihullah Hamidi, Jeffrey R. Binder & Bradley R. Postle, 2011; as cited in Xiaochen Hu et al., 2012, p. 02). Therefore, PMW represents an essential device to be harnessed and sharpened in order to maintain Pronunciation attainment process working. PMW assists learners to learn new vocabulary through phoneme system.

In foreign language instruction, most curricula emphasise pronunciation in the first year of study by introducing the phonetic alphabet and sound system of the language, but no continuation takes place due to the lack of enthusiasm towards pronunciation acquisition; because it remains the least important sub-skill in SLL/FLL. Thus, it tends to be neglected, especially in the case of adult FL learners. Another reason is that pronunciation is viewed as a component of linguistic rather that conversational fluency in a communicatively-oriented classroom (Pennington, 1994 and Elliot, 1995 as cited in Abbas Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2012, p. 123).

F. B. Hinofotis and K. M. Bailey (1980) observe that, "Up to a certain proficiency standard, the fault which most severely impairs the communication process in ESL/EFL lessons is pronunciation", (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011, p. 74). In other words,

despite its significance in speech and communication building, pronunciation instruction is being pushed back to be overcome by other skills without realising how crucial pronunciation can be when non-native speakers are obliged to go through a conversation with their teacher, peers or other native speakers of English, but become intimidated or embarrassed by their articulation.

Looking back at the history of pronunciation teaching, it is worth mentioning how it has gone through a series of alterations and a constant shift from one position to another. That is, by the very beginning, pronunciation as an essential aspect in speaking was and still is disregarded in EFL teaching. For example, in the Grammar-translation Method, pronunciation was almost irrelevant and was rarely taught (Florez, 1998). By the coming of the audio-lingual method in the 1950s and 1960s, pronunciation teaching was flourishing as a central part by the constant drilling of sound contrasts and word pairs; as well as the articulation of sounds in isolation. Nevertheless, this method failed and drowned in the trap of inconsistency, as it neglected the supra-segmental aspect in pronunciation teaching and pronunciation was drilled to exhaustion (Fraser, 2000).

In the 1970s, by the emergence and development of the Communicative approach, pronunciation's short status was diminishing by the fact that instructors had to choose between sticking to sound drilling activities and the teaching of articulatory phonetics or offering no direct instruction in English Phonology (E. Bray, 1995). Therefore, no room for pronunciation was dedicated and no would-be-teachers' training was offered as well. With the predominance of fluency over accuracy in pronunciation classes, the latter is given less time and effort to be taught despite its essential inclusion with the regular growth of communicative methods. Researchers, such as Joan Morley (1991) argue that the probability of EFL students' success in mastery of English pronunciation is bound to pronunciation lessons being an integral part of the oral communication class (as cited in Nair et al., 2006, pp. 28-29).

In this respect, Fraser (2002) attempted a list of several false reasons collected from ESL teachers for not prioritising pronunciation lessons which was used in Nair et al.'s field work,

- Pronunciation is a talent and cannot be taught

The majority of participating teachers, in the study conducted by Nair et al. (2006), agreed that teaching aspects of pronunciation cannot indeed be taught without offering great effort, material support, and motivated learners. It is not an impossible task to achieve but requires tremendous work and commitment.

- Students do not like to speak out in class

The majority agreed on creating speaking sessions and integrating conversations and discussions among groups of students rather than teaching sound drills which students no longer relate to. Speaking activities; therefore, aid learners in their pronunciation acquisition and provide a comfortable and realistic environment with plenty of encouragement and guidance.

- Correcting is intrusive

The majority of participants hinted that correcting their students directly came as a failure in their pronunciation teaching as most learners felt de-motivated and inhibited no matter how urgent and important pointing out their mispronunciations is. With regard to assigning some standards in pronunciation teaching, such as teaching native-like pronunciation, most participants stressed on the reliability of intelligibility over correct accent. Others highlighted the negative aspect behind ignoring mispronunciations' correction which indeed might lead to fossilisation of articulation errors for a long period. They suggested correction to be done in a positive and constructive way in order to avoid frustrating students and inhibiting them.

- There is not enough time

Regarding this point, most participants agreed that pronunciation required much time to be taught effectively, which was not the case of EFL curricula. The latter required the instructors to achieve wonders in so little time. More precisely, teaching phonetics is found to be a daunting task to achieve with beginner students. In reference to this, the variety of teaching methods should be taken into account; because no matter how intimidating and time-consuming teaching phonetics could be, the integration of the right techniques, methods, and time management may minimise the impossibility of its implementation and conclusion.

- We do not know how

Concerning this reason in particular, most participants admitted to avoiding teaching pronunciation due to their inability to do it effectively. Moreover, the researchers informed them of the findings of a study carried out in Australia by Macdonald (2002) from which it was revealed that some teachers did not like teaching pronunciation, others pronounced themselves unable to teach it, because they were not good at it, and nearly the majority did not sufficiently teach it to meet their students' needs. As a result, the participants commented on how it was possible for pronunciation teaching to cause issues in an English-speaking country where students were better surrounded with the necessary linguistic environment, guidance, and positivity for a proper mastery of this skill. The study's findings were highlighted by Fraser (2000) as well where pronunciation was given the least attention due to; mainly, the lack of confidence to teach it (pp. 30-32).

However, there still could be a possibility for other reasons behind the poor status of pronunciation teaching that make educators walk away from it. Correspondingly, Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) pointed out the difference between teaching and learning English pronunciation in countries that speak it as a second language and others as a foreign language (as in the case of Algeria). Szpyra-Kozlowska has designed an inclusive table of all possible distinctions between EFL and ESL pronunciation teaching and learning. The following comparison is to be illustrated afterwards with examples and counterparts from the Algerian contexts with regard to EFL classrooms.

Table 02. Comparison of Pronunciation Teaching/Learning in EFL and ESL Contexts

(Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska, 2014, p. 37)

EFL Pronunciation Teaching/Learning	ESL Pronunciation Teaching/Learning
The pronunciation model (usually some standard accent) imposed on the learners by the teachers	The pronunciation model(s) provided by native speakers, inhabitants of a country/region
Teaching/learning takes place in an instructed setting, i.e. in the classroom in a limited amount of time	Teaching/learning takes place mostly in a naturalistic setting (only sometimes in a mixed setting)
Learners have a limited or no exposure to spoken English outside the classroom	Learners usually have an unlimited (massive) exposure to spoken English in a variety of everyday situations (learning through immersion in the L2 environment)
The teacher serves as the major or (often the only) pronunciation model (input limited both quantitatively and qualitatively)	Learners have many native pronunciation models (input neither qualitatively nor quantitatively limited)
Learning pronunciation mainly through exposure to teachers of English, recordings and explicit instruction	Learning pronunciation mainly through exposure to native English (implicit learning)
Communication in English mostly with other non-native speakers (the teacher and other learners) little or no opportunity to use English in natural communication situations	Learners communicate in English mostly with native speakers in natural communication situations
Predominantly instrumental motivation in	Both instrumental and integrative motivation

learning English	
Greater exposure to written than to spoken English and powerful impact of orthography on learners' pronunciation	Greater exposure to spoken than to written English
Usually monolingual language classes with learners of the same linguistic and cultural background	In instructed settings, usually multilingual classes with learners of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds
Teachers usually of the same L1 as learners	Teachers usually of a different L1 from learners
Teachers usually with college or university qualifications to teach English	Teachers usually with qualifications obtained at ELT courses of a short duration
Non-native teachers	Native teachers' perfect English pronunciation which often departs from a standard model

Generally speaking, Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) declares that teaching/learning pronunciation in EFL/ESL contexts takes place and is achieved in different circumstances. Szpyra-Kozlowska demonstrates and introduces a set of quantitative and qualitative differences concerning learners, teachers, setting and the type and amount of L2 input and use. These differences cannot be ignored as they impact various elements of learners' phonetic training, where gender is seemingly absent in the table as illustrated in her book, and to a great extent, being an EFL teacher myself, I agree to what is listed above.

The first instance refers to pronunciation/accent models adopted by the curriculum and applied by teachers of English; in Algeria this would be Received Pronunciation (henceforth the RP) imposed by the Ministry of Education on all educational levels' teachers. Therefore, teachers of Phonetics and Phonology at university impose it on their learners as well to carry on the learners' prior training. Yet, it is worth mentioning that not all learners choose to speak it and; thus, fail to pinpoint the differences between RP and GA.

Second, still with the case of Algeria, EFL learning/teaching takes place indeed in a classroom at an educational institution and time allotted for English class is different; for instance, in middle schools, the total number of hours is three and in high schools, it ranges from three to five hours per week, and at times it depends entirely on each stream. At university, several faculties have adopted English instead of French as a Foreign Language,

and English classes take place once a week. By contrast, in the department of English, all classes are carried out in the target language. As for Phonetics' classes, they take place only once a week and they last for one hour and a half as a tutorial; which is not as sufficient as required for students specialising in English.

Third, truth to be said, aside from Algerian educational contexts, English is not spoken in a constant or natural manner. Once the learners leave the classroom, English becomes restricted only between learners having extra lessons of the target language, or specific groups of university learners, either direct speech among them, via media in general or on a few occasions with their teachers at the faculty.

Fourth, the Algerian teacher is indeed the only model for EFL teaching in Algeria. Besides, due to the lack of teachers' training in different fields, mainly pronunciation instruction, some teachers may lack the accuracy, as well as consistency in their pronunciation of English. In addition, a major shortage in material and equipment does make their task hard to convey the right input; unless the instructors devise their own methods and bring their own material in order to ensure regular flow of communication and retention of the correct output.

Fifth, the only means which most Algerian teachers of English rely on is their voice. Recordings and audio tracks are utilised with complete caution with the commitment of some teachers who persist to guarantee authentic and proper transmission and retention of the target language pronunciation. Other than that, non-native EFL teachers are the only direct source at college. Outside, learners may resort to audio-visuals aids and social media.

Sixth, as mentioned before, in EFL contexts, communication is entirely restricted between teacher and learner or other learners with their peers either in their classes or in exclusive groups. Recently, thanks to the spread of technology and foreign languages' awareness, an active use of English occurs through social media; such as Face-book, Instagram, Messenger, Skype and so on, where most of learners use English to communicate with other native or non-native speakers of English around the globe.

Seven, the prevalent type of motivation in our contexts, especially with the growing number of students speaking English and the widespread of English as an international language, is the instrumental one. This tendency could be due to the need to learn English, not for integrative reasons as suggested, but only to achieve certain objectives. For instance, getting a job with a higher salary at an international company, satisfying one's parents' needs, travelling abroad for educational, or touristic, as well as professional reasons, or even communication with other individuals from various cultural backgrounds are main reasons. Yet, this should not imply otherwise or hide the fact that no integrative motivation exists

among intuitive and aspiring learners who wish to be a part of the English-speaking communities.

Eighth, the efficiency of English as a Foreign Language in Algeria is entirely dependent on the written form, where the speaking skill is teacher-limited or left for advanced levels of specialities. In the case of education and teaching, almost all tests, homework, exposés, and examinations are written; consequently, students' efficiency in English is partially evaluated. Even final examinations, such as "le Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen" (henceforth BEM) and Baccalaureate exams do not include any oral activities for both French and English. Whereas, at university, it is almost the same case except that students specialising in English get the chance to express themselves and their thoughts in two ways, through their oral expression tutorial classes or power-point presentations and discussions.

Ninth, in fact the majority of a foreign language class comes from the same linguistic background which reduces the chance of having a diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds with regard to the very first levels of education in Algeria. At university; however, there is still a chance of African or Middle-eastern students to be found in almost every bilingual class; which opposes Szpyra-Kozlowska's general claim.

Tenth, it is quite common that foreign language teachers are from the same L1 as their learners, be it French or English. This means they cannot entirely speak English as accurate as a native speaker without proper training abroad and complete devotion to self-improvement and immersion into the foreign culture.

Eleventh, most teachers of English in Algeria possess a university diploma or qualification that is not entirely reliable for teaching in terms of practicability. In middle and high schools, the teachers possess a Bachelor or Master degree in Arts; whereas, at university and higher education, their qualifications vary from a Magister (classical system) degree, a Philosophy in Arts (Henceforth PhD) or Professorship. Still, the possibility of some teachers possessing IELTS or TEFL certificates exists.

Twelfth, the last indicator addresses the issue of EFL teachers' strife to achieve native-like pronunciation despite the possibility of the occurrence of mispronunciations that usually take place due to various factors; including the influence of the mother tongue or the untrained ears for phonetics. The possibilities of inaccurate enunciation diminish when the foreign language is taught by native speakers and which ensures correct input and output. It is commonly agreed upon that both input and output skills of any given language provide completion to one's process of learning. Thus, equality in teaching all language skills is to be held as a top priority. Fraser (2000) speaks about how the ability to speak English requires a

set of sub-skills of which pronunciation is "by far, the most important", (as cited in Nair et al., 2006, p. 28).

II. 3. The Teachability of Pronunciation

Pronunciation has been and still is regarded as the sub-skill of speaking that is most resistant to improvement and the least motivating to teach based on various opinions of EFL instructors as explained earlier. Nonetheless, for an EFL learner in higher education, it is not the same case as pronunciation of the target language becomes mandatory to be taught, acquired and evaluated as an integral part of their academic performance. Moreover, teaching pronunciation has undergone fluctuating situations in which at times, it emerged as one of the most challenging skills to teach. Therefore, various pronunciation drills and programmes were designed and practiced and with proper introductions and training all throughout middle and high school English classes.

This sort of attention towards pronunciation comes as a means of rescue in order to develop the necessary tools and instruction; as well as dedicate more time to invest in such a significant; yet, discarded sub-skill. At some other times, pronunciation suffers from marginalisation and tends to be overlooked; or in worst cases disappear; in EFL classes. Consequently, educators' major excuses are: teaching pronunciation's rules is time-consuming to accomplish and it involves teaching phonemic transcription which is hard to teach with their lacking experience and material in Algerian middle school (see Sofia Bahraoui, 2015).

Following the same line of thought, such an unsteady and unsafe position of English pronunciation teaching is not Algerian class-restricted as viewpoints from all around the globe educators and researchers who either agree or disagree with pronunciation's actual status. For instance, Judy B. Gilbert (1994) states, "Pronunciation has been something of an orphan in English programs around the world. Why has pronunciation been a poor relation? I think it is because the subject has been drilled to death, with too few results from too much effort" (as cited in Chen Den, 2006, p. 01).

As a result, pronunciation's status has quickly shifted from a status of being too reliable and central to achieve native-like articulation into being discarded and prioritised by the rest of the skills. Gilbert (1994) implies that pronunciation has been practised for too long with the same traditional passive and tedious methods of drilling without a touch of creativity. Hence, it has been exhausted and drained without any hope of change or satisfactory results.

Despite the fact that English as a Foreign Language is first introduced to Algerian learners in the first grade in middle school, and pronunciation instruction is included in their textbooks as well; very little practice takes place in class due to the very few tasks designed, teachers' reluctance to embark on teaching phonetic rules, or the use of their unreliable voices without the backup of native speakers' audio-visual aids that are necessary for accurate articulation of sounds; that is exposure to the target language (Bahraoui, 2015). Accordingly, Baker (1982) points out that schools' curriculum designers and course textbook planners rarely include intensive pronunciation instruction and practice activities for beginners in English, and tend to gradually implement and introduce these tasks as the level gets higher, as more time is allotted to linguistic areas like reading, writing, spelling and language comprehension. Pronunciation; therefore, is disregarded and marginalised (as cited in Margaret Wallace Nilsson, 2011, p. 06).

In the same sense, the fact that pronunciation tends to be undermined by the other language skills in FL classrooms has offered it a new title as "The Cinderella area of Foreign Language Learning" (Gerald A. Kelly, 1964 and J. Greenwood, 2002). Therefore, with less awareness of correct pronunciation and insufficient input comes low efficient and inappropriate output. In addition, practitioners in the field have got opposing views; as several ones promote the idea that native-like accent or native-like pronunciation can be achieved through sufficient exposure to the target language or constant application and use of the foreign language (Martha C. Pennington, 1989; Van Weeren J. and T. J. Theunissen, 1968; Richard W. Suter and Edward T. Purcell, 1980, and Penny Ur, 2006).

Whereas, another party of researchers including R. Wong (1993), Marcus Otlowski (1998), and Joanne Rajadurai (2001) encourage methodical and constant teaching and guidance; as well as incorporating correct input. Nonetheless, the issue of achieving native-like accent or pronunciation can be an impossible level to reach with pressing factors influencing the learners. Furthermore, Professor Farouk Bouhadiba explains the same phenomenon of how most of EFL teachers in Algerian educational contexts avoid pronunciation instruction or practice as well, illustrating some of the possible incentives for such behaviour,

> Most teachers of English in Algeria and probably elsewhere, see pronunciation as the most difficult teaching aspect. Some would even deliberately set it aside as it gets them involved in the "wild world" of Phonetics (mostly articulatory in the case of Algeria) and Phonology which they did not grasp or disliked as BA students of English (2004).

In this case, the only thought of getting involved in Phonetics and Phonology's teaching frightens teachers and the major reason for casting it away is how challenging and difficult to convey they could be; which goes back to teacher's lack of training in the field and shortage of equipment and motivation during their Bachelor of Arts (henceforth BA) tuition.

As a result, not only teaching Phonetics and Phonology requires an expert, but also an instructor who possesses the heart and motivation to succeed in appropriately instructing their learners on proper process of pronunciation acquisition. Moreover, it seems commonly acknowledged that any language teacher will inevitably be a phonetician (David Abercrombie, 1949, as cited in A. P. R. Howatt and H. G. Widdowson, 2004, p. 197). Hence, teaching pronunciation requires prior knowledge of the discipline; as well as openness and self-improvement through readiness and trainings.

Rajadurai carried out a study addressing the effectiveness of teaching pronunciation in Malaysian TESL students where she concluded in opposition to previous researchers who disagreed about the teachability of pronunciation. She concluded that most of the participants (70%) of the study enjoyed pronunciation instruction programme and insisted that it should be taught constantly (2012, p. 07). Therefore, acquiring accurate pronunciation has been and still is a challenging task which most EFL teachers fail to achieve one hundred percent.

By contrast, Purcell and Suter (2006) see this matter differently and highlight the fact that pronunciation practice and phonetic training in class can only affect the results and only have little influence on the learners' skills and improvement. Therefore, attaining accurate pronunciation falls beyond the control of EFL instructors; because any learner is able to improve their pronunciation by repetition, minimal pair practice, drilling exercises and the awareness of how to produce sounds which all can be done without the help of an educator (as cited in Jahandar et al., 2012, p. 03). Despite the great array of conflicting opinions when it comes to pronunciation teaching, what cannot be denied is the fact that it is only with the combined effort of EFL teachers and learners that satisfactory results may happen.

II. 3. 1. Accuracy vs. Fluency and Gender

Teaching the production of a foreign language can be successful by combining two major aspects with equal measures. Both accuracy and fluency if equally monitored and administered to EFL learners' tutelage, wonders might be achieved. Nevertheless, there exists an imbalance in instructing learners on how to speak; for instance, they either produce English accurately to evade embarrassment of mispronunciations; if not worse, a rupture in and

collapse of communication flow; because of inappropriate articulation or a distracting accent; or produce English fluently to transmit one's message successfully and be understood by the listener in urgent situations despite some production errors and accented speech.

Accordingly, some instructors tend to overlook the magic produced by blending these two aspects and give more priority to one and less to the other. That is, inaccurate enunciation of English sounds and incorrect intonation or misplacement of stress may lead to irritation and abruption during conversations, especially with non-natives speakers addressing native ones. For instance, during a press conference held after the Oscar award was received by the American Actor and academy award winner Leonardo DiCaprio in 2016, an Egyptian journalist addressed a question to him, but the actor could not; unfortunately, get what she was trying to say until she had to repeat it twice and with the remarks from his entourage. This communication rupture occurred because of two reasons. First, it was due to her awkward accent and intonation. Second, it was due to her incorrect articulation of sounds influenced by her mother tongue; such as [θ] and [ð] as [s] and [z] respectively. Her question was: What about the first Oscar for you? [wʌt ə'baʊt zə fɜːrst 'ɑːskər fə juː] instead of [wʌt ə'baʊt ðə fɜːrst 'ɑːskər fə juː].

However, most of teachers of English overlook emphasising accuracy or teaching all phonemic aspects; because if the sole goal of learning English is communication, then fluency serves this purpose perfectly or it could be the way around. Teachers who endeavour to teach accurate production of English, because communication fluency is not necessarily enough when substituting a phoneme for another that changes the whole meaning. For example, in the case of "three" [θriː] as [triː] which basically refers to "tree" and is a commonly annoying and distracting error.

Several practitioners define these two aspects differently; yet, tend to agree on paying equal attention to both. JoAnn Miller (2009) introduces them as follows,

> Accuracy is the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently […] whenever learners are involved in communication they are concerned with accuracy, in that they are making the best use of their language system to meet the communicative demands placed upon it. In spontaneous communication, learners have little time to reflect on the langue they produce. But, if they are given time to prepare what they have to produce; then there will be a concern for formal accuracy within a communicative context. (p. 04)

In view of that, Miller introduces two Longman dictionary definitions where accuracy is associated with producing utterances that are grammatically correct, but which do not involve any fluency in speech or writing. Therefore, she adds that it is almost inevitable to communicate without being accurate in one's speech, which refers to not only grammatical structures of sentence, but also includes vocabulary and pronunciation to which she refers as "formal accuracy within a communication context". Thus, speakers tend to allow more concentration and reflection upon their linguistic system when the formality of the circumstance calls for it.

Furthermore, Ur (2006) also explains the misconception of learning English to achieve native-like pronunciation, "Pronunciation improvement is not to achieve perfect imitation of a native accent, but simply to get the learners to pronounce accurately enough to be easily and comfortably comprehensible to other speakers" (p. 12). Consequently, one is not completely compelled to speak a foreign language as accurate as a native does. Still, they need balance their speech, at least produce comprehensible and intelligible utterances to maintain the stability and continuity of communication. That is, to be accurate and fluent enough to stabilise one's speech and be satisfied with the results of the conversation one's involved in.

So little attention is given to practical phonetics as EFL teachers prefer moderately intelligible pronunciation which is essential for effective communication; yet, emphasis is placed only on fluency rather than combining it with accuracy and mispronunciations are tolerated to some extent. Consequently, M. Celce-Murcia, M. Brinton and J. Goodwin (1996) explain such limited pronunciation training as follows, "communicatively adequate pronunciation is generally assumed to be a by-product of appropriate practice over a sufficient period of time". In other words, practicing a foreign language for some time may cause the speaker to reach an intelligible level of pronunciation. However, unless they study English for the sake of sitting for written exams, which is the case of the Algerian educational system, there is no need to give teaching native-like pronunciation or phonetic instruction the same amount of time and attention as they give other areas in ELT.

Nonetheless, it turns out to be a whole different matter regarding English learners at university; accentedness (attention on both accuracy and fluency) is not optional. With the teacher being the only model for a correct pronunciation of English in a non-English speaking country some decades ago; presently, various technological resources provide the necessary model for learners and aids instructors to perfect their ways and methods in teaching correct pronunciation of English. When referring to the best educational context for learners of English, plenty of approaches come in line and the one that has served the purpose well so far,

and is considered accountable is the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (henceforth CLT), Which favours learners' interactions with their peers in class in FLA. Yet, it does not prioritise fluency over accuracy as many individuals believe. For instance, H. Douglas Brown (2001) provides a description of CLT's main elements,

Table 03. Characteristics of CLT (from Brown, 2001; as cited in Eckstein, 2008, p. 07)

1. Classroom goals are focused on all components of communicative competence.
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques.
4. Students ultimately have to use the language productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom activities should prepare students for these contexts.
5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
6. The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and guide, not all-knowing bestower of knowledge.

Thus, CLT atmosphere includes important educational elements that surround the EFL learners with a complementary environment which focuses on all language skills equally. CLT's techniques also are designed to involve learners in a purposeful environment where language is practised well. Combining fluency and accuracy rather than prioritising one party in order to enhance learners' communicative competence. Receiving and producing language should be essentially practised in a spontaneous context outside the classroom provided that learners are being prepared in class beforehand. EFL learners must be aware of their own learning styles and understand how their learning process is adaptable in order to design or adapt the appropriate strategies and techniques. As for instructors, they act as mediators to guide rather than proud know-it-alls.

More importantly, Roy C. Major (1987) expresses a few complaints of his concerning the slow procedure and low attention of measuring pronunciation accuracy if compared to

other areas and skills in FLL, such as grammar, reading, writing and listening. He then advances the integration of some computerised technologies which are able to measure pronunciation accuracy referring to a few modern techniques and advantages of technology (as cited in Mahsa Hariri, 2012, p. 4861).

Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) joins her opinion to various researchers who have observed that pronunciation which creates too much strain on the listener is very likely to cause irritation and annoyance and; in consequence, discourage from further contact with the foreign speaker (p. 03). As a result, what aided the indifference towards teaching accurate pronunciation almost everywhere in the world is the fact that as long as the speaker is to some extent fluent, there is no need to pay more attention to accuracy and phonemic instruction, especially in cases; such as substituting the [t] for the [θ] in words like third/turd, three/tree, thick/tick, thin/tin, and the list goes on.

Moreover, with regard to gender, Irene Thompson's (1991) earlier research has found that women are more interested in pronunciation accuracy than men are. Additionally, J. J. Asher and R. Garcia (1969) report that female learners are more accurate in their pronunciation than male learners are. By contrast, in Japan, Busch's (1982) results indicate that Japanese males in fact possess more accuracy in pronunciation than their female counterparts. Similarly, in Egypt, Badran (2001) findings report that Egyptian male learners outperformed the females in their English pronunciation accuracy test (pp. 17-18).

II. 3. 2. Pronunciation Attainment Difficulties

Several research studies accentuate common variables in foreign language pronunciation acquisition which can affect this process including learners' native language, age, exposure to the target language, and innate phonetic ability (Kenworthy, 1987, as cited in Riam K. Almaqrn & Abdulrahman M. Alshabeb, 2017, p. 209). It is noteworthy to mention that learners' FLL undergoes several phases in order to reach a certain level. Proper articulation of the target language is one of the requirements for speech that falls under those phases to improve one's speech. Thus, correct and fluent pronunciation guarantees communication continuity as explained by various practitioners; "Good pronunciation is indeed indispensable for adequate communication in a foreign language and is; moreover, to a large extent responsible for one's first impression of a learner's L2 competence (Christiane Dalton-Puffer, Gunther Kaltenboeck, and Ute Smith; 2003, as cited in Joshua D. Tanner, 2012, pp. 01-02). Therefore, for EFL learners who are specialising in English, speaking the

target language adequately is a mandatory skill to possess as they will be evaluated and judged during a conversation. However, it is known that achieving native-like pronunciation may be a challenging procedure that goes through improving and overcoming several impediments. Some of the most prominent factors that hinder FL pronunciation for non-native speakers are presented subsequently.

II. 3. 2. 1. Age

Several variables can interfere with the process of pronunciation learning/acquisition, such as mother tongue interference and the degree of exposure to the target language; yet, the most common and widely researched one is age. Accordingly, due to the conspicuous effect of age in such a process, some researchers introduced plenty of hypotheses to confirm this occurrence, among which Erich H. Lenneberg's (1967), "The Critical Period Hypothesis" (henceforth CPH) or "Lateralisation" which has to do with the brain's left hemisphere that controls language learning, is most recurrent. Lenneberg (1967) highlights the fact that language learning ability can be affected by the completion of Lateralisation process that takes place right after puberty period.

This hypothesis explains how there exists a neuro-biologically-based period ending around the age of 12, after which completely mastering a second language becomes almost impossible. Moreover, Thomas Scovel (1980) claims that CPH cannot necessarily apply on the whole process of second language learning, but solely pronunciation. Scovel adds that this was due to the fact that "phonological production is the only aspect of language performance that has a neuro-muscular basis" (as cited in Elizabeth Pullen, 2011, p. 12). As regards age, Krashen (1973) adds to that the fact that this CPH effect goes beyond general learning abilities and affects areas like pronunciation, morphology, syntax or pragmatics in language learning (as cited in Turki A. Binturki, 2001, p. 07).

Additionally, various studies refer to the "Critical Period" or "Lateralisation" which determines the learners' ability or inability to accurately acquire correct pronunciation once they reach or pass a certain period of age, mainly puberty. For instance, Carroll (2008) declares that young learners acquire L2 better than older ones do despite that the latter do better at first; yet they reach a "plateau" where young learners catch up and eventually surpass them (as cited in Bahareh Koosha, Saeed Ketabi, and Zohreh Kassaian, 2011, pp. 1329-1330). Moreover, young learners tend to learn a language without much awareness or attentiveness,

only because they absorb information unconsciously if exposed correctly (Patricia K. Kuhl, 2004; as cited in Koosha et al., 2011, p. 1330).

Furthermore, young EFL learners possess a flexible capacity for perceiving and imitating sounds through communication and interaction. Once learners pass the critical period during their studies, they begin encountering difficulties in distinguishing and producing some sounds. Although some researchers criticise such a phenomenon and prefer to see the adults' inability to acquire perfect pronunciation is due to the lack of motivation or fear of losing their social identity (Wolfgang Klein, 1986; as cited in Koosha et al., 2011, p. 1330).

Nonetheless, opposing views to this theory do exist which point out that there are cases in which near-native pronunciation can take place even after puberty as stated by Theo Bongaerts, Chantal Van Summeren, Brigitte Planken and Erik Schils (1997). Between (05%) and (15%) of adult L2 learners still manage to reach native-like or accent-free speech (L. Selinker, 1972; Herbert W. Seliger, Stephen D. Krashen and Peter Ladefoged, 1975; L. Novoa, Deborah Fein & Loraine K. Obler, 1988 and David Birdsong, 1999, 2005; as cited in Hu et., al, 2012, p. 01). The opposing views to "Lateralisation" or CPH include Lund (2003) who concludes that despite that age may affect proper pronunciation acquisition; it is still possible for learners in their twenties to achieve accurate or native-like pronunciation; because a degree of brain plasticity may survive through to that period.

Additionally, Gerald G. Neufeld and E. Schneiderman (1980) reported that adult learners can be as proficient and fluent in articulation and prosodic features as the young ones. This development can be accomplished in a relatively short time without serious disruption to the second language teaching programme with adequate pronunciation instruction. In his research as well, H. Murakawa (1981) found that twelve weeks of phonetic instruction to adult L2 learners of English did improve their allophonic articulation.

Furthermore, several studies in Naturalistic Learning Environments have shown that learners' age of arrival to a country is highly connected to accuracy of their pronunciation in English. For instance, Asher and Garcia (1969) who have tested seventy-one Cuban immigrant students between the ages of seven and nineteen living in California, were recorded uttering and reading four sentences, and they were rated for degree of foreign accent by native-speaking judges. The results have shown that the children who had arrived to the US before the age of six received lower foreign accent ratings. Thus, it was concluded that, "If a child was under 06 when he came to the United States, he had the highest probability of acquiring a near-native pronunciation of English"; as well as the length of residence there (as

cited in Elizabeth Pullen, 2011, pp. 12-13). Age, as a variable, cannot be hidden or disregarded from any research with relation to language acquisition due to its prominent effect. As regards gender-related findings to this factor, no relevant information is found so far.

II. 3. 2. 2. Mother Tongue Interference and Regional Accents

The second most common factor that is found in research to have an evident influence on non-native learners' L2 pronunciation attainment is their mother tongue which comes in various and numerous dialects. ELL practitioners and researchers may agree on that based on their experience in pronunciation classrooms. Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) illustrates, "As any teacher will agree, however, it is the L1 that plays the major role in shaping the pronunciation of the L2 as the phonetic difficulties of learners sharing the same language background are largely predictable" (p. 38). Here, Szpyra-Kozlowska indicates the fact that mother tongue; to a great extent, interferes in the pronunciation acquisition process of the Second or Foreign Language Learning. It is worth noting that such phonetic difficulties differ from one language to another where problems of sound perception and production in accordance with the native language sound system stem out.

In the case of Algeria, where French is a second language and the first foreign language, and English is a second foreign language, it comes with a degree of difficulty in acquiring other languages for most learners in middle and high schools. The difficulty, mainly, lies in the fact that the former is a Romance language and the latter is a Germanic one. Coming from different language families and having different structures, rules and phonological/phonetic features make them different from Arabic (a Semitic language), that is the Algerians' mother tongue.

Thus, Arabic influences most of learners' process of EFL pronunciation attainment, and it is represented in several phonetic differences, such as vowel/consonant sounds and stress; that belong to both segmental and supra-segmental features respectively. Ellen Broselow and Daniel Finer (1991), for instance, claim that sounds' systems vary according to the sonority scale advanced by minimal sonority distance (Stops < Fricatives < Nasals < Liquids < Glides) that explains how the adjacent segment in an onset be far apart on the scale that consists of a stop plus liquid and a stop plus glide, but not stop plus nasal as it will be harder to acquire by a non-native speaker in accordance with their study results on L1

speakers of Japanese and Korean learning L2 English (as cited in Jette G. Hansen Edwards & Mary L. Zampini, 2008, p. 234).

Moreover, Arabic like any other languages has, throughout centuries, adopted a variety of accents and dialects that differ from one region or country to another. Most Arabic-speaking countries share one official language that is called "Classical Arabic" taught at school, and is understood by every Arabic native speaker. Nonetheless, numerous regional dialects stemmed from it, and gave birth to hundreds of colloquial Arabic accents, that can or cannot be acquired or understood by other speakers without practice and constant exposure.

In addition, several researchers who investigate the influences on correct pronunciation acquisition, including Peter Avery and Susan Ehrlich (1992) state that in FL pronunciation, the sound patterns of the learners' L1 are easily transferred into the L2 which is likely to cause a foreign accent. Therefore, such pronunciation errors committed by non-native speakers reflect the influence of sounds' articulation, stress and intonation patterns of their mother tongue. This particular influence occurs in three possible ways.

First, if there is a sound in the target language which is absent in the learners' native language or the way around, learners may not be able to produce it or even perceive it. Second, if the phono-tactic constraints are different in the learners' L1 from those in the target language, pronunciation problems occur because such rules are language-specific and speech becomes more accented. Third, learners may apply the rhythmic patterns of stress in their L1 on the production of L2 (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012, p. 78). Thereby, non-native speakers' L1 does interfere into their FL pronunciation attainment in various ways and these influences may be overcome by them or not, drawing attention to fossilisation of mispronunciations. As regards gender-related findings to this factor, no relevant information is found as well.

II. 3. 2. 3. Exposure to the Target Language

Exposure to the target language is considered a key-factor in pronunciation learning depending on the amount of exposure though. Several studies discuss this factor's effect on the foreign language learning process. For example, for Shum DI (1997) language learning theories encourage learners to acquire pronunciation primarily from a trusted input with large amounts of comprehensible input before they are required to speak. Furthermore, obtaining language instruction input differs between young and adult learners, and as the former can attain adequate exposure to the target language, the latter falls in what theories call "Linguistic Ghettoes" referring to their little and limited exposure that could consequently

result in language acquisition inhibition (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012, p. 124). As mentioned previously, age matters in EFL pronunciation attainment and may cause learners to approach pronunciation differently and obtain incomplete or erroneous articulation.

Furthermore, W. E. Lambert (1955-1956) conducted his seminal research on bilingual development, and discerned two clusters in the process of becoming bilingual; "The Vocabulary Cluster" and "The Cultural Cluster", which can act as barriers in the language acquisition process. He explains the former as the element of the language, not necessarily individual vocabulary piece, which he considered to some extent easy to master by learners. The latter, which he considers more difficult and the only way to overcome it is to integrate the language into one's life and make it part of oneself.

Accordingly, Gardner (2007) differed between three groups of individuals in his study conducted in the U.S.A. with regard to their language behaviour. The first group consisted of fourteen undergraduates specialising in French. A second group was comprised of fourteen graduate students specialising in French as well, and the third group had fourteen native French-speaking individuals who had settled and lived in the U.S.A for the last seven years and used English on a daily basis. He analysed and compared the three groups on a number of measures of French proficiency and French-English binguality; but prioritising two singular measures, which compared to the rest delivered reliable results to his study, and they were "Word-association" and "Recreation Time". The former refers to learning a foreign language through associating words with images or references for easier retention of vocabulary. The latter refers to integrating FLL as a reading activity; for instance, in their leisure time.

Expectedly, the results showed how their performance improved from the undergraduates, to the graduates to the French-native speakers. He concluded that there was a distinct pattern in the development of proficiency and bilingual skills and capacities in association with experience in the other language (pp. 03-04). Therefore, being exposed to the target language regularly and the input is correct and authentic, high-quality results in pronunciation acquisition are achieved and learners may succeed in that by integrating their own methods and strategies to boost their training or learning process. As regards gender-related findings to this factor, no relevant information is found as well.

II. 3. 2. 4. Phonological Awareness

Speaking of the difficulties that go beyond mother tongue influence over the target language learning process or even age of the learners, several researchers classify the absence of phonological awareness as one of the reasons that might hinder FLLs. Most likely, phonological awareness of the foreign language varies from one student to another, and which can be enhanced by constant exposure to the target language; as well as the IPA system of sounds. The term phonological awareness is defined by some researchers; B. R. Foorman, (1991) and Benita A. Blachman, (1994) as, "The ability to manipulate the individual sounds of words independent of their meaning". Keith E. Stanovich (1993) introduces it as, "The ability to deal explicitly and segmentally with sound units smaller than the syllable (as cited in Hussam Rajab, 2013, p. 654).

Phonological awareness, with regard to phonetic symbols, still lacks sufficient attention in order to uncover and eliminate the difficulties in retaining correct pronunciation of English words; in addition to overcome fossilised mispronunciations that could be due to lack of awareness, poor reception of spoken words; as well as, poor understanding and retention of IPA symbol-letter correspondence. K. E. Stanovich (1993), B. Layton (1998), Sensenbaugh (2000) and J. Gillet (2004) define phonological awareness as, "The consciousness of the language sounds, including syllables, onsets, rimes and phonemes" (as cited in Youcef M. Al-Shaboul et al., 2014, p. 201).

While others refer to it as possessing the ability to manipulate phonemes and judge if words rhyme, manipulate deleting, adding and substituting sounds which is an ability that encompasses phonemic awareness (p. 202). Phonological awareness; therefore, combines segmental and supra-segmental features of the target language. If such ability is retained well and sharpened, it will serve learners as a stepping stone towards easy and comfortable distinguishing and acquisition of sounds.

Moreover, Stanovich (1993) and Griffith (1992) conclude that in early EFL teaching; such awareness is needed for reading skill improvement and progress; as well as learning and comprehending the spelling/sound correspondences. This leads to the reminder that English is a non-phonetic language by nature as discussed previously. As a result, it requires learners to be aware of the grapheme-phoneme complex relationship of English and its spelling qualities, including silent letters, diagraphs and magic "e" to name a few. As regards gender-related findings to this factor, no relevant information is found so far as well.

II. 3. 2. 5. Phonetic Ability

Phonetic ability or as called by J. C. Wells (2000) "the phonetic ear" can be directly related to phonological awareness given their closeness in sounds' identification and articulation. The phonetic ear is an innate ear capacity that allows FLLs to detect careful and proper sounds' articulation and to differentiate one sound from another and an accent from another. According to Daniel Jones (1952), not every learner is able to possess such ear capacity for foreign languages. Those who do, can easily discriminate between sounds more accurately than others can. However, not having such ability does not mean that the rest of learners cannot learn or acquire near native-like accents or fail to speak fluently and possibly accurately. It is rather an ability that allows its holder to retain speech patterns and phonological rules much more quickly and easily which speeds up pronunciation attainment process (as cited in Mufit Senel, 2006, p. 116).

II. 3. 2. 6. Affective Factors

According to researchers in the field of FL pronunciation learning; such as Gergana Vitanova and Ann Miller (2002), various factors hinder the learning of language pronunciation, that are not necessarily related to gender, age or mother tongue interference. They namely highlight affective factors including poor confidence in speaking skill, feelings of frustration, and depressions (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 18). Additionally, Joan Morley (1991), in her article, agrees on the validity of such factors and emphasises how pronunciation learning is promoted by students' self-improvement in terms of four aspects which she lists as follow,

- Recognition of self-responsibility
- Development of self-monitoring skills
- Development of speech modification skills
- Recognition of self-accomplishment

By introducing these aspects, Morley explains how learners' self-belief and their will to improve are as strong and important incentives and factors as instructors' roles in the classroom. Moreover, in her study, she recognises only one main effective affective factor which is taking pride in one's own pronunciation success. Still, learners cannot improve their

pronunciation learning by just using pronunciation strategies without the appropriate context and guidance where the instruction has got a major role to play (Eckstein, 2007, p. 18). There is a powerful correlation that connects pronunciation learning, students and pronunciation strategies which is the teachers themselves that act as a pathfinder for their learners inside the classroom so the latter can manage their strategies' use outside the classroom.

As regards gender, very little research proves it to be a factor in pronunciation acquisition which seems to be mainly overshadowed by social stereotypes between female and male performances in EFL/ESL contexts. For instance, studies conducted by Asher and Garcia (1969), Sonia Tahta, Margaret Wood & Kate Miriam Loewenthal (1981) and Jiana et al. (2009) have found that gender plays a significant role in gender superiority with relation to pronunciation acquisition with high female ratings and scores. Whereas, others, such as L. L. Olsen & S. J. Samuels (1973), E. T. Purcell & R. W. Suter (1980) and R. E. Elliot (1995) have found no indicators of such an occurrence which maintains the role of gender in foreign languages' pronunciation acquisition unclear (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 20).

Following the same thought, in a study conducted in Saudi Arabia by Ayman Sabry Daif-Allah (2012) on the beliefs about FLL and its relationship with gender, he questioned two hundred and forty students to reveal how both genders perceive EFL learning from different aspects as motivation and expectations, FLL, nature and aptitude; as well as communicative strategies. The results showed that, in accordance with the aforementioned aspects, female learners have a sound and strong belief about the significance of speaking a foreign language with an excellent accent and pronunciation, as they tend to emphasise accuracy compared to male learners who prefer fluency. Another gender difference is that boys are more rational in believing that mistakes are to be expected from a non-native speaker, and they should not feel de-motivated by such mistakes; because females stress correctness in speech rather than committing mispronunciations (p. 30).

II. 3. 3. Speech Intelligibility and Gender

Speech intelligibility is becoming a popular topic to discuss when pronunciation teaching is involved. With regard to speech; generally speaking, intelligibility is the comprehensibility of uttered speech sounds and words, and how they are fluently or accurately produced by the speaker to convey meaning and construct successful communication with listeners. Consequently, for speakers and listeners to establish a balanced communicative atmosphere, they need understand and be understood as well. Fluent

intelligibility is widely encouraged rather than accuracy; because it does not require speakers to be accurate in language all the time as long as they are understood and communication flow is maintained as much as possible without interruptions made by lack of vocabulary, foreign accents or mispronunciations.

Morley (1991) emphasises the goals of teaching pronunciation; primarily, by considering "intelligible pronunciation" over "perfect pronunciation", which is a significant component of communicative competence. Moreover, attaining perfect-like pronunciation is becoming less required in communication; because it is being overshadowed by more realistic and reasonable goals. Morley; therefore, introduces "functional intelligibility" which refers to the learners' ability to be easily and relatively understood and "functional communicability" which refers to the ability to meet the communicative needs they face; as well as increased self-confidence, the speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies. It is also important to mention that intelligibility is vital for learners who learn English for international communication purposes (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2012, p. 120).

In addition, Anne Burns (2003) highlights the importance of involving both segmental and supra-segmental features in pronunciation acquisition; because they are interrelated and for successful instruction as illustrated in the following figure,
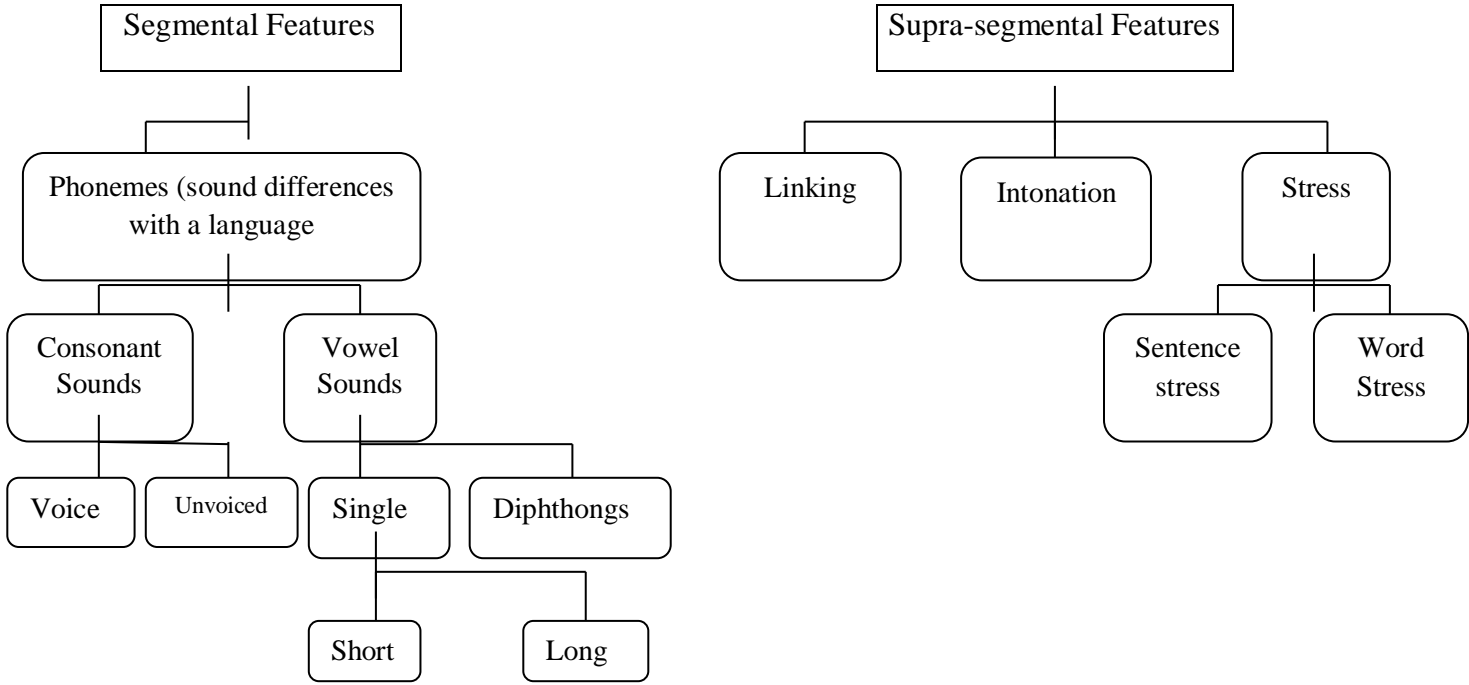
Figure 02. Various Features of Pronunciation (Micro and Macro levels)

(Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2012, p. 120)

Currently, in order to maintain the stability of communication flow between interlocutors, what must be established is comfort in turn-taking and no strain should be applied on either side. For instance, if communication is basic and considerable strain is put on the listeners requiring them to make extra effort to understand the speaker's message, it is called "Minimal Intelligibility". If no strain is on the listener and meaning is easily transmitted, it is called "Comfortable Intelligibility" as Abercrombie (1947) refers to both situations. Yet, there is no denying the fact that sustaining the flow of communication requires speakers to establish a degree of both fluency and accuracy as all language building elements are interrelated and missing one will affect that flow.

Following the same line of thought, Abercrombie (1991) encourages comfortable intelligibility and defines it as, "Pronunciation which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part of listener (as cited by Joanne Rajadurai, 2012, p. 01). Therefore, intelligibility between interlocutors requires sufficient understanding without fully possessing accurate or native-like pronunciation. As the question of intelligibility is no longer dependent on the choice of pronunciation models, such as RP or GA, Brown (1986) rejects the idea of adopting a certain model which is intelligible only to local speakers where a given model adopted should seek international intelligibility rather than restricted one (as cited in Rajadurai, 2012, p. 08).

If learners ignore how important it is to be both accurate and fluent in pronunciation to be understood, then the goal of learning and speaking English will not be achieved successfully. It has been proven before that the number of non-native speakers of English is exceeding that of native speakers; thus, non-natives prefer to be fluent rather than accurate, because they are communicating with non-native speakers. However, complications might occur within such communication especially with different cultural backgrounds. In other words, non-natives tend to make more phonetic and phonological errors which effect their interactions with other non-natives more than it does with native speakers of English; because the latter may use contextual information to figure it out, that is lacking in non-natives; for instance, the confusion of pork and fork in Korean English (as cited in Jahandar et. al, 2012, p. 02).

Jenkins (2000) points out that most of errors of pronunciation that cause unintelligibility are segmental in relation to misplaced nuclear stress, particularly stress whether on its own or combined with segmental errors (p. 03). That is to mean, mispronunciation of sounds may cause obstacles when learning and applying stress patterns

and stress shift in syllables. For instance, most of non-native speakers of English pronounce the suffix "dis" [dɪs] as [dɪz] as in the verb "to disagree" [dɪsə'gri:] as [dɪzə'gri:] and noun "disadvantage" [dɪsəd'vɑːntɪdʒ] as [dɪzəd'vɑːntɪdʒ]. If pronunciation of the letter "s" is not indicated and corrected, this might lead to fossilisation of errors as such in the long run, though not causing any interruptions or ruptures in communication but it makes speech sound a little bit accented exactly like pronunciation of retroflex approximant [r] as the Arabic trill [r]. As a result, making such mispronunciations while speaking RP or GA; as standard model accents; is considered inconsistent and phonetically wrong.

According to Yano Yakusata (2001), lack of confusion and transparency could be accepted since the main reason in interaction is understanding meaning in its broadest sense while overlooking the forms of utterances (as cited in Grace Hui Chin Lin and Paul Shih Chieh Chien, 2011, p. 72). Still, overlooking the segmental aspects in English pronunciation remains unfavourable as it will eventually instigate misunderstanding and confusion between NNSs and NSs. Moreover, for any NNS of English going through a conversation, for communicative efficiency, clear and correct articulation is a mandatory requirement for communication continuity as highlighted by various researchers, such as Charles W. Kriedler (1989), J. Morley (1998) and Helen Fraser (1999-2000).

Aside from speech sounding awkward or accented; speakers with pronunciation problems often make quite unconsciously and unintentionally an unfavourable impression of their personality on listeners. Gerald Kelly (2000); for instance, in his discussion of the role of English prosody, claims that German learners who use their native intonation in English sound abrupt or impolite, while the Spanish who employ Spanish prosody in English might sometimes appear rather bored and disinterested. Other studies have demonstrated that listeners often judge people they have never met on their personality, intelligence and social status. Needless to say, the less intelligible the foreigner's speech may sound, the more critical such judgements are.

For intelligibility tasks, various approaches and methods were employed; for instance, in quiet and noise, where students have to indicate what was heard (H. L. Lane, 1963). Listeners had to complete a close test based on a passage read by speakers from different L1 backgrounds (Larry E. Smith and John Bisazza, 1982). Another method was having the listeners memorise the main idea of what the speakers had orally presented (Marilyn Perlmutter, 1989). A dictée task was proposed as a now-common technique in which listeners were required to listen to sentence-length samples and write them down in standard

orthography, and data were scored in terms of words correctly transcribed (D. Brodkey, 1972) (as cited in Hui Chin Lin & Shih Chieh Chien, 2011, p. 201).

Yet, it is worth mentioning that tasks that investigate intelligibility aspects may fall short due to restricted and controlled tests, such as reading words or sentences as their speech will only lack naturalness and spontaneity, lack of word familiarity due to orthographic interference, dys-fluences or unnatural prosody that are necessary for successful analysis. Therefore, to obtain satisfying results, it is preferable to draw out improvised speech through picture story tasks, personal narratives, or interactive tasks (p. 202).

For more intelligibility achievement, several researchers including Golge Seferoglu (2005) and Fangzhi Cheng (1998) encourage integration of softwares; such as accent reduction software in a multi-media language laboratory; because technology has so much to offer in pronunciation teaching/learning in terms of interaction, practice and improvement in their oral and communicative competences especially for the supra-segmental instruction (stress, rhythm and intonation) (as cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2012, p. 122). In a nutshell, intelligibility in FLA has not quite been as decisive an element as accent in determining strong accents and the latter has often been selected as the dependent variable rather than speech intelligibility (Janet Anderson Hsieh, Ruth Johnson & Kenneth Koehler, 1992; and Doris Macdonald, George Yule & Maggie Powers, 1994). Having said that, intelligibility cannot be relied upon as a distinctive feature in identifying nativeness of L2, still, the relationship between accent and intelligibility remains fundamental in other fields and disciplines and serves other purposes of analysis (as cited in Murray J. Munro, 2008, p. 197). Native accent remains regarded with more interest and importance in speech difficulties and FLL settings.

From a gender perspective, intelligibility is a variable which can have an impact on speech intelligibility of both sexes, and which tends to be favourable to female speakers. According to Ann R. Bradlow, Gina M. Tourretta & David B. Pisoni (1996) and Valerie Hazan & Duncan Markham (2004), female speakers tend to be more intelligible than male speakers. Bradlow (2003) adds that this is probably related to the wider F0 range of females that aids women's speech to be more intelligible and tend to have "a larger vowel space, more precise inter-segmental timing than male speakers and less frequent alveolar flapping". These characteristics in female speech were identified in Bradlow's research about gender differences in acoustic speech analysis and intelligibility (as cited in Amano-Kusumoto and Hosom, 2011, p. 10).

There were studies conducted on the degree of intelligibility of speaking of females compared to male speakers in quiet places and by pronouncing sentences and vowels presented in noise. Females were found to be more intelligible (A. Bradlow, 1996 and Sarah H. Ferguson, 2004; as cited in Eric Johnson & Sarah Hargus Ferguson, n.d., n.p.). Nonetheless, gender variable in research related to speech intelligibility and accuracy still needs further investigation for wider results range. The next element places more focus on the main impeding errors committed by non-native speakers of English, mainly Arabs. There are still more of such mispronunciations and phonetic changes which are made by male and female speakers.

II. 4. EFL Arab Learners' Pronunciation Hindrances

The probability of error during the FLL process is a matter that needs not be disregarded; yet, in fact it is possible to be discarded by EFL instructors who should give more time and attention to remedy them with the right strategies and not overlook them. English and Arabic are two languages that descend from two different language families; Germanic and Semitic respectively. Thus, they possess numerous differences in their phonology, phonetic features, grammar, lexis and syntax. The following table summarises the sound systems of both languages briefly, as this is the most relevant aspect of both languages to the present study's aims. It also shows similarity in places and manners of articulation for both English and Arabic sounds.

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Table 4. English and Arabic IPA Symbols and Descriptive Classes

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental/ Inter-dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Pharangeal	Uvular
Stop	[p] [b] ب		ت د ط ض	[t][d]				[k][g]ك	[h] ه [ʔ] أ	ع	ق
Fricative		[f][v] ف	[θ][ð] ث ذ ظ	[s][z] ز س ص	[ʃ] [ʒ] ج ش			خ غ		ح	
Affricate					[tʃ] [dʒ]						
Nasal	[m] م			[n] ن				[ŋ]			
Lateral				[l] ل							
Trill				ر							

Approximant (Glide)	[w] و					[r]	[j] ي			

English; being a lingua franca for decades, has speedily spread all over the globe, and has become an international language spoken everywhere. What makes it so and what helps it to expand more rapidly than any other language is exposure through technology. Speaking of North African countries that take up English as a Foreign Language, Algeria included, have already integrated English as a subject in all educational levels, except for primary schools, and almost in every speciality in higher education, not to mention daily exposure and use of English for entertainment or communicative purposes via internet websites and social media network. Everyday usage of English can no longer deny the growth of its internationality.

Moreover, Arab researchers emphasise such widespread in various research studies, among which Hassan R. Abdal-Jawad (1987) and M. Al-Batal (1988) demonstrate how English has become more competent than Arabic especially in domains like education, tourism, international safety and business to name a few. Furthermore, the goal of teaching English in Arabic-speaking countries is to give birth to culturally competent citizens by acquiring English more efficiently through extensive regular teaching of its four skills. So, they could speak, write, read, listen and understand efficiently (as cited in Drbseh, 2015, p. 239).

That being said, another aspect of utmost importance to highlight is the linguistic structures of both English and Arabic which are basically different and; therefore, could cause hindrances for Arab learners of English; especially for those who are not exposed to it constantly. Nacer (1967) refers to them as linguistic levels, such as phonology and pronunciation practice. Similarly, Joker (1977) and Karyn Thompson-Panos & Maria Thomas-Ruzic (1983) address linguistic differences between English and Arabic in order to classify and identify language acquisition difficulties for Arab EFL learners. The reason behind this is to elucidate how learning English in Algeria as a foreign language differs from learning English as a Second Language in Egypt. The differences have already been discussed in detail previously in Szpyra-Kozlowska's table. As a reminder, Mpepo (1990) clarifies the difference in this way,

> An ESL situation is where the language is widely used by traditionally non-native speakers. Doubtless, the teaching approach emphasises intelligibility which is different from an EFL situation in which the use

> of the language is with native speakers and speakers from outside the country. The teaching approach in this case [EFL] aims to teach learners to produce the sound, syntax, and conversation patterns of British, American or of any English associated with a country where English is traditionally spoken as a native language
>
> (as cited in Drbseh, 2015, p. 240).

Meaning that, EFL contexts differ from ESL situation in terms of various aspects of language teaching that need be focused on including sound system, grammar, and speech rhythm. In an ESL context however, intelligibility between speakers is much more highlighted in pronunciation classes' programmes. According to Robert Lado (1957), it is critical to consider prior knowledge of language similarities and difficulties for developing suitable teaching material, creating tests for both pronunciation and vocabulary, designing research and also understanding cultures and such predictions ought to be confirmed by empirical evidence based on learners' productions. Therefore, any programme or curriculum to be designed is based on students' capacities and needs which serves the latter's needs as well starting off by explaining the phonological, lexical and syntactical dissimilarities to EFL beginners between their mother tongue and the target language.

As S. Suleiman (1993) stated that English presently is on top of the world languages by becoming the language of diplomacy, trade, communication, technology, business and development of large numbers of Arab countries. Moreover, learning speaking this international language by ESL/EFL learners provides them with a privilege of being part of today's world and reveals new horizons for a better career in the future (as cited in Binturki, 2001, p. 02). Therefore, EFL learning comes with its ups and downs and the difficulties encountered in the process need be identified and corrected to achieve successful communication and bury resilient speech errors.

Fossilisation, for instance, is a relentlessly recurring type of error that is identified by Selinker (1972) as an inter-language error, and such error is caused by the native language interference. By contrast, intra-language errors are caused in second language acquisition. Therefore, Selinker defines fossilisation as,

> Linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their inter-language relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the target language
>
> (as cited in Binturki, 2001, p. 13).

In other words, fossilised or mistakenly retained speech errors in one's second language for a long time can be hard to overcome once stuck in one's brain unless treated prior to fossilisation taking place. Selinker (1972) provides the example of American learners of French using retroflex [r] instead of the French uvular [ʁ] (pp. 13-14). In the case of Algerian students, it is imperative to note that their mother tongue may interfere and cause problems of fossilisation as such, but not classical Arabic; because it contains twenty eight alphabet letters including [θ] and [ð]. Yet, if attention is directed towards Colloquial Arabic accents as the accent of urban regions in Mostaganem, the former sounds do not exist in their accent; therefore, most of Mostaganem students unintentionally replace voiced and voiceless dental fricatives with voiced and voiceless alveolar stops [t] and [d] respectively, as a problem caused by the fossilisation of colloquial Arabic accent in some urban regions in the city of Mostaganem.

Not to forget, Algerian students' confusion between long and short vowels. For most of them, they treat some English long and short vowel sounds interchangeably, foot [fʊt] as [fu:t], book [bʊk] as [bu:k], leave [li:v] as [lɪv], and others. Similar errors are pointed out by Yost (1959) because most of Arabic-speaking countries' learners may fall into the trap of English sounds that do not exist in Arabic sound system. Hence, they replace them with closer sounds in their Arabic sounds' inventory (as cited in Binturki, 2001, p. 15).

However, numerous cases of Syrian, Lebanese, Saudi and Iraqi English learners do not apply to the Algerian ones, such as, sounds that do not exist in the Arabic sound system as [g], [ʒ], [tʃ], [p], [v], [ŋ], and retroflex [ɻ]. Yet, the influence of colloquial regional accents and French has provided a door of escape for Algerian learners and took the form of a richer phonological system. The issue at hand does not cause problems to; mainly, educated individuals. It should also be noted that errors made by Arabic learners were evaluated and scrutinised since the seventh century by El-Khalil and Sibawayh who published the very first books in Arabic Grammar, Phonology and Phonetics (Judith Rosenhouse, 2007, as cited in Binturki, 2001, p. 16). In a diglossic atmosphere as Algeria, most common pronunciation errors of Arab learners of English are reduced; still, they are identified and discussed subsequently.

Furthermore, in her study on major errors committed by Arab speakers of English, Ana Marina Barros (2003) came to the conclusion that pronunciation mistakes cannot be generalised to all Arabs as some of them succeeded in getting over some common mistakes. Due to differences in background and dialects that entail different levels of mispronunciation and most of such errors occur because of the absence of some sounds in the native language

inventory of sounds that are unconsciously replaced by their counterparts; such as, the case of [v], [f], [p], [b], [θ], [ð], [t], [d] or [s] for the case of Egyptians (G. Z. Messiha, 1985) (as cited in Binturki, 2001, p. 26). Existing articulation errors does not deny the fact that Arab learners cannot overcome such obstacles and achieve near-like pronunciation.

Studies conducted on Arab students in EFL contexts describe the latter as sociable and verbal learners who have a great interest in whole-class, in groups and in an extraverted manner of instruction (B. Harshbarger, 1986 and k. Willing, 1988). Moreover, Essam Hanna Wahba (1998) states that Arabic learners of English generally come across certain obstacles in their pronunciation learning process, but no previous research has related personality traits; such as extraversion/introversion and gender with regard to pronunciation accuracy of Arab learners in EFL contexts which is subject worth investigating (As cited in Badran, 2001, p. 11).

For Arabic, [n] and [ŋ] both exist in its sound inventory (J. Bauman-Waengler, 2009); however, unlike English where they are considered distinct phonemes, in Arabic [ŋ] is an allophone of [n] and it never occurs in final word position. Subsequently, some Arabic learners of English may substitute it with voiceless velar plosive [k] in final position; for example, "thing" becomes "think". Moreover, lateral alveolar approximant [l] tends to be pronounced as light [l] in all word positions. Post-alveolar approximant [r] does exist in the Arabic set of phonemes; yet, it is always pronounced as a trill; because of its pronunciation in Arabic. As for the production of vowels, Waengler (2009) explains the difficulties encountered by Arab learners of English with regard to certain vowels that are not found in the Arabic sound inventory, such as, [e], [ɔː], [ʌ] and [æ] (as cited in Elmahdi & Khan, 2015, p. 87).

Little research is done for the sake of identifying difficult sounds for Arab learners of English; still, those few studies that do (Fayez M. Altaha, 1995 ; N. Kharma,& A. Hajjaj, 1989 ; Avery & Ehrlick, 1992 and the Australian Government, 1978) agree on the following sounds that might be troublesome to produce or perceive, [tʃ], [ʃ], [v], [f], [p], [b], [ŋ], [θ] [ð], [r], [l], [gl], and [dʒ] for all learning levels (as cited in Elmahdi & Khan, 2015, p. 89). It is worth mentioning that the degree of Arabic EFL learners' inability to produce the previously listed sounds differs as some can pronounce them effortlessly.

English and Arabic have different phonemic structures as well, where English has got forty-four phonemes divided into twenty four consonant sounds and twenty vowel sounds including twelve Mono-phthongs and eight diphthongs. By contrast, Arabic has got thirty-six phonemes divided into twenty eight consonant sounds, two diphthongs, and six mono-

phthongs. This makes Arabic a consonant-heavy language compared to English that uses more consonant clusters to form its words (Z. Majeed, 1999; as cited in Elmahdi & Khan, 2015, p. 86). Following this thought, a cluster is a sequence of consonant sounds that are not separated by a vowel, and they are very common in English. As for Arabic, it does not have three- or four-consonant segments, such as, "sp", "spr", "spl", "str" or "gr" which for numerous Arab learners of English can be troublesome. Some of these learners, in order to ease the pronunciation of such clusters, may insert a vowel in-between consonants and break the consonant sequence. A phenomenon that is very common among Egyptians and Saudi Arabians, for example, "next" is pronounced [neksɪt] and "stand by" as [stændɪ'baɪ] (Murcia, 1999; as cited in Elmahdi & Khan, 2015, p. 86).

S. G. Guion, T. Harada & J. J. Clark (2004) highlighted the case of primary word stress placement by native and non-native speakers of English. The latter attributed the same phonological rule of nouns and verbs to nonsense words, and syllable structure had a sort of an independent effect on English native speakers' placement of stress as long vowels tend to attract stress (Syllable weight) more than short vowels; as well as syllables with complex codas rather than with simple codas.

Digging through EFL pronunciation teaching research, several experts including F. Abdul Haq (1982), N. Khama & A. Hajjaj (1989), E. H. Wahba (2008), and A. Al-Shuaibi (2009) concluded that EFL learners had some difficulties in the pronunciation of initial three consonant clusters and final three or four members in English correctly and properly (as cited in Attalah Mohammad Al Rubaat Hammad Ali Alshammari, 2019, p. 64). Thus, they resorted to reduction, deletion or substitution in order to cover up their mispronunciations. For that reason, they concluded that learners who studied the target language constantly and for longer time spans had less of these problems; which leads to the importance of necessary and sufficient exposure to the target language in order to reduce the possibility of committing speech errors.

There are a great number of researchers who conducted studies on the errors committed by Saudi Arabian EFL learners who speak Arabic, like Algerians and share the same Arabic alphabet, including J. Ahmed (2011), Emad Al-Saidat (2010), F. Altaha (1995), Binturki (2008) and Khan (2011). There are some mentions of incorrect productions of certain problematic sounds including consonant cognates [p] - [b] and [f] - [v]. Naturally, such mispronunciations are present in some students' speech production; because of mother tongue interference. There are numerous students who cannot discern [ʃ] from [tʃ] as in "sheep" and "cheap" (p. 211).

Therefore, this error in phonology is referred to as sound substitution of nearest equivalents, such as the example above between English and Arabic. Sound substitution occurs for many reasons; mainly, when an L2 target sound does not appear or exist in L1 inventory. Thus, the speaker substitutes it with a sound closer to it, such as English [r] for L2 Spanish [r]; otherwise the L2 sound may exist but does not appear in the required context due to phono-tactic constraints; as German's pronunciation of "log" with a final [k] even though [g] exists in German phonemes' set. Moreover, sound substitution may occur when the L1 does not have the corresponding L2 phone as done by some Arabic learners who substitute English [p] with Arabic [b]. For instance, Lombardi (2003) points out that L1 speakers of Thai, Russian and Hungarian substitute [t] for English [θ]; whereas, Japanese and German tend to substitute it with [s]. The interesting part is that all languages listed above contain all those sounds in their phonemic inventory (as cited in Hansen & Zampini, 2008, p. 232).

In a study conducted on Japanese speakers of English, the researcher tackles the issue of English non-native speakers' pronunciation obstacles and highlights the issue of "Differentiation". He classifies such obstacles hierarchically which may cause conspicuous difficulties. First, when two L2 sounds correspond to one L1 sound. Second, when a sound is present in mother tongue sound system, but is not found in the target language. Third, when L1 and L2 sounds are approximately equivalent (Bowen, 1965; as cited in Steven W. Carruthers, n.d., p. 17). Therefore, the issue of differentiation is also found in Algerian cases in which learners come from rural regions where a few sounds in L2, such as [p]-[b], [t]-[θ] and [d]-[ð] are the same for them or can be difficult to discern for the first time. More probable errors for non-native speakers of English may include,

- Prosodic interference is when non-native speakers produce a falling intonation in utterances or final words in L1 English and L2 Mandarin like flapping [t, d] regardless the tone. The rhythmic unit of foot also differs from one language's prosodic structure to another (Archibald, 1994) as placement of stress occurs either on the left or the right, allowing binary feet or unbounded just like in English.

- The notion of "Phonological Processes" refers to the use of L1 allophonic variants that do not take place in L2 environment; for instance, clear [l] for velarised/dark [l] in L1 French and L2 English.

- Under-differentiation refers to the sounds that are allophones in L1 and separate/independent phonemes in L2; such as the case of [d] and [ð] in L1 Spanish and L2 English; as well as [n] and [ŋ] in L1 Arabic and L2 English.

- Over-differentiation is the opposite of the previous element which refers to sounds that are separate sounds in the mother tongue; yet, they are allophones in the target language. In the example of L1 English and L2 Spanish.

- Reinterpretation of distinctions is reinterpreting secondary/connected features as primary or distinctive features in L1 German and L2 English; for instance, aspirated alveolar [tʰ] with unaspirated dental [t̪].

- Phono-tactic interference refers to conforming L2 syllable structure to L1 like in L1 Portuguese and L2 English; e.g., pic(i)nic(i), L1 Japanese and L2 English; e.g., wife(u), and L1 Arabic (Egyptian) and L2 English; e.g., c(i)lass.

- Altering the segmental feature, after several studies apparent in Mandarin (Lombardi, 2003) where three common errors in L2 production occurred; epenthesis which is inserting a vowel sound in the middle of a consonant cluster, after a word final consonant deletion especially of a consonant in a complex onset or coda and modification of L2 target or feature change; such as, devoicing a voiced stop consonant in the coda part. Therefore, in Mandarin speakers' production of L2 codas, mainly [p], [t], [k], [b], [d], [g], for example in the word [wɪg] → [wɪgə]. Additionally, Spanish and Cantonese speakers tend to delete the stop consonant more than 40% of the time and 19% of the L2 English final voiced stops were produced as voiceless stops (Broselow et al., 1998; as cited in Hansen & Zampini, 2008, p. 233).

Actually, most of the speech errors committed and impediments encountered by EFL learners have been identified for instructors to bear in mind and remedy. By paying more attention to the reasons behind such pronunciations errors; employing suitable pronunciation leaning strategies to overcome such hindrances are illustrated and explained in the present study. The upcoming element tackles one of the steps that may hinder correct pronunciation acquisition as well, which is the relationship between sound production and perception.

II. 5. Sound Production and Gender

Sounds' production and perception are two closely related processes and when combined together, one's speech sounds' are articulated and perceived in a manner that ensures proper speech and correct pronunciation; as well as uninterrupted communication. The production of sounds is thoroughly studied in the first branch of Phonetics which is called "Articulatory Phonetic" or "Physiological Phonetics". It is the oldest branch in the history of

Phonetics that specifically deals with the production, description and classification of segments and separate sounds. According to Peter Roach (2002), Articulatory Phonetics covers details of,

> How sounds are produced, how they are used in spoken language, and how we record speech sounds with written symbols […]. When we study the production of speech sounds, we can observe what speakers do, and we can try to feel what is going on inside our vocal tract. (p. 58)

In other words, the first branch of Phonetics carefully trails the physiological aspects of human speech, expressions and apparatus in order to present learners with all possible differences and explanations of speech articulation in the target language. Moreover, being non-native speakers of English with different mother tongue phonology and phonemic codes, English sound production may be accompanied with slight or large dissimilarities for young, old, female or male non-native speakers. Some of the most apparent changes are identified in this part to present and acquire a wider understanding of EFL speech production differences and for learners and instructors to bear in mind during pronunciation classes.

Hansen & Zampini (2008, p. 223) highlights the aspect of segmental production by indicating the case of Voice Onset Time (henceforth VOT) of stop consonant production by the mean analysis of English monolinguals and L2 late and early learners. By precisely introducing "The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis" presented by Lado (1757) in L2 acquisition, the results of several studies show that young learners between six and seven years old who had learned English/Spanish and English/French were able to produce stops in both languages with VOT durations that were similar to those of monolingual speakers (Williams; 1977, and Mack; 1989).

Moreover, Emil James Flege (1991) has conducted a similar study evaluating Spanish speakers of English VOT of voiceless stop consonants (or long-lag) and found out that Spanish early learners of English managed to articulate them with similar VOT as to monolinguals; whereas late Spanish learners of English had produced them with compromised VOT values. Therefore, Flege concluded that early learners possessed the ability to construct separate phonetic categories for L1 Spanish and L2 English stops (p. 223). Nevertheless, other research refers to some adjustments and L2 speaking norms that need be adapted to in order to completely establish such separate phonetic strategies (R. Schmidt & J. Flege; 1996).

Similarly, Flege (1995) has developed "The Speech Learning Model" (Henceforth SLM) where he theorised that for both young learners and older ones, their production mechanisms of new sounds remain intact. Nevertheless, perception of these sounds changes

with development or growing up which; hence, creates a foreign accent. Older or adult learners' ability to distinguish new contrasts is reduced by age; because young learners; such as, children, do not possess the native language perceptual categories as solidly fixed in their phonological system as older learners do. That is, the younger a learner is, the greater their chance to perceive L2 sounds as smoothly as possible is without picking up any references to L1. It is worth mentioning that Flege's (1995) model (SLM) has aided various research studies in language production area as it "generates testable predictions and can be used to organize and interpret a wide range of empirical data" (as cited in Hansen & Zampini, 2008, p. 225).

In his model, he claims that there is no critical period after which L2 learners are incapable of acquiring an L2 sound system; because the same mechanisms used in L1 acquisition remain intact all throughout adulthood and their phonetic categories evolve through time with the acquisition of new languages. Flege identifies what really hinders L2 late learners from acquiring such phonetic characteristics is "equivalence classification" that prevents the sound establishment of L2 sound system (p. 225). That is to mean, late or adult learners encounter difficulties in properly retaining L2 sounds which may not be due to the CPH as assumed by several researchers and he attributes this to their inability to classify these sounds with their assigned L2 equivalents.

By contrast, Joel Magloire and Kerry P. Green (1999) explored SLM and identified shortcomings in this sort of analysis. For instance, in their study, they relented from informing their subjects of their study's details in order to preserve their monolingual mode that allowed one's language to be activated and no interference of the second was involved. Therefore, the results of L2 sound production by late and early learners were closely similar, but that does not necessarily mean that they will not differ in other aspects of sound production (p. 225).

Moreover, other research studies came to the common conclusion that even in the production of vowels, both spectral or durational characteristics by L2 learners or monolinguals; not only dissimilarities of phonemic features of sound in L1 and L2 affect native-like production of L2, even late/early acquisition; as well as the amount of exposure do. Providing examples of [i:] and [ɪ] in several languages; namely, English, German and Finnish, the obstacle of correct native-like pronunciation seems to take place. The same case of liquids' production [l] and [r], [r] in Japanese was forwarded and age difference played a major role in better acquisition of dissimilar L2 sound [ɹ] than the similar [l], but unfortunately no improvement over time (pp. 229-230).

With regard to producing English sounds through phonetic imitation or as generally called "Phonetic Convergence" or "Phonetic Accommodation", it refers to "The process of changing or adjusting one's speech upon exposure to the speech of others" (as cited in Magdalena Zajac, n.d., pp. 144-145), and it is still taking place in L2 pronunciation acquisition. This phenomenon gained more attention around the 1970s and after several studies; they tended to treat it as an "Automatic reflex of the human brain rather than a socially or psychologically motivated process (S. Brouwer; 2010, M. Kim; 2011, and K. Nielson; 2011; as cited in Zajac, n.d., pp. 144-145). Naturally, this quote overthrows any socio-psychological factors involved in the process of imitating native English sounds.

With regard to speech production and perception of English by non-native speakers, in his PhD thesis about the effect of L2 on Korean learners' L1 and how malleable L1 is, Charles Bond Chang (2010) introduced and explained such external factors that eventually exposed and remedied sound articulation and perception of English. Those factors come in the form of a conclusion from a variety of research studies that targeted behaviours in sound articulation that may alter speech somehow in relation to different situations.

First, change with attenuated feedback which is related to the Lombard Effect (Lombard, 1911; Harlan Lane and Bernard Tranel, 1971); whereby speakers raise their voices in a noisy environment when the auditory feedback from their speech is reduced and weakened by concealing noise. Second, adaptation to altered feedback, which is basically related to how speakers alter the production of their speech, such as prolongation of vowels, repetition of consonants and increased tensity of utterances (Yates, 1963) or what is referred to as delaying auditory feedback, in order to transmit their message. Third, accommodation to another talker- that is what acoustic research refers to as "foreigner talk" or "teacher talk" which depends on the type of context (Ferguson, 1975, 1981; Freed, 1981; Hatch, 1983; Chandron, 1983; and Long, 1983). Whereby the speaker simplifies their speech to an audience with an elementary or limited command over the foreign language (Ferguson; 1975) whose phonological features are slower speech rate, increased amplitude, less articulatory reduction, more frequent and longer pauses and an increased use of emphatic stress to facilitate communication with lower proficient speakers (pp. 10-23).

The usual solution which most of instructors employ when practising the pronunciation of sounds as isolated segments is the drilling of minimal pairs. The contrastive analysis has been used for generations and maybe never failed in aiding non-native speakers of English who struggle with distinguishing some sounds that may not exist in the sound system of their L1. Maria Grazia Busa (1995) illustrates this point by indicating how Italian

learners of English are unable to articulate English vowels counterparts as in words like "bead" and "bid" is due to their inability to distinguish the two vowels perceptually (p. 169).

As for EFL Arab learners, Murray J. Munro's (1993) study focused on the production of English vowels by adult Arabic learners. He examined how they produced ten English vowels and the results showed that even with a few years of L2 experience, those new vowels and others close to L1 were different. In accordance with the acoustic analysis of their pronunciation, their accent was the issue in which the vowels produced by the learners were shorter than equivalent vowels produced by native speakers and vowel length was held constant before voiced and voiceless consonants. As a consequence, non-native changes or traits in L2 production would be attributed to the characteristics of the Arabic vowel system (as cited in Georgette Ioup, 2008, p. 34).

In another research study on the effect of gender and age in the phonetic perception and production of English, Zohreh Kassaian (2011) concluded that in L2 learners' speech whether young or adult, male or female, there is no significant difference. By this, she is contradicting K. Stolten and O. Engstrand's (2002) findings that younger women are found to be less dialectal than men of the same age. Kassaian (2011) also throughout her investigation found out that good or adequate articulation of English sounds was not necessarily based on good perception, as her subjects succeeded in the production tests, yet did not do better in sounds' discrimination tests. Therefore, she joined her opinion to Molly Mack (1989) and A. Sheldon (1985) who attributed good pronunciation to social conditions rather than non-native perception (J. Listerri, 1995 and A. Caramazza, 1973; as cited in Kassaian, 2011, p. 374). The present research has included; thus, several social and cultural factors that may or may not influence the production of English by Algerian EFL students in the field work part.

Still regarding gender, in a study carried out by L. L. Namy, C. L. Nygaard & D. Sauerteig (2002), gender was investigated on the magnitude of phonetic imitation and findings showed that participants imitated male talkers more than female ones'. Second, female participants imitated more often than their counterparts did (p. 145). Dealing with pronunciation accuracy from gender perspective related to standard English, most research come to the same conclusion that women's pronunciation is better than men's, such as the case of the pronunciation of "ing" ending. R. W. Shuy (1969) made a study in this field and he found that 62,2% of men pronounced the "ing" in a wrong way and only 28,9% of women did not pronounce it right (as cited in Xia, 2013, p. 1485).

After investigating and analysing the speech of Norwich English and the specific pronunciation of some sounds, P. Trudgill (1972) speaks of gender differences in terms of the

standard language where it is concluded that female speakers pronounce certain sounds in a way closer to the standard language which is regarded a more prestigious way of speaking (Vandeputte, 2015, p. 22). In the sense that female's production occurs with less phonemic flaws and tends to be regarded as a higher level of prestige compared to that of the opposite sex. Trevor (n.d.) states that lots of research results show that women's pronunciation is closer to British pronunciation standard.

Concerning the sounds [t] and [r], they are pronounced more easily which indicates how female pronunciation of English is more correct and concise too, because they care more about their social appearance, status, and high expectations, unlike men whose pronunciation is relatively undisciplined and they are not quite eager to show their high pronunciation in this aspect (as cited in Dong Jinyu, 2014, p. 94). As women tend to give more importance to the speaking skill and correct pronunciation of foreign languages thinking that it can possibly affect how they sound to listeners, and how effective it is to their position in society. Whereas, men are relaxed with their free and unaffected pronunciation; because prestige for them does not include pronouncing accurately, women give more care to distinguishing [t] and [r] when speaking unlike men who care less whether to pronounce voiceless alveolar plosive [t] as tapped approximant [r].

Jeperson (1922); based on the examples illustrated in his work about gender differences in pronunciation, demonstrated a few empirical results, but only in French language and it was general. One thousand and seven hundred women were examined, and they tended to pronounce "e" instead of "a" implying that women do not use correct pronunciation and do not stick to the norms of phonetics, whereas in English, where rarely, in his opinion, there exist significant dissimilarities. He noted that, women pronounced the word "soft" with a short vowel while men pronounce it with a longer vowel. Therefore, the few phonetic differences between men and women he noted, they were only negligible in English, because men and women simply share the same language (as cited Vandeputte, 2016, p. 21).

Nonetheless, following this conclusion; in contemporary research; mainly William Labov (1972), Peter Trudgill (1975) and Kramer (1975), conducted investigations and found similar conclusions that women; by contrast to men, use fewer stigmatised forms, they are more sensitive to prestige patterns, and they use them more frequently. With the different views about who is more innovative and more traditional in their linguistic and phonetic abilities, more views are in favour of women emerge, and as mentioned previously with Gauchat (1905) featuring women to be imitators to the phonetic changes, he states that, "As always, women set off more easily on the path of diphthongization than to men". That is to

mean, women in any speech, if compared to men, tend to pronounce with clear diphthongisation and men may resort to a mixture in their native language French (as cited in Vandeputte, 2016, p. 67).

Gauchat also notes that children would pick up their mothers' pronunciation, because language is learned at home when men are outdoors. That is, female language varieties act as an influence on their children where the variable of age counts too (pp. 63-64). They also pronounce certain sounds in a way closer to the standard language. In the sense that female's pronunciation is pure of phonemic flaws and tends to be regarded as a higher level of prestige compared to that of the opposite sex.

A number of studies have consistently investigated sound perception and transmission with relation gender, and demonstrated that female speakers show higher frequency energy than male speakers (Peter Flipsen, LD Shriberg, Gary Weismer, JL McSweeny and HB Karlsson, 1999). Reasons for observed differences in acoustics across females and males have tended to refer to biological or anatomical differences between both sexes. Extending from the general expectation that females will have smaller vocal tracts than males do (Gunnar Fant, 1973). It is also expected that female speakers will have a shorter resonance cavity in front of the fricatives constriction than men, and that this will cause the resulting turbulent airflow to show energy at higher frequencies (as cited in Jane Stuart-Smith, Claire Timmins, and Alan Wrench, n.d., p. 01).

According to other authors, cross-gender acoustic variations can be attributed to anatomical differences that rise during puberty (Fant, 1966). For instance, vocal folds become longer and thicker for male speakers (Kahan, 1978) which cause a slow vibration compared to women utterances. Another issue is the length of the vocal apparatus or tract which is the distance between the vocal folds to the lips, then if the vocal tract is longer, the resonant frequencies will be lower (Fant, 1970). Therefore, the average length of an adult female vocal tract is about 14.5 cm, while for men it is 17 to 18 cm long (Adrian P. Simpson, 2009; as cited in Erwan Pépiot, 2013, p. 03).

II. 6. Sound Perception and Gender

Over the years, research in the acquisition of foreign language pronunciation has come along with various results that support one of the facts that if difficulty occurs in sounds production, this is probably attributed to imperfect perception. Sounds' perception is studied and scrutinised in the field of Auditory or Perceptual Phonetics which is the third branch of

the scientific study of human speech sounds. In this matter, Roach (2002) explains, "When the analysis of speech is carried out by the listener's ear, the analysis is said to be an auditory one, and when the listener's brain receives information from the ear, it is said to be receiving auditory information" (p. 08). This summarises the objective of auditory phonetics which covers research regarding how the human ear receives and perceives uttered sounds and how the brain processes them and distinguishes meaning. Thus, sound perception is a fundamental phase in speech process for meaning to be transmitted and received properly, for correct and clear articulation and for establishing a sound communication.

Winifred Strange and Valerie L. Shafer (2008) define perception as an internal mental and physiological process by which the perceiver recognises incoming stimulus events as instances of mental categories (p. 159). In other words, perception and contrast of phonetic segments must involve complex brain processing of sound to allow sound detection and discrimination of phonemes identity to properly take place. Moreover, in field research, individuals specialising in sounds perception are called raters, and they are professionally trained to recognise, identify and evaluate non-native speakers' utterances during research studies and pronunciation accuracy tests. Still, technological advances seem to overshadow and surpass traditional methods thus replacing raters by acoustic devices for exact measurements and rapid results.

In fact, the use of native raters who rate the amount of accentedness in L2 learners' speech cannot be discarded all together in favour of acoustic measurements. Georgette Ioup (2008) reminds us that accents can be compared acoustically in terms of various aspects; such as vowel quality and length, voice onset time, and single versus germinate consonant duration. Still, these cannot be considered as definite characteristics of having an accent as non-natives; because relevant phonetic properties can be easily pinned down or measured. Consequently, the human ear of native raters might be of advantage for perceiving non-measurable subtle dissimilarities that discern one accent from another (p. 55).

Various findings of investigations (Peter D. Eimas; 1971, R. E. Lasky; 1975, Skeeter; 1976, P. W. Jusczyk; 1997, and Janet F. Werker & Richard C. Tees; 1999) about early-learners of L2 have come to similarly conclude that very young infants seem to be language-general perceivers. That is, they are capable of discriminating voicing and place of articulation contrasts in consonants which do not exist in the surrounding language, or that are actually present but constitute allophonic variants of a single phonological category. Nevertheless, such perceptual abilities are prone to rapid changes, which occur due to exposure to the distributional properties of their native language throughout growing up. In

other words, their discrimination ability of non-native consonant contrasts becomes relatively poor (as cited in Strange and Shafer, 2008, p. 156).

In a Canadian experiment in 1998, students' speech communication skills were assessed and results showed that there were several gender differences among the participants' listening skill (Darryl Hunter, Trevor Gambel, and Bikkar Randhawa; 2005) and what concerns the oral production of males, it was consistently below that of females. Yet, according to their studies results, Koosha et al. (2011) found no statistically significant difference between both genders in the speaking skill and this was attributed to the fact that both male and female learners were exposed to the same material and courses by the same teacher (pp. 1330-1335). Therefore, there was no significant difference to be found if EFL speakers are exposed to the same native accent and procedures. Similarly, according to D. Tannen (1995),

> Communication isn't as simple as saying what you mean. How you say what you mean is crucial and differs from one person to the next. Because using language is a learned behavior, how we talk and listen is deeply influenced by cultural experience. (as cited in Reda Baranauskiené and Vilija Adminiené, n.d., p. 113)

That is to mean, one's surroundings influence the way women and men speak and listen, how they utter language sounds to transmit the intended message, and how this message is received by the listener. What needs be more thoroughly explored is not the physiological dissimilarities between genders, but rather the socio-cultural factors. In addition, cross-gender acoustic observations and research explain why male's vocal cords tend to vibrate more slowly than those of women which happens to be related to the fact men's vocal cords become longer and thicker during puberty (Kahan, 1978, as cited in Erwan Pépiot, 2013, p. 03).

It is worth mentioning that this research in particular does not investigate acoustic properties thoroughly due to the limited knowledge in such a branch, and the fact that only sound production/perception are involved. Therefore, acoustic analysis of sounds is only included to investigate stress placement, intonation and accent.

II. 7. Pronunciation Learning Strategies and Gender

In the field of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, instructors have witnessed then adapted to the shift from teacher-centred approach domination into student-centred one through the integration of Language Strategies in the learning process by both parties. In order to retain the input properly, learners are required to assist their learning with strategies; such as input/practice strategy and obtain satisfactory results on both behalves. In order to avoid leaving learners as rigid and passive depositories that are spoon-fed without recovering any feedback because there is no interaction to test their comprehension; researchers are investing so much time into investigating how and what learners employ as strategies that allow them to succeed in learning foreign languages (Gregana Vitnova and Ann Miller, 2002; Phothong Sunan, 2006; and Wen-ta Tseng, 2005; as cited in Patchara Varasarin, 2007, p. 32).

The most influential work in the correlation between CLT and Language Learning Strategies (Henceforth LLS) is that of Rebecca Oxford (1990) who describes strategies as, "Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferrable to new situations" (as cited in Grant Taylor Eckstein, 2008, pp. 08-09). Thus, the definition is a way to explain how learning strategies are personal tools for learners to deconstruct and facilitate the process of instructions and make the latter less complicated, less time-consuming, less-distressing, less general, and more helpful on various occasions. So, these strategies will aid learners improve their communicative competencies and their autonomy. Yet, several researchers interested in the same field cannot agree if learning strategies are cognitive or behavioural or a combination of both.

In this respect, learning strategies are defined by Anita L. Wenden and Joan Rubin (1987) as "Any set of operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learners to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information". By Anna Uhl Chamot (2004), they are "The conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal" (as cited in Mahmud Mohammed, 2014, p. 51). That is, researchers agree that learning strategies are a kind of an action plan or tactic used by learners continuously to assist or improve their language learning process, joining Oxford's (1990) previous opinion and definition.

Therefore, various strategies are being adopted by learners in the course of learning pronunciation; mainly, segmental phonetics- and phonology-related. For instance, Ting Fang and Chih Chang Lin's (2012) study focused on investigating Taiwanese EFL learners'

pronunciation strategies and identified some other strategies adopted by them as well. To illustrate, if misunderstood in communication, they would employ paraphrase, self-repetition, writing/spelling, volume adjustment, speaking clearly, and slowing speech rate (Derwing and Rossiter, 2002). Whereas, Osburne (2003) identified some pronunciation strategies used by advanced learners; for instance, global articulatory gesture, local articulatory or sing sound, individual syllables, clusters below the syllable level, prosodic structure, individual words, paralanguage, memory or imitation. Yet, the major ones frequently used are imitation and paralanguage and other strategies involving syllable structure, intonation, stress or rhythm are seldom used (p. 889).

There is a variety of strategies in pronunciation learning that can be employed by FL learners in order to acquire and retain information successfully. In her investigation, Narmeen Mahmud Mohammed (2014) scrutinised the extent of using pronunciation learning strategies by fourth year college students. She included four categories of Kolb's "Learning Cycle Construct" which are,

- Input/Practice; where students go through pronunciation instruction and they practice producing them in isolation or in connected speech.
- Noticing/Feedback, which refers to how students pay attention to pronunciation rules and patterns, and how they comprehend the speakers' utterances.
- Hypothesis Forming, which refers to how learners cognitively relate actual pronunciation to target pronunciation in the form of feedback or observation.
- Hypothesis Testing means implementing some alterations in one's speech to attain successful communication.

Accordingly, results showed that the majority of students preferred implementing the first and second strategies. That is, they learn better when practising the acquired input or when instructions are put into action. Additionally, the chance to notice rules and peer feedback that aid them in retaining information. Such strategies could be asking for help, practising new words, listening to the speaker and repeating internally, noticing speaker's mistakes, they guess the pronunciation of new words, identifying difficult and unfamiliar sounds, correcting one-self and using media tools to learn the right pronunciation to name a few (pp. 55-56).

Following the same line of thought, ELT researchers combined and classified such strategies in accordance with Kolb's Learning Cycle Construct[3], Pronunciation

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[3] Kolb's Learning Cycle Construct (1984) is basically a model that explains the learner's cycle of learning that goes around four stages.

Acquisition Construct and Pronunciation Learning Strategies as illustrated in the following table,

Table 5. Connection between Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct, Second Language Acquisition, and Pronunciation Learning Strategies (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 35)

Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct	Pronunciation Acquisition Construct	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
Concrete Experience	Input/Practice	**Input** * Intent listening * Focusing on articulatory gestures of others * Active listening * Eagerly listening to new sounds * Putting self in proximal points for hearing L2 pronunciation; TV, movies, radio, etc. * Representing sounds in memory * Focusing on individual syllables of words **Practice** * Reading aloud * Practicing new words * imitating and/or mimicry of native speakers * Practicing "mock talk" or imitating L2 prosody using L1 words * Talking aloud/Role-play * Memorising the pronunciation of words * Helping facial muscles become accustomed to accommodating L2 pronunciation * Practicing different sounds, first in isolation and then in the context of words * Repeating after tapes in a language laboratory
Reflecting on Observation	Noticing/Feedback	**Noticing** * Noticing the intricate differences between L1 and L2 pronunciation

		* Focusing on supra-segmentals of language
		* Intent listening
		* distinguishing errors among other speakers
		* focusing on articulatory gestures of others
		* Listening carefully to errors made by native speakers to infer key sounds or structures
		* acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics
		Feedback
		* Self-monitoring
		* Focusing on supra-segmentals of own speech
		* Using phonetic symbols and transcriptions
		* Monitoring and eliminating negative interference
		* Active listening
		* Asking for help
		* Cooperating with peers
Abstract Conceptualisation	Hypothesis Forming	**Hypothesis Forming**
		* Monitoring and eliminating negative interference
		* Self-correcting
		* Acquiring a general knowledge of Phonetics
		* Doing special exercises for sounds not existing in the learner's native language
		* Finding out about the target language pronunciation
Action Based on New Conceptualisation	Hypothesis Testing	**Hypothesis Testing**
		* Repeating new words according to new hypotheses
		* Skipping difficult words
		* Rehearsing words
		* Using proximal articulations
		* Increasing or decreasing volume of speech
		* Using a slower rate of speech

| | | * Using Clear speech |
| | | * Lowering anxiety |

Strategies listed above are known as part of the Pronunciation Acquisition Construct which is the main approach or theory to learning pronunciation and it consists of the four strategies explained earlier. After several attempts by researchers and practitioners in the field to come up with a unified classification of the various collected strategies started to fall back, such as, Oxford's (1990) Taxonomy, researchers realised that the closest to being successful in pronunciation acquisition is Kolb's (1984) theory of learning or Kolb's Learning Cycle Construct in which he explained the process of learning a language which concentrated on four progressive aspects of learning.

Firstly, "Concrete Experience" is the initial step in learning process when learners receive information, such as pronunciation of a new word. Secondly, the learner moves to a "reflection on Observation" as they realise how sounds like vowels differ from consonants. Thirdly, "Abstract Conceptualisation" that is built on the previous reflection. For instance, the learner is about to analogise the articulation of the vowel they heard before to all the other words with the same vowel sound or spelling. Fourthly, "Action Based on New Conceptualisation" which refers to how, for example, learners act on the previous assumption and is tested in a conversation; so, it either causes listeners to be puzzled by his pronunciation or continuity of their communication. In either case, the learner eventually takes the reaction of the others or their corrections as a source of concrete experience which allows the cycle of the construct to begin all over again (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 30-31).

Additionally, several researchers, precisely Zoltan Dornyei and Peter Skehan (2003) analysed Kolb's LCC and came to the conclusion that its objectives and principles matched the Construct of Pronunciation Acquisition as illustrated above. As a result, to explain the connection, they declared that, "Input can be considered any stimulus whereby learners encounter sounds, such as the radio, conversations, or visual diagrams of phonemes. Practice is the act of producing sounds; either in isolation or in communicative contexts" (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 32). In other words, what the learner receives, processes and produces as part of "input/practice" combination allows them to get concrete experience with pronunciation of sounds. Furthermore, noticing is "The attenuation of both- intentionally and unintentionally to- pronunciation rules and patterns. Pronunciation feedback is a function of an interlocutor's ability to understand and recognise the pronunciation of the speaker" (p. 32).

These two aspects, pronunciation rules and patterns, cover the process of a learner's ability to divert the acquired information into a comprehensible manner for them. Then, they provide the output of what has been absorbed before the input. These two stages are connected and correspond to Kolb's "Reflection on Observation" element. The next stage is "Hypothesis Forming" which refers to "The mental process that attempts to bridge the gap between actual pronunciation and target pronunciation based on feedback from others or learner-noticed discrepancies" (p. 33). That is, "Hypothesis Forming" is related to "Abstract Conceptualisation", as it explains how the language learner begins forming their own assumptions during conversations or class in order to get the right pronunciation eventually.

Finally, "Hypothesis Testing", "includes implementing changes in pronunciation according to new hypotheses" (p. 33), which is related to action based on new conceptualisation; because learners throughout the learning process undergo attempts of pronouncing a vowel in different ways in order to get the right pronunciation. Thus, Kolb's Construct is considered a theoretical foundation for the categorisation of strategies, because it encompasses all elements that construct the pronunciation acquisition processor theory and provides a wider view of it.

By the end of his study, Eckstein's (2007) findings show that EFL learners with high pronunciation scores use strategies from all four categories, such as noticing others' mistakes, adjusting facial muscles and soliciting pronunciation help; whereas, participants with lower scores used speaking louder and silent repetition strategies. Moreover, participants who used various strategies more frequently had higher spontaneous pronunciation skill. His study showed that the correlation between Kolb's categorisation of Pronunciation Learning Strategies and Pronunciation Acquisition Theory is plausible (p. 87). Yet, no gender-related results were included in Eckstein's research; because it was not an important variable to include for investigation.

Various research has recently been directed towards the awareness of pronunciation learning strategies, and their results are advocating that EFL teachers must raise awareness of and consciousness about the acquisition of correct pronunciation through learning strategies. Therefore, these strategies introduced by the teacher will not only involve learners in a healthy communicative environment; but will also motivate them to be susceptible to pronunciation learning of the natives and their culture.

The most well-known LLS are the ones suggested by Oxford's (1990) classification. Hence, Oxford divides these strategies into two classes and then further into six groups which are explained as follows,

- MEMORY (e.g. using keywords)
- COGNITIVE (e.g. recognising and using formulas)
- COMPENSATION (e.g. avoiding using unknown words, mimes and gestures)
- META-COGNITIVE (e.g. focusing on and organising specific sounds)
- AFFECTIVE (e.g. rewarding yourself)
- SOCIAL/COOPERATION (e.g. asking for correction)

In his study, to identify the most and least popular strategies used by Turkish college students, Tugce Akyol (2013) found that the most popular ones fell into the category of memory, such as making up songs or rhymes to remember how to pronounce words associating English pronunciation with Turkish pronunciation. Cognitive ones, such as recording one's voice to hear one's pronunciation, and noticing contrasts between Turkish and English pronunciation, as well as meta-cognitive, such as choosing to memorise rather than read and present. Whereas, the least popular strategies were also memory-related, which included using phonetic symbols or their own codes to remember how to pronounce words; in addition to, cognitive-related strategies, such as repeating aloud after a teacher or a native speaker, or trying to imitate their teacher's mouth movement.

Next comes compensation strategies, such as checking phonetic symbols of the words from a dictionary for correct pronunciation when there is difficulty in pronunciation, and meta-cognitive, such as trying to learn something about Phonetics (p. 1460). Apparently, most of strategies which learners relate to are less phonetic and more aural. They rarely use symbols and codes or dictionaries, but rather memorise what they hear through rhyming or voice-recordings which is becoming more frequent with technological tools nowadays.

Moreover, some research studies that investigated the most popular pronunciation learning strategies came with the result that most of EFL learners pertain their pronunciation learning to the cognitive class strategies, such as practising naturalistically, and formally practising with sounds. Whereas, strategies based on memory, compensation and affective classes were the least popular among learners (Peterson, 2000). Moreover, paraphrasing (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002) was stated as a popular strategy. In Turkey, however, Gulçin Berkil's (2008) study on the same issue concentrated on other variables, including gender and the results showed that female learners used numerous strategies in learning pronunciation more than male learners. Berkyl suggested how the use of all kinds of pronunciation learning strategies would work effectively on learners' second language pronunciation ability (as cited in Akyol, 2013, pp. 1457-1458).

The adoption of LLS by EFL/ESL instructors is a recent action twinned with pronunciation learning. Despite the fact that most EFL learners are not aware of academic strategies that are suitable with their learning styles, they probably adopt strategies, in a subconscious manner, which aid them in acquiring pronunciation easily and properly. Therefore, this calls for more research to determine how learners implement such strategies, how they do it and what kind of strategies they rely on while learning pronunciation (Peterson, 2000; as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 01).

Table 6. Pronunciation Learning Strategies in Academic Articles (as cited in Eckstein, 2007, p. 23)

Author	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
Peterson (2000)	Representing sounds in memory
	Practicing naturalistically
	Formal practice with sounds
	Analysing the sound system
	Using proximal articulations
	Finding out about the target language pronunciation
	Setting goals and objectives
	Planning for a language task
	Self-evaluation
	Using humour to lower anxiety
	Asking for help
	Cooperating with peers
Vitnova and Miller (2002)	Self-correction of poor pronunciation
	Active listening to native pronunciation
Derwing and Rossiter (2002)	Self-repetition
	Paraphrasing
	Increasing or decreasing volume
	Writing and/or spelling difficult words
	Calming down
	Using pantomime
	Avoiding difficult sounds
	Appealing for assistance from native speakers

	Using clear speech
	Monitoring articulatory gestures
Osburne (2003)	Focusing on sounds below the syllable-level
	Focusing on individual syllables
	Focusing on prosodic structures
	Monitoring global articulatory gestures
	Focusing on paralanguage
	Focusing on individual words
	Focusing on memory or imitation

Pronunciation learning strategies listed on the table above were the fruit of collected effort of four studies which identified strategies used by participants to improve their learning process. When consulting pronunciation teaching books, Grant Taylor Eckstein (2007) summarises additional learning strategies in the field of pronunciation; for instance, imitation and mimicry activities (imitating foreign accents), noticing and emphasising supra-segmental structures, motivational strategies like association with native speakers, memorisation of words' pronunciations, positive interference with the L1 Phonology to compare sound systems, intent listening, and repetition or drilling of new words (Erik Gethin and Amorey Gunnemark, 1996; Rodney H. Jones, 1997; Vitnova and Miller, 2002; Joe Pater, 1997; Martha Young-Scholten, 1993; Gerald G. Neufeld, 1979; and Rebecca Oxford, 1990). More strategies are listed as follows,

- The use of phonetic symbols, transcriptions and mimicry of L2 prosody (N. Naiman, 1979; E. Gethin and A. Gunnemark, 1996).
- Reading aloud, repeating silently, talking aloud, and role-play, doing special exercises different from L1, practising different sounds in isolation and then in context of words, paying attention to sound rather than spelling, and avoiding self-consciousness (Naiman, 1979).
- Avoiding laziness of pronunciation when speaking, eagerly listening to and practising new sounds, being determined to get pronunciation right and positioning oneself in proximal points for hearing L2 pronunciation, Television (Henceforth TV), movies and radio (Gethin and Gunnemark, 1996).
- Monitoring and eliminating negative interferences, distinguishing errors in others' speech, self-monitoring and practice, finding out more about the target language

pronunciation, focusing on articulatory gestures of others, skipping difficult words, self-correction and pre-rehearsing of sound (Manfred Prokop, 1989, p. 26).

This is only a selection of pronunciation learning strategies collected by Eckstein (2007) in his thesis from pedagogy books and workbooks which come very useful in raising students' awareness about how important implementing strategies in their classes and speech can be for pronunciation improvement. Furthermore, Carroll (1971) considers "phonetic Coding" as a significant strategy to employ and adopt for more successful pronunciation learning and is defined as,

> The ability to identify and store in long-term memory new language sounds or strings of sounds. It is necessary because the individual must not only know the identities of the new phonemes of that language, but must also recognise and remember the phonetic sequence represented by the morphemes, words and intonation contour of a given language
>
> (as cited in Brett Reynolds, n.d.[4])

In other words, EFL learners obtain successful retention of pronunciation through developing adequate strategies of learning that facilitate the process, by not only memorising and producing segments in drills or daily speech, but also widening their cognitive scope and comprehending the nature of these segments as syllables, consonant clusters, affixes, and also stressed syllables. As learning correct pronunciations requires more than just drilling sounds and words. A variety of these strategies is selected to be used in the questionnaire section of PLSs used by EFL students addressed to the present study's participants. Selected strategies are to be used for the present study's field work which will be included in the participating students' worksheets and objectives are also explained in detail in chapter four.

With relation to gender, still the use of PLSs requires more research and empirical evidence to demonstrate how male and female learners attempt to choose and employ strategies for accurate pronunciation acquisition, if one gender employs more strategies than the other, and if using such strategies deem one gender superior than the other in articulation and pronunciation accuracy of the target language. In a study carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the researcher came to the conclusion that female and male learners employ distinctive and different techniques in FLL. For instance, boys believe that mistakes during the language learning process will disappear by the application of guessing techniques and regular practice. By contrast, girls apply repetition and memorisation techniques; as they

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[4] https://www.tuj.ac.jp/tesol/publications/working-papers/vol-14/reynolds.html

also prefer practising English in language laboratories; because they consider the positive influence of technology in learning the target language. For boys, it is preferable to learn the foreign language through a set of interactive activities and active involvement in everyday meaningful situations (Daif-Allah, 2012, p. 30).

II. 8. Acquired Socio-phonetic Features and Linguistic Preferences

The present element comprises a list of selected socio-phonetic features possibly acquired by EFL students throughout learning English. Whether for a great exposure to the target language or linguistic preferences, these features to be displayed and explained are both phonetic and phonological, and they can be related to gender with documented information and results from previous research investigations if possible. It is noteworthy to mention that most linguistic and phonetic variations have been exposed and scrutinised even from a gender perspective; yet, researchers demand to attempt further analysing these variations, phonetic features and linguistic forms the way either gender prefers using them rather than how exclusive these differences are to them. According to Bradley (1988), "Linguistic variation associated with gender found today involves gender preferential rather than gender-exclusive differences" (as cited in Hariri, 2012, p. 4862). The following features are to be incorporated in the present study's field work in order to expose, identify and discern each gender's linguistic performance and preference.

II. 8. 1. Standard and Non-standard Forms

EFL learners tend to grasp non-standard form more frequently than the standard one which is common in their use; because of the influence of slang use on TV through movies, series and programmes. Among which there are the following examples of reduced forms: ain't, gonna, hafta, and wanna. The latter forms are used in both accents (RP and GA) and varieties to function as informal forms of "going to", "have to" and "want to", whereas, "ain't" is the present tense negative form used with all persons of the verb in three different constructions; with the auxiliary be, auxiliary have and copula (linking verb) be. For example, she ain't coming today, I ain't been to Tokyo before, he ain't satisfied with the gift, respectively. So, according to the study conducted by Jenny Cheshire (1982) in the British town of Reading, in order to examine the sociolinguistic variations in spontaneous speech by teenagers, the frequency of "ain't" was notably higher for the boys compared to the girls.

These findings reflected the results of her previously done experiment in 1981, as well as Stenstrom's (1997) where still females used less of "ain't" (as cited in Ida Wilson, 2012, pp. 03-04).

Broadly speaking, reduced forms of English are common words frequently used by native and non-native speakers of English in an informal context, and which are not allowed to be used in academic writing and formal speech, because of their colloquial function and impression. They are more frequently used in connected speech, such as gonna, wanna, hafta, hasta, cuz, donno, couldya, wouldya, gimme, lemme, kinda, lottsa, ya, Whaddaya, Whatcha, gotcha, c'mon, and some of them are associated in pronunciation with flapping [t], such as gotta, mighta, oughtta, shoulda, coulda, woulda, lotta, and sorta to name a few.

Moreover, these forms come to use when unstressed syllables in function words are contracted, deleted, assimilated or reduced to merge with other function or content words of a sentence. Based on some studies conducted on such non-standard expressions, men are expected to use more reduced slang forms in their speech than women. In her analysis of the British National Corpus, Eva Berglund (1999) came to realise that men use the contraction "gonna" more commonly than women do (as cited in Ida Wilson, 2012, p. 04). Furthermore, Wilson's study results are similar to the previously mentioned studies where gender variation was analysed through movies, and how boys use non-standard speech forms more than girls and it is more apparent throughout growing up.

In her article, Adelaide Haas (1979) mentions how accumulated observations and research studies come to demonstrate gender differences with regard to language (L1) in four aspects: form, topic, content, and use which are categorised and suggested by the former's superior Lois Bloom (1978). When referring to the first aspect form, she means the form of utterances in their acoustic and phonetic shape, units of sounds or phonology, units of meaning like words and inflections or morphology more precisely, and syntax where units of meaning are combined (p. 616). Yet, what is more relevant to the present study is the part concerned with units of sounds. Therefore, according to W. M. Austin (1965), women tend to utter high, oral and giggly sounds; whereas, men produce low and nasal sounds (p. 617).

Furthermore, many writers; such as W. Labov (1966), L. Levine & H. Crockett (1966), and P. Trudgill (1972) have formed speculations about the use of slang expressions more frequently by men than women; because it is their domain. Additionally, Kayla Conklin (2013) noticed that women's vernacular language needs to be examined further. Among the few empirical phonological studies of "in" versus "ing" endings or "G-dropping" (John L. Fischer, 1958), "uh" versus "er" endings (Levine and Crockett, 1966; W. A. Wolfram, 1966),

and "f", "t", and "th" usage (Wolfram, 1969) displayed a wider use of standard forms by black females than black males (p. 618).

Among several linguists; who examined differences in language use at the phonetic level and referred to the existence of phonetic differences, Alexander Chamberlain (1912) and Paul Hanly Furfey (1944) pinpoint certain phonetic dissimilarities in a Siberian region and in Brazil where men drop intervocalic sounds /k/, /n/, and /t/; but women do not. In addition, F. Anshen (1969) notes that women, black population Hillsboro, in North Carolina, use fewer stigmatised forms and prefer using prestigious ones (as cited in Vandeputte, 2016, pp. 22-26).

II. 8. 2. Phonetic Transcription

Transcription of language sounds has a long history and it dates back to the seventeenth century. Linguistically, it refers to the process of recording the phonological or morphological elements of a language in terms of specific writing systems. That is, transcribed segments come in a different set and have different shapes which are created for the purpose of simplifying non-phonetic languages and spreading literacy. Such symbols were devised and classified by European and English Phoneticians who created the International Phonetic Association (Henceforth IPA) in 1886 led by Henry Sweet and called the chart containing sound system or phonetic notation "The International Phonetic Alphabet" (Henceforth IPA) in 1888 and which was last revised in 2020. English, for instance, is a non-phonetic language known for its complex grapheme-phoneme relationship, which means that its orthography does not reflect exact pronunciation and vice versa. Therefore, a phonetic coding system was created to transcribe such languages and make their pronunciations accessible.

Accordingly, transcription is defined by Peter Roach (2002) as, "the writing down of a spoken utterance using a suitable set of symbols. In its original meaning, the word transcription implied converting from one representation (e.g. written text) into another (e.g. phonetic symbols)" (p. 82). Roach also introduces two types of transcription,

> The most fundamental division that can be made is between phonemic and phonetic transcription. In the case of the former, the only symbols that may be used are those which represent one of the phonemes of the language, and extra symbols are excluded. In a phonetic transcription, the transcriber may use the full range of phonetic symbols if these are required. (p. 82)

Moreover, Roach refers to the latter as "narrow phonetic transcription" which carries and demonstrates several details about the quality of sounds and specificities in other variations between square brackets. As for the former, "broad phonetic transcription" gives a limited amount of phonetic information and less detailed transcription bordered by two slashes.

In his paper, Anthony Atkielski (2005) discusses how the written form of English is "only a representation" of the spoken language; yet, phonetic transcription by contrast, is "An exact representation without any ambiguity, redundancy, or omission" (as cited in Rajab, 2003, p. 654). In addition, teaching the IPA notation symbols is deemed easy for teachers who can save time and facilitate teaching other matters and notions related to spoken English. Therefore, there is no denying that phonetic notation is a traditional method to teach EFL learners basic English sounds in order and understand the complexity of the orthographic system and its relationship with the system of sounds that has proved itself resistant to time or marginalisation in ELT phonetics' classes; because it keeps beating the odds against its ineffectiveness to teach proper sounds' pronunciation and realisation and the ability to reproduce native speakers' speech.

Accordingly, Pennington (1996) trusts that the manifestations of speech sounds through graphic representations -phonetic codes and symbols- are resourceful to the enhancement of L2 learner's pronunciation production quality. Nonetheless, the teaching of phonetic notation may obtain satisfactory results only if taught favourably, as it can motivate learners to carry on their phonetic training. Integrating pronunciation aspects in class including transcription would enhance the chance of likeability of the so-called cumbersome symbols by the learners and of acquiring the desired results by both EFL instructors and learners.

In his study on the improvement of Arabic students' writing and speaking of English through the use of IPA codes, the results show that the majority of participants had little knowledge on phonetic transcription and codes, and had doubt with regard to the usefulness of such notation. However, by the end of the study, their stance changed and they realised the benefits of learning them; particularly when consulting dictionaries for proper pronunciation of recently-attained vocabulary (Rajab, 2003, p. 657).

II. 8. 3. Vowels' Reduction

This phonological feature refers to reducing some long vowels into their shorter versions or to schwa in most cases in order to un-stress a syllable and make it shorter in connected speech. Vowels' reduction is also referred to as the use of weak forms of structure words instead of strong dictionary forms. For example, strong isolated forms of "can" [kæn] and "was" [wɔːz] in connected speech tend to take the weaker forms [kən] and [wəz] respectively. Furthermore, Dani Byrd (1992) discusses vowel's reduction which is known to be affected by speech rate. Her experiment shows that men who speak faster tend to reduce their vowels to schwa more often than women who, on the other hand, may resort to another manner of vowels reduction (as cited in Jahandar et al., 2012, p. 02).

As for more gender differences with regard to this phenomenon, S. P. Whiteside's (1995-1996) experiments show that women articulate full consonant clusters, because they produce slow rates of syllables per second. Similarly, Adrian P. Simpson and Christine Ericsdotter (2003) conclude that male speakers tend to elide and reduce both vowels and consonants which leads to shorter sentences compared to females who tend to produce full speech segments in order to pronounce more clearly (p. 02). As well as Caroline Henton's (1995) view about how women produce more open-mouthed variants of vowels than men do, and their speech is more phonetically explicit to sound distinctively prestigious (as cited in Jahandar et al., 2012, p. 02).

II. 8. 4. T-glottaling

A "Glottal Variation in [t]" or "T-glottaling" is a distinctive aspect in mainly RP or some other British accents that goes by several names, such as, glottalisation; yet, the latter refers to "The general concept of there being some kind of variability between different realisations of [t]", and the former will be used to refer to "the substitution of a glottal stop for [t]" (as cited in Rob Drummond, 2011, para. 10). That is, glottal variation in [t] encompasses various physical realisations of the voiceless alveolar plosive [t]; such as, not only the case of [glottal stop] replacement, but also aspirated [tʰ], non-aspirated [t], silent [*t*], flap [ṭ] or even applosive [t⁻].

As research has already generalised that women favour prestigious linguistic forms for their speech, studies carried out in Cardiff (I. M. Mees, 1987; I. M. Mees and B. Collins, 1999), Newcastle (J. Milroy, 1994) and New Zealand (Janet Holmes, 1997) among others

demonstrated that middle-class women are acting as leaders in the spread of the glottal variant that could not possibly be called prestigious in the above-given contexts. Therefore, Milroy (1994) emphasises the idea that women did not favour prestige variants, but in actuality they created them. Similarly, J. Holmes and N. Woods (1997) divert attention to research that reveals how women tend to shift their language style to a great extent. This is related, according to them, to the great level of interaction women display in society, and they accommodate their speech styles to others' (as cited in Rob Drummond, 2011, para. 11-12).

Analysing glottalisation features in Cardiff English of pre-consonantal and pre-pausal [t], Mees & Collins (1999) found out that while in the other British regions, the glottal pronunciation is considered locally as prestigious (as cited in Foulkes et al., n.d., p. 708), and female speakers tend to produce it more than male speakers do.

II. 8. 5. Assimilation

Assimilation may not be a feature thoroughly highlighted in EFL classrooms, but it is an essential feature in speech or accent that sounds native-like. It is more apparent in connected speech where some sounds overlap and a slight change in their pronunciation occurs because one sound influences an adjacent one. Hence, assimilation is described by Jones (1960) as, "The process of replacing a sound by another sound under the influence of a third which is near to it in the word or sentence". For Roach (2002); however, it is problematic to consider assimilation the combination of one influencing sound and another sound being the victim of the influence. He rather considers it as sounds influencing each other mutually.

He defines assimilation and explains it as,

> What happens to a sound when it is influenced by one of its neighbours; For example, the word 'this' has the sound /s/ at the end if it is pronounced on its own, but when followed by /ʃ/ in a word such as 'shop' it often changes in rapid speech to /ʃ/, giving the pronunciation /ðɪʃʃɒp/ (p. 07).

He adds more examples, such as "football" /ˈfʊpbɔːl/ and "fruit-cake" /ˈfruːkkeɪk/ and calls this kind of assimilation as "Regressive" where the change takes place when a sound influences a following sound on one hand. "Progressive Assimilation" on the other hand refers to the change that occurs when a sound influences the one that precedes it; for instance,

final "s" in dogs /dɒgz/ and cats /kæts/. Assimilation is a factor that makes EFL student's accent sound closer to native speakers' or not; because it is a natural manner in native speakers' speech.

II. 8. 6. Linking and Rhoticity

Unlike the intrusive [r] in English; which is considered a stigmatised phonological phenomenon in connected speech; for a natural flow of words, linking word boundaries together ensures proper English enunciation and musicality. "Linking [r]" or "[r]-liaison" takes place when a word ends with rhotic [r] which is pronounced in GA; but is not in RP only when followed by a vowel; for example, "power up" [pauə'rʌp]. In non-rhotic accents like RP, letter "r" is always silent except when it is pre-vocalic (in initial position) or when followed by a vowel in an inter-vocalic or post-vocalic position (in the centre or at the end of a word). If the word "power" is pronounced in isolation by an RP speaker, letter "r" is not pronounced as in all post-vocalic positions.

According to Pilar Mompéan Guillamon (n.d.), various research studies have investigated factors that cause the usage of [r]-liaison, such as sociolinguistic, phonetic, cognitive and linguistic factors (Hay & Sudbury, 2005) and other documented variability of its use (Daniel Jones, 1956; Lewis, 1975; Alfred Charles Gimson, 1980; J.C. Wells, 1982; Laurie Bauer, 1984; D. Watt & L. Milroy, 1999 and Jennifer Hay & Paul Warren, 2002); still with few empirical investigations (p. 952). Therefore, in his research investigating the frequency of using linking [r] between male and female BBC newsreaders from 2004 to 2005 archived texts, his findings show that both male and female RP speakers use the linking [r] equally (955). Rhoticity has been thoroughly explained previously in the element dealing with model accents.

II. 8. 7. Yod-dropping

With the changes all throughout the history of English language evolution, English has been undergoing changes that encompassed various aspects of it, be them phonemic, syntactic or lexical. Such changes may not be endorsed or adapted immediately into accents; because researchers found out that any transformation affect speech and meaning, as the case of palatalised [j] known as the Yod. Nevertheless, presently the added [j] sound between consonants and close back long vowel [u:] is being either elided or palatalised, that is

removed completely or turned into a palato-alveolar sound respectively as illustrated in the table below.

Table 7. Patterns of the Yod Transformation by Order (as cited in Olivier Glain, 2012, p. 04)

01	[j]→Ø / /Palatal, r, C+l / ----- [u:]
02	[j]→ Ø / /Palatal, t, d, n, s, z, r, l/ ------ [u:]
03	[j]→ Ø / C ----- [u:]
04	[s→sh] -------- [ju:]

This table demonstrates the patterns of phonetic environments in which the Yod existed previously and started to fade away. The yod pattern was first established between consonants followed by [u:] as the first pattern on the table reads. The elision of the yod preceded by consonants created homophones; such as "through and threw" or "brewed and brood" and only very few regional accents still hold the yod in such words in their pronunciation. So, historically speaking, phenomenon of the yod is referred to as "Yod Dropping", "Yod Elision", "Yod Coalescence", or "Yod Palatalisation". The disappearance of the yod in words is predicted to happen just like its rapid appearance in the early seventeenth century thanks to the falling diphthong [iu:] (Wells, 1982). Thus, words like rude, crew, blue and juice were initially pronounced [rju:d], [krju:], [blju:] and [dʒju:s] respectively. However, yod-dropping began to take place gradually starting by the first pattern.

From the Early-yod Dropping before palato-alveolar consonants there came the Later-yod Dropping by the American innovation, where the yod was elided when preceded by coronal consonants in words like "student", "news", "numerous", "presume" and "enthusiasm". Nonetheless, the yod is kept after labials, velars and after [f] and [v] (Wells, 1982 and Alan Cruttenden, 2008). For example, in "beauty", "cute", "music", "feud", "vacuum", etc., and the second pattern illustrated on the table has already begun to spread among English accents as well (as cited in Glain, 2012, pp. 05-06).

Speaking of RP, there is a variation in the pronunciation of various words, such as "absolutely", "revolution", "pursuit", "super-market", "suitable" and "consume" where both [u:] and [ju:] are heard, but the former is growing more frequently-used and more common after [l] and [s] in stressed syllables, while [ju:] is maintained after [θ – z] (Cruttenden, 2008). Yet, the third pattern on the table exists mainly in East Anglia which is a region famous for its

"generalised-yod Dropping". That is, in this region, they elide the yod pronunciation in almost all words that contain a consonant before [u:]; even in words like "cube" and "music".

According to Wells (1997), the phenomenon of "Coalescence" took place a long time ago, and he explains its evolution in three stages,

- Firstly, "English has long had a tendency to convert [tj] into [tʃ] and [dj] into [dʒ]" for example nature ['neɪtʃə] and procedure [prə'si:dʒə].

- Secondly, this process spread and changed numerous words in mid-twentieth century including, "actual, perceptual, graduate, and naturally" containing affricates [tʃ - dʒ].

- Thirdly, by the end of the twentieth century, coalescence kept "widening its scope" reading stressed syllables in words like "Tuesday, duke, and dune". Yet, it gave birth to phonetic implications and it made words sound similar to others when palatalising the alveolar consonant like the second syllable in "seduce" [sɪ'dʒu:s] sounding like "juice" and the first syllable of "Tuesday" ['tʃu:zdeɪ] like "choose", as well as making dune [dʒu:n] sound homophonous with "June". Ramsaran (1990) joins Wells' opinion and calls such a type of coalescence as "sloppy". So, coalescence in GA within stressed syllables is considered to some extent non-RP (as cited in Glain, 2012, pp. 09-10). However, with the wide phonemic shift and acceptance of coalescence in speech, even by RP speakers, the various changes were included in dictionaries; such as Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (Henceforth LPD) and Everyman's Pronouncing Dictionary (Henceforth EPD) and in the former they were labelled by Wells as non-RP.

The fourth pattern on the table refers to the "De-alveolar Assimilation" coined by Wells, where voiceless alveolar fricative [s] changes into voiceless palato-alveolar affricate [ʃ] when preceded by [ju:] as in issue ['ɪʃu:] (p. 11). After numerous surveys and research studies, it is concluded that the coalescence and yod-dropping are associated more with younger speakers. The yod is losing ground gradually with the phenomenon of "De-alveolar Assimilation" mainly in unstressed syllables before the stressed ones; and in GA, yod-dropping is more apparent and frequently used.

The next table displays the transition of the yod and its disappearance from most English accents, where it is being deleted progressively (p. 06). It is worth mentioning that in unstressed syllables; the elision is almost non-existent in words, such as "education" and "tissue" or rather palatalised in GA. That is, American speakers insert a palato-alveolar consonant instead so the words are pronounced [edʒu'keɪʃn] and ['tɪʃu:]. It is similar to yod-coalescence which refers to a type of assimilation where palatal [j] merges with alveolar

plosives [t-d] and are realised as palato-alveolar affricates [tʃ - dʒ] respectively as explained earlier. The table below demonstrates the evolution of yod-dropping along with the accents that adopt it.

Table 8. Examples of the Evolution of the Stressed C+[ju:] Variable (as cited in Glain, 2012, p. 07)

Early-Yod Dropping (ex: traditional British accents)	**Variable-Yod Dropping (some British accents)**	**Later-Yod Dropping (ex: most US accents)**	**Generalised-Yod Dropping (ex: East Anglia)**
Chew, juice, yew, rude, crew, blue, flew, grew and shrew	Lute, lewd, salute, revolution, enthusiasm, pursuit, assume, suit (able), superstitious, super-market, consume, and presume	Tune, student, dune, new, numerous, enthusiasm, tutor, and nuclear	Beauty, few, music, cube, and Hugh

As some practitioners call it "Palatalisation", it is somehow misleading because only the first element is being palatalised, such as tune [tju:n] → [tʃu:n] and dune [dju:n] → [dʒu:n]. Therefore, the alveolar cognate's articulation shifts towards the palato-alveolar and according to Rodoslav Pavlik's (2009) explanation, the yod is the assimilator which is "the segment that triggers assimilation process". The [t – d] are assimilees because they are "the segments that are being assimilated", and the affricates [tʃ - dʒ] are assimilants, which are "the segments produced as a result of the assimilation process". The affrication tends to be creating an obstruction for the glide and assumes its place of articulation (as cited in Glain, 2012, p. 08). Yod-dropping use is increasing among non-native speakers as well, still no conclusive results show if male or female speakers tend to embrace it in their speech more frequently.

II. 8. 8. G-dropping

There are several variables when phonological variations are tested once they emerge, and the most notable ones are final "s", "ed", and "ing" in words like "king", "sibling" and suffix in "shocking". Final "ing" has two possible pronunciations, either with the standard

voiced velar nasal stop [ŋ] or non-standard voiced alveolar nasal stop [n]. Thus far, Trudgill (1974) has examined the pronunciations of "ing" in Norwich and there were differences across gender and social class. Trudgill's quantitative methodology resulted in two pronunciations in Norwich English "walking" the prestige form and "walkin" the informal one.

Results also revealed that non-standard [ɪn] is used more by male workers from lower-working classes and [ɪŋ] is the prestigious form used by higher social class women. Similarly, the same differentiation in "ing" ending pronunciation is detected by Fischer (1964) in a study of child education in a New England village where boys used non-standard [ɪn] more often than girls; because it was a feature of male speech and [ɪŋ] was of female speech uttered by girls more frequently (as cited in Wilson, 2012, p. 07).

Finnegan (n.d.) argues; similarly, how females tend to avoid dropping the [ŋ] for more socio-economic reasons, in order to sound more prestigious and high-status; while males drop it, because they think it marks masculinity and toughness in speech which is an additional reason to the first one. Therefore, he adds that language is "A major symbol of our social identity" (pp. 378-379), where he provides the evidence taken from an island off the coast of Massachusetts called "Martha's Vineyard". There, inhabitants of the island change the pronunciation of words containing the diphthongs [aɪ] and [aʊ] as in "why" and "shout" by centralistaion of the vowel, shifting to [ə]; because it represents identity with traditional values of the island and its life which is a socio-phonetic feature.

Moreover, Holmes (1997) expresses the conservative gender identity of a woman in society by selecting her own phonological choices of speech, that is the construction of her speech and identity are entirely based on such choices, "Through the use of phonological variants which are more frequent in New Zealand women's speech than men's. For example, she uses the standard realisation of "ing" variable and the conservative aspirated variant of intervocalic [t]". Thus, the speaker constructs a conservative feminine gender identity in this instance through a combination of phonological choices that for them to some extent sound more conservative and prestigious (as cited in Jenny Cheshire, n.d., p. 19).

Similar to Trudgill's finding (1968) that in Norwich, England; males use more non-standardised [n] forms than females who use [ŋ], Labov (1966) finds also that in New York City the more people used post-vocalic [r], the more prestigious they are and women pronounce the post-vocalic [r] more than men do. Hence, the majority of research on the differences between men and women's speech focused on phonetic features rather than conversational strategies (as cited in Ahmad Mohammad Ahmad Al-Harahsheh, 2014, p.

873). Regardless what is stated above, research on gender differences concerning speech phonetic features is still lacking more empirical findings.

II. 8. 9. Aspiration

Defined by Peter Roach (2002) in his Phonetics' Encyclopedia, aspiration refers to the brief noise made after a consonantal stricture is released when the compressed air in the production of a plosive almost freely escapes. Aspiration refers to the hissing sound and extra puff of air produced as [h] mainly in English voiceless plosives [p, t, k] in initial position, at the beginning of a syllable or in final position in several variations. For instance, in words like "pea", "tea" and "key". By the articulation closure at the beginning, the escaping air comes out with the [ʰ] sound before the voicing of the vowel takes place. It is the result of the vocal folds being pulled apart at the time of the articulatory release. Nonetheless, this feature does not occur when [p, t, k] are preceded by voiceless alveolar fricative [s] and they are un-aspirated, such as in "speak", "stay" and "school" (p. 07).

Similarly, Cruttenden (2012) explains how aspiration after production of fortis voiceless plosives [p, t, k], these latter sounds undergo "a post-release phase in which they are followed by a "brief puff of air", and defines it as "A voiceless interval consisting of strongly expelled breath between the release of the plosive and the onset of the following vowel". Therefore, they are aspirated and aspiration is indicated with a diacritic superscript [ʰ]. It is also strongest in initial position of a syllable, such as "time" [tʰaɪm] or a stressed syllable in a multi-syllabic words as in "potato" [pə'tʰeɪtəʊ] or before a long vowel or diphthong like in [kʰiːn]. However, aspirated [p, t, k] do not alter meaning of the words even when there is no aspiration produced. Unless aspiration occurs in unstressed syllables or in syllables followed by syllabic consonants, the stressed syllables containing aspirated voiceless stops [p – t – k] must be articulated more loudly, strongly and prominently (David Odden, 2005 and Mehmet Yavas, 2006)

In Erwan Pépiot's (2013) study on voice, speech and gender, speaking of voiced/voiceless sounds in French and aspirated/non-aspirated sounds in English, he reported that,

> Women would tend to mark a greater distinction between these phonetic pairs, and this phenomenon could be explained by socio-phonetic and cultural factors and favours the idea that female speakers

would try to achieve a more intelligible speech than male speakers (p. 11).

That is, women tend to pronounce and produce clearly and properly to guarantee successful recognition and perception by the listener, and to sound more intelligible. Similarly, M. J. Owren and G. C. Cardillo (2006) claim that female speakers uttered consonant sounds proportionally longer in di-syllabic words; because for them they are seen more important than vowels in oral word recognition or perception by the listener (as cited in Pépiot, 2013, p. 11).

II. 9. 10. Other Features

There exists a variety of phonological and phonetic features in speech that can be used by males and females alike or not as demonstrated previously. However, such pronunciation preferences and dissimilarities are more scrutinised from native speakers' pronunciation. Research remains lacking when dealing with such articulation differences made by non-native speakers of English which is one of the objectives of the present research work. Aside from the phonetic/phonological features displayed earlier, there are other features which might exist or not in EFL learners' speech which may be highlighted in the field work part. Some of them are briefly introduced subsequently.

Louis Gauchat (1905) mentions some phonetic variations; though in relation to age; between male and female speakers where some sounds are reduced from /e/ and /t/ to /y/ in Northern France, and in some dialects in Switzerland. He also states that women tend to be willing to accept innovation and changes in pronunciation; because they like to adapt to the phonetic variation in trend, while men pay more attention to the conservative aspect of speech (as cited in Vandeputte, 2016, pp. 22-26). Vowels' reduction in English includes short forms or contractions and weak forms of structure words. In English phonology and connected speech, it is common to reduce vowels in order to maintain the correct rhythm in speech and avoid sounding accented or robotic. Other aspects to be included in the present study's investigation include affrication which refers to changing the pronunciation of a sound into an affricate either [tʃ] or [dʒ] and [tr] or [dr]. The first example of affrication phenomenon occurs mainly at the boundaries of two words; for example, "what you want is there" is pronounced this way [ˈwɒtʃə jə ˈwɒntɪz ðeə] where the sounds in word boundaries of "what" and "you" [t] and [j] overlap to create the affricate [tʃ]. The second example takes place in words, such as "tree", "draw", "truth" and "dream" to mention a few.

Dentalisation refers to the substitution of dental consonant sounds [θ] and [ð] with [t] and [d] respectively in examples like "think" [θɪŋk] pronounced as [tɪŋk] and "this" [ðɪs] pronounced as [dɪs] in some accents. Dentalisation also refers to some consonants including [l – n] getting influenced by dental consonants and; therefore, become dentalised. It is illustrated in the following example "in there" [ɪn̪'ðeə], where the alveolar nasal stop [n] is dentalised due to the adjacent voiced dental fricative [ð] and the subscript diacritic [̪] is used below [n̪] to indicate its dentalisation. Another feature is H-dropping, which refers to not pronouncing the "h" in connected speech where it is required for speech rhythm. For example when using possessive adjectives "her"/"his" and object pronouns "him"/"her" in the middle of sentences or phrases, the "h" is dropped when un-stressing such structure words. Pronunciation dissimilarities that are gender-related are much greater than those in grammatical forms, which implies how such gender dissimilarities in sound articulation need further research and evaluation; especially with regard to non-native speakers.

Conclusion

This chapter attempts to gather the most relevant pieces of information and theoretical background with regard to the relationship between EFL pronunciation and gender in order to complement the previous chapter. Pronunciation's status has not yet gained a stable position in EFL classrooms due to various reasons including teachers' reluctance to teach it and learners' willingness to learn it. Therefore, the key to succeed in pronunciation acquisition is cooperation between both parties including a boost in learners' motivation. EFL instructors must be aware of its importance for communication; as well as the major obstacles confronted by Arab learners that drive teachers to fail in their mission. A balanced instruction between pronunciation accuracy and fluency without favouring one attribute over the other eventually provides an intelligible flow of communication between interlocutors as previous research has indicated. This is the result desired most by non-native speakers who can improve their articulation despite the existence of some fossilisations in their pronunciation or even overcome accented speech.

This chapter provides gathered data from previous research that investigated gender differences concerning pronunciation accuracy, linguistic and phonetic preferences and possible strategies employed by male and female learners in L2 pronunciation acquisition to enhance and remedy their articulation and accent. This chapter is concluded by listing a variety of phonological and phonetic features that characterise English pronunciation of both

English model accents RP and GA. The same features are to be included as key-components in the field work in order to discern female speech traits from male's, and provide as many details as possible for clearer gender dissimilarities in English pronunciation acquisition within Algerian higher education contexts. The next chapter covers the methodological data and research design that outlines the present study's practical part; as well as data collection and analysis of the students' worksheets.

Introduction

The present chapter covers both the research methodology and design of the present study which attempts to investigate gender dissimilarities in pronunciation attainment of English in terms of both phonological and phonetic aspects of LMD3 graduates at the University of Mostaganem; department of English. This chapter encompasses fundamental elements in methodology including research methods employed in analysing collected data and research instruments utilised in order to gather and obtain the required data. Moreover, it exposes the population targeted specifically for this investigation; as well as the setting and procedure of the conducted study.

This chapter also comprises the first part of data analysis that deals with the respondents' pronunciation worksheets and their phonetic coding skills. The worksheets are self-designed and they target different aspects of pronunciation including phonemic/phonetic transcription that concentrate on phonetic coding skill evaluation, detection of silent letters; as well as prosodic elements in gendered speech. Worksheets attempt to access an approximate level of respondents in English pronunciation and spelling as a combination of both language productive skills- speaking and writing. Results are illustrated in the form of tables and charts accompanied by separate description, analysis and brief conclusions.

The study's research questions and hypotheses are listed below to remind readers of the rationale being investigated and the hypotheses being proposed as a solution,

1. To which extent do gender differences impact Algerian EFL students' English pronunciation acquisition?
→ As male and female interlocutors perceive and speak language differently, various gender differences may provide another perspective on the fact that one gender may be superior to the other in correct and accurate pronunciation within Algerian university classes of English. Therefore, interest in a certain model accent and its aspects, speaking it with more accuracy and less accentedness regularly, at an early age and with more exposure may grant one gender both skill and professionalism in their speech.

2. Do specific gender dissimilarities distinguish females' pronunciation from the males' in the process of pronunciation attainment?

→ Yes, they do. There may be some striking differences that distinguish males from female learners throughout pronunciation acquisition and vice-versa. Among these contrastive differences, it could be accurate oral production at the level of words that come with better perception of vocabulary obtained from authentic sources pronounced by native speakers. This takes place with intent listening and imitation of the model, as well as drilling; therefore, the appropriate use of techniques and strategies for pronunciation acquisition.

3. What are the main areas and aspects that differentiate female from male learners throughout pronunciation acquisition and tuition?
→ In order to acquire proper pronunciation of a language, various features are listed as major and those include different areas: personal aspects which are affective factors that are entirely related to students' psyche, personality and socio-cultural aspects that may include preferences in exposure to the target language and mother tongue interference. As for phonetic and phonological features, numerous traits are highlighted including fossilised mispronunciations, stress placement, rhythm and tone.

III. 1. Research Methods

Research methodology is an important component in any study that attempts to gather, examine, describe and evaluate any given collected data. In order to proceed in a systematic manner to describe and analyse the present study's data properly, two main research methods are adopted. The present research work is built upon a mixed-method approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The purpose of such a choice - a mixed-method - is gathering and obtaining as much information as possible; as well as ensuring credibility to the present research.

III. 1. 1. Quantitative Analysis

Accordingly, quantitative analysis encompasses the presentation of all numerical data and statistics obtained through the process of description and analysis of data collection instruments. These statistical representations of collected data and information are primarily presented through tables and charts to facilitate its reading; as data analysis includes both female and male information separately (Dan Fleetwood, 2020). Description of each of the

tools utilised in this study is explained in detail subsequently in this chapter. The interpreted data through quantitative analysis will consequently expose the final results after data analysis in chapters three and four. The use of quantitative data analysis will provide the numbers of participants' replies and their recordings' results provided through tables and graphs in chapters three and four respectively.

III. 1. 2. Qualitative Analysis

This type of method goes hand in hand with the quantitative method due to combining both methods primarily in the use of research instruments. By contrast, this method describes, arranges and evaluates a certain corpus of any study; such as worksheets, interviews, textbooks and recordings, in order to provide better understanding of collected data to the readers (Dan Fleetwood, 2020). Qualitative analysis in the present research work is more concerned with examining open-ended questions used in students' questionnaire, and both worksheets for oral and written activities, as well as recordings of those oral tasks performed and submitted by the participants.

III. 1. 3. Error Analysis

Error analysis is a branch of Applied Linguistics developed by Pit Forder in the 1960s. Error analysis; thus, refers to studying errors made by ESL/EFL learners (as cited in Ahmed Ali, 2018). It is important to bear in mind that error is different from mistake in terms of following rules. The former occurs when learning is incomplete; whereas the latter occurs due to stress or carelessness by learners.

The present study has opted for error analysis in order to explore learners' language pronunciation proficiency, to investigate how learners tend to acquire English pronunciation, in order to obtain gender differences and difficulties between male and female learners' and to find out the causes of errors; such as mispronouncing prefix "dis" [dɪs] as [dɪz]. For the current study, both types of error analysis are included. The first type is inter-lingual errors which take place when mispronouncing sounds due to; for instance, mother tongue interference or unnecessary vowels' reduction. For example, using the front close-mid short mono-phthong [ɪ] instead of the front close long mono-phthong [iː] in "leave" and "live". The second type is intra-lingual errors which are considered the opposite of inter-lingual errors

where error takes place due to misapplication of certain rules; such as stress placement, stress shift misplacement and prosodic patters to name a few (Ahmed Ali, 2018).

The present research analysis follows all steps of error analysis including,

- Collection of errors from collected data in students' worksheets and recordings.
- Identification of errors by discovering each of their significant mispronunciations and corresponding misspellings.
- Description of errors that attempt to provide the right pronunciation and spellings to compare with their errors.
- Explanation of errors which demonstrates how and why such errors occurred by laying down possible reasons that cause learners to deviate from rules of the target language.
- Correction of errors serves as a goal in order to guide learners and ensure successful instruction. This stage takes place within classrooms generally; by providing remedies; such as strategies.

According to Jack Richards (n.d.), there are five factors explaining learners' error types and they are listed as follow (as cited in Marwan Alalimi, 2014),

- Mother tongue interference
- Overgeneralisation.
- Ignorance of rule restriction.
- Incomplete application of rules
- False concept hypothesised.

Such factors are to be taken into consideration after research instruments' analysis in order to find out what possibly causes learners to commit errors both inter- and intra-lingual and which gender tend to commit more or less.

III. 2. Research Population and Sampling

In an educational setting where observed phenomena are being investigated, a certain population is targeted to be developed, to be utilised as a sample for investigation, and to be put under testing to collect answers and evidence for the raised questions. It is relevant to the present study to choose a representative group in which its members share similar features including study level, age, and field to name a few. The generalisability of the research findings can only be relevant to the target population from which a sample of participants is

selected. Further research and evaluation may require a larger group of respondents and a longer period of time.

The present study aims at identifying various gender differences with relation to English pronunciation acquisition by Algerian EFL learners. Algerian university classes are targeted from which the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem is selected to be investigated in particular. For representative results, the number of participants should be as large as possible. In this case, the study targets Algerian EFL graduates at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem.

III. 2. 1. Research Setting

The present study targets an educational setting of higher education; to be more precise, one of the universities in Algeria. The investigation took place at the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem, exactly at the department of English. It is worth mentioning that EFL learners are introduced to various disciplines referred to as modules, one of which is Phonetics or Articulatory Phonetics. Phonetics' classes are a part of the learners' yearly curriculum for two successive years, and they take place during one hour and a half per week. Nevertheless, due to Covid-19 health procedures, the amount of time was altered to two separate hours per week. Phonetics' class is one of the most quintessential elements in the present study; where the investigation took place. It involves the distribution of paper questionnaire copies and worksheets, as well as sitting for oral examination as part of the designed pronunciation worksheet.

The investigation; thus, commenced with a pilot study in the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020). Four groups of participants were under investigation within their Phonetics' classes twice a week. The main research study took place in the second semester of the same year; however, it was interrupted by the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. The investigation resumed in the next year (2020-2021) by the first semester. During two hours per week and for the whole educational term, participants received the instruments. The investigation was extended for the entire academic year due to health procedures imposed; where learners were obliged to study for two weeks and leave the university for other two weeks in order to receive other levels in the meantime.

III. 2. 2. Research Participants

Being a teacher of Phonetics and still specialising in this vast and intriguing field, the current investigation sprung out from the daily observation in class and how different male and female EFL students perceive, learn, sound in and speak English including sounds and intonation, let alone how they acquire correct English pronunciation through articulation, phonetic transcription and native speakers' speech perception. Therefore, the participants selected for the present study that investigates the various gender dissimilarities in pronunciation acquisition at the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem are EFL third year LMD students, male and female, from the years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Additionally, all those groups are included in the investigation for more diffusion and the total number of graduates ranges between one hundred and eighty students to two hundred. It is worth mentioning that after the questionnaires reception, only one hundred and fifteen copies were given back; twenty males' and ninety five females'. It is worth mentioning that EFL LMD3 students have studied Phonetics for the first two years only as a tutorial class and no Phonetics' class is included in their third year curriculum. Thus, the reasons behind selecting third year students as participants in this study are the following,

- To evaluate the results of their Phonetics' tuition during their previous years.
- To determine if it is sufficient to acquire all necessary phonological knowledge and Phonetic skills as EFL graduates during a two-year training.
- To uncover what helps them to practise English pronunciation better and avoid words' mispronunciations and any possible fossilisations.

Choosing another level, such as Master students was excluded because not the entire specialities take Phonetics' classes and the difference of years in which they are not trained in Phonetics may affect their capacities including phonetic transcription which is included in activities in the present investigation's worksheets. The number of third year EFL students cannot be definite due to the fluctuation of repeaters and students who have got debts. However, their number ranges between one hundred and fifty and two hundred students including all categories. The present investigation; therefore, intends to include as many EFL LMD3 graduates as possible; for more credibility and reliability for the study's results, objectives and findings.

Third year students' total number is divided into six groups whose educational curriculum does not include any Phonetics' classes and they have got classes during the whole week.

Still, due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and health procedures enforced, delivering students' questionnaires and performing pronunciation activities was deemed impossible. Therefore, participants were to be in touch via email, LMD3 students' Facebook group, and Google forms for the time being. LMD3 students were not allowed to work in pairs and individual work was mandatory for the accomplishment of this investigation in order to test and evaluate each student's answers separately, and identify gender differences for the present study transparently.

III. 3. Research Instruments

As part of any academic research work, a questionnaire is the most rapid and useful instrument to collect data as it combines and comprises both closed-ended and open-ended questions; as well as multiple-choice answers for ticking or classification (Dan Fleetwood, 2020). The present study questionnaire is addressed to the selected sample of participants which is graduate students; LMD3 students for two successive years. Other instruments utilised are worksheets for pronunciation activities; as well as recordings. Each of the tools included in this investigation is described in detail subsequently.

First of all, students' questionnaire takes both survey forms: digital and tangible, and the former is made in Google forms and shared on Facebook platform. This decision was taken due to the time constraints and limited presence of students in classes; because of the pandemic procedures (Two to three weeks of studies for each level). Therefore, for the sound continuity of the field work and quicker reception of the data as well, the digital form of the questionnaire is opted for as a back-up plan. The questionnaire objective is primarily to collect as much information about phonetic/phonological background of LMD3 students and their attitudes and views about Phonetics' class as possible. This is to be achieved through four sections that target several aspects including personal background with relation to their phonetic studies and preferences, phonological background based on their previous Phonetics' classes' tuition, choice of accent which they speak (L3), and identifying their preferable pronunciation learning strategies.

Besides students questionnaire, two worksheets of phonetic and pronunciation exercises are enclosed. The first worksheet comprises three exercises, and the second worksheet comprised two parts and each part comprised four exercises and three exercises respectively. These worksheets vary in aspects and objectives; yet are related to pronunciation

skills. These aspects include phonetic transcription, stress placement and silent letters. As for recordings, students' verbal production of isolated words and their vocal clips of connected speech are analysed.

III. 3. 1. Description of Students Questionnaire

- Section One   (Q 01 – Q 09) Personal Background

The first section naturally targets students' personal and social aspects where they are requested to tick answers, for instance their gender which is the most essential variable in this research work for easy categorisation of the questionnaire. In addition to the full period of their English tuition by providing full answers for foreign country experience; as well as, their opinions about addressing native speakers in person. It also explores their thoughts about learning English as their choice in general and specialising in it in particular. This section targets mostly how they consider and view English pronunciation and Phonetics' classes: as positive attitudes and motivation are key-elements in the success of EFL learning process. This section concludes by asking them if they believe two years are enough for their enunciation tuition.

- Section Two   (Q 01 – Q 29) Phonetic/Phonological Background

The second section attempts to test participants' phonological background in terms of basic notions as defining the sciences of Phonetics and Phonology, and the differences between types of transcription; with which they have dealt every year during their Phonetics' classes. Afterwards, the participants are requested to state their opinions concerning Phonetics' syllabus, classes, and English systems of writing and articulation obstacles.

In addition, they are requested to provide their suggestions and feedback on the amelioration of Phonetics' classes, and if such classes did assist them in improving their speech and pronunciation, if phonetic instructions in class were beneficial; as well as how frequently they are exposed to the target language through authentic material. This section ends with inquiries that target gender differences in pronunciation skills; as well as possible hindrances that they might have come across producing or perceiving sounds and words at the beginning of their EFL learning.

- Section Three   (Q 01 – Q 10) Choice of Accent

The third section targets learners' accent of choice, if they are aware of the reason behind their choosing it, and if they are familiar with the difference between the accent they speak and other accents of English. The following questions only inquire about aspects of English accent, and how it is different from their mother tongue Arabic. It also investigates how the majority of students who speak GA can handle RP in classes as the official and model accent taught in EFL classes. The section concludes by stating if stereotypes about British and American English accents are true or false, that is from their own points of view. It ends with direct inquiries that target gender differences in pronunciation skill; as well as possible hindrances which they might have come across producing or perceiving sounds at the beginning of their EFL learning.

- Section Four   (Q 01 – Q 06) Pronunciation Acquisition Strategies

The fourth section investigates the participants' familiarity with pronunciation acquisition strategies, and attempts to detect which strategies and techniques are of their preference and more or less are used, and by which gender are employed most. Moreover, it seeks discovering how learners perceive aspects of speaking, such as accurate pronunciation and fluent communication as separate elements or interrelated elements that need be balanced instead of dealt with priority.

III. 3. 2. Description of Students' Worksheets

Respondents chosen for the present study are EFL LMD3 graduates who have been exposed gradually, but entirely to Articulatory Phonetics and supra-segmental instruction for two years. This two-year tuition of their English pronunciation; mainly RP, involves almost all aspects of Articulatory Phonetics including segmental instruction. It has been dealt with aspects; such as phonemes' description (both three-term description and detailed description of both consonants and mono-phthongs), phonological background and instruction including all related terminology, moving to supra-segmental aspects dealt with, such as a syllable (definition, patterns, types, structure and also word syllable types), word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, beat, unit of foot and intonation; although briefly due to Covid-19 study period.

However, with the lack of constant practice and lack of students' diligence in homework and self-evaluation, most of these requisites are either poorly integrated in and processed by their brains or lost through time. Therefore, the main objective of these

worksheets is to test students' pronunciation and phonetic knowledge and skills, if their requisites remained partially intact or faded with the lack of practice and willingness to continue learning independently; as well as their fossilised mispronunciations. Not to forget, male and female differences in terms of correct pronunciation, accented speech, linking in connected speech and mispronunciations.

The first worksheet's content revolves around phonetic coding skills. That is, the activities provided involve phonemic transcription of words and rhyming phonemes; as well as stress placement. The second worksheet contains activities that need be recorded, and which focus on narration of a short story in the accent of choice, recitation of two lists of spelt and transcribed words to be pronounced separately and another one for stress shift.

III. 3. 2. 1. Phonetic Coding Worksheet

Phonetic coding worksheet for students consists of three activities besides the indication of the participants' gender (as the main variable in this study and the analysis of collected data afterwards). In the first activity, the selected participants are provided with twenty-eight transcribed words plus stress marking. Most of these words are commonly and frequently used among EFL learners and most of English phonemes are included in them. Participants are required to write down the spelling; henceforth, decoding phonetic symbols. The aim of this activity is to test and evaluate their phonetic coding abilities, and find out if they are able to re-identify and read vowel and consonant sounds' symbols and provide correct spelling for each word. These words contain diagraphs and silent letters as well. Throughout my experience in teaching Phonetics, most students come across difficulties in memorising vowels' symbols and not consonants. This is shown precisely in the second activity (See Appendix n° 2).

e.g., - [ˈstjuːdn̩t]…………………..   - [ˈsɜːvɪs] ……………… - [hɑːf] ………………….

   - [ɪmɪɡˈreɪʃn̩] ………………… - [ˈhæŋkətʃɪf]……………… - [ˈrɪŋkl̩] ……………

   -[klɪə] ……………….. - [tʃeɪnd] …………..   - [ˈrɪðm̩]……………

The activity that follows requires students to transcribe sixteen words also commonly and frequently used among EFL students. These selected words vary in function, type and word syllable type. Phonemic transcription does not include diacritic details except for marking the stress. Participants are required to transcribe phonemically rather than phonetically, because it is assumed that they cannot either identify or recall diacritic details; such as, aspiration and syllabicity.

The activity aims to test and evaluate their memory of phonemes' codes and transcribing words with different syllables by indicating stress. Gender variable is included in order to assess male and female phonetic coding superiority and to identify which gender manages to recall most of the phonetic information previously acquired and maintained so far. Using Phonemic details include the use of slashes by the participants which discerns writing alphabetic letters from alphabetic symbols of sounds.

e.g., - Stop ………………- Memory ………………- Dove ……………Hospital ……………

- Close-up …………… - Motivational ……………- Decide …………

- Industrialisation ……………. - Impossibility …………………….

The third activity revolves around rhyming sounds and the one that does not rhyme should be crossed out. This type of activity is popular among activities that target sounds that rhyme within different words and syllables and they are requested to cross the odd word one out (the word that does not rhyme in this case, be it a consonant or a vowel), and then provide the phoneme that is repeated in the other three words. In this exercise, there are twenty lists of four words in each, and these words vary in type, function, and word syllable type as well. The aim of this activity is to test and evaluate male and female pronunciation of words, and if they are able to distinguish sound cognates; as well as if fossilisation of mispronounced words exist or it may be a lack of focus.

e.g., - Shape   - Passion   - Push   - Hissing   [ ]
      - University   - Moustache   - young   - Mutant   [ ]
      - Thought   - Mammoth   - Breath   - Breathe   [ ]
      - Stuck   – Flood   – Sprung   – Wound   [ ]
      - Steer   – Fear   – Rear   – Bear   [ ]

III. 3. 2. 2. Pronunciation Recordings' Worksheet

Pronunciation worksheet for aural recording consists of four activities besides mentioning participants' accent of choice. This is important as another variable equal to gender in order to compare it with their pronunciation recordings; if they are consistent in the system they chose, either RP or GA, and if they are aware of the differences between official accents of English. Eventually, LMD students of English are taught the main differences

between these two model accents in pronunciation and in phonemic transcription. Afterwards, participants are requested to narrate a short story.

The choice of the story or its content is not emphasised, but rather the continuity of their speech and thoughts, and to make them feel at ease while telling events from their own backgrounds and viewpoints. The aim of this activity is to analyse their speech and pronunciation in terms of accent; whether they speak it in a unified manner or they mix aspects from both accents including the ones listed in chapter two. In addition to aspects of linking and liaison [r], short forms, reduction, elision, and other features of connected speech as previously mentioned in chapter three as well. Not to forget the use of Standard English in terms of formal or vernacular forms.

The second activity requires the participants to articulate and pronounce words in isolation by including pauses between each word. There are thirty-six words and most of them are minimal pairs. The list has been adapted from Madhav Kafle, Jinya Xia & Fran Durbin portfolio (n.d, p. 31) and was slightly modified. These modifications include alphabetical order and extra minimal pairs. The aim of this activity is to assess their ability in distinguishing vowels, mainly long mono-phthongs from the short ones and long mono-phthongs from diphthongs. It is important to know how participants may not realise the fact that replacing one phoneme by another even by mistake changes the meaning of the whole word; hence, directing the listener's attention to a different meaning from what is intended to be said and causing a misunderstanding.

The third activity consists of six lists of four words that belong to the same family, but with different word formation and function including verbs, adjectives, and nouns. This activity precisely focuses on the stress placement and shift in syllables from one word to another in accordance with their shift in function; as well as accent as the final word in each list has got the suffix –isation- which is pronounced differently in American and British accents. Gender differences to be targeted here are male and female superiority in the mastery of the accent they speak and mastery in stress placement and shift in words with different formats and functions.

The fourth activity targets pronunciation of silent letters and words that are pronounced differently in RP and in GA as well. The list contains seventy-three entries, and it was designed personally. The exercise was chosen on purpose to be both familiar in frequent use and also containing silent letters. It is important to mention how speaking an accent must be consistent and accurate, and to find out which gender gives these details more attention.

Activities of the second part of the pronunciation worksheet are to be recorded by the participants and sent via email or social media chat rooms in order to be analysed afterwards. It is worth mentioning that what are transcribed phonetically are the words and sentences that carry only gender dissimilarities with regard to phonetic and phonological features highlighted in the previous chapter.

III. 4. Pilot Study

As part of a solid investigation in terms of reliable results and respondents, a preliminary study was conducted before the actual and current one as a pilot study. The objective of such an investigation is; mainly to observe and find out gender differences if there are any. For the pilot study, two research instruments are utilised. First, classroom observation as part of the usual Phonetics' class took place during a whole semester. The aim of this observation is to discover a degree of difference in males and females' pronunciation and speaking skills, and then establish the right questions for the main study. Second, a paper questionnaire in the form of a short survey that contain questions targeting male and female opinions about and attitudes towards Phonetics' class, programme, and their accent of choice is designed. Moreover, inquiries took the form of closed- and open-ended questions with the requirement for justification where compulsory. Most of those questions were adopted once again into the main questionnaire.

It has been observed that male and female graduates might approach their Phonetics' tuition similarly but their pronunciation acquisition manner and tendencies might differ with reference to their articulation, perception, emotional state, capacities and exposure to the target language. These results only serve as a drive and backup to design a lengthy questionnaire that envelops and targets different themes and aspects; as well as integrate worksheets that would provide more empirical data. The pilot study took place in the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020).

III. 5. Data Collection Procedure

¨Procedure for the present study's data collection was initiated in the previous academic year (2019-2020); however, all preparations were put on hold due to the Pandemic of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown for over six months. Such a postponement; nevertheless, served as extra time to reformulate and revise the informants' questionnaire more thoroughly; as well as their enclosed worksheets. Therefore, the data collection procedure was resumed in (2020-2021) once classes began in the first semester at the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis; precisely, the department of English.

Putting into consideration health procedures and social distancing, L3 EFL groups had fewer classes compared to the previous years and their tutorial classes (TDs) were reduced in number of hours; hence, groups doubled reaching up to twelve groups. As a result, all those groups are included in the investigation for more diffusion. The total number of EFL LMD3 students reached the number one hundred and sixty. Accordingly, printed questionnaires were distributed among all the L3 graduate groups, and they were provided with sufficient time to return the questionnaires. Due to the study questionnaire lengthy layout, participants were allowed more time up to one week for submission. Still, after collection of the questionnaires, not all of them were returned; therefore, a digital format was designed on Google Forms and was posted to their Face-book group page in case they could not return the tangible copy on time when their studies' period came to an end.

It is worth mentioning that distribution and collection procedures lasted for about three weeks which was the same period of their attendance. They were given the first worksheet that covered the part of phonetic coding. Afterwards, they were requested to answer promptly and were given up to half of an hour to complete the task. As for the second worksheet that covered the part of pronunciation, participants were requested to record their voices with clear pronunciation of the words' glossary provided alongside the narration and reading activities after stating the accent they spoke in a noise-free environment. The voice clips were sent via Email or Messenger within the deadline of a week.

After the questionnaires were collected, the process of analysis commenced. Firstly, L3 graduates' questionnaires were divided into two categories, males and females apart for easier counting and analysis. Secondly, each of the sections and its questions were dealt with individually, by describing the objective of each inquiry and presenting the statistical results through graphic tables and bars for each gender; in blue for males and in red for females.

Thirdly, each question with a requirement for a justification with the researcher's analysis followed the description.

Students' worksheets were analysed similarly; each of male and female answers were analysed separately, and also were illustrated through tables for statistics and other tables for qualitative data analysis. Moreover, results followed the statistical representations and each set of the results was discussed in the last chapter in detail. It is worth mentioning that after questionnaires were received, only one hundred and fifteen copies were given back. Twenty males' and ninety five females' and forty five were not returned out of one hundred and sixty questionnaires delivered including the digital questionnaire.

III. 6. Worksheets' Error Analysis

The present research attempts to uncover and expose EFL third year graduates' major dissimilarities of gender in pronunciation at the University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis in Mostaganem. The field work imposes empirical evidence; therefore, the present research comprises various instruments including a lengthy students' questionnaire, transcription/spelling and pronunciation worksheets, and recordings or voice-clips of the worksheets' oral tasks. In chapter three, students' worksheets activities and pronunciation recordings are described, examined and analysed in order to obtain answers to the previously raised questions through the obtention of their mispronunciation and speech errors. Collected data is described and illustrated through tables and graphs in the following section.

III. 6. 1. Analysis of Phonetic Coding Activities

The first worksheet delivered to participants is enclosed to their questionnaire which attempts to test their phonetic coding skills, and whether their brains could still establish the relationship between spelling letters and their equivalent sound symbols after the end of their Phonetics' class tuition in their second year. The variable gender will determine male and female students' skills, be them phonetic or phonological. Final scores will also demonstrate which gender keeps a watchful and attentive mind over their pronunciation progress and improvement; as well as the fact that Phonetics' classes are significant to their EFL learning process. As a reminder, ninety five females and twenty males returned their worksheets and are; henceforth, described and analysed.

- Activity One (See Appendix n° 1)

The first activity requires participants to provide the listed transcribed words with their appropriate equivalent spelling. The words selected in this activity are commonly used in English, and they contain all phonemes tackled during Phonetics classes' transcription and pronunciation lessons and tasks in accordance with their syllabus. The following table illustrates the statistics of male and female participants' correct and wrong replies in addition to no replies provided.

Table 9. Male and Female Participants' Results of Phonetic Coding Activity

Transcription	Spelling	Correct Replies		Wrong Replies		No Replies	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
[ˈstjuːdn̩t]	**Student**	(82%)	(80%)	(01%)	(00%)	(17%)	(20%)
[wʊlvz]	**Wolves**	(52%)	(60%)	(24%)	(15%)	(24%)	(25%)
[nəʊm]	**Gnome**	(00%)	(00%)	(50%)	(20%)	(50%)	(80%)
[ˈflaʊə]	**Flower/Flour**	(55%)	(65%)	(21%)	(05%)	(24%)	(30%)
[ʃʊə]/[ʃɔː]	**Sure**	(08%)	(30%)	(55%)	(40%)	(37%)	(30%)
[hɑːf]	**Half**	(76%)	(75%)	(04%)	(00%)	(20%)	(25%)
[naɪt]	**Night/Knight**	(53%)	(65%)	(14%)	(05%)	(33%)	(30%)
[ˈsepərət]	**Separate**	(30%)	(35%)	(43%)	(30%)	(27%)	(35%)
[nʌm]	**Numb**	(03%)	(25%)	(50%)	(25%)	(47%)	(50%)
[tʃeɪnd]	**Chained**	(10%)	(35%)	(28%)	(15%)	(62%)	(50%)
[ˈdʌmi]	**Dummy**	(06%)	(25%)	(29%)	(10%)	(65%)	(65%)
[ˈnekləs]	**Necklace**	(10%)	(35%)	(50%)	(35%)	(40%)	(30%)
[ˈrɪŋkl̩]	**Wrinkle**	(03%)	(15%)	(38%)	(25%)	(59%)	(55%)
[steəz]	**Stairs**	(06%)	(20%)	(38%)	(30%)	(56%)	(50%)
[ˈsɜːvɪs]	**Service**	(28%)	(30%)	(22%)	(15%)	(50%)	(55%)
[ˈletəz]	**Letters**	(21%)	(30%)	(19%)	(10%)	(60%)	(60%)
[diːp]	**Deep**	(75%)	(80%)	(02%)	(00%)	(23%)	(20%)
[breθ]	**Breath**	(46%)	(55%)	(22%)	(15%)	(32%)	(30%)
[ˈhæŋkətʃɪf]	**Handkerchief**	(01%)	(15%)	(28%)	(15%)	(71%)	(70%)
[ɪmɪˈgreɪʃn̩]	**Immigration**	(21%)	(40%)	(41%)	(30%)	(38%)	(30%)
[ˈræpɪŋ]	**Rapping**	(14%)	(25%)	(36%)	(20%)	(50%)	(55%)
[kləʊn]	**Clone**	(00%)	(05%)	(62%)	(65%)	(38%)	(30%)

[ˈrekɪdʒ]	**Wreckage**	(02%)	(15%)	(27%)	(10%)	(71%)	(75%)
[ˈrɪðm̩]	**Rhythm**	(02%)	(05%)	(40%)	(35%)	(58%)	(60%)
[tɔɪz]	**Toys**	(32%)	(50%)	(19%)	(05%)	(49%)	(45%)
[ˈɔːdə]	**Order**	(23%)	(30%)	(19%)	(15%)	(58%)	(55%)
[klɪə]	**Clear**	(40%)	(50%)	(17%)	(00%)	(43%)	(50%)
[ˈbɒtm̩]	**Bottom**	(06%)	(40%)	(37%)	(20%)	(57%)	(40%)

The first entry "Student" as shown above is given its correct spelling by the majority of respondents both male and female, where their numbers exceed half of participants each. Still, the number of males who did not provide an answer to the transcription (20%) is slightly higher than the females'. Besides, one female respondent provided one wrong spelling for the word which was: "Studant".

The second entry "Wolves" is chosen to test participants' ability in distinguishing the spelling of irregular nouns in the plural form. Similar to the first entry, correct answers by both genders exceed half of the participants. Still, numerous misspellings are committed by female learners (25%) including: "walves", "wolfs", "wolvs", "walvs", "woves", "vowels", "wooz", "wolfes"; which demonstrate either lack of concentration while reading or the inability to decipher phonemic symbols contrasted with their spelling forms. Male respondents made two kinds of misspellings including: "walves" and "wolf".

For the third entry "Gnome", not a single participant (00%) managed to identify the right spelling. Both genders committed errors and misspellings. By females, the following are gathered, "nome", "name", "nom", "known", "noun", "noum", "noam", "noise", and "num". There are recurrent misspellings made by males; such as "norm", "noum" and "name". It has been noticed that female participants tend to add letters to create words that do not even exist in English. Half of females (50%) provided wrong replies and the other half no replies at all. The majority of males (80%) preferred not to reply as well.

The fourth entry "Flour" or "Flower" appears to the participants easy to guess, as correct answers by both genders reach more than half of the participants each. Female respondents (21%) made more misspellings than males (05%), because the majority of the latter chose not to reply when they failed to identify the right spelling. Most of females' misspellings are "flow", "fellow", "flowr", "fly", "few", "flew", "floor", "flaw" and "flawar". Males' misspellings included only "flow". Both parties provided the spelling "flower" more

than "flour" and none provided both homophones despite being introduced to homophones, homographs and homonyms since high school and then at university.

For the fifth entry "Sure", there is only a minority (08%) of female participants who replied correctly, mistaking [ʃ] for other phonemes as demonstrated in the following misspellings provided by them: "few", "fewer", "fuer", "far", "for", "joy" and "your"; including these as well, "show", "shoo", "shower", "chew", "shoe", "shoer", "she", "chower", and "shue". Therefore, more than half of them (55%) provided wrong answers. As for the males, (30%) managed to decipher the phonetically transcribed word. Nevertheless, (40%) failed to provide the correct spelling and some of the errors included "shoe", "show", and "few".

For the sixth entry "Half", the majority of both genders - (76%) females and (75%) males- provided correct replies demonstrating their knowledge that RP pronunciation of the word is different from GA, and the letter "l" is silent. Still, (20%) to (25%) of participants left it blank. Female participants provided two wrong spellings including "harf" and "have", while male participants did not.

For the seventh entry "Knight" or "Night", female and male performances are similarly good - (53% and (65%) respectively. However, observing their answers leads to discover that the second spelling "night" is provided more frequently than the one containing the silent "k". Neither entry is provided with the presence of the other as an indication of a homophone. Female respondents once again wrote more misspellings than their male counterparts including "hate", "neight", "naight", "net", "nait", and "kigent". As for male participants' misspellings, only one was found which was: "nite".

For the eighth entry "Separate"; generally, percentages of correct and wrong answers in addition to no replies are close - (27%) to (35%) - except for females' misspellings (43%) which include, "separet", "seperate", "seperait", "spreit", "spearte", "spreat", and "sperit". As for males, their wrong spellings include "seperate", "separeat", and "spareit". Such mistakes are assumed to be made due to the fact that EFL students find pronunciation of the schwa [ə] tricky; as it encompasses numerous spelling representations and it can be "a" or "er" in this entry; as well as the little practice of the sound.

For the ninth entry "Numb", the minimum of female participants (three candidates) provided the right spelling out of ninety five other respondents of the same gender. As for male participants, only five out of twenty were right. The highest percentage gotten is (50%) wrong replies by female participants and (50%) no replies by male respondents; as well as (47%) for female respondents. Misspellings committed by females include "name", "num",

"namn", "nam", and "narm", which demonstrate students' inability to understand neither the case of magic "e" that elongates short vowels into long vowels or causes them to become diphthongised, nor the case of long vowels preceding silent "r". Males made similar mistakes that include "name", "nam", and "num".

For the tenth entry "Chained", the minority of correct answers (10%) is recorded by female respondents whose majority preferred to skip answering (62%). Their misspellings provided include replies, such as "chaind", "tchained", "tchind", "chande", "chund", "chaned", "chined", "sheind", "cheind", "changed", and "trend". By contrast, male respondents gave better attempts at answering (35%), but the majority (50%) had no replies. Some of their misspellings contain "tcheind", "shaned", and "shade".

For the eleventh entry "Dummy", as illustrated on the table, most answers of both genders are lower than expected although male participants performed better than females did; (25%) and (06%) respectively. What represents the majority for this entry is the equal no replies from both participants (65%). Most repeated wrong spellings provided by females are "demi", "demy", "damy", "dumy", and "dami". As for males, only one misspelling is recorded and which is "dumy". The low score for the right spelling demonstrates that LMD3 EFL graduates may be familiar with the word's pronunciation, but do possess weak orthography awareness and skills.

For the twelfth entry "Necklace", only (10%) of female participants managed to answer correctly which was surprising with regard to familiarity with the word which was selected for being frequently-used. Therefore, male participants collected better results (35%). Still, half of female participants (50%) provided misspellings that included "nekles", "neckless", "necklase", "neclase", "neclesse", "nickless", "necklas", and "nucleus". It is noteworthy to say that ['nekləs] and ['nju:kliəs] are different in all aspects, and the latter was thoughtlessly written by female participants as if they were similar. Male participants had fewer misspellings that included "necklas", "neckless", and "neckles", which is a fact that demonstrates to some degree attentiveness towards silent letters perceived by males.

The thirteenth entry "Wrinkle" contains a silent letter in the initial position and another silent letter in the final position. Results show that this entry has got the lowest score for correct answers made by female participants (03%), and (59%) exceeding half of them who provided no replies. Males' results are not promising as well (15%). Still, they made two misspellings (25%), "rinkle" and "rincle" missing the silent "w" in the initial position. As for female participants, (38%) answered wrong and repeatedly provided misspellings that did not exist –except for the last one- which included, "ringle", "ringkel", "renged", "rinckle",

"rinckel", "reigncal", and "ring-call". The majority of male participants (55%) chose not to provide any answer which demonstrates how they favour not to risk providing wrong replies.

For the fourteenth entry "Stairs", it is perceived to be a challenge to most of participants alike. Results show that the majority (56%) of females, and (50%) of males chose not to answer at all. Female participants scored lower once again (06%), as male participants performed slightly better (20%). As for wrong answers; once more, females' wrong replies are higher than the males' compared to their correct replies. Most of misspellings demonstrate that most of females are unable to figure out that the schwa in numerous cases represent silent "r", although this is one of the characteristics of RP English. Thus, their misspellings include "stees", "steas", "steaz", "street", "steese", "stays", "cities", "stars", "stais", and "stys". Male participants made only three types of misspellings: "stays", "steas" and "stears". Accordingly, females cannot differentiate between centring diphthongs and closing ones.

For the fifteenth entry "Service", both males and females have got close results for correct answers, (30%) and (28%) respectively; and for no replies as well, (55%) and (50%) respectively. Still, considering half of each total of participants, the males continue scoring better than female participants. The latter's wrong spellings include "servis", "servise", "serves" and "seeves". It is assumed that females confuse [s] with [z] although both sounds are different phonemes. A few male participants provided unusual spellings for the transcription this time which include "serves", "souffice" and "savage".

For the sixteenth entry "Letters", the majority of participants prefer not to provide any reply (60% for both genders) and their correct answers are few and close to each other in percentage (21% for females and 30% for males). Similar to the fourteenth entry, what prevents them from figuring out the right spellings is silent "r". Female participants provided more unusual misspellings; such as "lettus", "lets", "later", "letese", "lates", "letes", "lotus" and "latters". As for males, only one misspelling is found which is "lets".

For the seventeenth entry "Deep", as illustrated above on the results' table, both parties scored better; that is above (50%) and both genders' performances were close, where only below (25%) had no replies. Long vowels seem to be of no hindrance to the participants often as shown before in entries including "service", "student" and "half". Only (02%) of females provided misspellings that included "deap" instead of "deep", whereas for male participants, no misspellings are recorded.

The eighteenth entry "Breath" is selected in particular to test learners' ability to distinguish it from its verb form "To Breathe". To some extent, the participants managed to reach an average score; females (46%) succeeded in providing correct spelling and (22%) had

no replies. As for misspellings (22%), the following were recorded: "breth", "broth", "bref", "breeth", "brath", "brought", "bread", "heath", "breathe" and "brough". There appears to be various spellings that are not similar to the correct one which confirms once again females' inability to refrain from misreading phonetic transcription. As for males, (55%) which represent more than half of the participants had answered correctly and only (15%) returned misspellings which included: "breth", "bref", and "broth". There probably is not a reason behind mistaking [θ] for [f] and [e] for [ɒ]. In this case, both phonemes' pairs are not similar, neither in form nor in production. However, in Algerian dialects, [θ] and [f] may be similar or may be used interchangeably in examples, such as "Thani" "ثاني" and "Fani" "فاني".

For the nineteenth entry "Handkerchief", female participants scored the lowest so far as only (01%) of them provided correct spelling; whereas male participants (15%) replied correctly which is considered a better performance than the females' once again after the entries "wrinkle", "dummy", "stairs", "numb", and "sure". Still, the majority of both genders preferred not to reply and left it blank - (70%) for males. Some of the females' misspellings are: "hankerchif", "hankchief", "hanketchif", "hang-catchif", "hanckchief" and "handkeichief". It is worth mentioning that most misspellings demonstrate that female participants pay little attention to silent letters. Male participants' misspellings are also spotted including: "heinkerchif", "hangkerchif" and "handkrietchief".

For the twentieth entry "Immigration", the highest percentages represent (40%) male participants who answered correctly opposite to (41%) female participants who answered wrong. Moreover, there were (38%) of females who left answers blank. The entry is a frequently-used word among EFL and non-native speakers, and is chosen specifically for its frequency. Still, female participants failed to provide the correct spelling and their misspellings include "imigration", "emigration", "imegration", "immegration", "imaging", and "imagination". As for males, the following misspellings are recorded, "imigration" and "immgration".

For the twenty-first entry "Rapping", as illustrated on the table, the majority of both genders - (50%) females and (55%) males - did not reply, and those who did answer had little luck in finding the right spelling; as they confused the present entry with "raping" breaking the rule of one vowel in an inter-consonantal situation - where the last consonant should be doubled. The hindrance also lies in the production of front open lax unrounded short mono-phthong [æ] that appears to be problematic in production and transcription to most of the students. Only the minority succeeded in providing the right spelling for both genders as

demonstrated in numbers. Most of females' misspellings are: "raping", "reping", "reaping" and "rapin". As for males' incorrect answers provided, there is only "raping" recorded.

For the twenty-second entry "Clone", as shown above on the table, female participants scored the lowest (00%) and only a fragment (05%) of male participants succeeded in estimating or finding the right spelling for the transcription. By contrast, the majority of females failed to provide the correct answer. Moreover, (62%) of females misspelled "clone" as "clown", "clowne", "cloun", "kloun", "cloon", "klwon", "klen", and "kleen". Once again female participants demonstrate disregarding the use of magic or silent "e". Similarly, (65%) of males misspelled the same word as "clown" and "klown". The latter gender did not get carried away, and it was probable that they fell into the trap of confusing between falling closing narrowing diphthong [əʊ] and falling closing wide diphthong [aʊ].

For the twenty-third entry "Wreckage"; once more, male participants performed slightly better (15%) than their female counterparts (02%), where the majority of both genders preferred not to leave any reply. Female participants who answered wrong reached (27%) and provided numerous unusual misspellings to the entry disregarding the silent initial "w" or silent "d" most of the time which included: "rekidge", "reckings", "rakige", "rackige", "reckeage" and "rekid". As for males, (10%) wrote two misspellings: "reckige" and "reckidge" disregarding silent "w" that was more frequent or silent "d" as well.

For the twenty-fourth entry "Rhythm", it is a challenging spelling to be decoded in letters. Scores of correct answers are low for both genders - (02%) for females and (05%) for males - even wrong answers are close in percentage as illustrated above. Such a fact demonstrates how LMD3 EFL students do not familiarise themselves with writing the orthography of words, as they only listen or read. Females' wrong attempts (40%) included "rythem", "rithem", "rythme", "rythm", "rytheme", and "rethm". Males' wrong answers (35%) include similar ones to females' mistakes: "rythem", "rythm", and "rythme". It is worth mentioning that no one of the participants who answered figured out the presence of the silent 'h' and concentrated on inserting the silent magic "e" at the end which is similar to the French orthography. Participants who left answers blank marked the majority as illustrated above.

For the twenty-fifth entry "Toys", half of male participants managed to provide the right spelling and (45%) left answers' space blank. They did not risk replying although the entry was a frequently-used word, and the issue lied in the fact that they struggled in identifying diphthongs. Almost half of female participants preferred (49%) not to reply to this entry surprisingly; as they showed previously some risk-taking attempts when it came to

decoding phonetic transcription. Moreover, (32%) of them got the right spelling and (19%) provided wrong or unusual misspellings that included the following, "toyz", "toise", "tows", "tease", "trees", "cheese", "sheese", and "tears". As for males' (05%) incorrect spellings, only one was recorded which was: "tcheese". It was unexpected how participants mistook [t] for [tʃ] or [tr] and mistook "toys" for "cheese" or "trees".

For the twenty-sixth entry "Order", only an average number - (23%) for females and (30%) for males - had replied correctly by both genders, where not replying at all was marked by the majority. The few participants who answered wrong; (19%) for females and (15%) for males; could not pay attention to silent "r" in RP English and created a challenge that only drove the few participants who did answer to provide some misspellings. For females, misspellings included: "oder", "odder", "older", "other", "water", "aude", "oudur" and "soda". Some of their incorrect replies are not even closer to transcription, where females misread phonemes' symbols yet again. For males, the following are recorded, "older", "aide", and "odd". It is worth noting that although female participants gave plenty of wrong answers; still, they figured out that the word ends with [ə] which is silent "r".

For the twenty-seventh entry "Clear", it was another challenge of diphthongs and silent "r". Still, participants scored better this time where almost half of the batch provided correct spelling - (40%) for females and (50%) for males. The other half of male participants chose not to risk answering wrong and left blank space (50%). Whereas, a few female participants answered wrong among which there was recorded the following misspellings: "clay", "kley", "cly", "kly", "claw", "killer", "cleer" and "caly".

For the twenty-eighth entry "Bottom", participants are tasked to determine the syllabic [m̩] correctly and it is a reminder to refresh their minds concerning syllabicity. As illustrated, female participants scored lower than males (06%) compared to (40%) respectively. Females' majority (47%) provided no replies and those who did and were wrong (37%) replied with the following misspellings, "bottum", "botm", "botomn", "bottem", "botom" and "botan". Females' incorrect replies show that they either miss letters or add unnecessary ones. As for males, also the majority did not reply (40%), and the minority misspelled the entry (20%) as "buttum", and "boutton".

Looking at the table one last time and taking into consideration the reading of the numbers; as well as analysis of the participants' misspellings, it is concluded that when female participants answer correctly, they are in line with male participants; looking at combined success in decoding transcription of entries such as "student", "wolves", "flour/flower", "half", "night/knight", and "deep". Nevertheless, the majority of males

succeed in decoding more transcriptions including: "breath", "toys", "clear" and "immigration". Furthermore, on several occasions, female participants score lower than males where the minority (below 10%) answer correctly in instances; such as "sure", "numb", "dummy", "wrinkle", "stairs", "handkerchief", "wreckage", "rhythm" and "bottom". They even reached (00%) in "clone" and "gnome" as well.

As for wrong answers, male participants reached above the majority only once to decode the entry "clone". By contrast, females are noticed to be risk-takers and their wrong answers are spotted above their half in various entries including "gnome", "sure", "numb", "clone", and even reaching half of the batch in entries like "separate", "wrinkle", "stairs", "immigration" and "rhythm". Moreover, looking at the entries that mostly challenge the participants not to take a risk; "gnome", "numb", "wrinkle", "stairs", "service", "letters", "handkerchief", "rapping", "wreckage", "rhythm", "order" and "clear"; despite that these words contain multiple or single silent letters distributed in different positions. Yet, what hinders them most are: silent "r" (either in middle or final positions as a diphthong or a schwa) and silent "w" in initial position.

It is worth mentioning that EFL students at the department of English sit for both written and oral tests, and in the syllabus of Phonetics, they are introduced to silent letters and are taught RP since first year in both transcription and pronunciation. Their inability to notice and expose silent letters in phonetic transcription probably comes from the fact that they rarely practise writing or English orthography alongside articulation. Moreover, they do not focus on writing while decoding phonetic transcription given that they commit various misspellings. Females appear to have a lack in their stock of vocabulary or have lower attention in orthography.

- Activity two

This activity requires the participants to transcribe a list of words phonemically. The words for this exercise are randomly selected; still, familiarity with the provided vocabulary is taken into consideration. The words are ordered by syllable number starting from mono-syllabic, di-syllabic, tri-syllabic, tetra-syllabic, penta-syllabic and ending with poly-syllabic words. This activity's instructions are the opposite of the previous one, where the participants are required to transcribe words in order to test their ability to differentiate mono-phthongs from diphthongs and from consonants that change their roman form into symbols; for instance, [θ], [ð] and [dʒ].

Moreover, it attempts to find out if participants do indicate word stress, to observe which phonemes may be hard to be perceived and written, and to discover if they are able to write the appropriate realisation of each vowel letter or diagraph. Female participants who reply are sixty out of ninety-five (63%) and (32%) with no replies. By contrast, male participants who answer are fifteen out of twenty (75%) and (25%) with no replies.

Analysis begins with mono-syllabic entries provided in the second activity which are: "stop", "risk", "dove", and "help". Female participants (52%) reply correctly in RP for the first entry [stɒp], as the rest of them (48%) mistakes [ɒ] for [stop], [stʌp] and [stʊp]. They also resort to the American pronunciation and replace the back open-mid lax rounded short mono-phthong with back open tense unrounded long mono-phthong [stɑːp]. By contrast, male participants (66%) are correct in their transcription of this entry, and there is only one form of wrong transcription which is: [stʌp].

For the second entry "risk" [rɪsk], (75%) of females answer correctly as the rest mistakes the front close-mid unrounded lax short mono-phthong with the schwi [i] or [e]; [ˈrisk] and [ˈresk]. Moreover, they mark the stress in a mono-syllabic word. As for the males, (66%) are also successful in transcribing risk and made the following mistakes, [ˈRɪsk] and [ˈrisk]; seemingly marking the stress in a mono-syllabic word as well and using capitalised forms of symbols or phonemes.

For the third entry "dove" [dʌv], (33%) females are right in their transcription except the rest who mistakes the central open-mid lax unrounded short mono-phthong for [dəʊv], [deʊv] or [dɒv]. Whereas, (27%) of male participants transcribe the entry correctly. Still, Males' majority (73%) mistakes the vowel for [daʊv], [Dəʊv] or [dɔːv], not only mistaking vowel sounds for others, they re-write initial consonant in uppercase form.

For the fourth entry "help" [help], (28%) of female participants reply correctly and the rest mistakes the front mid lax unrounded short mono-phthong for [hʌlp], [ˈhælp], [həlp] and [ˈhɛlp]. As for males, (40%) of them provide the right transcription for this entry, where the majority makes mistakes similar to those of females. For instance, [həlp], [ˈhælp] and [hʌlp], as they still commit the error of marking the stress on one-syllable words alike.

For the fifth entry "happy" [ˈhæpi]; on one hand, half of female participants (50%) transcribe it correctly; whereas the rest does not and examples of their wrong transcriptions include [hʌpi], [həpi] and [hæˈpiː]. They either misplace the stress as in the last example or do not mark it at all. On the other hand, (47%) of male participants achieve transcription of the di-syllabic entry with the right stressed syllable at times; the rest only provides wrong phonemic transcriptions that include [hʌpi], [Hɑːpiː] and [ˈHapi].

For the sixth entry "close-up" [kləʊˈsʌp], only (05%) of females provide correct phonemic transcription. The rest of participants mistakes it for [kleʊzap], [kləʊˈzʌp] or [kləʊzəp]; thus, confusing it with the verb "to close". Male participants, by contrast, (20%) succeed in transcription; where such a result demonstrates once again that they have got the upper hand in phonemic transcription, but not stress placement as demonstrated in their subsequent answers. Some of the collected wrong answers are: [kˈlɒsæp] and [kləʊzˈʌp].

For the seventh entry "father" [ˈfɑːðə], (27%) of females answer right and (73%) unexpectedly answer wrong, despite that the present word is frequently-used and requires no diphthongs as they tend to cause students confusion with pure vowels. Some of the wrong phonemic transcriptions include [fəðə], [fæðər], [fʌθə] and [ˈfɑːθə]. (33%) of male participants; thereby, are more successful than females in transcribing this entry, although it might still be considerate a minority with regard to the type of word syllable. Some of the errors include [fʌðə], [Fəːðə] and [faðə]. The use of phonetic symbols in uppercase form is more apparent in males' answers than females'.

For the eighth entry "decide" [dɪˈsaɪd], (30%) of female respondents provided the right phonemic transcription; whereas the rest of them (60%) mistakes the phonemes for [dɪcaɪd], [dəsaɪd], [dɪˈseɪd] and [desaɪd]. Male respondents again with only a minority (33%) answer this entry right. More transcription errors are made by males who replace [k] with letter "c" as do some females as shown in [dɪcaɪd] and [dicaɪd]. No sign of stress placement is to be traced, although they do have the knowledge that it is mandatory to mark the stress in di-syllabic words.

For the ninth entry "memory" [ˈmeməri], only (17%) a portion of female participants is successful in transcribing this tri-syllabic word; whereas the rest of them made numerous mistakes including [mɪˈmɒri], [memɒri] and [memʊrɪ]. (20%) of males provide correct transcription of the entry, where the majority are mistaken and transcribe it differently as: [ˈməməʊri] and [məməˈri]. In their answers, it is clear how male participants disregard the rule of the impossibility to stress any weak syllable that include any of the schwa [ə], the schwi [i], the schwu [u] or syllabic consonants.

As for the tenth entry "container" [kənˈteɪnə] which is tri-syllabic, only a minority of female participants (22%) transcribes it right; still, not necessarily with the right placement of stress or indication of the right stressed syllable. The rest of participants confuse it with the fossilised pronunciation in their minds as [ˈkɒnteɪnə], alongside more wrong transcriptions including: [kənˈtejnər], [cɒnteɪne]; as well as with or some made-up symbols as in [kəntəɪnə]. For Males' replies, another minority (20%) has succeeded in transcribing this entry properly

while the rest mistakes it for [knˈteɪnə], [kɒnteɪnə] and [kɒntænə]. It is worth pointing out how males succeed though in omitting approximant [r] in the final position as required in RP.

For the eleventh entry "hospital" [ˈhɒspɪtəl] or [ˈhɒspɪtl̩], only (17%) of females answer right, but not a single respondent transcribed syllabic [l̩]. Remaining female participants report wrong transcriptions; such as [həˈspɪtl], [ospɪtel], [hɒsˈpɪtɒl] and [hʊspɪtəl]. By contrast, (33%) of males transcribe the entry without difficulty, where the only noticeable hindrance is writing consonant phonemes in capital letters as in: [Hɒspɪtəl] and [Hɒsˈpɪtəl]. Moreover, they either overlook marking word stress or misplace it as indicated in samples of their wrong phonemic transcription.

For the twelfth entry "serious" [ˈsɪəriəs], (07%) of female participants are able to provide the right transcription; while the rest of females (93%), which represents the majority provide wrong replies; such as [ˈsɪrɪjʊs], [siriəs], [serjɒz] and [serˈju:s]. The recorded wrong phonemic transcriptions, yet again, demonstrate that respondents do follow the transcription of their fossilised mispronunciations of words. Unlike the females, not a single male participant (00%) is able to transcribe this entry correctly by disregarding the stress mark and providing recurrent wrong transcriptions including: [sɪrɪəs] and [sɪrjɒs].

For the thirteenth entry "American" [əˈmerɪkən] or [əˈmerɪkn̩], which is a tetra-syllabic word, only (08%) of females are successful in presenting correct transcription. Some examples of the collected wrong answers include [ʌmɪrɪkən], [əmeˈrɪkʌn], [ʌˈmərɪk ən] and [æˈmerɪkən] with syllabic [n̩] nowhere to be traced and weak syllables stressed. Similarly, males' performance in phonemic transcription shrank (07%) starting from tetra-syllabic words including this entry, where they appear to have mistaken correct pure vowels with others as in their answers: [əˈmɪrɪken] and [ʌmɪrɪkən]. The case of the schwa also appears to be problematic or challenging to them.

For the fourteenth entry "motivational" [ˌməʊtɪˈveɪʃənəl] or [ˌməʊtɪˈveɪʃn̩l̩], only (02%) of female respondents (which corresponds to one individual) provide the right transcription of the penta-syllabic word. Such a percentage directs attention to the fact that most of females mispronounce the word, while analysing their redundant wrong answers, may prove such an assumption; [ˈməʊtɪˈveɪʃjʊnəl], [mɒtɪveɪʃn], [mʊtɪvʌʃənəl] and [mɒtɪvæʃɪnɒl]. For this entry, only (07%) of male respondents provide correct transcription unexpectedly with the right stressed syllable; as they previously did not succeed in marking the right stressed syllable. Most of their recurring wrong answers are similar to those of female respondents including [mɒtɪveɪʃənəl] and [mɒtɪvæʃənəl].

For the fifteenth entry "impossibility" [ɪmpɒsə'bɪləti], which has got six syllables, none of the present participants are successful (00%) in transcribing the entire entry correctly. Some of the selected wrong transcriptions include [ɪm'pɒsibiliti], [ɪm'pʌsibiliti], [empɒsɪbɪlɪti] and [ɪmpəʊsɪbl]. Similarly, for this entry, (00%) of males' replies are correct. Some of their mistakes in transcription that are selected include [ɪmpɒsɪbɪlɪti] and [ɪmpəsəbəlɪti] with no stress indication yet again.

The sixteenth entry "industrialisation" [ɪndʌstriəlaɪ'zeɪʃən] or [ɪndʌstriəlaɪ'zeɪʃn̩] has got seven syllables and falls under the category of poly-syllabic words including the syllabic [n̩] as a nucleus. Similar to the previous entry, no female participants succeeds in transcribing it correctly and some of them mostly mistake its ending suffix for the GA pronunciation. For instance, [ɪndʌstrɪelaɪ'zeɪʃen], [ɪndʌstriəli'zəɪʃən] and [ɪndju:streəlizəʃɪnɒl] with no syllabicity to be traced. Even male respondents (00%) cannot transcribe it fully correctly; however, their transcriptions, unlike the females', are more directed towards RP pronunciation as demonstrated in their attempts including: [ɪndəstrɪlaɪzeɪʃən] and [ɪndəstrjələɪzeɪʃən] with no indication of syllabicity or stress mark as well.

After thorough description and analysis of participants' replies to the second activity that attempt to test their phonetic coding ability, level of efficiency in phonemic transcription and pronunciation of words with different syllable types; as well as to expose their fossilised mispronunciations. There are several criteria that are explained on the table below for each gender opposite to the other. Criteria to be discussed subsequently are,

1. Vowels and consonants' transcription
2. Syllables
3. Phonemes' in lowercase form
4. Stress placement and stress mark (')
5. RP vs. GA differences in transcription

Table 10. Final Results of the Second Activity Analysis

Female Participants	**Male Participants**
1. A most conspicuous confusion between [e] and [ə] as in "memory"	1. Similar confusion between [e] and [ə], [ʌ] and [æ], [əʊ]-[ɪə] and [eɪ].

or "help".

- Some female participants transcribe using the American symbol [ɛ] which is the equivalent to the front mid unrounded lax short mono-phthong [e] although they do not learn it in class as they are concerned with only British phonemes.

- They come up with phonemes' symbols that do not exist in RP's IPA; such as, [a] and [əɪ].

- Another transcription error of the voiceless fortis velar oral central plosive [k] and the voiceless fortis alveolar oral central fricative [s] as /c/.

- Female participants disregard the case of silent "r" in final position most often and add the retroflex phoneme after the schwa; for example in "father" and "container".

2. Despite that the syllables' nuclei are maintained, there is the recurrent case of the removal of the central mid lax unrounded short [ə] without replacing it with the right syllabic consonant. If they do remove the schwa, they tend to overlook the syllabicity diacritic.

- As females do, they come up with unusual symbols which do not exist in RP's IPA including: /a/, /əɪ/ and /ə:/.

- Another transcription error of the voiceless fortis velar oral central plosive [k] and the voiceless fortis alveolar oral central fricative [s] as /c/.

2. Syllables' nuclei are maintained. Nevertheless, no attempt of syllabic consonants' use is recorded.

• As long as syllable number increases, it is unlikely to transcribe correctly; starting from tri-syllabic words and onwards.	• As long as syllable number increases, it is unlikely to transcribe correctly starting from tri-syllabic words and on.
3. At times, they write phonemes in uppercase form instead of lowercase symbols in initial position.	3. Male participants also write in uppercase instead of the usual lowercase phonetic symbols more often than female participants; especially in the initial position.
4. Most of female participants (88%) overlook marking the stressed syllable.	4. (33%) of participants overlook marking the stress in transcription. Still, the rest of males who do mark the stress do not necessarily place the stress mark on the right syllable.
• (27%) of females stressed mono-syllabic words whose stressed syllable should not be marked.	• Only (03%) of participants mark the stress in mono-syllabic words.
5. In their transcription, females are more GA-oriented.	5. Male participants are more conscious of RP pronunciation in their transcription.
• They transcribe silent "r" more often; as well as, back open tense unrounded long mono-phthong [ɑː] instead of back open-mid lax rounded short mono-phthong [ɒ].	• No American transcription to be recorded.

The table summarises the whole results of the participants' answers in an activity that requires phonetic coding ability from spelling form into phonemic transcription. Such a skill allows students to be capable cognitively of decoding any phonemic/phonetic transcription of words or texts and also transcribe as efficiently as possible. Although female participants are

better transcribers in terms of the closest pronunciation to the correct one, males do not commit any errors in transcribing some consonants unlike females who do. The latter attempts to devise new symbols that do not exist in RP's IPA chart.

Furthermore, female participants' answers demonstrate that they are more GA-directed unlike male participants who exhibit their flexibility in maintaining RP transcription without necessarily speaking it. Such flexibility is more apparent in considering silent "r" in inter- and post-consonantal positions; as well as suffix "isation". Females also tend to mark the stress in mono-syllabic words and overlook stress mark in poly-syllabic words more often than does the opposite gender. Whereas for males; their transcription display the wrong use of capitalised phonemes, mainly in initial position.

- Activity Three

The third and last activity in this worksheet requires participants to cross the odd word out in terms of rhyming sounds. That is, three words out of four share one same rhyming phoneme, either a vowel or a consonant, while the fourth word does not and participants must provide the repeated phoneme afterwards. As shown in the example provided below,

e.g., Church – Chester – Machine – Such   [tʃ]

Participants have got twenty-four-word lists that contain three similar phonemes and a different one each. Moreover, the eighth list contains a trap which is that the rhyming phoneme is the back open tense unrounded long mono-phthong [ɑː], which is present in all of the provided words. The point of such a trap is to figure out how attentive participants could be, and if they are able to differentiate the slight different pronunciation aspects between RP and GA. The most successful action is to leave the words uncrossed besides the repeated phoneme to be mentioned.

Analysis of this task is handled differently by counting the number of students and the total of their wrong replies. For example, two female students make seven mistakes in accordance with the number of lists; that is, seven lists with wrong answers. Therefore, only the total of mistakes is taken into consideration. For females, (67%) reply to the activity and (33%) do not. No female participant is able to achieve less than four wrong attempts. (02%) of them are able to commit four wrong lists including the trap list; as well as the list that contains "oo" vowel diagraph including "aunt", "wood", and "door". Thus, instead of providing the right phonemes [ɑː], [ɔː] and [ʊ], there are others, such as [aɪ], [ɪ], [eɪ], [t], [əʊ], and [uː]. Afterwards, the percentage of participants who commit errors; about seven lists;

grows from (04%), (06%), (11%), to (19%) reaching sixteen wrong lists. Seventeen wrong lists are committed by only (03%) and nineteen wrong lists by (02%).

As a summary, it has been noticed that most of female participants who reply to crossing the odd word out either do not mention the rhyming phoneme, or confuse the right one with other short mono-phthongs or diphthongs. Furthermore, they appear not to diphthongise semi-vowels in final position and also misplace rhyming vowels with consonants instead; not paying attention to phonemes being repeated. For example, the list: flute – mood – wood – fruit – has got the odd word "wood" with rhyming phoneme [uː]; thus, instead, most females mention [d] or [ɜː] which are irrelevant to the objectives of the task.

They also write symbols the wrong way; for instance, [ʊː], [ɛ], [ɒː], [əː], [ei], [aː] and [x] to represent consonant cluster [ks]. They place the wrong vowels/consonants; for instance, in the list: shape – passion – push – hissing   - [ʃ], they provide the following, [h], [æ], [s], and [ʒ]. Most of the provided words that are challenging in pronunciation and recurrently mislead females are: "aunt", "pathway", "door", "wood", "plaid", "brochure", "beige", "moustache", "leather", "drape", "own", "slim", "bear", "germs", "breathe", "bless", "flood", "hissing", "swamp", "wound" and "wax". (60%) replied to the tasks and (40%) left them blank.

By contrast, for male participants, (25%) appear to commit four wrong lists, not until nine wrong lists where the percentages keep fluctuating between (08%) and (16%) neither above it nor below it. Additionally, no more than fourteen lists are found which indicates once more males' caution in replying. As a summary, it has been noticed that male participants make the same mistakes almost with a similar list of challenging words; mainly, "aunt", "pathway", "door", "brochure", "plaid", "wood", and sometimes "basic" and "swamp". Still, they show a better discrimination of vowels than do the females. There are also a few wrong rhyming phonemes; for instance,

Poor – Door – Endure – Tour   [r]
Brim – Gist – Bless – Spick   [s]
Drape – Friend – Sled – Blend   [d]

This probably may be caused because of not fully understanding the task's instructions and not the fact that they cannot recognise that the rhyming phoneme should be a vowel phoneme.

In a nutshell, despite that male participants' number is much fewer than female participants'; the males do not reach fifteen to nineteen mistakes out of twenty. By contrast, female participants make all kinds of mistakes which have encompassed almost all lists. The number of females who committed errors was little and did not exceed (19%). As for males who committed errors as well, they were less than (20%). This can be due to the fact that only half of the male respondents replied to the activity.

Another detail to be pointed out is that the majority of both genders were not successful in answering the second part of the activity, as they were required to indicate the rhyming sound repeated in each list. Most of the participants; however, failed to recognise that rhyming phonemes were not only consonants, but vowels as well or vice versa. For females, even their answers or symbols were either transcribed wrong or were unfamiliar at all. As for males, they showed better vowels' discrimination.

III. 6. 2. Analysis of the Worksheets' Pronunciation Recordings

LMD3 graduates are requested to take the pronunciation worksheet activities during a period of one week. The worksheet has got two parts. The first part centres on oral production of various lists of words in isolation. There are three activities in the first part and forty-seven participants in total; twelve males and thirty-five females. The second part of the same worksheet contains three activities as well, and the number of participants is one hundred and thirty-six; one hundred and six females and thirty males. Similar to the first worksheet analysis, female participants tend to outnumber male participants due to the fact that even within ordinary classes, the number of males is always fewer than females. The analysis of the first worksheet comes in the subsequent part in the form of activities.

III. 6. 2. 1. Analysis of the First Part of Pronunciation Worksheet
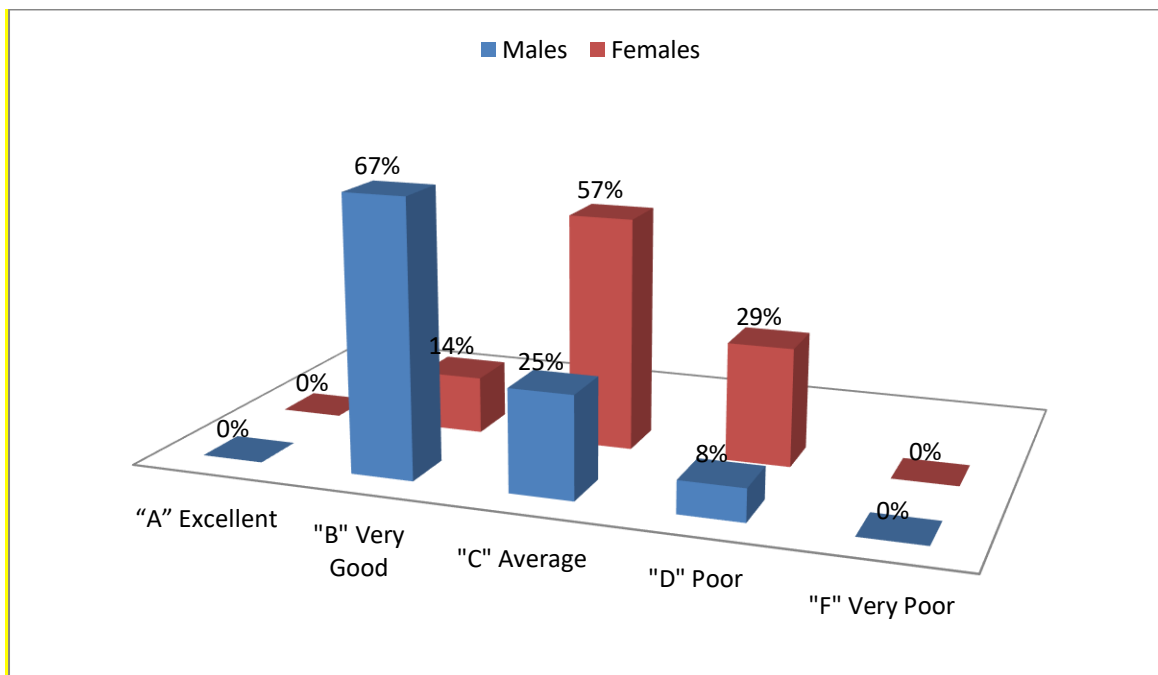
- Activity One

The first activity of part one requires the participants to pronounce a list of separated words slowly, clearly and loudly. The objective of such an activity is to determine the participants' ability to distinguish vowel phonemes in minimal pairs and which gender is able to succeed in easily discerning short mono-phthongs from long ones and from diphthongs; as

well as vowel letters from phonemes. For more orderly results, the evaluation took the following course,

1. Participants who make less than two mistakes get an "A" which is equivalent to Excellent".
2. Participants who make less than five mistakes get a "B" which is equivalent to "Very Good".
3. Participants who make less than ten mistakes get a "C" which is equivalent to "Average".
4. Participants who make numerous mistakes get a "D" which is equivalent to "Poor".
5. "F" is an equivalent to "Very Poor" and is given to any participant who can pronounce the minimum number of words.

The following graphs demonstrate final results and statistics of the first activity for both genders, and they are followed by their description and results' analysis as well.

e.g., Beat – Bit – Bait – Bet – Bead – Bid – Bad – Bed, etc., (See Appendix n° 3)

Figure 3. Females and Males' Results of Minimal Pairs' Reading and Production Activity

On one hand, for female participants, looking at the statistics above, no one was able to achieve (100%) correct pronunciation. It appears that the highest score is achieved in "C" category (57%), which denotes average pronunciation, where the females made more than ten

mistakes in minimal pairs and various examples are demonstrated below. The lowest score is achieved in category "B" (14%) which shows that LMD3 female graduates need more practice to discern vowels and their corresponding letters in spelling. Moreover, they need more attentive and constant practice to overcome their fossilised mispronunciations. Fortunately, no participant has reached level "F". Still, (29%) of them fall under level "D" category which indicates how they still need to improve the right pronunciation of basic and commonly-used words before graduation.

On the other hand, for male participants, better achievement is noted as demonstrated on the third figure. Despite that no male participant achieved level "A" (00%), the majority reaches the best score (67%) in level "B" making less than five mispronunciations; mainly, the ones exposed on the next table. (25%) of male participants obtained "Average"; whereas the lowest score was recorded in level "D" unlike female participants who had a higher percentage. Similarly, no participant has reached the lowest category "F".

During articulation of the provided words made up of minimal pairs mostly, a few notes; with regard to recurrent mispronunciations and model accent inconsistencies; are reported in order to explain the acquired results displayed above all together in parallel.

Table 11. Notes Regarding Female and Male Participants' Reading and Production of Isolated Words

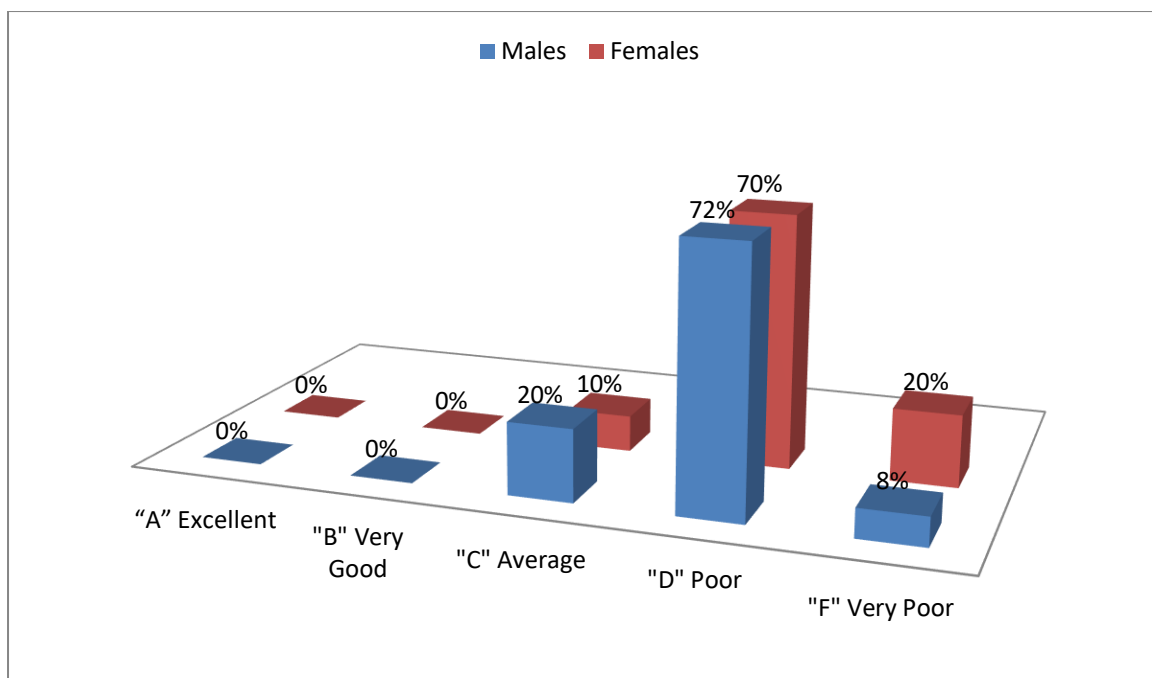| Female Participants	Male Participants
• Some female participants pronounce the words: "Lick", "Hit", and "Bid" as [laɪk], [haɪt] and [baɪd].	• A male participant pronounce "bait" [beɪt] as "bite" [baɪt].
• Numerous females mistake [æ] for [e].	• Males have got a better distinction here.
• Very few females succeed in distinguishing "Leak" and "Bead"; as well as vowel phonemes [i:] from [e].	• No similar mispronunciations are recorded.
• Most of females mispronounced "Pete" [pi:t] as [ˈpi:ti], "Puke" [pju:k]	• No similar mispronunciations are recorded.

as [puːk], "Mud" [mʌd] as [muːd], "Lug" [lʌg] as [luːg], "Fur" [fɜː] as [fuːr], "Lag" [læg] as [lɑːg], "Pack" [pæk] as [pɑːk], and "Mad" [mæd] as [mɑːd].	
• Only one female participant pronounces "Herb" as [ɜːrb] in GA., whereas the rest of females pronounces it as [hɜːrb].	• The majority of male participants pronounces "Herb" as [hɜːb] with silent "r".
• Females tend to mix both accents in their speech.	• Some male participants commit the same error.
• A few female participants pronounce [tʃ] as [ʃ].	• One male participant does the same.
• None	• One male participant pronounces [dʒ] as [ʒ]
• Some females mistake [əʊ] for [ɒ] in the words "Roll" [rəʊl] and "Toll" [təʊl].	• Very few males mistake [əʊ] for [ɒ] as well in the words "Mall" [mɑːl] and "Mole" [məʊl].
• All females pronounce "Room" as [ruːm] in GA despite that not all of them respect the model accent they speak.	• All males pronounce "Room" as [ruːm] in GA despite that their majority respect the model accent they speak.
• One female participant mistakes [p] for [b] in "Puck" [pʌk] and "Peck" [pek].	• None

• Activity Two

The second activity of part one in the pronunciation worksheet requires the respondents to pronounce six lists of words that belong to the same family in terms of lexis. e.g., Civil – Civility – Civilise – Civilisation. (See Appendix n° 3)

These words need be articulated clearly, loudly and slowly with the possibility of repetition if necessary. The objective of such an activity is to determine the participants' ability to place word stress on the right syllable, and whether they understand stress shift from one syllable to another in poly-syllabic words or do not. The participants; moreover, have been given ten seconds beforehand to skim the words silently before loud articulation takes place.

Therefore, the following graph represents results of their oral production of stressed syllables; each gender illustrated separately. The assessment and analysis of results takes the same form as the previous one following the five categories of speech proficiency as demonstrated right below.

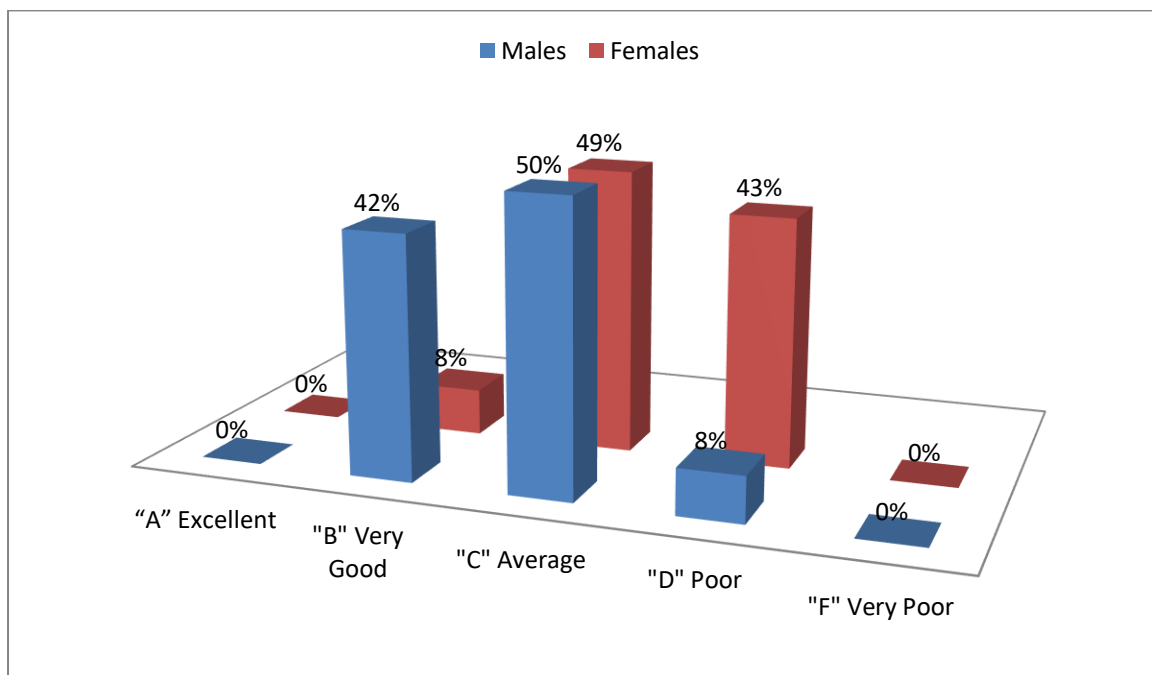**Figure 4. Females and Males' Results of Stress Shift Pronunciation Activity**

After data categorisation and analysis, with regard to female participants' performance, it is noticed that the majority scored (70%) level "D" which corresponds to "Poor". Thus, such a percentage demonstrates the students' inability to use stress in their enunciation and almost pronounce syllables with the same weight; except for the last word in each list that contains the suffix "isation". Still, the figure shows that (10%); as a minority;

has got the stress right in some of the provided words; whereas, (20%) fail to mark the stress in their speech at all. Even their pronunciation is not accurate.

As for male participants, results are approximately similar to the females' when the majority (72%) had a poor ability to detect stress or use it nonetheless. No male participant managed to achieve "A" or "B" levels, which is a fact that indicates their inefficient and lacking English pronunciation in terms of word stress. Nonetheless, (20%) achieved an average level while (08%) got level "F" that signifies the minority of male graduates who did not produce word stress at all. Both gender results may be compatible to their phonetic coding worksheet's second activity, where they scored the lowest in marking the stress. one must bear in mind that their majority's failure in marking the stress could be due to being self-conscious and pressed by the task at hand, which excludes naturalness somehow.

- Activity Three

In the third activity of part one, participants receive another list with seventy-three random words to be articulated slowly and clearly. Most of the provided entries contain silent letters. The objective of such an activity is to figure out if LMD3 graduates are able to recognise and discern silent letters in most commonly-used English words, and if they are familiar with as many words as possible both spellings and their pronunciation.

Figure 5. Females and Males' Results of the Silent Letters Challenge Activity

At first, for female participants, the majority (49%) obtains level "C" which corresponds to "Average"; still, not far from it (43%) obtain level "D" which may indicate only that females' reading and pronunciation of words need more attention, practice and improvement. This is due to the fact that no female participant is able to achieve level "A", and only a minority (08%) has obtained the "Very Good" category.

As for male participants, their results are approximately similar to females'. (50%) represent the majority that achieve level "C" as well, and (42%) unlike females, have obtained level "B". still, the minority (08%) attained level "D". Therefore, the different percentages between both genders highlighted show that male participants are able to correctly pronounce numerous entries with silent letters than do their female counterparts.

During enunciation of the third activity's seventy-three entries, it has been noticed that female participants are struggling with the articulation of some words, because of the silent letters of which they are not aware. Thus, they either skip or mispronounce them by articulating the silent letters along with the rest. It is only fair to say that even a few male participants did skip some of them as well. Entries that are more difficult to articulate are the following,

Almond – Aisle – Champagne – Comb – Dilemma – Dimension – Fasten – Folk – Feign – Genre – Genes – Half - Herb – Issue – Mayor – Pneumonia – Psychiatrist – Salmon – Sandwich – Status – Talk – Thistle – Tissue – Yolk

This is believed to be caused by participants being unfamiliar with the words as a whole, unfamiliar with spelling of the words or due to hastiness and the lack of concentration. It has also been noticed that some females pronounce silent letters in words; such as "Castle – Knew – Knife – Dumb – Calm – Half- Muscle and Yolk", and they have changed pronunciation of other words including: "Fought" [fɔːt] as [faʊt], "Knickers" [ˈnɪkəz] as [ˈnaɪkərz], "Weigh" [weɪ] as "Weight" [weɪt], "Through" [θruː] as "Thought" [θɔːt], and "Status" [ˈsteɪtəs] as "Statue" [ˈstætʃuː].

Some of the female respondents' enunciation has got no affrication in entry "Strife", and "Psychiatrist". They; moreover, mispronounce "Dimension" [daɪˈmenʃn̩] as [daɪˈmenzn̩] or [daɪˈmenʒn̩], and "Genes" [dʒiːnz] as [dʒiːnɪz]. With regard to males; by contrast, it has been noticed that they possess more poised and straight focus during enunciation. As a result, they are able to produce more vocabulary correctly than females, not only because they are familiar with them and females are not.

Both genders mix accents and their speech is not consistent. They realise such a fact, as they admit their inability to systematically and firmly follow one accent. Such a combination is more apparent in the case of silent "r" which is pronounced at times and not at other times; even for the rest of vocabulary that requires RP enunciation rather than GA. For instance, Capitalisation – Castle – Civilisation – Direction – Fasten - Fragile – Herb – Issue – Tissue – or vice-versa in words; such as Attitude - Altitude - Data – Dimension – Mayor – Status. Very few participants from both genders mispronounce "sh" as "ch" or the other way around. No participant from either gender is able to pronounce "Comb", 'Pneumonia" and "Genre" correctly.

III. 6. 2. 2. Analysis of the Second Part of Pronunciation Worksheet

In the second part of the second worksheet, sentences are integrated in order to test LMD3 graduates' production of English prosodic aspects: rhythm, intonation, linking and full word articulation within connected speech with relation to tonic stress. This part as well consists of three activities that require participants to pronounce clearly and loudly. Total number of participants is seventy-two (sixty-two females and ten males).

- Activity One

The first activity of the pronunciation worksheet's second part requires participants to read and pronounce a list of twenty-eight transcribed words taken from the first worksheet (see appendix n° 3). Entries are transcribed phonemically with the mark of word stress in order to be taken into consideration in articulation. The same evaluation method of A – F levels is opted for thereby.
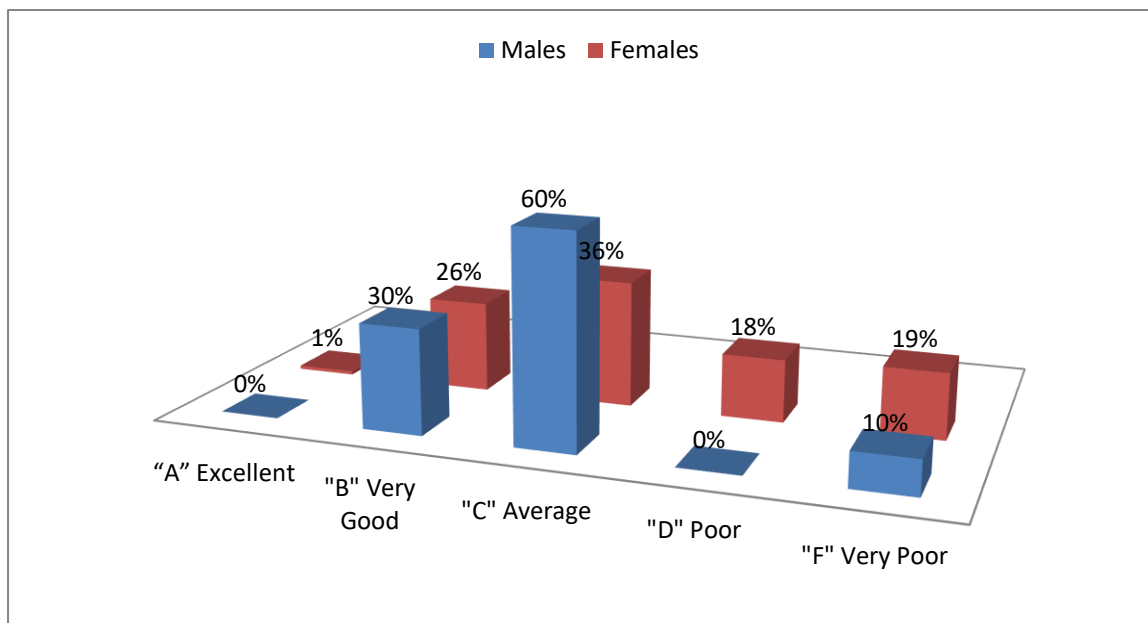
Figure 6. Females and Males' Results of Reading and Articulating Phonemically Transcribed Words

The above graph demonstrates results of phonetic coding and enunciation skill by both participating genders in the second worksheet. For female participants' results, only a minority (01%) has scored level "A" which is equivalent to one female participant out of sixty-two, who is able to read the transcribed words almost correctly. The only detail missing in her enunciation is clearly pronouncing stressed syllables. Not stressing words is noticed in most of all the participants' articulation.

By contrast, no male participant has scored level "A". However, the majority scores "Average" that is above half of them (60%) and (30%) has achieved "B" level which may be similar to female participants who reached (26%) for "B" level, and also their majority scored "C" level. It is worth noting that females' results, as shown, record (18%) and (19%) as levels "D" and "F" respectively, which slightly exceeds the males'. Results would have been much fairer if the number of each gender's participants was equal. Still, females have been greater in number almost in all cases.

During the reading session, it has been noticed that most of participants struggled in pronouncing some of the transcribed entries including: [ʃʊə], [ˈrɪŋkl̩], [steəz], [ˈsɜːvɪs], [ˈhæŋkətʃɪf], [ɪmɪɡˈreɪʃn̩], [ˈræpɪŋ] and [ˈɔːdə]. Some female participants commit mispronunciations due to hastiness and mistake the entry "Immigration" for "Imagination". The second hurdle is noticed in most of the words that contain silent "r" and front open unrounded lax short mono-phthong [æ] or unfamiliar vocabulary.

- Activity Two

In the second task of the same part of pronunciation worksheet, participants are required to read sentences from various paragraphs in order to test their ability to maintain most of the aspects of connected speech including correct articulation of words, linking, rhythm, intonation, word stress and accent consistency. The following graph represents results obtained following the same evaluation method of "A – F levels" with the same number of participants; seventy-two in total (sixty-two females and ten males). Results are represented henceforth in the following tables.
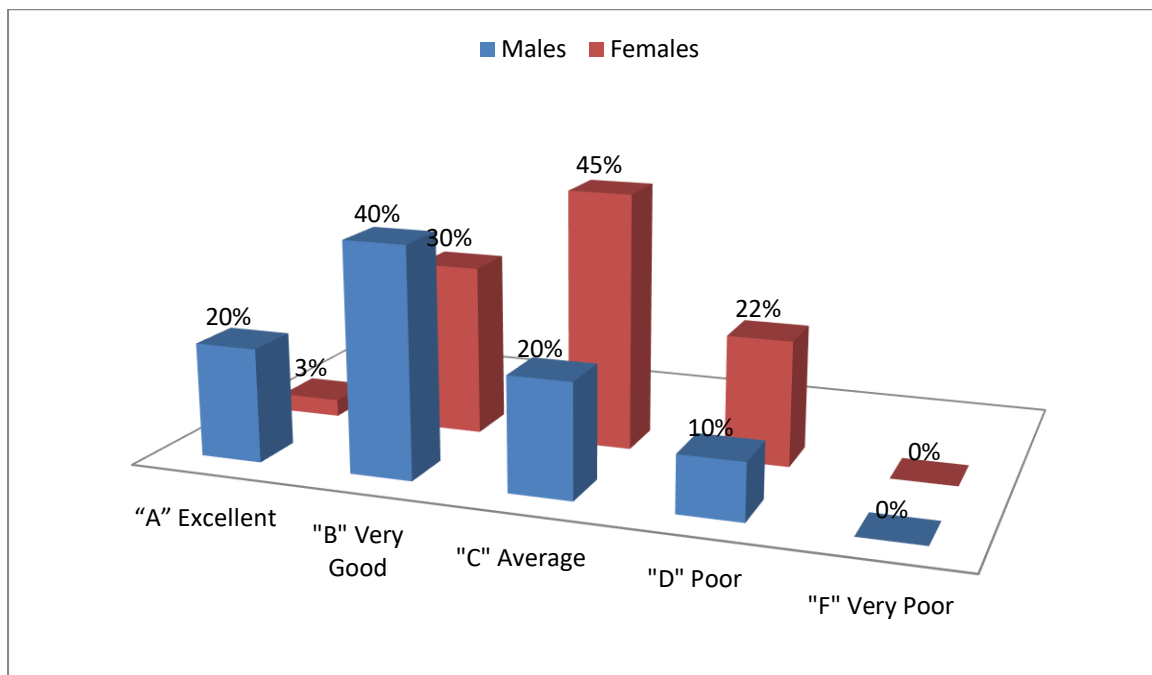
Figure 7. Females and Males' Results of Sentences' Articulation Accuracy and Fluency

On one hand, similar to the previous analysis of task one results, level "A" represents the minority where (03%) of female participants succeed in reading sentences properly. The minority for male participants; on the other hand, has scored (10%) in level "D" followed by (22%) of females recorded as having poor pronunciation and (10%) of males as well. Due to the fact that participants were limited to reading a passage, and were conscious of themselves performing the task, plenty of mispronunciations are made including robotic speech, accented speech and misplacement of word stress; as well as mispronunciations of some basic vocabulary. For females, "D" and "C" levels are achieved more, and they obtain the highest score in level "C". Males, by contrast, achieve the highest score in level "B" committing less

errors and mispronunciations. Results cannot be conclusive only because there are not an equal number of participants in each gender.

During the recitation and reading session, it has been detected that female participants cannot keep the model accent intonation in speech and made various mispronunciations with rare instances of word stress including the major ones,

- Upset [ʌpˈset] as [əpsət] and [ʌpsʌt],
- Focus [ˈfəʊkəs] as [ˈfɒkəs] and [ˈfʊkəz],
- Pilot [ˈpaɪlət] as [pɪˈlɒt],
- Which [wɪtʃ] as [wɪʃ],
- Space [speɪs] as [spaɪs],
- Whines [waɪnz] as [wɪnz],
- Ignore [ɪgˈnɔː] as [ɪnˈjɔːr],
- Ideal [ˈaɪdiəl] as [ɪdiəl],
- Visual [ˈvɪʒuəl] as [vɪzuəl],
- Conversation [kɒnvəˈseɪʃn̩] as [kɒnvərˈzeɪʃn̩],
- Increasingly [ɪnˈkriːsɪŋli] as [ɪnˈkriːzɪŋli].
- Radar [ˈreɪdɑː] as [rɑːdə]
- Significant [sɪgˈnɪfɪkn̩t] as [sɪgˈnɪfɪsn̩t]
- Peanut [ˈpiːnʌt] as [penət]
- Psyche [ˈsaɪki] as [psaik]

Moreover, a common ground between some of both participating genders is found in mispronunciation of unfamiliar words including "Multitude", "Multi-tasking", "Ideal", "Genuinely", "Sincere", "Simultaneously", "Burdensome", and "Boundaries"; as well as the absence of stress in their speech, both word and sentence stress. They tend to pronounce syllables and words with the same rhythm, use fewer weak forms or stress the wrong syllables as shown above, which causes their speech to sound robotic, inconsistent, quick, barely heard or accented.

Another idea to point out is that all participants are producing English with an American accent. Although some participants; mainly, females admit to speaking RP; it is not apparent in their speech entirely as they mix aspects of both accents. Even participants who have scored level "A" are not consistent in their model accent of their choice and mixed both

systems either unconsciously or unknowingly. Moreover, less affrication is noticed more in females' pronunciation in examples including, "Trip", "Gradually", "Treating" and "During".

- Activity Three

The last task in the same worksheet requires participants to send recordings or voice-clips of their speeches; where they are requested to narrate topics which they select out of proposed ones including: a movie's summary, an anecdote from their childhood, an unforgettable memory, or their experience during Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in 2019. Participants are given three to five minutes maximum to record their speech and send them via Messenger. Instead of reading a passage, they are requested to speak freely to allow them to be less self-conscious of their mistakes or being monitored and examined by a listener. Their evaluation has taken a smooth course where all recordings are replayed various times in order to pinpoint the participants' aspects of speech more carefully; both phonological and phonetic aspects. Participants' total number is one hundred and thirty-six (one hundred and six females and thirty males). Evaluation method and scale has taken the following form,

Table 12. Evaluation Method and Scale for the Speaking Task

A	**Excellent**	All components of speech are included and present. (Linking, word stress, intonation, rhythm, model accent, accuracy and fluency)
B	**Very Good**	Some prosodic (intonation) inconsistencies and a few instances of mispronunciations and unintentional absent linking or word stress.
C	**Average**	Intelligible speech accompanied with a few instances of linking, mispronunciations and inconsistent accent.
D	**Poor**	Robotic speech due to absence of rhythm, word stress, and intonation, in addition to accented speech and plenty of mispronunciations.
F	**Very Poor**	No component of speech is to be spotted.

Following this table with the evaluation method and scale to assess respondents' speech via recordings, the following statistical results are gathered, illustrated, described in detail and analysed subsequently,
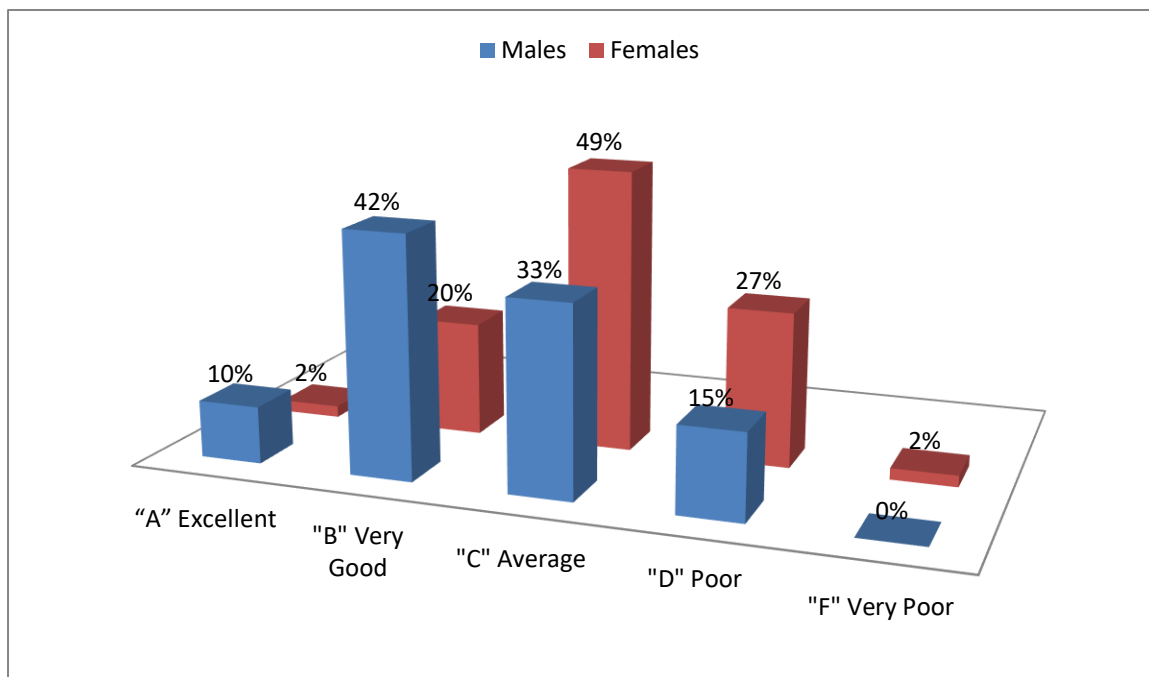
Table 8. Females and Males' Results of Speaking and Narration Evaluation

With regard to first level "A", only a minority (02%) of female participants produces almost correct speech and English pronunciation but only in RP. By contrast, (10%) of male participants achieve the same performance. Considering the total number of each gender, male participants appear to have surpassed females in English speech, but in GA. What is noticed is that all of them speak too fast, where they disregard rhythm rules, although intonation and linking are present in their speech. Only one female candidate out of more than a hundred speaks in RP fluently and whose speech is marked with glottalisation.

By getting to level "B", the males score better than the females here (42%) where their speech is mainly in GA and is marked by little linking especially the case of linking "r". Moreover, g-dropping is greatly noticed among males rather than females. Additionally, stress patterns are poorly apparent in the females' sentences; as well as ignoring tonic stress in some instances which makes their speech sound a bit accented, due to missing rhythm in connected speech. The females mix model accents more than the males do, as they produced rhotic [r] sometimes and disregard it at other times. Glottalisation is more conspicuous in females' speech who speak RP and GA; for instance, in "But" and "That".

It is also noticed that females and males misplace word stress only when noticeable; whereas in most of their production, word stress is not given much attention and is occasional. For female participants, it is more apparent when they confused between long and short vowels; for instance, "Events" [ˈiːvents] instead of [ɪˈvents]. As for males, there is stress

misplacement in "until" [ˈʌntɪl] instead of [ənˈtɪl] and "Delay" [ˈdɪleɪ] instead of [dɪˈleɪ]. Furthermore, rhythm is; in a few females participants' speech; unorthodox where they stress structure words; such as "that" and "to" without a reason for emphasis. For females as well, there are some instances where they do not use contractions (e.g., you are, she is, etc.).

With regard to mispronunciations, the males make less; for example, "Chance" [tʃæns] pronounced as [ʃæns], "Basically" [ˈbeɪsɪkli] as [ˈbeɪzɪkli], "Precious" [ˈpreʃəs] as [ˈprɪsiəs], "Tree" [triː] as [triː] with a trill and "Champion" [ˈtʃæmpiən] as [ˈʃæmpiən]. Females; on the other hand, make numerous mispronunciations probably because they outnumber male respondents and they speak for longer minutes. Some examples that are recorded include "Tortured" [ˈtɔːtjʊəd] instead of [ˈtɔːtʃəd], "Techniques" [tɪkˈniːks] instead of [tekˈniːks], "Vaccination" [vækˈseɪʃn̩] instead of [væksɪˈneɪʃn̩], "Memory" [meˈmɒri] instead of [ˈmemr̩i], "Swam" [swʌm] instead of [swæm], "Sincere" [sɪnsə] instead of [sɪnˈsɪə] and "Saw" [səʊ] instead of [sɔː]. Females' speech was marked by the glottal stop on many occasions where males' speech was not.

With regard to the third level "C", (33%) of males and (49%) of females have got average English where their English pronunciation as graduates is to some extent lacking. Their speech although intelligible, still is short of prosodic features. After the listening analysis of the recorded extracts, it is deduced that females' speech is marked with flaws more than males' speech is. The former's pronunciation is accented because of little linking and a few intonation units. Therefore, females' speech contains accentedness and conspicuous lack of linking in connected speech; as well as stressing most of structure words including "to", "was", "of", "for", and short forms; such as "there is", "she is" and "will not".

Word stress cannot be noticed in their speech as if they are pronouncing syllables equally in rhythm. Still, where there is stress, it is often misplaced as in the following words: "Follow" [ˈfɒləʊ] that was pronounced [fɒˈləʊ] and "Contact" [ˈkɒntækt] pronounced as [kɒnˈtækt] accompanied by intonation problems and mixing both model accents. Female participants in this level confuse or have got no differentiation between short and long vowels in some words including: "Cook" [kʊk] that is pronounced [kuːk], "Beauty" [ˈbjuːti] as [bjʊtiː], "Each" [iːtʃ] as [ɪtʃ] and "Keep" [kiːp] as [kɪp]. Furthermore, female participants have got more noticeable mispronunciations; and they are listed as follows,

- "Surgery" [sərʒr̩i] instead of [ˈsɜːdʒri].
- "Increasing" [ɪnˈkriːzɪŋ] instead of [ɪnˈkriːsɪŋ].
- "Series" [ˈsaɪrɪz] or [sɪrˈɪɒz] istead of [ˈsɪərɪz].

- "Month" [mɒnθ] instead of [mʌnθ].
- "Us" [ʌz] instead of [ʌs].
- "Closer" [ˈkləʊzə] instead of [ˈkləʊsə].
- "Other" [ˈɒðə] instead of [ˈʌðə]
- "Comfortable" [kɒmˈfɔːrtəbḷ] instead of [ˈkʌmftəbḷ].
- "Neighbours" [ˈnaɪbɒz] instead of [ˈneɪbəz].
- "Hospital" [ˈhɔːspɪtḷ] instead of [ˈhɒspɪtḷ].
- "Desert" [ˈdiːzərt] instead of [ˈdezət].
- "Philosopher" [ˈfiːlɒzəfər] instead of [fɪˈlɒsəfə].
- "Goblet" [ˈgʌblɪt] instead of [ˈgɒblət].
- "Use" (noun) [juːz] instead of [juːs].
- "Invited" [ɪnveɪtɪd] instead of [ɪnˈvaɪtɪd].
- "Lockdown" [lʊkˈdaʊn] instead of [ˈlɒkdaʊn].
- "Period" [ˈpɪried] instead of [ˈpɪərɪd],
- "Fell" [felt] instead of [fel].
- "Bear" (verb) [bɪə] instead of [beə].
- "Danger" [ˈdændʒər] instead of [ˈdeɪndʒə].
- "Precautions" [prɪˈkəʊʃnz] instead of [prɪˈkɔːʃnz].
- "Covid" [ˈkɒvɪd] instead of [ˈkəʊvɪd].
- "Considered" [kɒnsiːdərd] instead of [kənˈsɪdəd].
- "Frustrating" [fræstreɪtɪŋ] instead of [ˈfrʌstreɪtɪŋ].
- "Pandemic" [ˈpendemɪk] instead of [pænˈdemɪk].
- "Discovering" [dɪskɒvərɪŋ] instead of [dɪsˈkʌvərɪŋ].
- "Platform" [pletˈfɔːrm] instead of [ˈplætfɔːm].
- "Alone" [əˈlaʊn] instead of [əˈləʊn].
- "Afraid" [ˈʌfreɪd] instead of [əˈfreɪd].
- "Movie" [mʊvi] instead of [ˈmuːvi].
- "Realise" [ˈriːlaɪs] instead of [rɪəˈlaɪz].
- "Phoenix" [fɪnɪks] istead of [ˈfiːnɪks].
- "Final" [fɪnḷ] instead of [ˈfaɪnḷ].
- "Really" [rɪli] instead of [ˈriːli].
- "Deathly" [dɪθli] instead of [ˈdeθli].

- "Even" [ˈɪvn̩] instead of [ˈiːvn̩].
- "Most" [mɒst]/[m ɔːst] instead of [məʊst].
- "Comfort" [kɒmˈfɔːrt] instead of [ˈkʌmfət].
- "Souls" [suːlz] instead of [səʊlz].
- "Childhood" [tʃaɪldhuːd] instead of [ˈtʃaɪldhʊd].
- "Wound" [wuːnd] instead of [wʊnd].
- "Wolf" [wɒlf] instead of [wʊlf].
- "Addition" [ˈʌdɪʃn̩] instead of [əˈdɪʃn̩].
- "Faced" [feɪsd] instead of [feɪst]
- "Three" [triː] instead of [θriː].
- "Trip" [triːp] instead of [trɪp].
- "Innocent" [ɪˈnɒsn̩t] instead of [ˈɪnəsn̩t].
- "Cooked" [kʊkd] instead of [kʊkt].
- "Hospital" [hɒsˈpiːtl̩] instead of [ˈhɒspɪtl̩].
- "Evening" [ɪvn̩ɪŋ] instead of [ˈiːvn̩ɪŋ].
- "University" [jʊnɪvərˈsiːti] instead of [juːnɪˈvɜːsəti].
- "Pronounced" [ˈprɒnaʊnsd] instead of [prəˈnaʊnst].
- "Remained" [rɪmaɪnd] instead of [rɪˈmeɪnd].
- "Abroad" [əˈbrəʊd] instead of [əˈbrɔːd].
- "Favourite" [faɪvɒrɪt] instead of [ˈfeɪvərɪt].
- "Isolated" [ɪzɒleɪtɪd] instead of [ˈaɪsəleɪtɪd],
- "Extremely" [ɪkstremli] instead of [ɪksˈtriːmli].
- "Himself" [hɪmself] instead of [hɪmˈself].
- "Useless" [ˈjuːzləs] instead of [ˈjuːsləs].
- "Balloon" [ˈbʌlɒn] instead of [bəˈluːn].
- "Addicted" [ˈædɪktɪd] instead of [əˈdɪktɪd].
- "Allow" [ələʊ] instead of [əˈlaʊ].
- "Continued" [ˈkɒntɪnjuːd] instead of [kəntɪnˈjuːd].
- "Hesitant" [hɪstn̩t] instead of [ˈhezɪtn̩t].
- "Proud" [prəʊd] instead of [praʊd].
- "Break" [briːk] instead of [breɪk].
- "Memory" [ˈmɪmɒri] intead of [ˈmemr̩i].

- "Invented" [ɪnveɪtɪd] instead of [ɪnˈventɪd].

As a result, it can be said that females' pronunciation recordings demonstrate females' graduate inability to discern long mono-phthongs from the short ones in accordance with the afore-listed examples. Moreover, stress placement appears to be heavily based on the longest vowels or heaviest syllables in weight disregarding conventional stress patterns; as well as the right articulation. The males; however, have mispronounced very few examples as mentioned earlier and do not struggle with word or sentence stress. Most of females and males who are categorised as level "C" pronounce "g" as [ng] and not [n] where the soft "g" articulation is clear.

Participants whose speech is deemed to be poor in various aspects of English speech and pronunciation are to some extent closer in number to level "C"; (27%) females and (20%) males. After the cautious listening session of participants' recordings, it is concluded that both genders in this category have got accented and robotic speech, where no rhythm or intonation pattern is traced. All structure words are stressed and tonic stress cannot be noticed in a regular rhythm. Some mispronunciations are extracted only when speech is intelligible a little; such as "isolated" [ˈaɪsəleɪtɪd] pronounced as [ɪsɒleɪtɪd] and losing [ˈluːzɪŋ] as [lɒzɪŋ].

As for level "F", only one female participant could or would not utter a single word of English correctly. Her speech is not evaluated properly due to her refusal to speak further. No reasons behind her demeanour are unfolded. By contrast, no male participant (00%) is recorded to be part of this level.

Proceeding thorough analysis of male and female participants' recorded speech and classifying them, there are similarities between each genders' pronunciation of English. As for dissimilarities, they are only conspicuous afterwards due to the little number of males. The females; nevertheless, commit various errors; mainly, numerous mispronunciations, misplacement or absence of word stress and robotic speech that lacks rhythmic and prosodic patterns. Males on the other hand, maintain a decent level of pronunciation compared to females and their speech has got a few insufficiencies with reference to mispronunciations and accented speech or pronunciation. Results also show that both female and male participants' speech in category "B" is marked with a few examples of non-standard forms, such as, "like", "gonna", "lotta", "hella" and "yeah". Only females who speak RP maintain a degree of formal speech. Both genders express English in different manners. The females show much hesitance, spuriousness and tend to pose to sound prestigious which is apparent in their many pauses. Another important trait is the use of alveolar [r] or the trill instead of post-

alveolar [r] in females' production. Moreover, implementing the flap [t̬] in GA is noticed in both genders' pronunciation, as well as a few instances of dentalisation in examples like "This" [dɪs], "That" [dæt] and "With" [wɪd]

Conclusion

After the elaboration of all components of the third chapter that present the research methodology, research instruments, and participants for this investigation; the subsequent part involves the first part of data analysis and description which concerns pronunciation worksheet activities and recordings in order to obtain the main gender dissimilarities related to phonetic coding skill, model accent consistency, phonemic transcription, prosodic aspects and patterns of pronunciation and silent letters' distinction. The major results obtained after data analysis and participants' speech and pronunciation evaluation are briefly listed as follows,

Concerning phonetic information, knowledge and coding, females make a large amount of misspellings when decoding phonetic transcription, and they even provide awkward spellings that are meaningless; whereas males prove to be better at phonetic coding and they read phonemic symbols more properly. Females are better transcribers and succeed in being as close to the right answer as possible; still, they confuse more symbols, such as [ʃ] as [f], [n] as [h] and [tʃ] as [dr], which can be due to hastiness and lack of concentration. Moreover, males are better at discerning silent letters and they mispronounce less transcribed words and other entries' spelling. It has also been noticed that both genders have got a major hindrance in correct pronunciation which is fossilised mispronunciations. The reason behind such difficulties in acquiring the right production of syllables or words may be uncovered later on in their questionnaires analysis in the subsequent chapter.

With regard to phonemes' distinction, results so far show that the females have got a difficulty in distinguishing closing diphthongs from centring diphthongs in phonetic transcription. Their confusion between and mixing up of long and short mono-phthongs are more conspicuous in their oral production than males who perform well and more confidently. Another hindrance to point out is the case of the phoneme schwa which is tricky to pronounce and to detect its equivalent grapheme in isolated words.

When it comes to prosodic patterns and degree of accentedness, although word stress is rarely heard, females stress more often than males do, but tend to place it on the wrong syllable. Males who do stress English words are a majority and because their speech tends to

be quick, stressed syllables are thought to be unheard; yet, it is the contrary and male participants' word and sentence stress are appropriate. In terms of accent, the females cannot be consistent in their production of the model accent which they speak. They implement elements from both accents, for instance, [ɑː] vs. [æ], [ɔː] vs. [ɒ], [ə] vs. [ər], retroflex [r], rhotic [r] and final suffix "isation" to name a few. Nonetheless, male respondents are self-aware of their articulation of isolated words and read transcription better with respect to silent "r" in RP.

For other aspects, female respondents risk more often by providing answers that are mostly wrong, whereas male respondents, when unsure; leave blank space. The latter is more attentive and confident in their replies and it has been noticed that they are not risk-takers on various occasions. Furthermore, the males drop the pronunciation of the "g" more often, particularly, the males with results from A and B categories. Most of female respondents do not drop it and their speech is marked with instances of glottalisation. The next point is that most of females from categories "C" and "D" rarely apply affrication in words; as well as in word boundaries in sentences, for instance, "but you're". It is worth mentioning that only one female scored level "A" for her consistency in speaking RP.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, two research instruments were scrutinised and results were obtained to be compared with participants' answers from the third instrument analysis; a questionnaire. The last tool to be analysed is a lengthy paper survey diffused among LMD3 EFL graduates in the department of English at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University in Mostaganem. For extra participation, the same questionnaire is made digital in Google Forms as an online survey. Students' paper survey is opted for as a preliminary research instrument that is considered the fastest in collecting data. The present study intends to collect empirical evidence to be analysed through gender, as the main variable in this investigation in order to pinpoint the main gender differences in pronunciation attainment. Results collected from their questionnaire are to be compared to their worksheets' findings.

Additionally, Covid-19 pandemic procedures did slow down the process of data collection, and the usage of a questionnaire at first was selected. The survey took two forms, a tangible one and a digital one published via Google Forms. However, quite a few participants opted for the digital questionnaire. Out of one hundred and eighty questionnaires distributed among LMD3 EFL graduates, only one hundred and fifteen were returned; whereas, only eight surveys were digital which makes the rest of them tangible.

IV. 1. Student Questionnaire Analysis

As previously stated in the third chapter, students' questionnaire was lengthy and the selected participants were allowed to have as much time as they needed while answering. Collection of their questionnaires lasted for a whole week. The selected participants remained anonymous, only their gender was requested at the very beginning of it right after the objectives were laid down. The main objectives of the questionnaire are the following,

1. Confirming and comparing the main gender differences in LMD3 EFL graduates' pronunciation and its attainment that were identified in the previous chapter; as well as the possible superiority of either gender in some phonetic aspects; if there is any.

2. Identifying students' phonetic and phonological background proficiency which is linked to their previous Phonetics' classes and phonological awareness; as well as instruction.

3. Determining students' tendencies in speaking a certain accent which they select among the most common model accents; RP and GA. In addition, identifying their attitudes towards the model accents and their reasons behind their choice of that accent.

4. Exposing students' employment of techniques and strategies along the course of phonetic/pronunciation learning and their pronunciation practice tendencies.

5. Determining whether LMD3 graduates are fully satisfied with their phonetic tuition (two years), and if any progress is achieved thanks to their Phonetics' classes. Afterwards, designing a list of recommendations for Phonetics' teacher in accordance with students' needs.

IV. 1. 1. Section One: Personal Background

The first section of the survey targets the selected participants' major personal details that concern their socio-cultural status, as well as phonetic orientation and viewpoints.

Q1. Gender

The first inquiry aims to find out the number of participating genders in the survey. It also aims to facilitate classifying respondents' answers between males and females, which refers to the main variable in the present study. It serves as a means to categorise obtained results afterwards to be scrutinised systematically and more at ease.
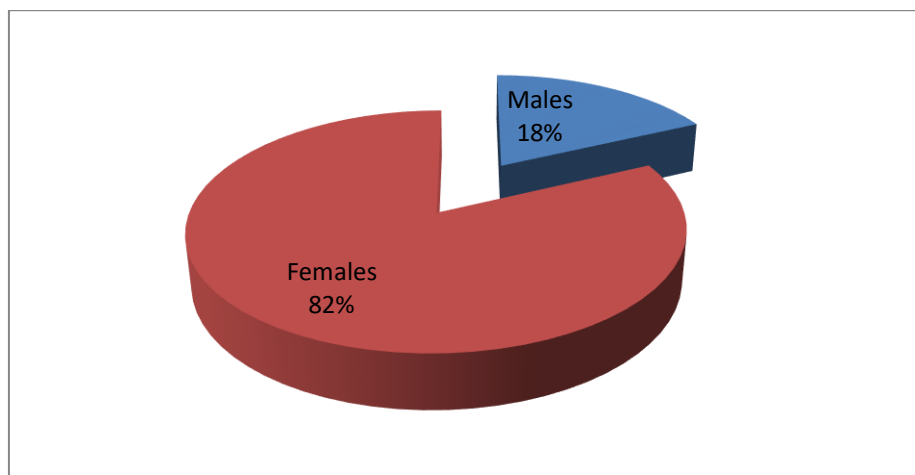

Figure 9. Participants' Gender

Participants' gender indicates a huge gap between male and female students who take part in the present investigation. The small number of male participants is conspicuous due to the fact that in every LMD3 group of students, the number of males is always minimal compared to their female counterparts'. Another reason to be highlighted is the fact that out of the total number of distributed questionnaires (One hundred and eighty copies), sixty-five respondents did not return their copies, which is assumed to be containing male respondents.

Q2. Years of Learning English

This inquiry aims to find out the number of English learning span as it may differ from several students due to some educational reasons; for example, older students who have already finished studies in a field different than English, and now they are learning English as a major or they belonged to the classical system where the total of English learning years at middle and high schools is five years. Since 2008, the total has changed into seven years with one additional year at middle school. Another reason can be students repeating years. Another one is exceptional teaching of English in primary schools as a choice in some Algerian towns including Ourgla.

- **Province**
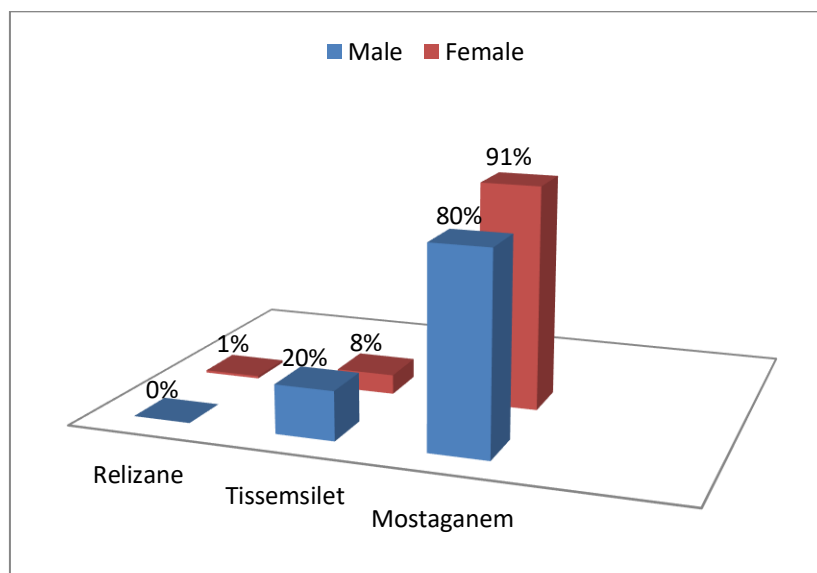
Figure 10. Females and Males' Province of Origin before University

Among female and male respondents, the span of their English tuition since middle school varies between nine to ten years. Theoretically speaking, with eight years in both middle school and secondary school combined and with no repeated classes or levels (grades), plus three years or more before graduation is sufficient for students to process basic English that encompasses all language skills. Nevertheless, one cannot be certain if pronunciation is emphasised during such a period of time; let alone, the fact of fossilised mispronunciations that may last for years without proper monitoring and instant correction.

The table demonstrates the majority of respondents, both male and female, come from Mostaganem and are taking a major in English in their hometown Mostaganem as well. The minorities are from Tissemsilt; mainly, and Relizane as well. It is worth noting that similar to Mostaganem, learners in other western area schools begin their tuition in English in middle schools. At university, students from Tissemsilet are being oriented to Mostaganem University for being geographically closer or their Baccalaureat final exam's average, and because there is no college that offers majors in foreign languages unlike other provinces; such as Oran, Algiers, Tiaret and so on.

Q3. Foreign Country Experience (English-speaking Country)

The third question intends to figure out the possibility of Algerian learners having experienced speaking English abroad which can greatly boost one's self-confidence and provide them with the right context to speak English with native speakers. For more clarification, another sub-question entails their opinions of pronunciation's importance while conversing with native speakers. It also targets the issue of accuracy and fluency to convey one's message.
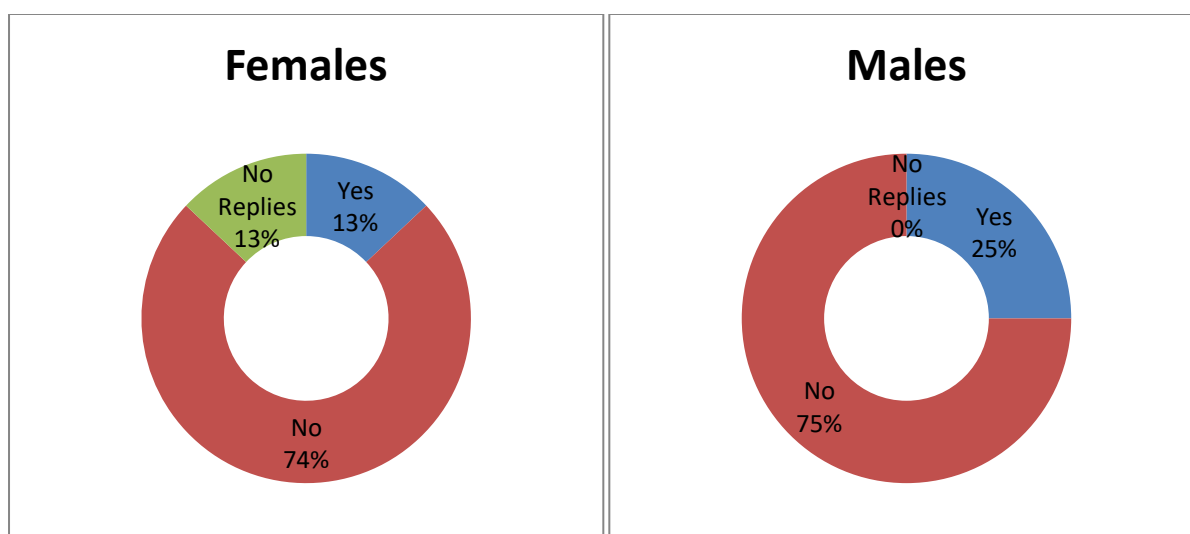

Figure 11. Females and Males' Experience in English-speaking Countries

Statistics demonstrate a majority in both genders that has not travelled abroad to employ their skills in a foreign country that spoke English as a first language. Some female respondents have left the answer blank (13%) while males have not. The minority of females who experienced speaking English in a different country answered the sub-question.

- Correct pronunciation is important for communication in order to sound clear and native-like.
- It is important because mispronouncing words or syllables in English causes a change in meaning; as well as being misunderstood.
- It is important in order not to cause misunderstanding and not to interrupt communication.

Namely, most of their answers emphasise accuracy and fluency which combine transmitting the speech and message smoothly. Another candidate mentions that she had no difficulty in communicating with native speakers despite the various accents only thanks to correct pronunciation. As for male respondents, their answers are quite similar, as they emphasise speaking correctly in order to be understood without difficulty and; especially English that possesses a complex grapheme-phoneme relationship which needs to be understood.

One male respondent; however, claims that the message intended is conveyed even through a weak pronunciation. It is only natural to believe that as many accents exist now and thanks to technology everyone is exposed to them. Still, accented speech may not be tolerated by all native speakers as it may annoy the listener before they can understand what is about to be said.

Q4. When you learn and speak English, you are …

This inquiry aims to obtain gender differences through targeting students' affective factors that may determine the progress of their learning process. Male and female students may share or experience the same psychological states while learning and speaking English by being motivated, assertive, perseverant and pleased on one hand, or afraid, anxious and inhibited on the other one. Participants are given the chance to also state additional factors of their own and select more than one option.
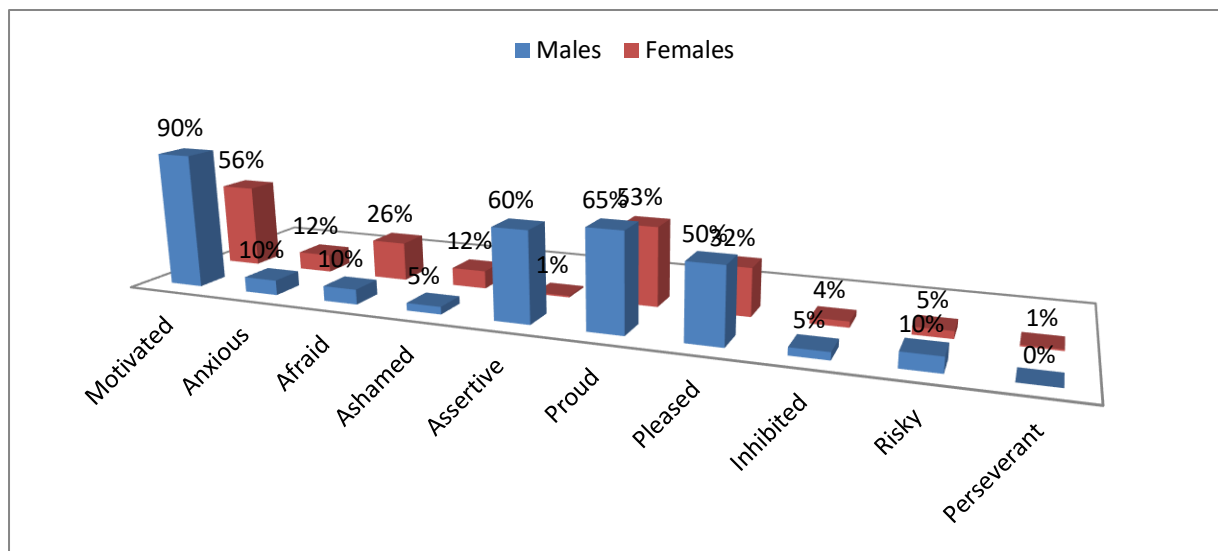
Figure 12. Females and Males' Affective and Emotional States

Females' results demonstrate how their majority (56%) and (53%) exhibit motivation and pride in themselves while speaking English; followed by pleasure (32%). The three positive affective factors are associated together in most of their replies. Males' results demonstrate a similar emotional aura of motivation, pleasure and pride while practising the target language, and statistics show more enthusiasm in males' attitudes and opinions as well. Moreover, for female respondents, there is a pattern of mixed feelings noticed between motivation and pride accompanied with fear. The candidates who mention fear alongside positive emotions indicate in their answers that their English needs amelioration and practice in order to become better speakers.

Moreover, females' minority expresses anxiety (12%), apprehension (26%) and shame (12%) while speaking English; and learning it might be challenging to them. Some respondents mention being forced to study it or have got no other better choice in order to get a job. Others do love English despite being anxious or afraid while communicating in the target language. A few male respondents, by contrast, may feel somehow afraid (10%) and anxious (10%), even run a risk (10%) speaking incorrect English, but they demonstrate interest in learning the target language. Last but not least, the males express no perseverance (00%) in learning or speaking English although their majority is assertive, motivated and proud during the process. For females; however, results show one respondent being assertive of her level of English and perseveres in progressing more.

Other affective factors indicated by female respondents are: encouragement, happiness, confidence, excitement, curiosity, luck, in control, expressing one-self, ambition,

and intelligence. Others indicate less positive factors including shyness, nervousness, inhibition in front of the teacher or audience and being bothered by "the tons of exceptions in English". Other affective features indicated by male respondents are none, except one respondent who feels "stressed" when speaking English.

In accordance with females' additional affective factors, more positive emotions are being projected in the process of learning English in general, which is an instance that calls for pointing out Wilson (2006) and Hawkar's (2016) research, concerning females' great motivation in EFL classrooms that overpowers the males'. Females' positivity is only enhanced by the skills they sharpen while speaking a foreign language and may take risks in order to improve.

Q5. Was studying English your own choice?

Several students cannot obtain the branch they desire once they get their baccalaureate degree. Therefore, this inquiry exposes the possibility that EFL students may be obliged to study English or is imposed on them may reduce the likelihood that they are motivated to study a speciality they do not like. From a gender perspective, this inquiry intends to find out which gender prefers English more.
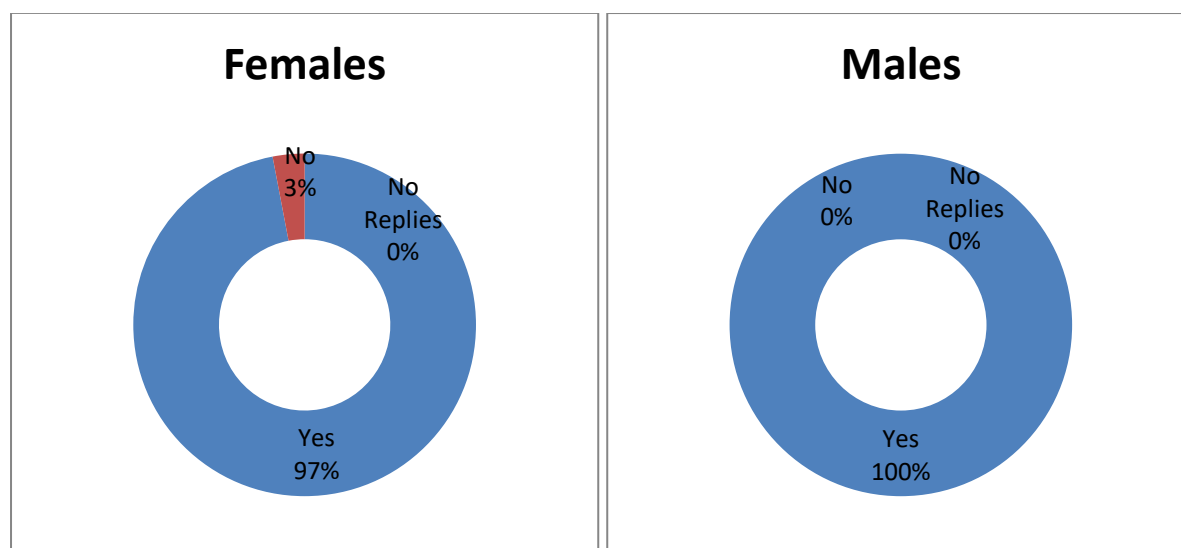
Figure 13. Females and Males' Choice of a Major in English

The fifth inquiry draws more attention towards LMD3 EFL graduates' opinions and affective aspects with regard to learning English. Motivation has been tackled before in the present research as it represents one of the major affective factors that lead learners to succeed or fail in their studies. Bearing in mind that learners with integrative motivation may achieve

better results in their studies compared to those of them who lack motivation or may apply it instrumentally for material reasons and objectives. Results demonstrate positive answers from both genders; as the majority has willingly chosen to study and major in English. Only a small fragment of female respondents answers no. Participants are required to justify their answers, which are summarised for more clarification as follows,

- For personal reasons, most of LMD3 female EFL graduates simply like English, love learning it, they are interested in English because it facilitates communication around the world, English is their favourite language, they are interested in movies and reading books in English, they admire it and its pronunciation is beautiful, they intend to develop their foreign languages' speaking skills, it makes them feel and sound intellectual and others feel comfortable speaking in English.

- For integrative reasons, and besides admiring it as a beautiful language, only the minority of female respondents aspire to speak it like native speakers, everything about England is appealing, they are interested in the culture, while others aspire to become teachers of English.

- For instrumental reasons, the first minority of female participants states that it simply is an international language spoken everywhere, they can utilise it to benefit from it in communication and will utilise it to travel the world and discover it. The second minority of females chooses English to either get job opportunities abroad, because they "could not get what they wanted ", or simply because they desire to speak a language different from their mother tongue.

- The second majority of females choose to study English as a major because it is a childhood dream as they grew up exposed to it via media, it is a passion to learn it, or as expressed by a participant "obsessed" by it. Other female participants are positively influenced by certain individuals; such as their middle school teachers or parents who are teachers of English themselves. The third majority is represented by the participants who actually love languages in general and aspire to learn them, either as a passion or because they express themselves more comfortably through English and other foreign languages.

During the categorisation process of female participants' replies, it is noticed that the majority who has personal and integrative reasons to learn and speak English have already stated previously in the fourth inquiry that they are motivated, pleased and proud during their

tuition period (since middle school). Others accompany such positive views and emotions with apprehension or anxiety, while others express only negative emotions including apprehension, anxiety, shame and sometimes inhibition. The reason behind such low and negative feelings may not be determined at the moment, but it is assumed that they can be due to listeners' reaction or feedback.

For the participants who reply with a "no", they justify their answers by stating various reasons including the following,

- A few participants (3%) are forced by a parent to study English. Others have had the intention to specialise in another major; such as nursing or translation, but their baccalaureate exam results were not sufficient to apply for such majors and English was a last-minute way-out for them. Moreover, motivation matters in succeeding in any field of interest. It reflects on each student's performance and psyche.

-

By contrast, looking at male participants' results, everyone had chosen learning English. Additionally, they had diverse justifications similar to the females'. Males' majority (100%) states that they select English as a major, because they like it, they love learning it even further, it is their favourite foreign language, it is a childhood dream and they feel the happiest and most comfortable speaking it. Moreover, they are interested in learning languages in general in order to become polyglots. Some of them state that they are good at it at a very early age and will do better at English than other languages. The minority of males states that they are influenced by media and have developed a passion towards English movies and series. Only one respondent discloses an instrumental reason which is using English only when necessary, which may refer to a job requirement or for communication in trips to foreign countries and so on. Compared to the females' statements and justifications, male graduates; although fewer, express more motivational and affective views behind their choice of specialising in English at university.

Q6. What makes English special to you?

Bearing in mind that most of students may be studying a branch against their will only because they are obliged to do it administratively speaking, they are required to answer this question to find out if; even after two years of studying English as a speciality; their points of view have changed and if they grow to like it and are or are not familiar with it.

As this inquiry dives deeper into the participants' preferences with regard to studying English as a major and following the majority's positive views; and their intentions to carry

on towards higher levels, it is believed and has been already proven that positive attitudes, motivation to learn a foreign language; as well as possessing favourable and enthusiastic views towards it will only serve learners favourably in achieving better classroom and academic performances.

For females' answers, they are divided and classified into different categories in accordance with their preferences and explanations. The first majority of female graduates expose their desire to learn English only because it is an international language widely spoken and understood. Furthermore, English is a language that dominates the world and facilitates communication between non-native speakers and native speakers of English all over the globe. One of the female participants calls it "The mother of languages" to emphasise its significance presently, and its widespread around countries. The second majority represents the various aspects that appeal to the participants about English; mainly, English pronunciation which they find interesting, melodic and cute. Opinions shift between RP, GA and other accents. Secondly, they regard English grammar to be easily attained and practised as well. Thirdly, there is more interest in the American culture, as well as books and movies. Therefore, being able to listen to native speakers is generally associated with social and mass media whose influence leaves a mark on EFL learners, and may create various reasons to learn English. The third majority represents female respondents who have not provided an answer.

The fourth majority introduces the participants who regard English as an instrument to achieve a certain goal. That is, most of them find it helpful in the future as a means of communication with foreigners while they travel the world to make friends from different cultures; especially to visit English-speaking countries; such as cosmopolitan London. For others, English "opens multiple opportunities" and plenty of goals are set to be accomplished in the future with relation to English. The fifth majority concerns participants who are more personally attached to English due to their passion, admiration and "love" for it. It is either a dream to be fulfilled, a special bond created since childhood after their mother tongue, or they are influenced by a certain person, be it a teacher in middle or secondary school or a family member. Lastly, the minority of females expresses more personal incentives that make English special to them; for instance, affective factors as feeling psychologically better while speaking it, they sound more intellectual, they express themselves more easily in English, it makes them feel proud, happy and confident. While others find learning English as a major a fun activity to do.

As for male participants, the first majority express similar reasons to the females' including being an international language whose speakers' community is growing fast. The second majority regards English as "special" only in terms of achieving a task or a means to an end; for instance, getting to know more individuals from different cultures and ethnicities. Moreover, English as the first mostly-spoken language in the world facilitates communication and comprehension, establishes good foreign relationships and helps to connect with people internationally. Other participants are interested in discovering the world through travelling to English-speaking countries; such as New York. The third majority expresses more affective reasons; such as the fact that English has got a sweet accent to listen to; as well as "easy structure of words" referring to its spelling.

The first minority of male participants has not provided an answer to the sixth question. Concerning the second minority, the answers reflect personal attachment to learning English as most of them are influenced by someone special to them, be it a teacher or a family member. Due to the fact that such a question intends to expose the reasons and incentives that drove EFL graduates to set goals in learning English, either interactively or instrumentally; results, gotten after the analysis, demonstrate that females and males may share similar purposes. Still, male respondents express less affection and more inquisitiveness towards the target language privileges.

Q7. Complete the following sentences the way you desire,

The next inquiry contains incomplete statements about English and pronunciation learning which they are required to complete on their own freely. In each statement they are free to describe Phonetics' class, phonetic transcription, native-like pronunciation and English orthography the way they find suitable. Their attitudes are to be examined thoroughly at this phase to uncover their true opinions regarding the main aspects of Phonetics' class and phonological training from a personal point of view.

The following tables gather all participants' answers, females' and males' separately and respectively.

Table 13. Females' Viewpoints on Phonetics' Class and its Features

Phonetics' Class is.......	Difficult - Hard - Boring - Good - Motivating Funny - Beneficial - Amazing - Interesting Enjoyable - Simple - Easy - Tiring - Perfect Amusing - Cool - Important - Helpful - Nice Complicated - Essential
Phonetic Transcription is......	Complex - Hard - Difficult - Helpful - Fun Needs Concentration - Needs Practice - Good Easy - Tricky - Boring Interesting - Entertaining - Enjoyable
Native-like Pronunciation is.....	Specific - Challenging - Perfect - Excellent - Necessary Difficult - Good - Needs Practice - Hard The best - Easy - Dream-like - Smooth Average - Beautiful - Important - Fun - Amazing
English Spelling is......	Hard - Good - Easy - Normal - Important Different from Pronunciation - Amusing Uninteresting - Difficult - Motivating - Tricky Moderate - Helpful - Needs Practice - Rich - Different

Table 14. Males' Viewpoints on Phonetics Class its Features

Phonetics' Class is........	Useful - Hard - Interesting - Boring - Exciting Complicated - Difficult
Phonetic Transcription is......	Useful - Interesting - Difficult - Hard Needs Practice - Fun - Complicated
Native-like Pronunciation is.....	Enjoyable - Necessary - Perfect - Good Easy - Fast - Beautiful - Difficult Motivational - Important - Beneficial - Challenging
English Spelling is	Rich - Interesting - Normal - Complicated Easy - Funny - Moderate - Helpful Tricky - Important - Hard

The analysis of selected participants' replies takes the form of categorising affective factors, and if they perceive Phonetics' class and its aspects positively or negatively. For the first element "Phonetics' class", female participants provide an array of different viewpoints.

Table 15. Females' Views Analysis and Categorisation

Negative Views	Positive Views	Frequency
1 – Boring	1 – Interesting	Equally Frequent
2 - /	2 – Fun	
3 – Difficult	3 – Helpful	Equally Frequent
4 – Hard	4 – Important	Equally Frequent
5 - /	5 – Good	
	- Beneficial	
	- Enjoyable	
6 – /	6 – Easy	
	- Amazing	
7 – Tiring	7 – Motivating	Equally Frequent
- Complicated	- Perfect	
	- Nice	
	- Cool	
	- Amusing	
	- Simple	
	- Essential	
1 – Difficult	1 – /	
2 – Hard	2 – /	
3 – /	3 – Easy	
4 – /	4 – Helpful	
5 – Complex	5 – /	
6 – /	6 – Fun	
7 – /	7 – Interesting	
8 – Tricky	8 – Needs Concentration	Equally Frequent
- Boring		
9 - /	9 – Good	
	- Entertaining	

	- Enjoyable	
1 – /	1 – Beautiful	
	- Needs practice	
	- Good	
2 – Hard - Difficult	2 – Easy	Equally Frequent
3 – /	3 – Perfect - Excellent	

4 – /	4 – Necessary
	    - Smooth
	    - Amazing	

5 – /	5 – Specific
	    - Challenging
	    - The Best
	    - Dreamlike
	    - Average
	    - Important
	    - Fun
	    - Prestigious
	    - Smart	

1 – /	1 – Easy	
2 – /	2 – Important	
3 – /	3 – Good - Moderate	

4 – Hard
    -   Difficult
	4 – Helpful
	    - Different from
	Pronunciation
		Equally Frequent

5 – Tricky
    -   Uninteresting
	5 – Normal
	    - Amusing
	    - Motivating
	    - Perfect
	    - Needs Practice
	    - Rich
		Equally Frequent

However, positive views happen to overwhelm the negative ones. The majority of female graduates (70%) consider Phonetics' class equally boring and interesting, equally difficult and helpful; hard but important to their English tuition. Females' majority consider Phonetics' class fun to attend; good and beneficial; besides to being enjoyable. Their minority (30%) equally considers such a class tiring and complicated, but motivating, essential and simple. Gathered replies of females show opposing views; still, such views are in favour of Phonetics. Replies for phonetic transcription show how the majority of female graduates (60%) find learning symbols and phonemes "difficult" and "hard" despite the fact that most female learners have shown better transcription skills than male participants have. Some females (15%) consider it complex while others (25%) find it fun and interesting, but they admit that it requires practice and concentration.

The table shows once more that positive views outnumber the negative ones. With regard to native-like pronunciation, it is perceived as equally hard and easy. Nevertheless, the majority (80%) and minority (20%) of female participants are interested in English accent and they find it beautiful, perfect, excellent, necessary, dreamlike, but challenging and prestigious. Last but not least, positive views surround English spelling including easy, good and important. Such a fact demonstrates how females feel more comfortable with spelling rather than transcription. Still, their worksheets' results demonstrate females' weak orthography skills. A number of females (70%) admit that English spelling is different from pronunciation realising the fact that English is not a phonetic language, while the minority (30%) finds it equally tricky, uninteresting and normal, amusing and rich. It is worth noting that most of female respondents (70%) who describe English spelling as easy make misspellings, which calls attention to the fact that they still need to consider their writing skills.

The expressive adjectives are put in ordinal numbers in order to classify them from the more frequently restated to the less stated ones. Male participants' replies follow the next categorisation on the following table,

Table 16. Males' Views Analysis and Categorisation

| Positive Views	Negative Views	Frequency
1 – / 2 – Hard - Boring 3 – Complicated 4 – Difficult	1 – Interesting 2 – / 3 – Useful 4 - Exciting	 Equally Frequent Equally Frequent

1 – Hard
 2 – Difficult
 3 – Complicated
	1 – /
	 2 – Needs Practice
	 3 – Interesting
	    - Useful
	    - Fun
	    - Helpful
		
		 Equally Frequent
		 Equally Frequent

1 –   /
 2 – Difficult
 	
 3 -   /
	1 – Easy
	 2 – Necessary
	    - Good
	    - Perfect
	 3 – Enjoyable
	    - Challenging
	    - Beautiful
	    - Important
	    - Beneficial
	    - Motivational
		
		 Equally Frequent

1 –   /
 2 –   /
 3 –   /
 	
 4 – Complicated
    -   Hard
    -   Tricky
	1 – Easy
	 2 – Normal
	 3 – Interesting
	    - Fun
	 4 – Rich
	    - Moderate
	    - Helpful
	    - Important
		
		 Equally Frequent

For the first element, it appears that male graduates have got a similar opinion to the females' as they perceive Phonetics' class as hard and boring with an almost equal number of students (75%) who consider it interesting; useful and exciting compared to complicated and difficult. Male respondents appear to be less eager to attend Phonetics' classes, which is more conspicuous when having a look at how the majority (80%) finds phonetic transcription hard to learn or apply. Nonetheless, some participants (20%) admit the fact that the best remedy to how difficult and complicated transcription might be is constant practice. More positive views are presented by the minority of males (20%) including interesting, useful, fun and helpful.

With regard to how the males view native-like pronunciation, more positive affective aspects are attributed to it as the majority (90%) finds it easy to understand and necessary, but equally difficult. It remains indecisive if male participants mean to say difficult to imitate or understand. However, for them it is enjoyable, beautiful, important, fast, motivational and challenging. Compared to the females where a great number finds speaking the English accent more difficult, males' replies are more practical, than admiring. Concerning the last element, males' majority (85%) , similar to the females', express more positive views than negative ones. They find English spelling easy, normal, interesting and fun.

An equal number of male participants (70%) consider spelling complicated but helpful, hard but important, and tricky but rich. Male participants, although a minority (30%), realise the importance of the complex grapheme-phoneme relationship which English orthography possesses. It is worth noting that male participants have made misspellings as well, but they appear to have provided shorter answers than females have. Therefore, the females appear to have made more spelling mistakes.

Q8. Algerian learners have a rich phonological system and can speak various languages easily.

This inquiry discloses an assumptive statement generally used in local conversations with regard to Algerian learners' ability to speak various languages easily due to their phonological system as children or teenagers' mainly. Due to Lateralisation (Lenneberg, 1967 and Thomas Scovel, 1980, as cited in Elizabeth Pullen, 2011, p. 12), learners' phonological capacities to perceive or distinguish different sounds may diminish and speaking a native-like pronunciation may not be achieved 100% once past puberty period. It is worth mentioning that LMD3 Students' ages range between nineteen and twenty-one years old.
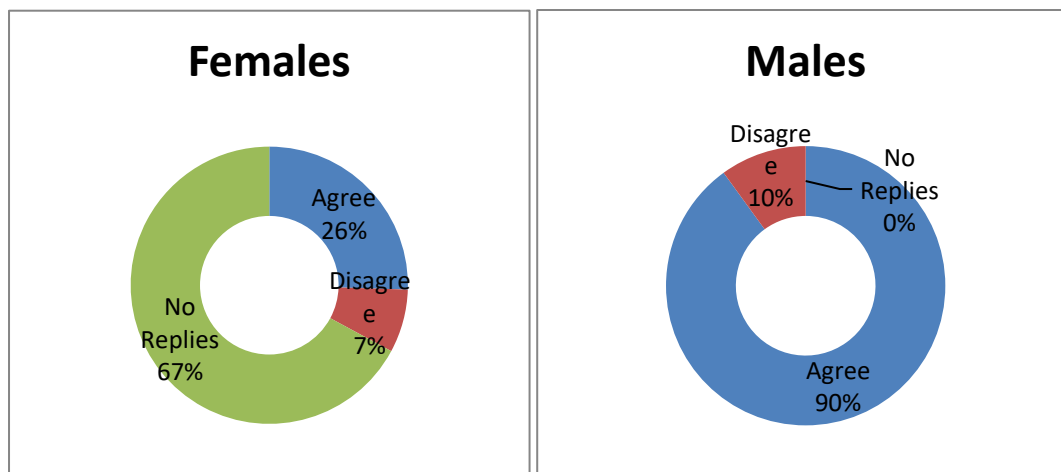
Figure 14. Females and Males' Opinion about Algerians' Rich Phonological System

The fact that Algerians speak and learn French at a young age before lateralisation may take place; their phonological system gets better with practising foreign sounds that do not belong to the Arabic sound system. By the time Algerian teenagers reach puberty, they are introduced to English as a second foreign language and they tend to learn it easily. With the spread of technology and social media, learning and speaking English are taking place smoothly. The only hindrance in acquiring correct pronunciation is the lack of authentic sources as stated by Jolanta Szcypra (2014) within ESL classrooms. Results demonstrate that the majority of Algerian graduates, both female and male, agree to the statement as they realise their own capacities to learn and speak foreign languages comfortably and confidently. Only a minority disagrees to that as there was no justification required for it.

Q9. Which type of tests and exams do you prefer?

The last question in this section targets the participants' ability to discern between modules that require written tests and exams while others that require more focus on oral skills, such as Phonetics' class. Accordingly, Pronunciation classes' evaluation has always relied entirely on test papers and written exams. A mixture of both which combines oral skills and phonetic coding on the board or paper may be the best type of evaluation to be recommended. Participants are required to justify their answers to identify the reasons behind their choices.
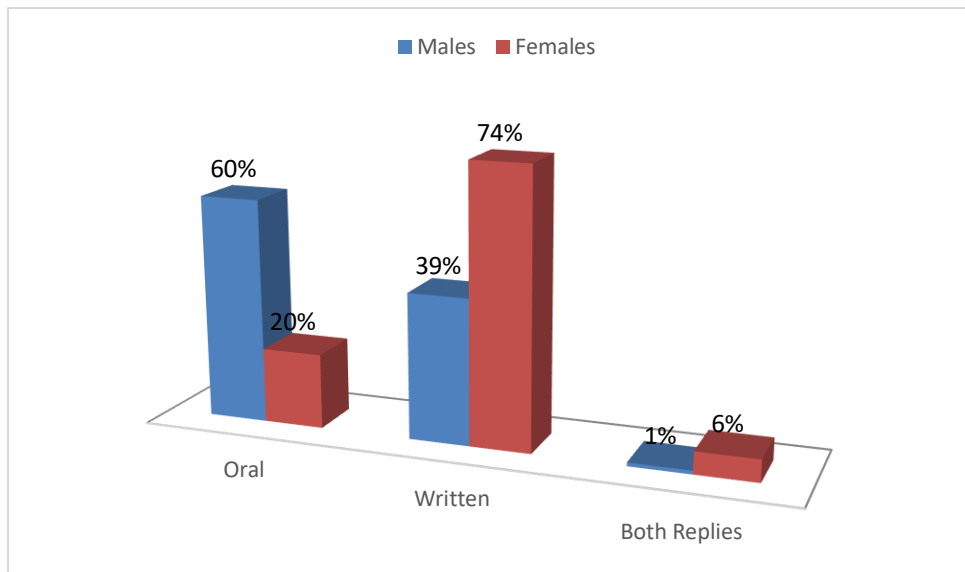
Figure 15. Females and Males' Favourite Type of Tests and Exams

The graph's results demonstrate different opinions from both genders. Apparently, the majority of female graduates do prefer written exams; whereas the majority of males prefer oral tests. Participants are requested to provide a proper justification to their answers. First, female respondents who select "written" option agree on the following reasons that are ordered by affection, preference, circumstances and difficulty respectively. There is a variety of reasons in their answers which prove females' attachment to writing and avoiding oral interaction when possible.

- Being too shy to speak in front of an audience.
- When they speak, they panic, feel stressed out and lose words.
- To avoid consequences of fear and confusion.
- Feeling at ease and more comfortable when writing.
- They are more expressive and organised in written expression than oral expression tasks.
- Feeling anxious of oral interaction and making mistakes - not precisely misspellings or mispronunciations.
- If they speak, it would be only one-to-one conversation (student-to-teacher), because of their being self-conscious of their way of speaking and their underdeveloped communicative skills.
- Afraid of being watched and judged by their peers, may get a loss of words and get embarrassed along the way.

- They prefer writing essays.
- To improve their writing skills.
- Taking time to think and prepare what to say or remember what had been prepared before.
- Having enough time to think about and recollect what they revised in order to concentrate and answer correctly.
- Having enough time to go over their answers and also correct mistakes.
- Not being obliged to answer promptly and directly.
- They need more time to reflect on questions and to also brainstorm.

- Not having a proper English (native-like) accent and being afraid of mispronouncing.
- Being "weak" at English oral expression.

Female respondents who select "oral" option mention the following justification to their answers. These reasons follow the same order of affective, preferential, circumstantial and difficulty aspects. Although a few participants prefer oral expression, their replies are more constructive and personal.

- Oral tests help them to find the courage to face their fears and errors, as well as to learn from them to improve.
- To get the chance to be corrected when mispronouncing.

- Oral expression is more interesting and beneficial.
- Interested in conversing with others rather than writing individually.
- Addressing a teacher or an audience is regarded as a challenge to drive them to speak well, fluently and accurately.
- Feeling free to say what is on their mind and to feel more comfortable.
- They like how English sounds in its spoken form (referring to English accents).

- To evaluate their skills in pronunciation by their instructors and get the chance to improve their speech.
- An easier and faster manner of answering.
- They can remember more ideas while speaking.

- They find writing down thoughts more difficult - referring to non-phonetic English spelling.
- Writing causes some participants to forget information, while speaking naturally does not require them to be self-conscious or formal.

The majority of male participants' replies come in support of oral interaction as they tend to be speech-directed and they write only when required. With regard to the males' replies, the following reasons are laid down to justify selecting the written form following the same previous order of affection, (no preferences), circumstances and difficulty.

- Feeling more at ease and comfortable with no pressure on them to speak or answer promptly.
- "Most of us are introverts" as quoted, and speaking in front of an audience intimidates them.

- They have got more time to organise and re-order their ideas and have the chance to correct their mistakes.
- Written exams/tests help them to gain more experience in writing and to enrich one's stock of vocabulary.

- They are better at spelling rather than pronunciation.

By contrast, males who select the oral option have not mentioned any difficulty in writing to cover up for their choice or any affective aspects. They rather consider elements of preference and what suits their style while replying. Thus, their justifications are mentioned as follows,

- They feel free to express themselves because they learned English at first through listening to natives and speaking, not by writing.
- To help them to improve one's pronunciation; oral expression is the best way.

- To describe their thoughts more clearly and to transmit their intended message more easily.
- Oral expression aids them in demonstrating how one is good at English.
- To enrich and build a strong phonological system.

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning that (06%) of female respondents; on one hand, have ticked both options referring to the importance of combining both productive skills together in order to obtain a good level of English in their studies. So, they justify it as follows,

- Oral and written expressions both can "show how successful one is while speaking and writing". Still, writing is a process that requires time to think before producing.
- Interested in both manners without bias.
- Both skills should be improved equally.

Males (60%), on the other hand, are a little attentive to such a fact of developing their productive skill and focus on oral expression more. Only one candidate (1%) has ticked both options and express that both manners serve to improve one's learning process. Affectively speaking, female participants display in their justifications fear of confrontation and willingness to fight their weakness towards oral expression, although the opposite party of females expresses more emotional reasons, as well as phonological ones. The males; nonetheless, display solely interest in oral expression because they listen more than read and write.

IV. 1. 2. Section Two: Phonetic/Phonological Background

The second section of the students' survey targets their phonological awareness and their utilisation of and exposure to the target language. Various aspects are considered necessary in EFL learners' skills which begin with the smallest unit in speech before nurturing the rest of skills.

Q1. What is the difference between Phonetics and Phonology?

The aim behind this question is to find out if LMD3 EFL graduates are aware of the difference between both independent; yet, interrelated branches of Linguistics, and if by learning both studies for two successive years has granted them the ability to differentiate both scientific studies or not. Their answers are not evaluated in terms of exact definitions, but rather growth in their phonological intellect and knowledge.
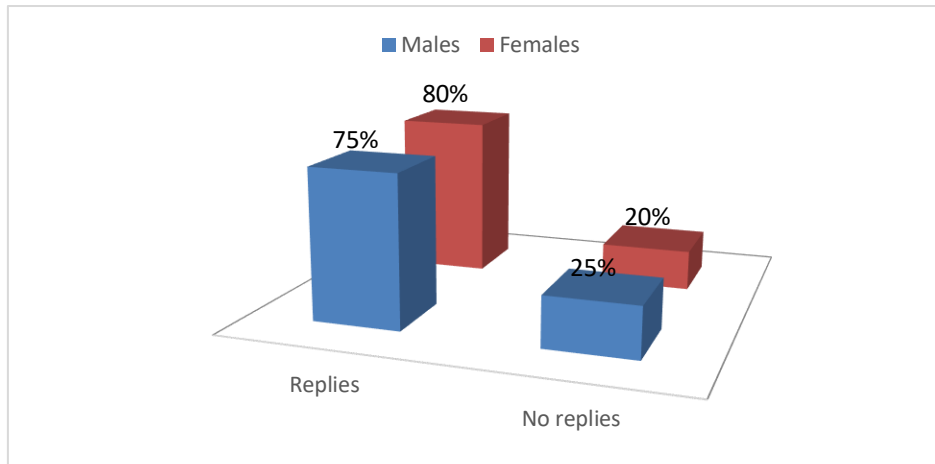
Figure 16. Females and Males' Basic Phonological Background Proficiency

**Q2. What is meant by phonetic transcription and where is it found?**

This question aims to reveal LMD3 EFL students' awareness of what phonetic transcription is without referring to sophisticated definitions and notions, and if they are familiar with its use other than within classes. That is in hard copy dictionaries or phone dictionary applications. It targets male and female's degree of precision when it comes to sharpening and enriching their phonological background.
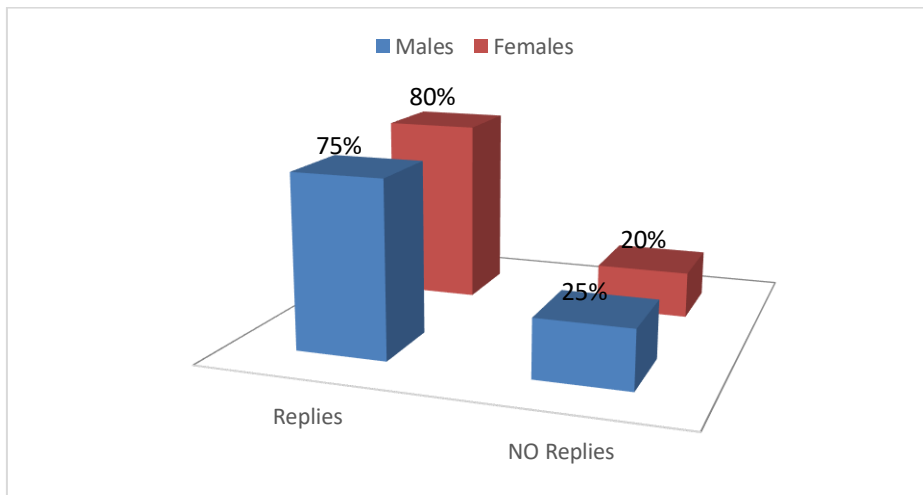
Figure 17. a. Females and Males' Phonetic Knowledge

Q3. Please do explain the difference between narrow and broad transcriptions, if you can.

This question is related to the previous one in terms of types of transcription. It is worth mentioning that all students go through phonetic/phonological background including rules and notions. Therefore, the terms "Broad and Narrow transcriptions" have surely been used in Phonetics' classes to refer to phonemic and phonetic transcriptions respectively.
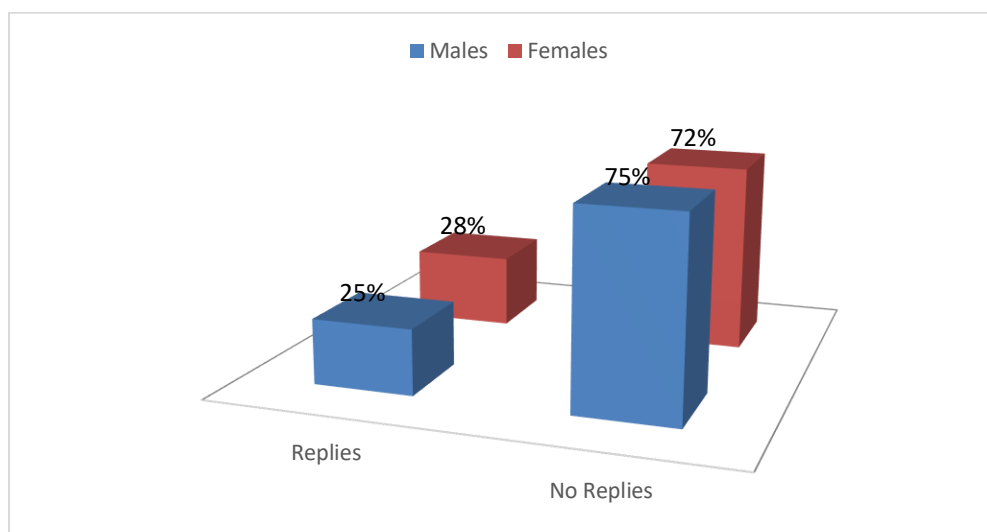
Figure 17. b. Females and Males' Phonetic Knowledge

The graphs demonstrate results of a great number of participants to have answered the first question. Going through their answers in the form of self-made definitions of the main differences between both sciences; Phonetics and Phonology, it has been noticed that females' majority by half (40%) provides distinction between the two sciences. The other half (40%) of females who provide replies did Phonetics right and mistook Phonology for a sub-branch of Phonetics, as a science that deals with physical and concrete aspects of sounds, a science of language and pronunciation in general, including sentence structure, morphemes or how words are produced. As for males, only a minority (30%) has answered correctly with the rest of answers being meaningless when it comes to Phonology. Both genders seem to struggle with phonological background and females, as previously noted to be risk-takers, provide more wrong replies rather than leaving blank space as the males did before, and they continue to do so far.

The second graph demonstrates similar statistics to the previous inquiry with the majority of female participants having provided (80%) slightly different definitions, but correct to some extent. Their replies express a degree of comprehension of what transcription is, but not phonetic which is to be answered in the next inquiry. However, a fragment of females has provided the wrong concept and explanation as they refer to phonetic transcription as the representation of the descriptive parameters of consonants, voicing, place and manner of articulation (VPM) dividing words into syllables, it refers to words and how words are spelt.

Most of female respondents succeed in associating transcription with dictionaries in order to obtain the right pronunciation of isolated words. Some of them mention Google Translate as well. Regarding males' replies, as indicated in the figure, the majority also has succeeded in explaining transcription in general and how it can be found in dictionaries; as well as "language learning books", but not with relation to "phonetic" as a term different from phonemic. A slight fragment of wrong replies associates phonetic transcription with putting symbols and describing words.

The third figure displays close statistical results between both genders. Usually, EFL learners do not pay attention to phonetic/phonological background during classes and tend to leave blank space on their exam papers, which are educational mistakes that reduce their theoretical knowledge and capacities, as well as limit their critical thinking and cognitive skills. Thus, EFL learners tend to disregard definitions and notions, and tend to avoid answering, especially when they do not revise well for their exams. The majority of both gendered participants did not provide any answer to the inquiry; mainly, due to its difficulty when dealing with phonetic information.

Diverting attention back a little, in the first section, the seventh inquiry requests participants to describe certain aspects of Phonetics where phonetic transcription is included. Most of collected opinions of both genders state that it is hard, difficult and complex. As a result, EFL learners cannot answer definitively. The minority of respondents who has provided an answer is split into two parties, a fragment that is closer to the right answer by mentioning that "narrow" refers to a specific and accurate representation including allophones, phonetic characteristics and details; whereas broad transcription has a simpler from. One female candidate refers to the difference between both transcription systems is in the use of slashes in the latter and square brackets in the former.

Some of the wrong replies include reversing each system's aspects, narrow being simple and broad being detailed, narrow is reserved to short words and broad to long ones,

narrow transcription include stress; whereas broad does not, and in broad transcription, the schwa is found, whereas in narrow it is not. Other answers are only apologetic, where the respondents either apologise for not remembering, for forgetting, for not having an idea about it or even not hearing of such information for the first time. Another category of replies is to be described as nonsensical as they do not make sense at all including the previous statements and by quoting as follows,

- "Narrow transcription is when the vowels are near the schwa [ə] in the quadrilateral vowels' diagram, while broad is when they are far from the schwa sound".

- "Narrow is when you have; for example, history to talk about it; this is narration. Unlike transcription which is like identifying and spelling".

- "Maybe narrow is like the schwa can be avoided, but broad is different; we write all transcription of the word or texts".

- "Narrow is when we use a voiced and a short sound, and broad is when we use voiceless and long sounds".

- "Narrow and broad transcriptions are different in meaning and in writing and even in spelling. They describe every word phonetically".

-

Concerning males' replies, very few questionnaires contain a correct definition between both systems. Out of those who have replied and are mistaken, they mention reversed characteristics of narrow and broad transcriptions. Other replies are apologetic as they cannot remember the difference. Whereas males' replies are limited and conservative, the females once more tend to take risks of answering wrong and provide meaningless notions. It is worth mentioning that both genders' correct replies do not contain any reference to phonetic transcription being narrow and phonetic transcription being broad. Their inability to make such a distinction comes from; mainly, their pre-requisites in middle school and high school instruction. The reasons cannot be decisive without evidence. All that can be assumed is lack of attention and concentration, missing lessons or disinterest.

Q4. Did your instructor explain the importance of Phonetics and Phonology teaching?

This question inquires about how fundamental it is to explain and know how important these studies are by exposing their main historical background. In fact, it only conceals the intention to find out students' aptitude and intrigue to read about both disciplines and make research even if their instructors do not tackle them. Hence, respondents are required to provide an answer of their own afterwards for the sake of finding out if they are familiar with

the significance of such branches, not only as modules but also as pillars in their educational career.
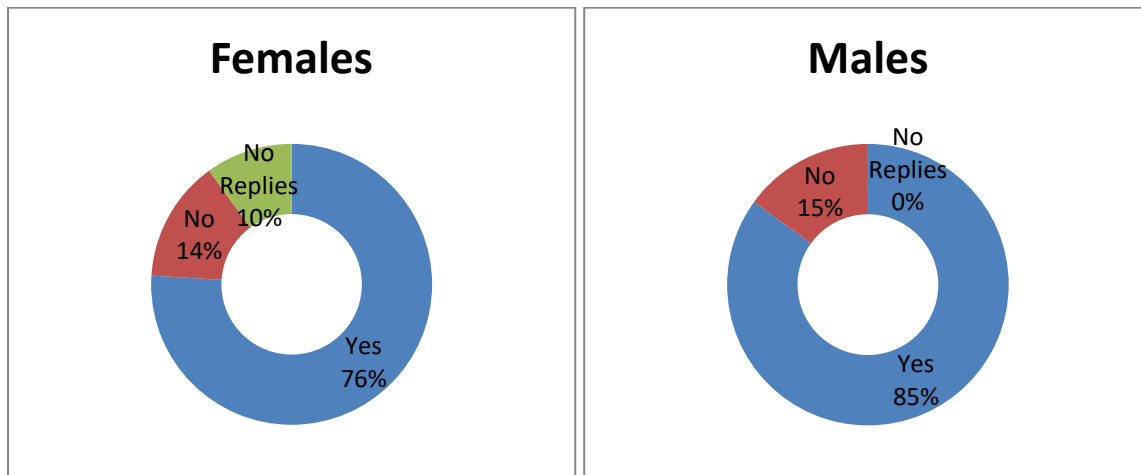
Figure 18. Males and Females' Phonological Awareness

Graphs' results indicate that "Yes" is represented by the majority of replies from both genders. With such a positive answer, it is only convenient to say that LMD3 graduates are familiar with the significance of Phonetics and Phonology sciences being integrated within their syllabus. Being part of pronunciation class, Phonetics and Phonology guide graduates to proper articulation and as a training to their speaking skills and instruction as future teachers-to-be. For the minority that represents "No", it is only fair to speculate that they might have missed some classes; particularly, first meeting or introductory sessions, at the beginning of the academic year, where they are introduced to these sciences for the first time or as a recapitulation in the upcoming year. Some female respondents have left blank spaces unlike the males.

Q5. If you practise phonetic transcription more frequently, you will begin to notice repeated patterns that will help you to easily understand and memorise transcription symbols more.

This statement describes the constant exposure to and practice of transcription and phonetic codes that have been introduced to EFL students since middle school. Yet, students specialising in English studies have got numerous chances to be familiar with phonetic transcription for two years. This can be a successful technique or strategy to trigger their memory to retain symbols by practising rather than passive drilling of isolated sounds.
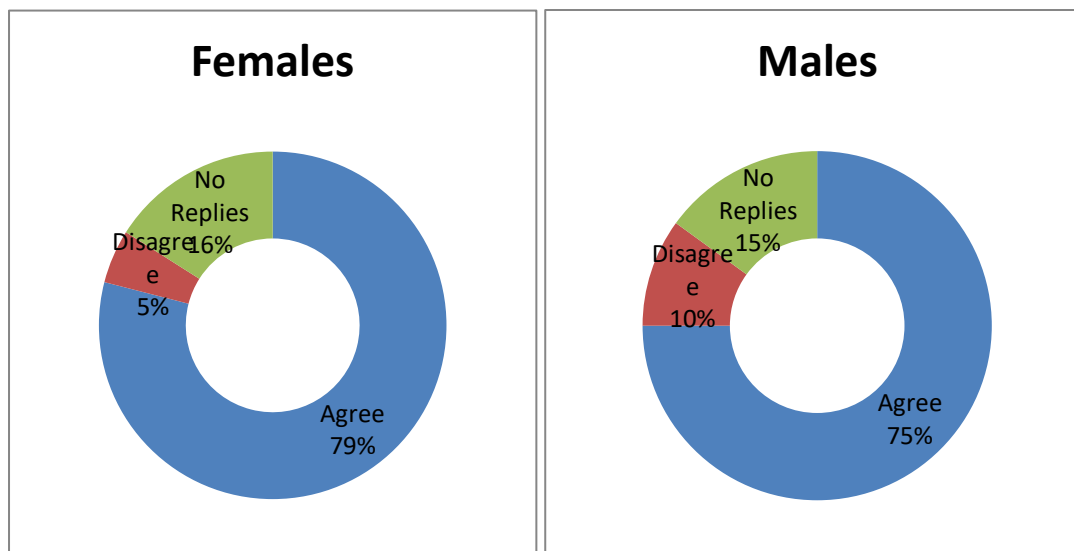
Figure 19. Females and Males' Opinions about Phonetic Transcription Beneficial Practice

Both genders' results appear close in number, as the majority agrees to the statement. Practising phonemic/phonetic transcription on a constant basis is generally believed to benefit learners with attentive response and training for their working memory, as information tends to fade away from the human short-term memory once rarely used or recovered. Such a number only indicates students' readiness to practise more transcription in the long-run and with the right assistance and guidance.

Participants are required to justify their selection of agreement or disagreement. First, female participants who agree to the fact that with transcription practice comes familiarity with the symbols, most of their answers are irrelevant; where only a few participants relate proper and correct pronunciation to practising transcription, how some participants like the process and how it guides them to correctly pronounce phonetic codes. Regarding why they agree, most of them mention the benefits of constant repetition in memorising symbols better. One participant admits that she is weak in Phonetics' class because of confusing symbols, but after practising constantly, there has been improvement. Another agrees that it does help to find out similarities in transcription.

It is mentioned that transcription trains their brains to preserve phonetic information and memorise symbols; as well as authentically be familiar with them. Moreover, practising transcription helps their minds to recognise and distinguish phonemes. It facilitates understanding how phonemic/phonetic transcription works. Moreover, they admit that transcription requires practice because it functions as a code-decode process. They will also

be able to connect spelling and sounds and; finally, they will be able to learn from their mistakes with practice and correction.

Male respondents; similarly, have provided justifications of their own, which include how repetition serves as a way to quickly memorise sounds and their equivalent symbols. For some male participants, it is helpful and there are words that contain similar and repeated parts – referring to syllables. Additionally, transcription is a beneficial process to understand the difference between some phonemes; such as, mono-phthongs and diphthongs. One male participant points out how constant practice can have positive results. Finally, practising phonetic transcription will drive learners to use it more frequently and one can grasp phonetic knowledge; such as how words are spelt and pronounced accordingly.

Regarding females who disagree with the statement, they justify by stating that learning pronunciation "comes easily with listening to native speakers via social media" without resorting to transcription. Another reason is being obliged to memorise phonetic symbols only for the sake of exams. Finally, another participant adds that it is possible to understand and memorise words' articulation without transcription. Nonetheless, most of these reasons are irrelevant to the aim of the question where they appear to have missed the point due to their hastiness in replying; as well as their dislike of phonetic transcription.

Furthermore, one male participant who disagrees and justifies by referring to the invalidity of practising transcription making learners notice repeated patterns and mentions that each word has got its own transcription not realising that repeated patterns; such as "er" [ə] in final position, "sion"/"tion" [ʃn̩], able [əbl̩] to name a few, do exist. Participants; from both genders; who disagree fail to see the whole picture with the necessity to practise transcription constantly as it facilitates understanding the nature of English spelling and its equivalent articulation - referring to how non-phonetic English orthography is and how it needs attentive minds, trained ears' perception and visual acuteness.

Q6. In your opinion, what methods can help you succeed in phonetic transcription?

Such an inquiry is related to the previous one and it highlights the quickest and easiest way to facilitate phonetic transcription of sounds' retention and avoid students' dislike of it. That is, by practising symbols regularly, symbols memorisation follows.
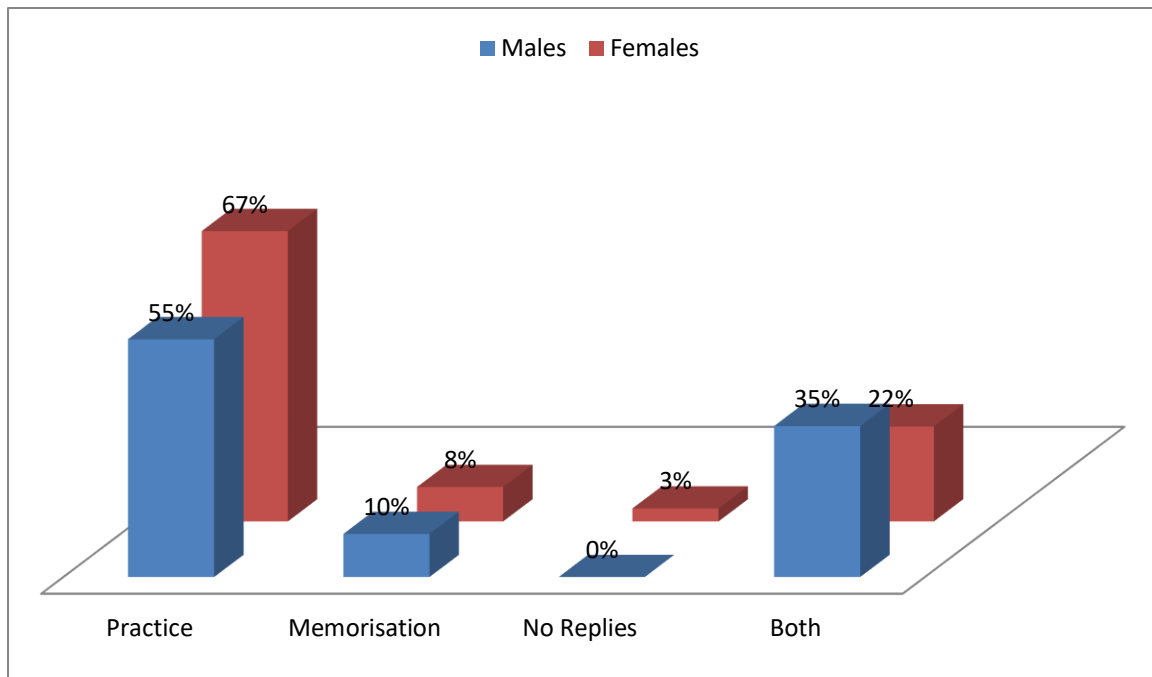
Figure 20. Females' and Males' Choice of Method in Transcribing

Obtained statistics on the table demonstrate a greater number that goes above half of the female participants who prefer practice over memorisation (67%), where the latter represents the majority. Similar results are obtained from male answers, where half of the batch selects the practice option as well. No participant has mentioned other methods that might help them with phonetic transcription. However, it has been recorded that a number from both genders select both options referring to their complementary aspects, which are more highlighted in their justifications. It is worth mentioning that, although a fragment, participants who have selected both options are more attentive to such a fact and must have realised it only through their process of using phonetic transcription. Females who select only "practice" as a method to succeed in phonetic transcription have provided the following reasons,

- Practice makes perfect.
- The more practice they do, the better they become.
- Practice helps them to get used to transcription symbols.
- Regular practice eventually will help them to be familiar with repeated patterns.
- Practice of phonemic transcription goes hand in hand with correct pronunciation of words.
- Practice helps them to familiarise themselves with difficult words and not get tricked by spelling.

- Practice facilitates understanding.
- Practice makes them learn from their mistakes.
- Practice helps them to discover the nature of phonetics.

While providing their own personal opinions, some female respondents, actuality mention some setbacks of memorisation including,

- Having tried memorisation, but failed due to the cumbersome nature of phonetic codes.
- Memorisation of phonetic symbols is forgotten with time.
- Memorisation is for children.
- Memorisation is a method that helps with the written form only, not pronunciation.

As a result, the majority of females who select "practice" option unintentionally combine both systems as complementary. Without ticking both options, they still justify that with constant practice, they memorised phonetic codes; automatically with practice comes successful memorisation of both symbols and their pronunciation. Whereas, only a minority selects (08%) the "Memorisation" option and justify their selection as follows,

- They had no choice and must memorise phonetic symbols.
- Practice did not work and they were obliged to switch to (unperceptive) memorisation.
- Memorisation prevented forgetting and made them realise similarities between syllables.

The only explanation for this faction's inability to succeed by combining both methods is their misapplication of some helping techniques or the lack of utilising any useful techniques. Practice enhances understanding and facilitates the memorisation process. This expression is stated and restated by several participants who perceive how success in phonetic transcription is linked to combining both systems and employing them equally in their tasks. Similarly, male respondents are more practice-directed where the majority provides corresponding reasons to those of the females including,

- Practice makes perfect.
- With practice, they can correct their mistakes and learn from them.
- The more they practise; the better they become at phonetic transcription.
- Practice would eventually help them to be able to deal with any word's transcription.

Another faction of male students has mentioned the correlation between practice and memorisation referring to the former as a trigger to the latter without ticking both options. Still, it is a sign that most of them do realise such a connection and one option complements another in order to succeed in phonetic transcription tasks - phonetic coding tasks. Concerning the minority (10%) that has selected "memorisation" option; no male respondent has provided a justification to their selection.

Q7. How do you find English pronunciation and spelling?

The question mainly targets the issue of grapheme-phoneme complex relationship and how English is not a phonetic language. One of the basic elements to tackle when introducing phonetic transcription is how English orthography is a combination of various languages. Therefore, it does not reflect its exact pronunciation and vice-versa.

While analysing their answers, three majority categories appear to surface; the first majority understands the aim of this inquiry, a second majority does not, and a third majority states that English pronunciation and spelling are easy. Firstly, for participants, who have provided relevant replies to the sixth question, appear to have agreed on the fact that there are difficulties when learning English, referring to the non-phonetic nature of English spelling and how it does neither reflect nor convey exact articulation. They need practice and research; as well as employing the right methods and techniques to improve their level in both skills. For more classification and credibility, some of the main replies are quoted below.

- "I find it difficult, but some words are easy".
- "Maybe it seems difficult for such compound and complicated words, but through time when you get used to it, it'll become easy".
- "Difficult".
- "In between easy and difficult at the same time".
- "It is easy; you just need to know the right way of doing things".
- "I really like English pronunciation. It's beautiful and unique. I find that British accent is harder than the American one, but I like both of them. Spelling is different from pronunciation and there are a lot of silent letters".
- "Some words are easy and some words are difficult".
- "Good and easy in some words, but it has a tricky pronunciation that's why it could be hard sometimes".
- "I face problems with the two but more with pronunciation".
- "It is different because there are many letters which we don't pronounce".

- "There is no problem with spelling, but there are a few problems in pronouncing words the correct way".

- "A little different because some words are not pronounced as they are written. So, I find difficulties in here only".

- "Spelling is easy and for pronunciation, you have to practise to become good at it".

- "It is easy for those who practise".

- "There are some words that are easy, but at the same time, there are difficult words, especially new vocabulary".

- "It is easy but it needs practice".

- "It's not easy, but with practice, one can improve".

- "I find it interesting because each word differs from another in pronunciation and spelling".

- "Not easy and not difficult. It just needs practice and searching more".

- "I find English pronunciation somehow more difficult than spelling".

- "I believe it's different depending on which accent you want to master".

Secondly, for female participants who have provided irrelevant replies to the same question appear to have missed the point or aim of the inquiry that requires their feedback with regard to any difficulties they might have come across speaking and writing in English. Some of their answers are illustrated and quoted next.

- "Beautiful and feels good to hear it".

- "I love English pronunciation most likely the American, because the British one is a bit hard".

- "Easy, rules of pronunciation are quite hard. It needs practice to be easy".

- "It is a bit tricky because of the different accents".

- "It's very interesting. It improves skills in mastering and learning the English language".

- "It's all my interest and that's why I chose the English language and I try to make my pronunciation better".

- "I find it great".

- "Easy but you have to focus on the sounds' production".

- "Correct pronunciation is so important in English".

- "English pronunciation is very lovely and important".

- "Interesting".

- "It is useful".
- "I found English pronunciation and spelling useful for me".

Thirdly, for the last category of female participants, most of their replies refer to English spelling as "easy" "super easy", "English pronunciation and spelling mostly are the same", "we write words as they are pronounced", "easy to spell it at the same time difficult in pronunciation", "I find it very easy", "good", "both of them are good and simple", "English pronunciation and spelling are very easy and interesting", "compared to other languages, it's easy", "clear, clean and easy to learn it", then "very easy and helpful".

It is worth mentioning that most of these statements, if not all of them, come in opposition with participants' actual writing and spelling skills. It is more apparent to notice how many misspellings they made, because it was a questionnaire. No observations could be made with regard to their pronunciation. A number of spelling errors that are detected are listed below,

- "pronunce", "pronunciate", "probleme", "sepecial", "transcripe", "eassy", "deffucult", "transcrip", "onely", "dictionaris", "thruth", "lik", "borring", "televisition", "consontrate", "automaticly", "practicies", "dectionries", "writhe", "devolepment", "mistackes", "tottally", "prononciate", "listining", "domaine", "repeatly", "freinds", "becous", "studie", "descuse", "eazy", "patherne", "diffrent", "motivite", "befor", "foriegn", "persone", "australian", "becouse", "easaly", "listner", "neccesary", "personaly", "encountared", "especialy", "visite", "adviced", "intersting", "frensh", "thier", "deffuclt", "pronciation", "rish", "presans", "dectioneries", "prefere", "alot", "paterns", "moovies" among many other misspellings made by female participants.

With regard to male respondents, there are two categories that provide relevant and irrelevant feedback. The majority; however, provides answers that reflect their understanding and insight with reference to the complex relationship between phonemes and graphemes in English. The following examples are quoted from their answers,

- "It is difficult but requires practice".
- "English pronunciation and spelling are difficult to master".
- "I find accent very beautiful and sweet but a little bit difficult".
- "Good but not easy".
- "Pronunciation and spelling need practice to learn".

- "Maybe pronunciation is different from the spelling in many words that can make English different from other languages".
- "I find it easy somehow, however the spelling is quite hard than the pronunciation".
- "I think they are hard to deal with".

The second category groups male answers which refers to only one aspect and does not provide an inclusive reply. Some of their answers wae only general including,

- "I find it interesting".
- "Easy but sometimes we mix RP with American pronunciation".
- "Entertaining".

There are students who believe English spelling and pronunciation are the same, not realising they are mistaken because spelling cannot reflect its pronunciation 100% in English due to its containing silent letters, diagraphs and letters that are pronounced differently in different words.

Q8. Which of the following do you find more helpful learning?

Participants are provided with the chance to realise that in order to obtain correct pronunciation, both sounds' production/perception and supra-segmental instruction must be combined together for the best results. Favouring one instruction over the other will keep their pronunciation learning lacking. A justification for this inquiry is required to discover their insights about their choice, and if they purposefully picked an answer or not.
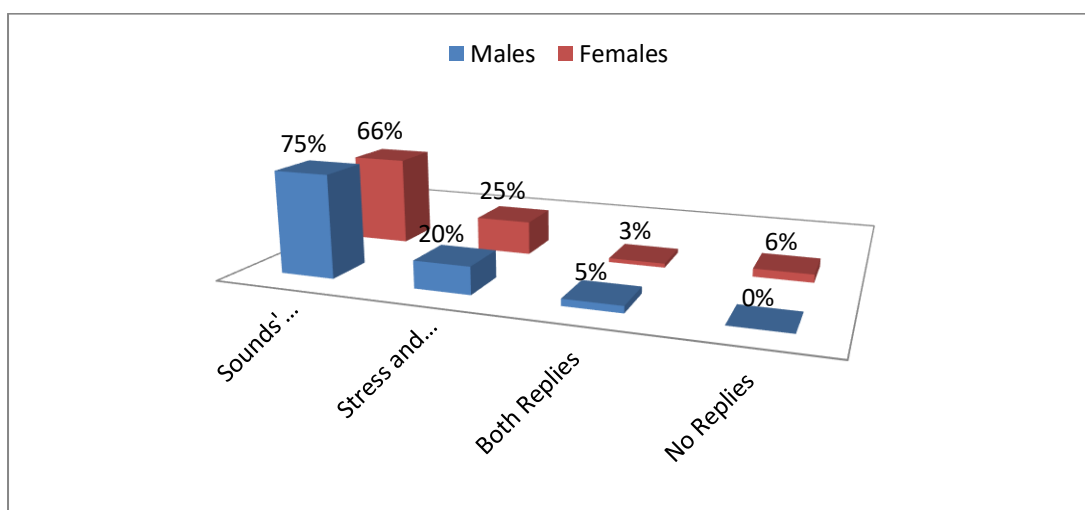

Figure 21. Males and Females' Specific Area of Interest

Data displayed on the above graph demonstrate a great majority of both genders align their learning preferences with sounds' production and perception or as referred to "segmental instruction". By contrast, only their minority represents the second option "stress and intonation patterns" referred to as "supra-segmental instruction". With every choice LMD3 EFL graduates make, a justification to their replies or selection is required. Although there are numerous questions left blank, the most relevant answers are gathered and are displayed as follows,

- Segmental instruction helps to learn more about word structure and how sounds are pronounced. They find it easy, not complicated and it does not consume much time. It helps to understand speech easily and because sounds are the basis of learning any language initially. It has been dealt with segmental features more which made them more knowledgeable about its aspects and familiar with them. Segmental instruction is a necessary process that helps to pronounce correctly, and if a learner cannot produce sounds, learning syllables and word stress would be more difficult to attain afterwards. Sounds' production and perception represent the first step that leads the way to proper learning of stress and intonation. However, mispronouncing sounds changes words' meaning and causes miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Supra-segmental instruction comes only as a response to proper sound perception/production and retention of segments and words, and the former is retained through time. A group of participants believes that learning how to perceive and produce speech sounds more significant than stressing syllables and content words in connected speech. Male participants' majority has selected segmental instruction, as well as provided their own explanations to such a selection and they are summarised as follows,

Segmental features introduce the smallest unit of pronunciation and sounds are the basis of language learning. Knowing each symbols and phonemes' articulation helps to pronounce words correctly and may help learn English faster. Moreover, segmental instruction improves one's articulation especially during a conversation. Whereas, learning stress and intonation patterns is considered difficult and more challenging, because they contain various rules and exceptions which can be confusing to them.

With regards to female participants who have selected stress and intonation patterns, their answers explain mostly one case, where they all agree on the fact that following stress rules and intonation benefit them better in proper production. They highlight the case of

pronouncing syllables separately with stress that helps them differentiate between verbs from nouns and from adjectives - referring to the homophones and homographs' case. Furthermore, learning supra-segmentals provides them with the chance to practise and to learn transcription. By contrast, males who prefer supra-segmental instruction explain how stress patterns are necessary in speech production and meaning transmission.

Although a minority, from both genders, there is a degree of understanding by learners who realise the connection between both instructions. As a fact, segmentals and supra-segmentals go hand in hand and must be learned and practised equally. Segmentals teach learners how individual sounds are produced and classified properly; as well as within a unit of pronunciation, whereas supra-segmental features come as a continuation, and its aspects; stress and syllable structure, are practised better through phonetic transcription that combines them all.

Apparently, most of LMD3 EFL graduates appreciate accurate communication rather than solely fluent one even and more attention is paid to sound production/perception. Such a conclusion comes with evidence from their worksheets where they give little attention to both instructions and care for speaking even without stress, either word or sentence stress. It appears that they only make wrong choices because they have not experienced speaking to native speakers. More is to be confirmed about such assumptions in the following analysis of their questionnaire, in order to come up with the right advice and recommendation for Phonetics' teachers to take into consideration while introducing and teaching English pronunciation.

Q9. Do you think by attending Phonetics classes your level of English pronunciation improved these past two years?

The aim of such a question is to find out if a two-year training in Phonetics is sufficient to students' phonological growth and a remedy to their mispronunciations, including sounds' production, syllabification, stress placement and rhythm. A Phonetics' class combines both segmental and supra-segmental features all throughout the two first years and if this period of time is sufficient to guide them and remedy any pronunciation errors and fossilisations through instruction and practice.
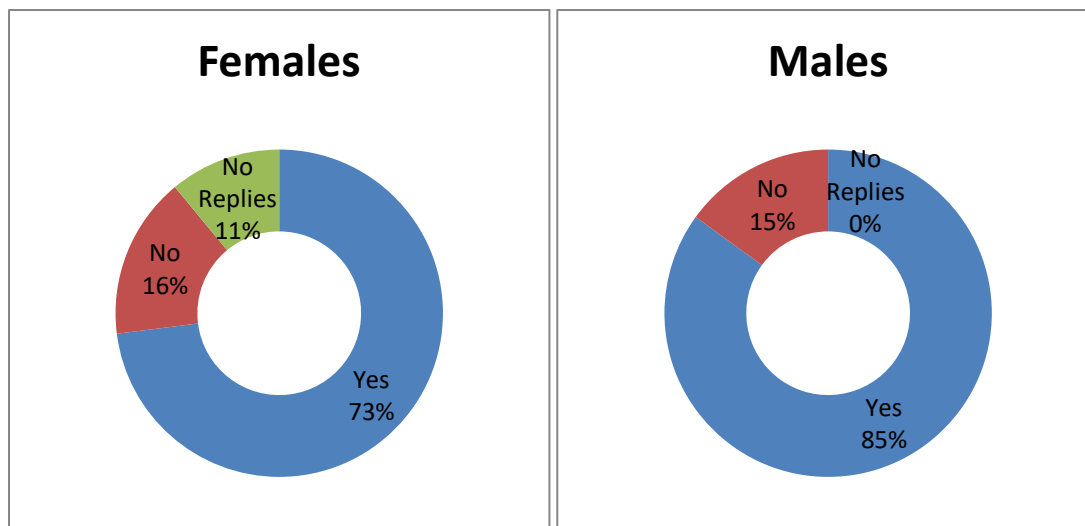
Figure 22. Females and Males' Opinions about the Benefits of Phonetics' Classes

Statistics illustrate how the majority agrees to the fact that attending Phonetics' classes regularly has improved their pronunciation, let alone, their phonetic/phonological credit of knowledge. As participants are required to share the reasons in accordance with their positive or negative selections, female participants provide the following justifications alongside male participants. They are all gathered due to similarity.

- They learn correct spelling in accordance with pronunciation of the specific vocabulary; they enrich their phonetic/phonological background, listening to the teacher pronounce while transcribing helps them to pronounce tricky sounds including the schwa, they become able to pronounce words correctly with respect to phonological rules, such as stress and intonation, their pronunciation becomes more correct, they manage to correct their mispronunciations and also fossilisations, they are able to make distinctions between RP and GA and improve their accent of choice, they are allowed more time to practise, they learn to pronounce new and difficult words, they learn to pronounce vowels properly thanks to teachers' efforts and they practise pronunciation through transcription which corrects their mispronunciations.

With the minority answering with no, it is intriguing to find out the reasons why Phonetics' classes for two years has not triggered any interest in them or benefited them with a single piece of information. Both participants' gendered opinions are to be taken into consideration in order to come up with the right recommendations in chapter five of the present study. The last two justifications below are found most enigmatic and perplexing to

discover. It is only natural to assume that some female graduates are either too vain or too proud.

- They learn how to pronounce better through listening to songs and series.
- They find a two-year tuition of Phonetics insufficient.
- It is their fault for not practising constantly; mainly due to fewer sessions.
- They lack attention during classes.
- They find the module "uninteresting".
- It is a difficult module to attain.
- Due to the pandemic of Covid-19, they have got little time to study, practise and have got no interest in the module.
- They study only for exams.
- Phonetics' classes have got nothing to do with pronunciation.
- They already know how to pronounce.

Q10. What aspects of Phonetics did you enjoy most?

This question intends to uncover which parts; during Phonetics' classes; students like or enjoy most as Phonetics is considered the physics of a language, and it deals with more practical and scientific elements including sounds' production, phonetic coding, syllabification and rhythmic patterns. It highly concentrates on students' productivity and decreases passivity.

Table 17. Females and Males' Ranked Areas of their Interest in Phonetics' Class

Rank	Females	Rank	Males
1-	Transcription	1-	Transcription
2-	Pronunciation Practice	2-	Stress patterns
3-	Stress patterns	3-	Pronunciation practice
4-	Consonants/vowels production and descriptions	4-	Consonants/vowels production and descriptions
5-	VPN	5-	Nothing
6-	Nothing	6-	Everything
7-	Syllable structure	7-	Syllable structure
8-	Articulators	8-	Intonation patterns

9-	Spelling		
10-	Everything		
11-	Sub branches of Phonetics		
12-	Homophones/homographs		
13-	Intonation patterns		

In accordance with LMD3 EFL graduates' replies, there is diversity in their choices. Nonetheless, more attention is drawn towards top five aspects. For female participants, except stress patterns, the rest of elements are segmental features which is another proof that the majority of Algerian EFL learners has got a tendency to select segmentals over supra-segmentals. Still, stress patterns come in third place which refers to the significance of segmental phonology. The males, similarly, show more interest towards the same elements with respect to results and statistics in question nine. However, they appear to have listed fewer aspects than females have. From another affective point of view, the females so far have demonstrated more emotional involvement and transparency with regard to their answers. Male participants; however, have provided short, limited and objective answers.

What attracts more attention is what comes in the sixth place for females and fifth place for males. When required to provide a constructive answer to this question, they state that nothing catches their interest despite that Phonetics' class is a mandatory module to study and attend; as well as having a rich syllabus for each level. It is only fair to take into consideration the reasons they provided earlier (the ninth inquiry), as setbacks to their negative perception of Phonetics' class. Although further research is required to clarify any vagueness surrounding this element in particular, as displayed on the table, transcription, although being hard and complicated to them as they previously stated, it comes in the first place followed by pronunciation practice and stress patterns. Moreover, they express having fun and joyful time going to the board, pronouncing, transcribing and marking the stress. For them game-like exercises are more involving and enjoyable.

Q11. What might have motivated you more in Phonetics' class?

Students' opinions and feedback enable instructors to gain an overview about their needs, preferences and elements that motivate them to improve and reach the level they desire. In addition, enhance their enthusiasm to attend the classes and acquire articulatory knowledge better. That is, the purpose behind such a question is to provide insightful

suggestions and feedback in order to clarify students' incentives towards better experiences in learning Phonetics.

**Table 18. Females and Males' Suggestions for a Better Phonetics' Class**

Rank	Females' Suggestions	Rank	Males' Suggestions
1-	A good instruction	1-	More oral practice and exercises
2-	More oral practice and exercises	2-	A good instructor
3-	More transcription Practice	3-	More Phonetics
4-	Nothing	4-	Nothing
5-	Improvement in pronunciation	5-	Improvement in pronunciation
6-	More Phonetics	6-	Pronunciation of RP
7-	Description via mouth articulation		
8-	Peer participation		
9-	Good grades		
10-	Simplified rules and lessons		
11-	More enjoyable exercises		
12-	Listening/speaking before transcribing		
13-	Pronunciation of RP		
14-	Using dictionaries		

In addition to their suggestions, various students comment on the main reasons that motivate them to study Phonetics and what will motivate them more. Each element is ordered by how many times they have mentioned it. For females, the first incentive is having a good teacher whose methods and manner of teaching are inviting and fun. Indeed a teacher's role in motivating their students is a major success to the class and a sign to an excellent role model in teaching to teachers-to-be. LMD3 EFL graduates also appreciate more practice that involves their speaking skill, to test their oral abilities, intelligibility and put their pronunciation to constant practice and exposure. This way, learners may be able to obtain time for actual application of what they learn theoretically. They; moreover, request more phonetic transcription in class and as a homework to keep track of their progress. Some students have mentioned how satisfying their pronunciation improvement can be.

Although, Peer participation is ranked eighth place, it still is considered an incentive for more hard work as it might fuel competition among them. Last but not least, number four calls for concern with regard to a category of graduates who do not enjoy the class; because it is difficult or even dislike it as stated, "I hate Phonetics". It is natural to say how such a science can be unattainable to some due to various factors. This category in particular needs more motivation to be integrated in the world of Phonetics; as well as its class. The males, by contrast, have shared similar reasons that might drive them to work harder in and enjoy their Phonetics' class including a good instructor.

Q12. Did the instruction on phonetic transcription help you to develop ways to improve your oral production of English?

This inquiry investigates the effectiveness of Phonetics' classes for two successive years including segmental and supra-segmental instructions in improving learners' oral skills and remedying their mispronunciations which they have regarding English accents. Phonetic transcription may be one of the most frequently used remedial methods to prevent any articulation errors.
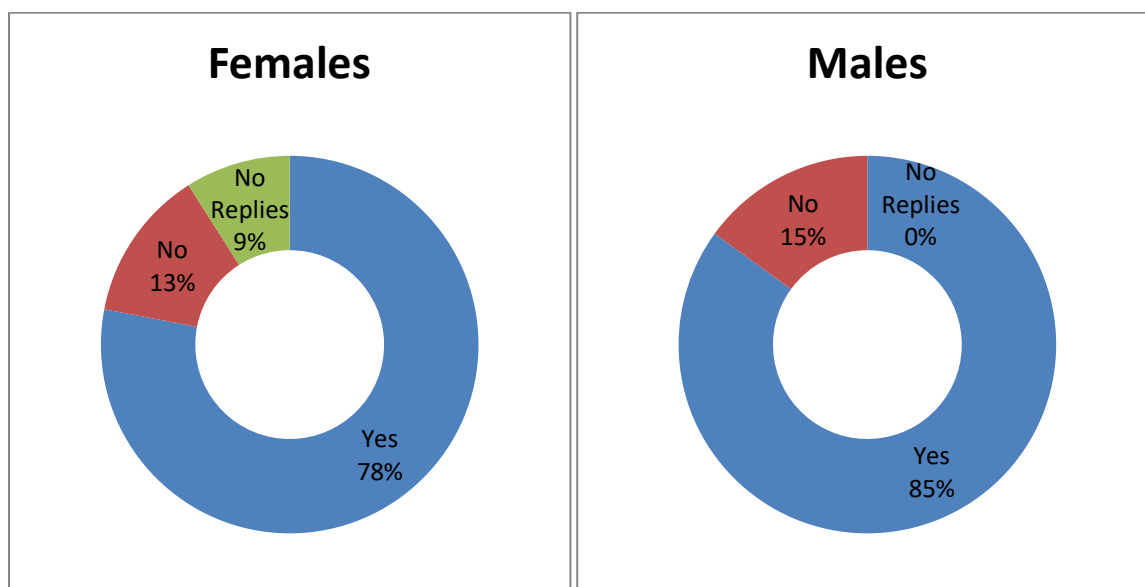
Figure 23. Females and Males' Interest in Phonetic Instruction

With the majority answering by yes, there is no doubt that phonetic transcription is a reliable method to teach to EFL students who must be familiar with IPA chart and phonetic symbols. Without constant practice to remind learners how to read and pronounce phonemic codes equivalently, all phonetic information may be lost or forgotten. Therefore, Phonetic

Coding Ability and Phonological Working Memory are two main skills that must be sharpened and not disregarded. Participants are required to justify their answers and females; mainly, state that phonetic transcription instruction gets them familiar with new words by checking them in the dictionary. As a result, they can read symbols and transcription of entries easily and correctly, it teaches them how to spell and pronounce correctly at the same time, it helps them to pronounce RP more properly, it shows them the right stressed syllable to pronounce loudly in order to convey the right meaning, it also helps them to overcome their fossilised mispronunciations and notice their errors, it boosts their self-confidence during oral tests and exams and it helps them to obtain exact pronunciation as produced by native speakers.

The majority of male participants, who answer positively, have provided similar justifications promoting phonetic transcription practice, but not as many as the females have listed. Therefore, males' answers justifying the benefits of transcription include,

- Gaining the ability to read phonetic transcription in dictionaries for accurate pronunciation.
- Teaching them how to spell and pronounce words correctly.
- Rectifying their mispronunciations and overcoming old habits and fossilisations.

Notwithstanding, the second group which has selected the option no; mainly, most of those respondents left blank space after ticking. The justifications selected are very few and are listed as follows, from both genders,

- It is hard and they never understood it.
- More focus should be placed on attaining vocabulary and not pronunciation.
- Lack of practice.
- No interest in RP pronunciation/accent.

As a reflection on what male and female participants lay down onto the justification section, it has been noticed that it is the same category of students who bear feelings of disinterest towards Phonetics' as a science or a class. It is an important issue to investigate and direct other instructors' attention towards it in order to fight negative views and attitudes towards it before it is late. A part of the present study is dedicated to a section of all possible proposals and recommendations to all Algerian teachers of Phonetics to assist them in overcoming any difficulties in their phonetic instruction.

It is worth mentioning that lack of interest towards the subject matter; as well as having difficulties in comprehension can be cured. Nevertheless, the issue of disregarding teaching pronunciation within a pronunciation class with more focus on attaining vocabulary or no interest in RP accent are beyond discussion. First, because vocabulary is included; a wide range is introduced and second, both RP and GA accents are introduced as part of raising their awareness about the distinction between them both.

Q13. Did Phonetics' lessons and practice in class assist you in identifying and overcoming your mispronunciations?

English is a foreign language introduced to Algerian learners first in middle school and phonetic instruction is included in their English textbooks, but not enough to obtain correct pronunciation. Even constant exposure to the target language is not sufficient without guidance and dictionary consulting for the right enunciation of the newly-acquired terms. This question begs the sole answer of how Phonetics' classes may or may not be efficient to EFL learners' mispronunciations.
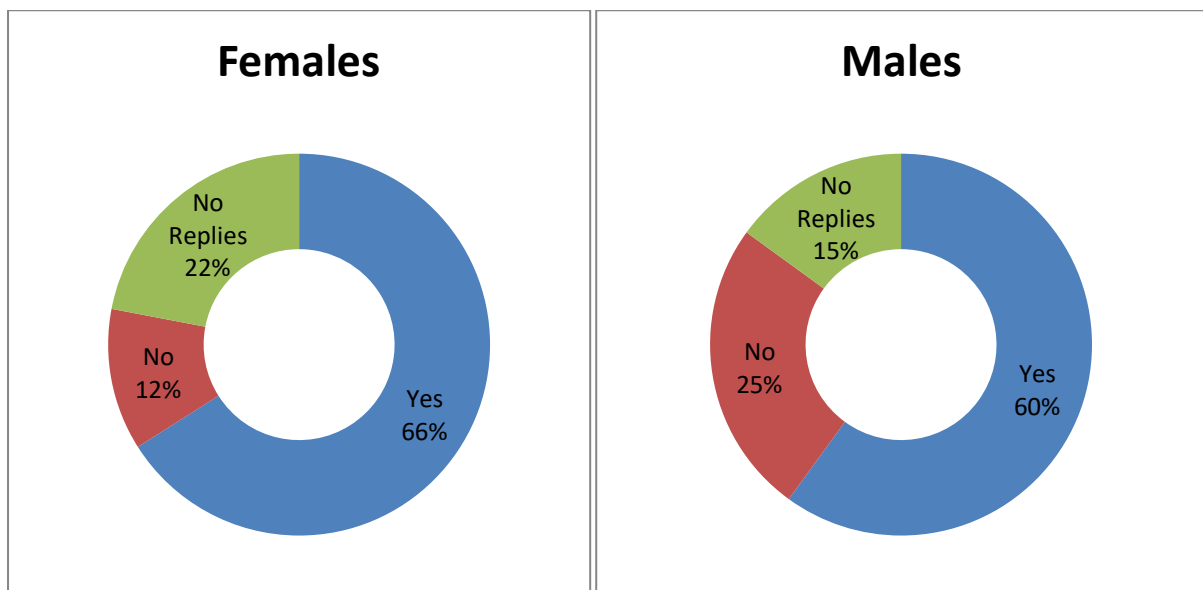
Figure 24. Females and Males' View on Phonetics' Class being a Remedy for Mispronunciations

Statistics indicate a majority (60%) admitting practice and lessons within Phonetics' classes for two successive years are to some extent fruitful. Despite the fact that classes are reduced and students are allowed a two-week break between different levels, there still are positivity and attendance shown by most of participants from both genders. Therefore, they are requested to elaborate more by providing their feedback on how phonetic instruction has

benefited them. First, the females who answer by yes mention the following summarised explanations. Phonetics' class is important in identifying silent letters in various words and learning how and where to place stress, in correcting one's mispronunciations and pronouncing more accurately, in learning from mistakes, in benefiting from teachers' experience and instruction, in producing the right symbols and sounds through transcription, in gaining phonetic knowledge to commit less errors; by learning places and manners of articulation, in getting constant practice and guidance that help them to identify their mispronunciations and in identifying spelling and corresponding pronunciation.

Only female respondents' minority states that such a phonetic instruction has not assisted them in any way; even though it had lasted for two entire years with a basic and rich syllabus. Very few participants justify by stating that they never understood this module, they are knowledgeable about all words and Phonetics "was not a big deal".

Accordingly, it is noticed that these respondents have got confidence in their abilities; oral capacities that is. Such a statement is compared with their answers since their previous worksheets are enclosed with the questionnaires. Their replies are inconsistent with the activities' answers, as they make numerous misspellings; they fail in reading symbols; as well as their inability to identify the non-rhyming sound in a four-word list as shown earlier in the third chapter (see appendix n° 1).

Male respondents have provided similar justifications to those of females and the main ones are highlighted and listed below. There are no justifications to their "no" selection (25%). Phonetics' class assists them in identifying inconsistency is in the accent, in correcting their previous mispronunciations, in learning more words' pronunciation and articulation, in practising aspiration of [p] – [t] – [k], in avoiding future mispronunciations by applying the right rules, in getting improved through practice and articulation and in identifying spelling and its corresponding pronunciation.

Q14. Do you speak English outside the classes?

This question inquires about EFL learners' regular or frequent use of the target language as graduates who are closer to getting their bachelor degree and are about to specialise in Master Studies afterwards. Therefore, speaking frequently and correctly matters as it flexes and stabilises communication with others and familiarises them with speaking to larger audiences. Participants; moreover, are required to justify their replies.
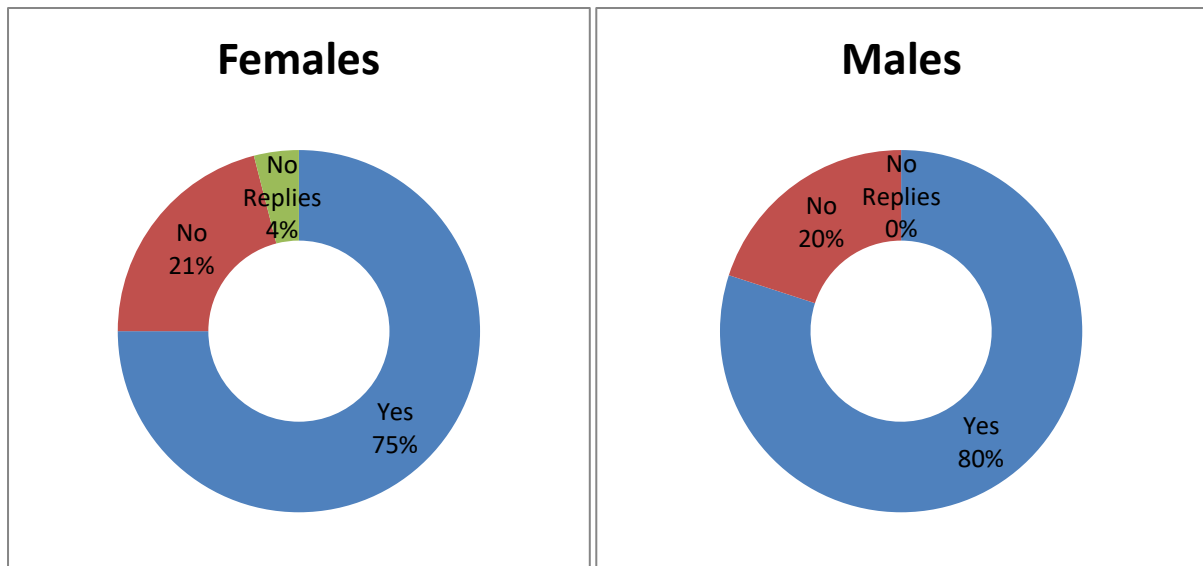
Figure 25. Females and Males' English Practice outside the Classes

Results show a degree of approximation between male and female participants' positive replies; confirming how the majority do speak English once outside the educational classes. After being requested to report their justifications, females' majority states that,

- They speak English in order to improve their speaking skills and pronunciation; as well as becoming more fluent and improve their self-confidence when facing an audience or in discussions.
- They speak English, because they love speaking it and it makes them feel happy and overjoyed.
- They speak English as a form of practice and in order to not forget anything they learn including vocabulary.
- They speak English, because they feel more at ease, more expressive and comfortable in this language than in Arabic.
- They speak English, because they have got Anglophone friends to speak to and exchange ideas with.
- They speak English, because they need to communicate with foreigners.

Similarly, male respondents have provided replies in the same direction of interest and state that,

- They speak English, because it helps to improve pronunciation and fluency, to speak perfectly and to enrich their vocabulary.

- They speak English, because they love speaking it and it is their favourite language; as well as feeling as a native.
- They speak English, because they need to practise it regularly and also to get use to it.
- They speak English, because they converse with foreigners, such as through playing video games.

It is worth noting that answers from both genders carry competitive aspects that may explain and justify the reason or drive behind their justifications. Respondents, males and females alike, are interested in speaking the target language once outside the classes for self-improvement, success and out of passion towards learning or speaking English. The males; however, use stronger affective expressions; such as "speak perfectly" and "feeling like a native", which may indicate their readiness and intentions to speak both fluently and accurately.

Although a minority (20%), both genders have provided similar reasons to why they do not speak English outside the doors of their EFL classes. Female respondents highlight the following obstacles by repetitive mention,

- They do not speak English, because there is no one around them to speak or practice with.
- They do not speak English, because they are shy and may feel ashamed of their current level.
- They do not speak English, because they appear stressed and embarrassed due to poor vocabulary and pronunciation.
- They do not speak English, because they have got "a bad pronunciation".
- They do not speak English, because they are not used to it.
- They do not speak English, because of no reason.
- They do not speak English, because there is no one interested in speaking it around them.

Whereas, males' justifications are very few and are limited to only two statements,

- They do not speak English, because no one from their entourage speaks or understands it.
- They do not speak English, because "Algerian people are silly".

Therefore, it is concluded; in accordance with the participants' above-mentioned reasons why not speaking English outside; that the females feel more uncomfortable speaking English around others, feel shy and ashamed because of poor vocabulary and pronunciation; as well as being unsure what exactly prevents them from using it. Female respondents appear to be going through more emotional struggle than males. It could be due to females' status-consciousness, self-consciousness or being afraid of judgement as previously claimed by Lakoff (1975).

Q15. Is correct pronunciation important in daily speech between classmates, foreigners and teachers?

Despite that answers to this question is an absolute yes; there is no denying that there are learners who care more about speech fluency rather than pronunciation accuracy. That is, even native speakers may commit pronunciation errors and non-native speakers are more prone to such errors when the message is to be conveyed. Still, some individuals may tolerate mispronunciations. Such tolerance is to be either male or female as the latter gender is known to be more precise in pronunciation and less tolerant towards formal standard pronunciation.
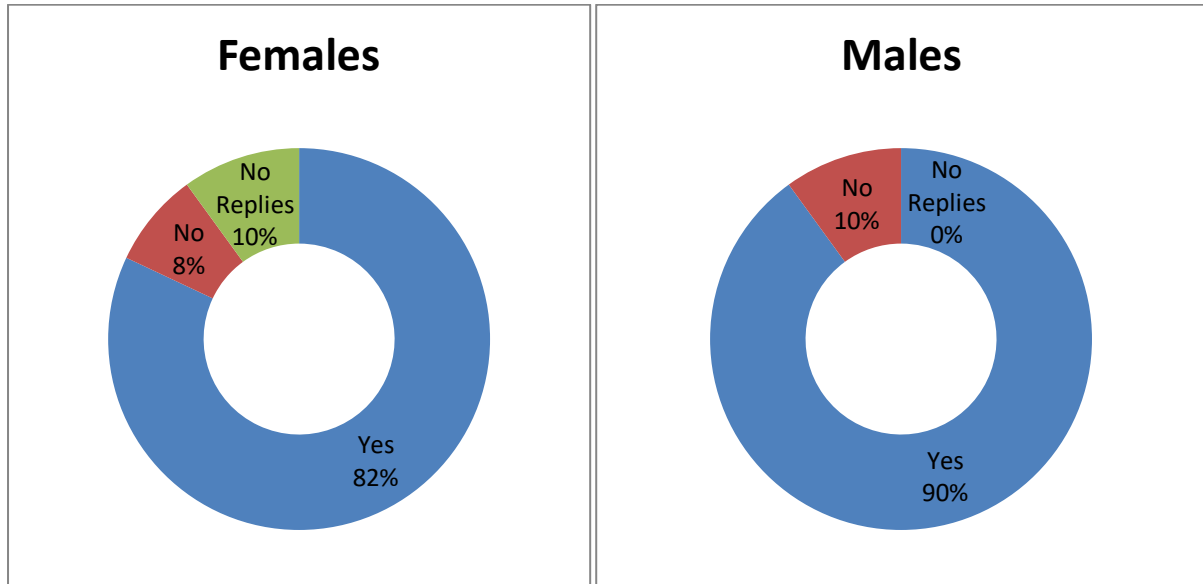
Figure 26. Females and Males' Attitude on the Importance of Correct Pronunciation

As the minority answers by a no, the majority of both genders supports pronunciation accuracy and highlights the point of addressing teachers and foreigners when speaking correct articulation. Female respondents have provided a diversity of justifications which is summarised and listed as follows along with male participants' who share the same opinion,

- Accurate pronunciation ensures understanding and intelligibility among interlocutors.
- It ensures conveying the right message and information without being interrupted or misunderstood.
- It allows one to sound educated, knowledgeable, confident and less shy.
- Mispronunciations can easily be memorised; so, it is better to retain correct pronunciation in the very beginning.
- With poor pronunciation, people will avoid and quit communicating and listening.

Females; however, have added the following points,
- English is non-phonetic and several words might be written and pronounced similarly or the other way around.
- Good speakers need good pronunciation.
- Being EFL learners, mastering English pronunciation is obligatory.
- Non-native speakers of English can be easily misunderstood; especially when addressing natives.

For the participants who replied by "no"; being a minority, they have not provided constructive justifications and only state that with time correct pronunciation can be learned. With regard to the quality of their answers, it is noticed that the females, once again, accentuate the significance of pronunciation in front of people which can be related to females' desire to sound prestigious, esteemed and well-thought-of.

Q16. Does it make a difference speaking to English native speakers and speaking to non-native speakers?

This question intends to find out male and female EFL graduates' points of view concerning communication with native speakers of English and non-native speakers as themselves. The differences which they may pinpoint are important to highlight as they may notice them in their own speech and articulation and whether they are able to perceive and detect any apparent dissimilarities.
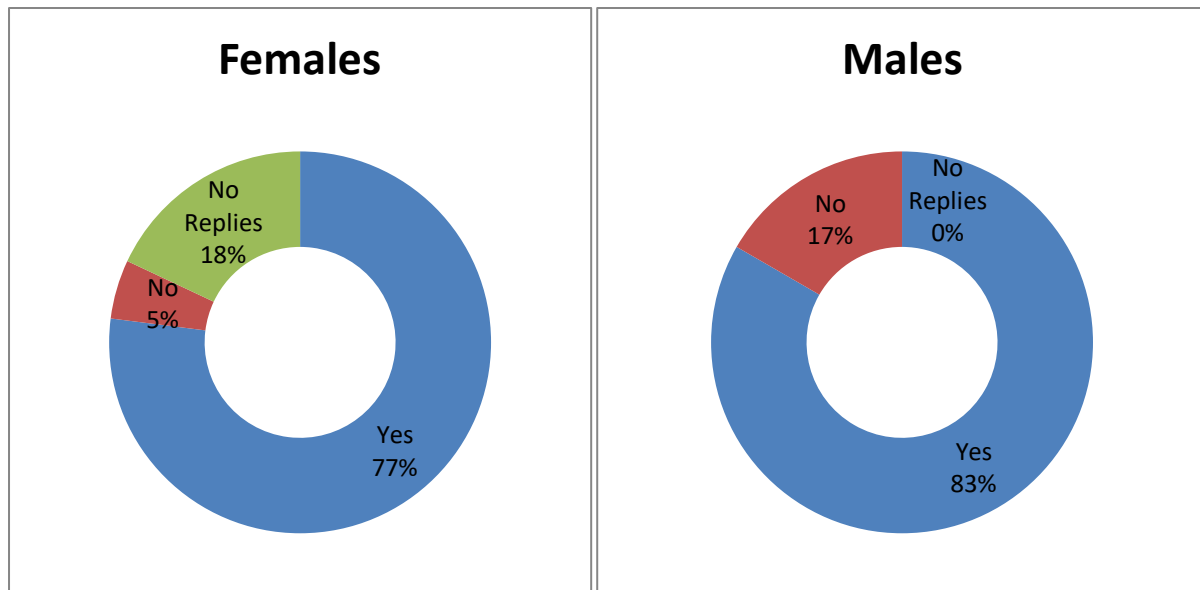
Figure 27. Females and Males' Attitudes on the Importance of Pronunciation with Different Individuals

In support of the importance of proper pronunciation of English and if it affects communication between native speakers and non-natives, female participants who have answered "yes", have provided the justifications which are listed below,

- Miscommunication may occur due to different accents.
- Non-natives are not understood as easily as natives, because the former may commit pronunciation errors.
- Non-natives may face difficulty understanding accents and some expressions related to culture.
- Natives are more informal and faster in speech.
- Natives speak with more confidence.
- Non-natives make more irritating mispronunciations.
- Non-natives' mother tongue may cause hindrances for example, [θ] and [ð] or [f] and [v].
- One can learn from natives, and non-natives require other reformulations.
- It is uncomfortable to speak to non-natives.
- Non-natives speak spontaneously without considering mistakes.
- Speaking to non-natives may cause them to be embarrassed about their mistakes and feel uncomfortable.

Male respondents; similarly, have provided justifications in support of how greatly accurate pronunciation may cause a huge difference; either when speaking to a native or a non-native speaker. The main remarks are listed as follows,

- Making mistakes causes non-natives to sound ignorant.
- Natives can understand meaning though.
- Both types of speakers have got different pronunciation and accent, where natives are correct and good at it.
- Native speakers' speech is much faster.
- One can learn correct English and pronunciation from native speakers.
- It is difficult to communicate with natives, because of their unique accent.
- One cannot hide the real accent with non-natives.

As for participants who reply with a "no", they are a minority. The females have not provided any justifications, whereas, the males have provided only one which is,

- It does not matter if one speaks correctly or not, "only speak go ahead".

It appears that the majority who indicates various differences with regard to speaking to native and non-native speakers of English accentuate the differences in mother tongue in language building, culture and pronunciation, which may cause miscommunication or misunderstandings. Although the message is transmitted, one way or another, incorrect pronunciation may irritate the listener or drive them to interrupt or stop the conversation. The main justifications provided all lead to one common point which is the importance of fluency and accuracy as the main parameters in sound and an interrupted speech or communication flow.

Q17. How often do you listen to native speakers?

This inquiry targets the issue of how LMD3 EFL graduates allow themselves the exposure to English outside the classroom as English and Phonetics' classes cannot guarantee the sufficient amount of exposure. More research and practice on their own is mandatory. It also investigates the different sources of their exposure to English aside from English teachers at university and it targets the reason why they are exposed to authentic material.
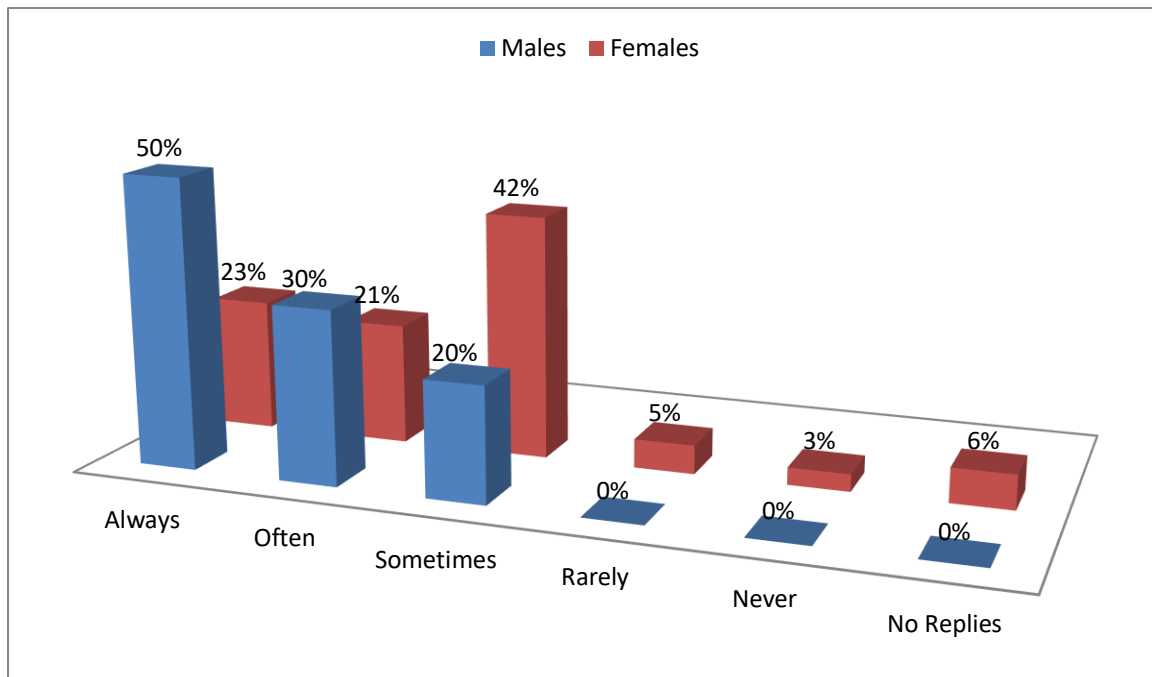
Figure 28. Females and Males' Frequency of Exposure to Native Content

As shown on the graph above, the majority of female respondents (42%) is exposed to English through native content at certain times and occasionally. This is followed by approximate percentages between constant exposure (23%) and frequent times (21%). The rest is a minority of female graduates who are rarely or never exposed to English. Only to speculate, considering the previous replies – Whether studying English was their choice - it can refer to the category of students who were forced to study English or had no other choice, but an English major.

By contrast, male respondents, with half of their total, expressing constant exposure (50%) to native and authentic sources, which is a good sign considering how useful it is to be exposed to the target language through authentic content and on a regular basis. The second and third majorities state to be exposed more frequently and occasionally as well. No rare or negative instances. As they have been required to indicate the tools through which exposure to the target language took place, female respondents mention the following which are listed by frequent repetition.

1. Television (movies, series, TV shows, news, documentaries, etc.).

2. Social media (Facebook, Youtube, etc.).

3. Songs' lyrics.

4. Podcasts.

5. Online video games.

6. Phone applications (Duolingo, Goodnight, etc.).

7. Teachers.

8. Audio books.

9. Native friends.

Male participants provide similar tools and they are listed by frequent repetition as well.

1. Television.

2. Social media.

3. Songs' lyrics.

4. Online video games.

5. Friends.

Considering the selected participants' choice of tools, it can be stated that at least the first four top tools are direct sources for exposure to the target language; mainly, television and social media. With the help and widespread of internet and technology; nowadays, learners can be exposed to the language by one way or another and more often. The males appear to be more exposed to English than females in accordance with their replies. It is a point to be restated afterwards when comparing and discussing oral results.

Q18. What conditions do you think can possibly prove useful for learning Phonetics better?

Learners as the main receivers of Phonetics' lessons, they are also the main and most reliable source of feedback regarding their needs and the right conditions and instruction. Such needs make Phonetics' classes more active, constructive and appealing than before rather than learners being passive depositories and teachers robotic savoir givers or instructors. This question intends to gather more information about the best conditions in which EFL learners acquire articulatory instruction better in their syllabus or teachers' methods.

Table 19. Females and Males' Suggestions for a Better Phonetics' Classes

Rank	Females' Suggestions	Rank	Males' Suggestions
1.	More practice	1.	More practice
2.	Listening to native speakers	3.	Listening to native speakers
3.	More transcription practice	4.	More transcription practice
4.	Explaining the importance of fanatics		
5.	A good teacher	5.	A good teacher
6.	Reading books and using dictionaries		
7.	Learning and applying		
8.	More participation in class		
9.	Motivation		
10.	Correction of mispronunciations		
11.	A native teacher of English	6.	A native teacher of English
12.	Attentive learners		
13.	More interaction	2.	More interaction
14.	More supra-segmental instruction		
15.	Fun games	7.	Fun games
16.	Slow and steady instruction		
17.	Technological devices	8.	Technological devices

As a summary, female participants appear to have suggested more recommendations for the betterment of Phonetics' class; as well as obtain satisfactory results. Such suggestions will be the basis of the recommendations to be laid down in chapter five to guide teachers and teachers-to-be through a successful journey in teaching Phonetics and satisfy both parties. Both genders appear to have similar suggestions and agree on certain additions to the objectives and tendencies within pronunciation classes. At top of the list, practice including oral and written articulation is highlighted. A balance between oral and written activities is quite essential in order to complete their phonetic/phonological tuition.

Participants accentuate the exposure to the target language through authentic sources including listening to native speakers. They also mention the possibility of using Information and Communication Technology (Henceforth ICT) devices, such as videos or audios in class. Another possibility is having native teachers of English referring to Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska's (2014) differences between ESL/EFL teachings. Both genders agree on the Phonetics teacher's qualities, to be competent and hard-working who provides opportunities

of constant practice, interaction, group-work and entertaining or appealing activities that take the form of games and combine knowledge and fun at the same time.

Most of females point out a few ideas and propose more hard work from the students' part, such as boosting their skills by reading books and consulting dictionaries for meaning, transcription of correct articulation of the entries, more participation and inclusion in activities and paying more attention to lessons and instructions in class. Females' suggestions appear to have drawn more attention towards Phonetics/Phonology background and instruction, focus to be placed on theory as well, but slowly and properly explained.

Q19. Do you find phonetic codes (symbols) hard to memorise?

In several research studies, dealing with phonetic symbols, their instruction and retention is seen as cumbersome and memorisation of the phonemes' chart might be time-consuming. Nonetheless, they are fun to learn through diverse and regular practice activities. Whether male or female students find them interesting or hard to retain, they remain necessary for the sole purpose of reading and decoding phonetic transcription and texts in tests and exams; as well as a skill for acquiring the correct pronunciation of entries in dictionaries.
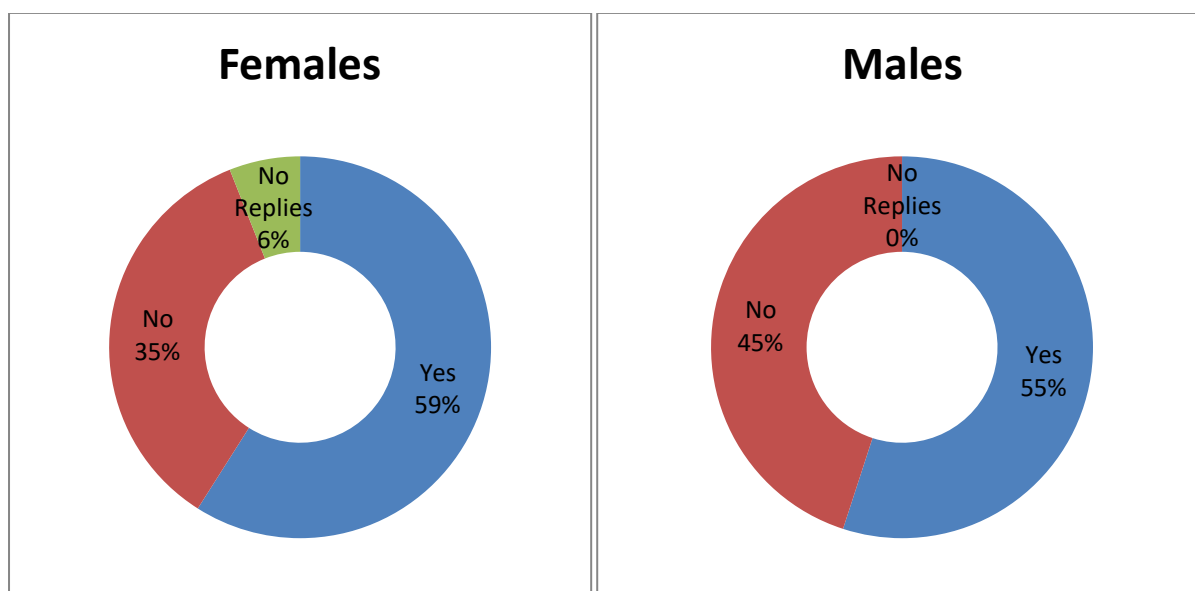

Figure 29. Females and Males' Memorisation of Phonetic Codes

It has been speculated that EFL students would come across difficulties in learning and memorising phonetic symbols without regular practice. Results on the table show that the majority of both genders struggles in memorising phonetic codes. It could be due to the

cumbersome forms or the correspondence of sounds and codes can be confusing. It is important to hint back at the seventh inquiry in the first section (see appendix n°1), where they state that phonetic transcription is hard, complex, difficult and tricky; still, it is fun, useful, helpful and needs practice. It is worth pointing at the percentage of respondents who do not find phonetic codes difficult to memorise which is a considerable amount (35% of females and 45% of males) and might hint at the possibility of succeeding in phonetic transcription that can be related to learners' efforts and hard work.

Q20. Do you use dictionaries to consult pronunciation?

Traditional use of dictionaries in the past decade in Algeria was rich and varied. The use of pocket dictionaries or large ones necessitated its consulting to find out correct articulation of most new words. However, in the present day with the spread and use of technology and internet, dictionaries are digitalised and are accompanied by vocal articulation and oral pronunciation can be acquired without consulting a dictionary by using a digital translator.
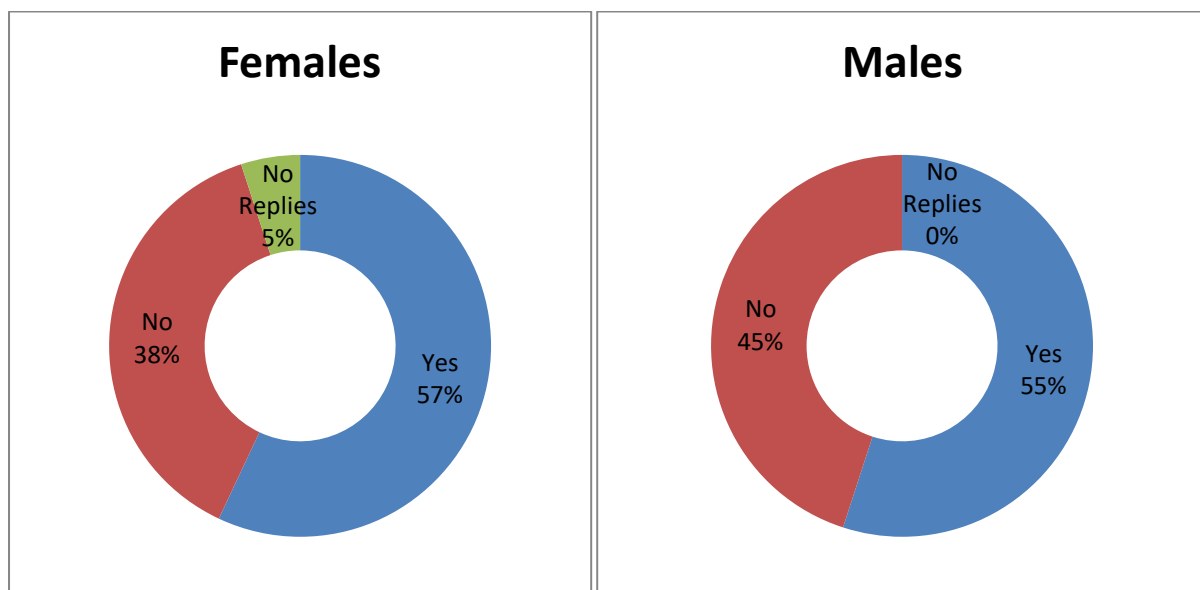
Figure 30. Females and Males' Use of Dictionaries

The above results indicate that LMD3 EFL students' usage of dictionaries with the majority of both genders, above half (50%), confirms that. If a learners familiarise themselves with the use of dictionaries by the beginning of their tuition, it will become a habit and; therefore, facilitate the memorisation of phonetic codes. Male and female participants, who

answer by "yes", have provided their own reasons that; in general, demonstrate their appreciation and their justifications are listed below by popularity order.

1. To obtain the right pronunciation of difficult or new vocabulary.
2. To find and read pronunciation and stress placement through phonetic transcription.
3. To learn spelling and meaning of newly acquired terms.
4. To correct their mispronunciations.
5. To memorise correct pronunciation.

Female respondents add more reasons for the use of dictionaries and which include,
1. To find out the difference between RP and GA accents.
2. Dictionaries are helpful.

Respondents who have opted for a "no" as an answer, provide the following reasons for not using a dictionary. It is worth noting that these respondents have not understood the point of the question and may think that dictionaries are hard copies; whereas, they can include digital versions provided by phone applications. Females have stated the following,
1. Using Google translate instead in order not to read transcription.
2. Using app dictionaries because regular dictionaries are complicated.
3. Using internet sources, such as YouTube, is more helpful and practical.
4. Preferring hearing the pronunciation of words rather than reading them.
5. They cannot develop the habit of searching in a dictionary.

On the other hand, male respondents state the following,
1. Not being familiar with using dictionaries.
2. Internet is faster.

Therefore, most of respondents find tangible dictionaries old-fashioned and complicated in usage, because they take time to flick through the pages to find the right word. Moreover, today's generation appear to be impatient and always in a hurry, for such a reason, digital and pronouncing apps are more appealing to them than hard-copy dictionaries.

Q21. If you do not use dictionaries, how do you acquire correct pronunciation of new vocabulary?

It is important to acquire the right pronunciation of new terms in the target language; especially for conversations. This question is addressed to the participants who do not rely on dictionaries to get the right pronunciation of words, and to find out what other means they resort to instead. Respondents who do not use dictionaries are required to explain their approach or techniques and tools that are useful in providing the right way to articulate certain vocabulary. Female participants have provided more possibilities and solutions. Still, the males have mentioned; similarly, only the first three items. Females as noticed and noted before, tend to express more interest and concern in the amelioration of their speaking skills and pronunciation instruction. Thus, they learn the right articulation,

1. By listening to native speakers through movies and radio.

2. By using phone applications and internet.

3. By learning from their teachers.

4. By applying the rules which they learn in class.

5. By imitating and repeating after native speakers.

6. By learning from friends or anyone who speaks English well.

7. By following English teachers on social media platforms.

8. By asking others for correction.

Apparently, EFL learners rely on all skills' development from auditory-based sources without resorting to dictionaries, tangible ones in particular. It also indicates the fact that because they struggle with phonetic transcription, they avoid written forms and transcription. Moreover, they tend to dislike the written aspect of dictionaries; however, as it previously has been noticed, a great number of learners prefer written exams claiming to be in need for more time to think and focus. Additionally, disregarding English orthography might be one of the reasons behind female graduates' weakness in spelling as concluded in their worksheets' activities.

Q22. In learning English, who do you think is quicker in acquiring correct pronunciation?

Research has shown little results concerning gender differences in pronunciation acquisition; yet, female learners' positive attitudes and openness to fresh learning experiences may assist in their slight superiority in oral skills. Nevertheless, male learners appear to

exhibit wit and more active conversational skills that outdo female counterparts. This question investigates participants' opinions regarding the quickest gender in obtaining correct pronunciation, either on their own or acquired in classes and they are requested to justify their replies.
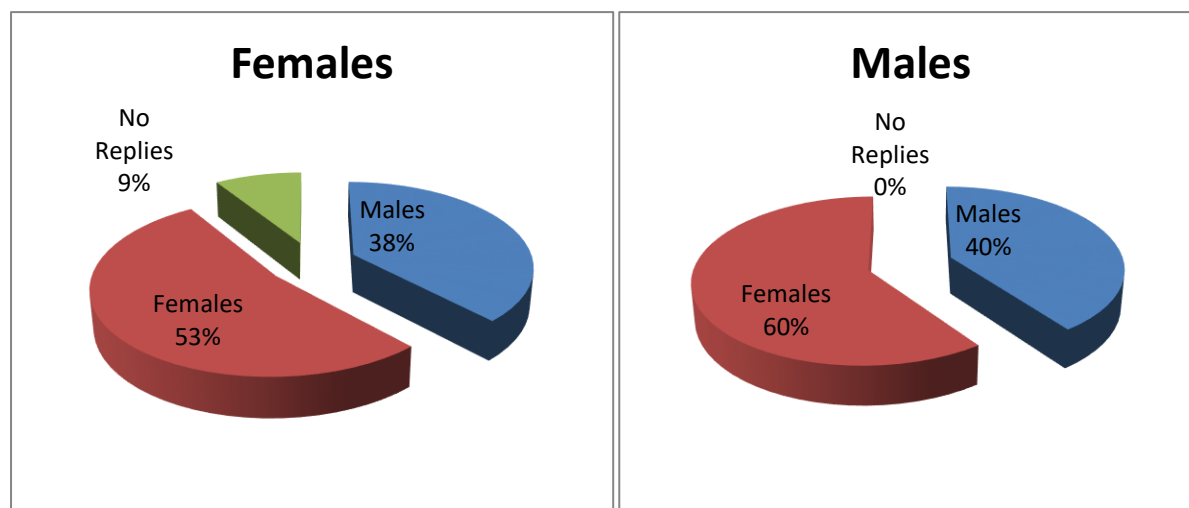
Figure 31. Females and Males' Views on either Gender's Speedy Pronunciation Acquisition

Results from both genders demonstrate a majority that exceeds half of the batches that think female learners acquire correct pronunciation more rapidly than males do. Respondents are required to provide reasons behind their choice which are collected and listed as follows,

- Because they work and study harder for improvement.
- Because they like discovering new things; so, they research more and are more motivated.
- Because they are smarter and quicker in understanding and memorisation.
- Because females are more exposed to the target language by constantly listening to native speakers through watching and listening.
- Because they focus more on rules and apply them.
- Males' voice is louder and unclear.

The rest of female respondents believe that male learners acquire English pronunciation more quickly by justifying as follows,

- Because male learners are exposed to American native speakers a lot; especially through series and video games.

- As observed in class.
- They are not anxious as females and do not focus on making mistakes.

In accordance with the above listed reasons, the females appear to be superior as the majority has voted as such. They also claim that female learners are more hard-working, attentive and smarter than their male counterparts. They learn rules and apply them properly and are more exposed to native content which is considered an additional reason for their superiority in speedy pronunciation acquisition. By contrast, male learners can be as superior due to their openness to learning English pronunciation without pressure, as observed by female classmates within classes.

It is also stated that male learners are more exposed to English authentic sources, such as TV shows and video gaming, as well as being flexible in learning and committing errors. However, such statements can be subjective and it is more accurate to mention how their oral recordings can confirm or disconfirm such claims after analysis and discussion of results. It is only fair to mention that very few participants (2%) are not pleased and do not accept to choose a gender and state that it could be both as it entirely is dependent on their effort and practice.

Q23. In your opinion, who can speak English more properly and less accented (Algerian accent)?

Although the answer is entirely dependent on their personal opinions which may turn out more subjective or biased towards the same gender, this question seeks to discover which gender's pronunciation is more accurate and native-like than the other. Justifications are obligatory.
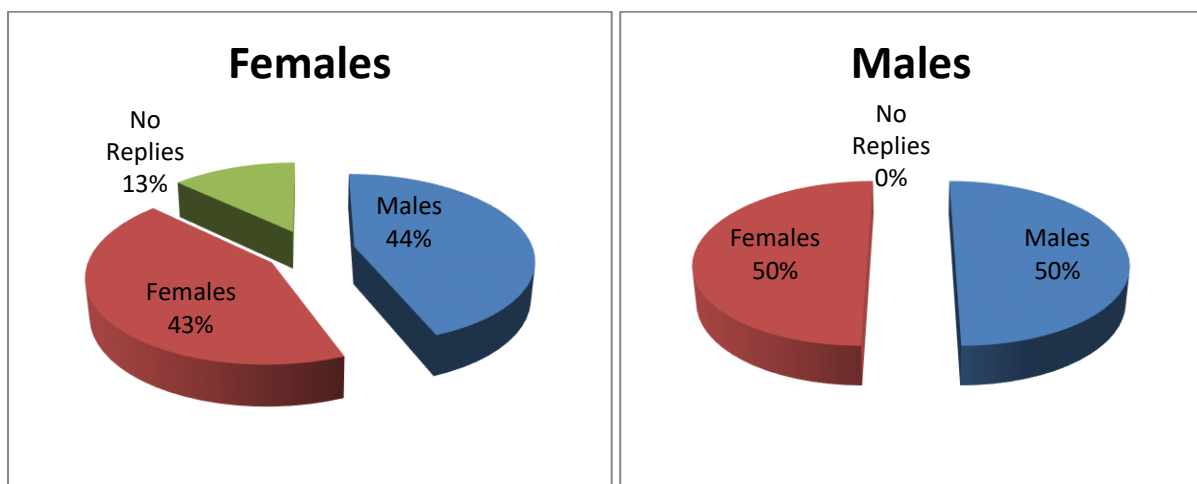
Figure 32. Females and Males' Views on either Gender's Proper and Less Accented Pronunciation

Statistics show a degree of equality between male and female answers; however, a slight difference is to be pointed at concerning the females. The latter (44%) believes that male students can utter English in a proper accent without mother tongue prosody to affect it. Still, (43%) is very close to it which indicates females' ability to pronounce as correctly and well as males do. Once more, respondents are requested to include the reasons behind their selection and they are listed as follows by both genders,

- Because the females make much effort in pronouncing correctly and also correct their mistakes.
- Because they love the English accent and they find it easy to acquire.
- Their voice is weak.

By contrast, participants who select the males as superior in this aspect of accent acquisition, have provided their justifications which include the following,

- Male learners are influenced by American native speakers and also wish to immigrate.
- Male learners pronounce clearly without hesitation.
- Female learners' speech sounds more accented, because of the influence of mother tongue.

Despite the fact that LMD3 EFL graduates' replies cannot be entirely decisive and correct, in accordance with their opinion replies, male participants appear to have got integrative reasons that may drive them to learn the correct accent including immigration - as previously stated - in inquiry number five of the first section- that they wish to travel abroad to English-speaking countries, which is a sign for integration within the English society according to Gardner (2007). There is a re-mention of a similar reason stated earlier in the twenty-second question that points at the females' efforts to pronounce correctly and the males' lack of hesitation. Furthermore, a few participants (2%), similar to the previous inquiry, express the same idea of the capacity of both genders to speak and produce the accent properly in equal measures depending on each individual's effort and capacities.

Q24. In your opinion, who speaks English better in terms of making fewer mistakes in pronunciation of words?

As related to the previous question, this one also inquires about possible gender dissimilarities with regard to students' accent. Despite the fact that accented speech has not been listed as one of the obstacles in English pronunciation, it still causes listeners to be irritated and at times causes misunderstanding or confusion due to the wrong intonation. The question; therefore, inquires about male or female flexibility in acquiring correct accent of choice rather than an accent influenced by mother tongue's supra-segmental features.
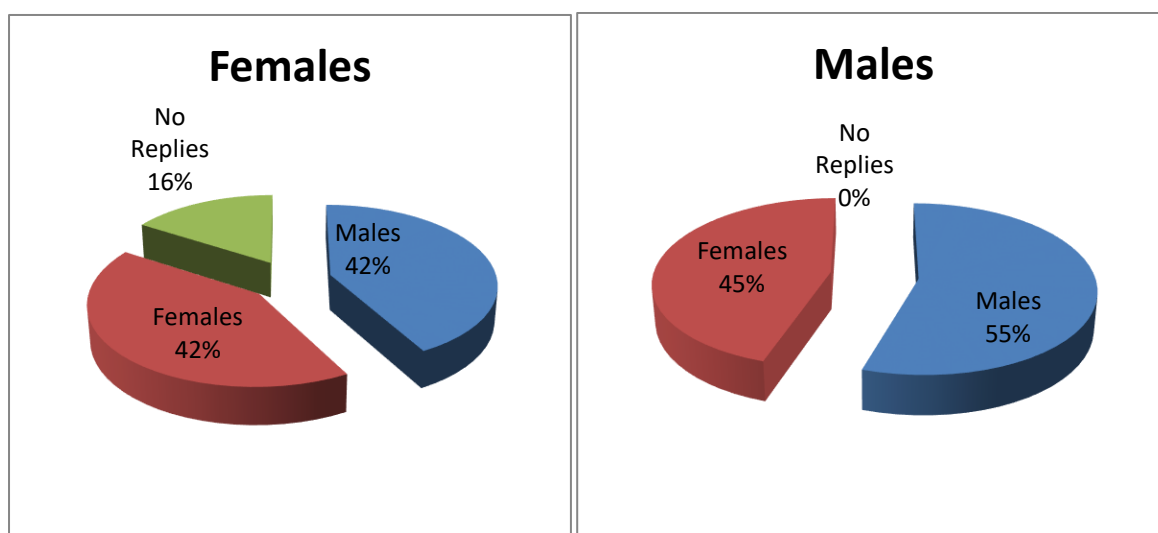
Figure 33. Females and Males' Views of either Gender's Fewer Mispronunciations

Female respondents appear to have equal production capacities in terms of making fewer mispronunciations in accordance with their answer results. Nonetheless, male respondents' results indicate a slight difference that supports male speakers' capacity to be better in articulation of words than the females'. Furthermore, participants from both genders have provided reasons in favour of females and are listed below.

- Because female learners practise more often than males,
- Because they make much effort and listen to native speakers more often.
- Because they are more anxious and careful with their pronunciation errors.
- Because they lower their voice and speak clearly.
- Because they are smarter and attentive learners who are interested in the way they pronounce.

Moreover, the rest of participants; both male and female, who select males as the gender with superiority in committing fewer pronunciation errors have provided the following reasons,

- Male learners are exposed to authentic output including TV series and video games, football programmes and movies, while the females show more interest in Turkish series and French programmes.
- Female learners tend to speak too fast and too much, where they commit more mispronunciations without paying attention.
- Male learners have got a strong and clear voice.
- Male learners tend to learn pronunciation faster than female learners, and they are more confident in themselves and their oral skills.

As a result, the same aspects are surfacing repeatedly which can be in favour of or against either gender. Such aspects include the degree of exposure to the target language, self-confidence and anxiety, voice quality and attentiveness in perception of the target language articulation. Most of such elements are investigated in a number of inquiries in the present study and more insight is to be presented. It is assumed that female respondents may come across obstacles in perception that can be manifested in the production of words.

Q25. Have you had any difficulties with the articulation (production) of some sounds while acquiring the English pronunciation?

This question targets the production and perception of the target language sounds and non-native speakers' main obstacles, as tackled before, are highlighted in terms of misperceived or mispronounced sounds. Thus, participants are requested to name the sounds which they struggled to produce at first. Moreover, they are requested to state how they overcame sounds' production difficulties in order to assess their techniques later.
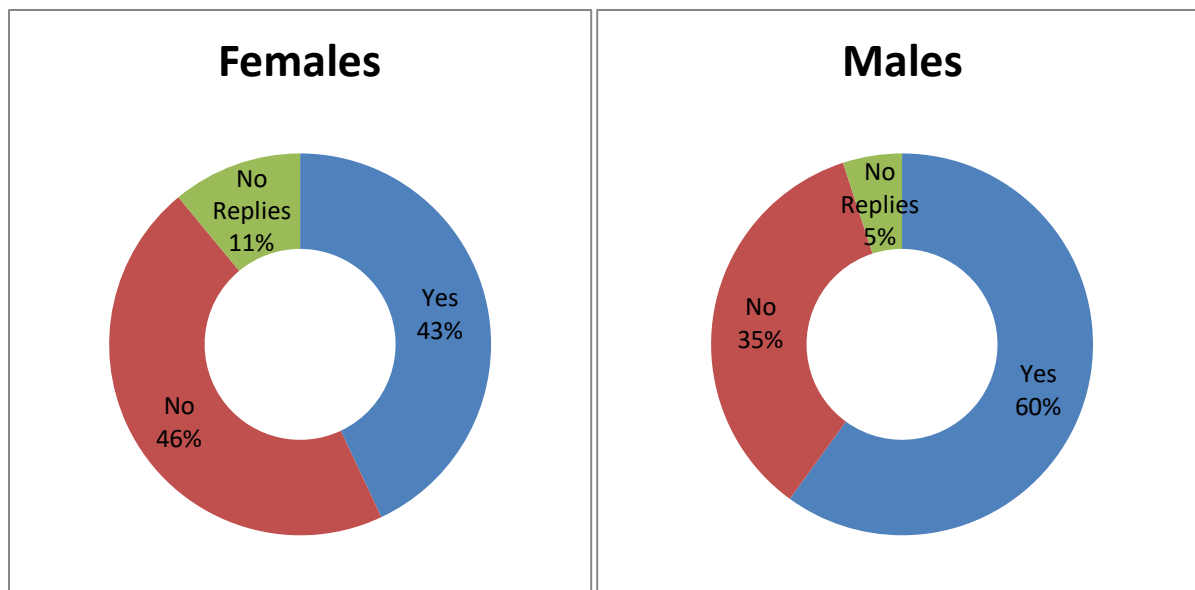
Figure 34. Females and Males' Sounds Production Difficulty

Male and female graduates appear to have different experiences, where the majority of the former has encountered a certain difficulty when producing English phonemes; whereas, the latter has not. Nonetheless, female and male respondents who have replied by "yes" mention what sounds they exactly struggled with including,

- Unfamiliar or long words.
- Silent letters.
- A few consonant sounds, for females; for example, [ʃ], [tʃ], [s], [θ], and [ŋ], and for males, [w], [θ], [ð], [v], [ŋ], [ʒ] and [h].
- Vowels [e], [ə], [æ], [ɜː], [ʌ], [eɪ], [aɪ], [əʊ] and [ɪ], but they have corrected them by practising and drilling them, and through intensive listening (For females). Whereas, others are still struggling with appropriate articulation of such vowels.

Following the same line of thought, Algerian students do come across situations where they can articulate those vowels, but cannot differentiate between them, such as [ə] and [e] which appear similar to them and they consequently get confused in the word transcription . Apparently, the first issue to hinder their proper production is not isolated sounds but actually words that are either long or new. Such an issue is accompanied by their inability to identify silent letters in words for example. It is worth highlighting that the selected participants' results from recordings' analysis show such a difficulty which, to a certain degree, proves that LMD3 EFL graduates are unable to correctly produce words that contain silent letters. Although some words are frequently used, female respondents either mispronounced or

skipped them. However, with reference to the previous pronunciation recordings' results, the males are more superior to the females in the production of vowels and isolated words.

Q26. Have you had any difficulties with the perception (retention) of some sounds?

Similarly, this inquiry targets the matter of English sounds' perception and if throughout the course of English learning since middle school – or perhaps before that period – has led to some sort of struggle understanding and retaining certain sounds. If there exist a few, they are requested to state the way they overcame such perceptual difficulties as well.
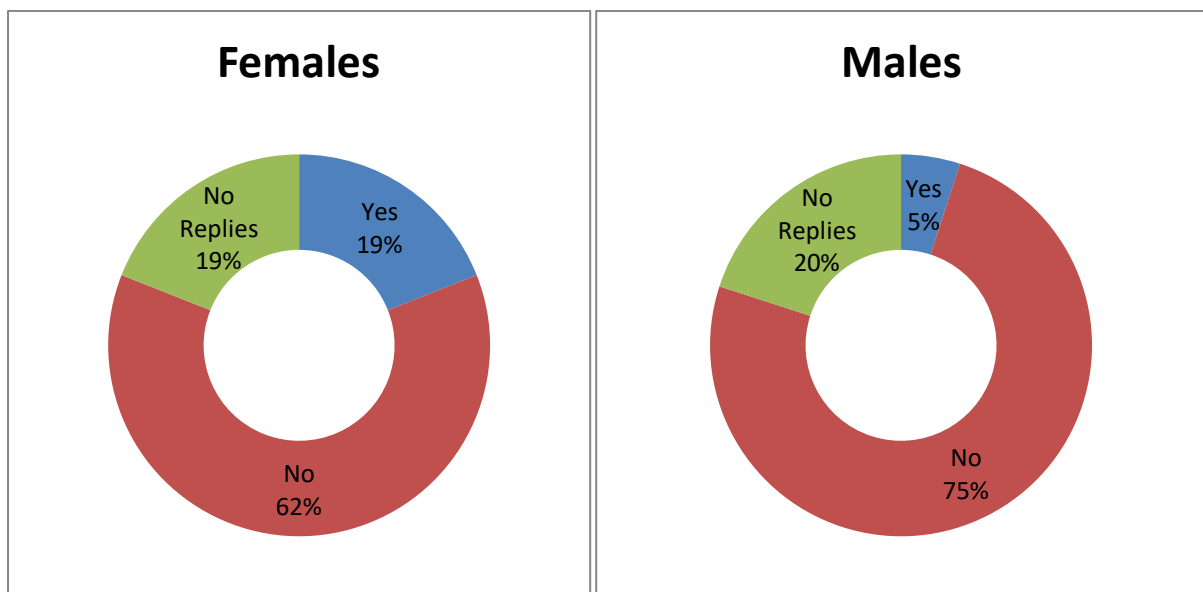
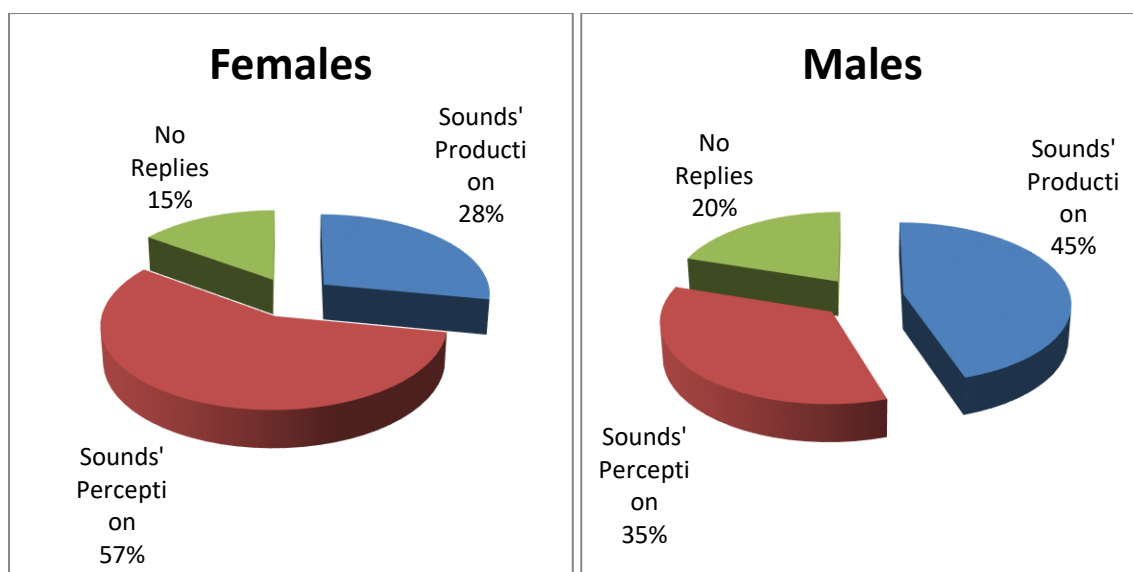**Figure 35. Females and Males' Sounds' Perception Difficulty**

With a close relationship between production and perception of sounds, one element can affect the other if a speaker is facing a hitch which consequently affects the flow of communication and comprehension. The above-shown results demonstrate a high majority of both participating genders claiming to be able to retain and perceive sounds well. The minority; however, that answers negatively have provided where exactly such difficulties might take place. Only female respondents have provide answers and they are listed as follows,

- Mono-phthongs; such as [ə] and [e] and diphthongs.
- [t], [d] and [r].
- Homophones.

Therefore, vowels, both mono-phthongs and diphthongs, represent an issue for females, not only in production, but also in perception. It has been stated in the third chapter of the present research that males' articulation scores are better than the females', which is more apparent in contrastive analysis of minimal pairs. The case of rhotic [r] in non-rhotic RP is presumed to be a case of misperception for females as well; which is to be clarified more in the next third section that deals with the accent of choice and the participants' views of both models.

Q27. In English pronunciation, which do you find more difficult?

To be more precise, participants are requested to identify the major flaws and obstacles which they have encountered while acquiring and learning English pronunciation and their personal justifications will indicate if they have managed indeed to overcome sounds' production/perception hindrances or not.

Figure 36. Females and Males' Comparison of Difficult Pronunciation Areas

With much focus on production and perception of whole words rather than individual sounds, it is helpful to reveal which aspect is more challenging in pronunciation acquisition, either segments or beyond segments. Participants stated previously that most of their production errors and misperceived sounds were remedied through constant practice and listening. However; in this case, the majority of female EFL graduates states that understanding other speech becomes arduous in situations such as,

- When people do not speak clearly and commit mispronunciations.

- If the speaker articulates quickly.
- If the speakers have got different accents and ways of speaking, such as Indians or the Scottish.
- When some vowels sound similar to each other.
- Not familiar with words or assimilated sounds.

Male respondents highlight the same issues listed above, but the majority faces difficulties with articulation of whole words. Yet the reasons are limited among which they mention,

- Because they are not familiar with some new vocabulary.
- Lack of practice.
- Because being stressed out or anxious affects their production.

Female respondents add more reasons including,

- Because incorrect production affects comprehension.
- Because English is non-phonetic and there are various vowel letters' realisations.
- Because mispronunciation of vowels causes accented and incorrect speech.
- Because their native language influences English articulation.

Q28. How do you find your pronunciation of English so far?

Participants are requested to pick the manner how they judge their own pronunciation level as LMD3 EFL graduates are one step away from graduation after a two-year training in articulatory Phonetics. Respondents have got multiple choices including five entries.
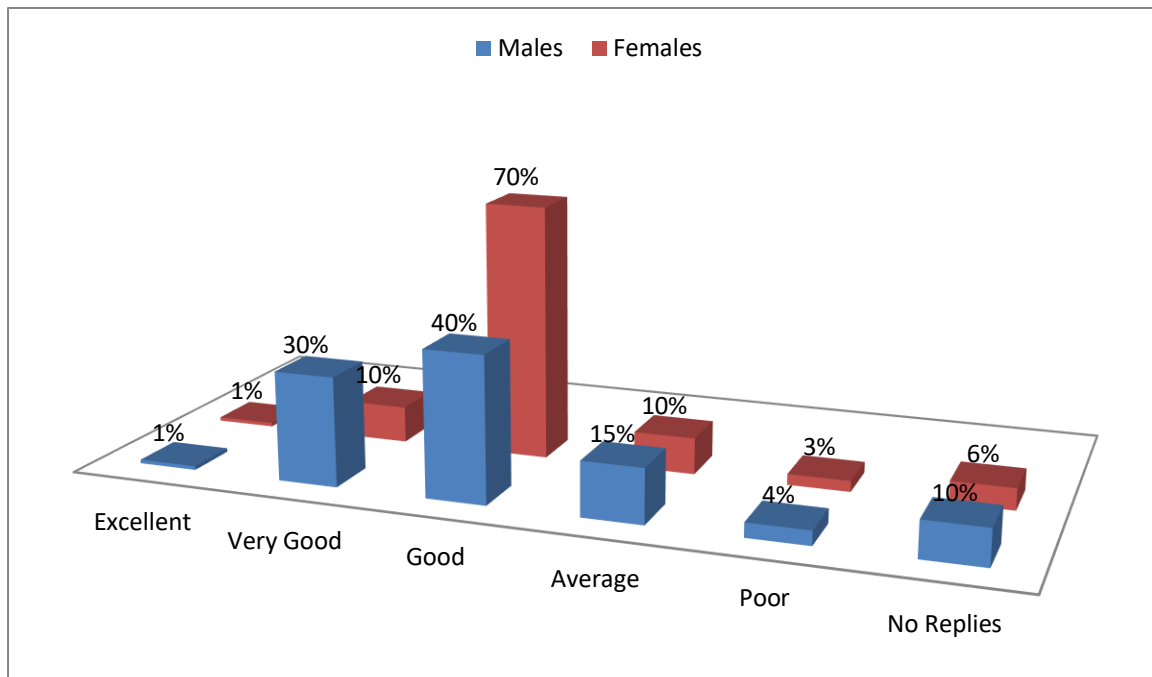
Figure 37. Females and Males' Personal Views on their Pronunciation Proficiency Levels

LMD3 EFL graduates are provided with the opportunity to judge their level of speaking English, and with the slightest minority both male and female respondents express to having an excellent pronunciation (1%). Nonetheless, the majority, males (40%) and females (70%), claims to be good at speaking English. As a reminder; in the previous chapter, participants' oral skills; phonetically and phonologically evaluated and examined; were also classified into "A-F" levels and the majority of females were categorised as "average" and males as "very good" in terms of fluency and accuracy. With a minority of male graduates having reached "Excellent level", most females did not apply word stress and required the listener to strain themselves focusing on their speech. In addition, the females spoke softly and were requested to speak up on various occasions.

Q29. What does your English pronunciation need to improve?

This inquiry functions as an additional bonus question whose answer may provide more insight about male and female differences and hindrances in the process of English pronunciation attainment. Their feedback matters for not only the present research study, but also for the betterment and improvement of Phonetics' classes.

As previously indicated, females' striking majority labelled their English pronunciation as good; therefore, this inquiry serves to expose the main elements missing in

their current pronunciation to be pinpointed and improved. Female respondents mention the following list,

- Practice more speaking and articulation.
- Pronunciation of new vocabulary.
- Vowels' articulation and distinction; especially diphthongs and [ə].
- To speak like a native.
- Listening and repeating after native speakers.
- Spelling along with articulation.
- Avoid panicking and be self-confident and motivated.
- Speaking more of the British accent outside the class.
- Understand how Phonetics works.
- Be consistent in speaking one accent.
- Be familiar with different English accents.
- Everything.
- Nothing, "I have an excellent pronunciation".

Male respondents have mentioned similar, but fewer aspects to be attended to in order to improve their pronunciation of English which include,

- Pay attention to and apply stress and rhythm.
- Practice speaking and articulation regularly.
- Obtain native-like accent.
- Nothing, "my English is excellent".
- Listening to and repeating after native speakers.
- Speaking more of the British accent.
- Everything.

Both gendered students appear to have encountered lacks in their English pronunciation. The females' answers; accordingly, confirm most of results obtained from their recordings; being deficient of constant exposure and practice; especially newly-acquired vocabulary of English. It is added up to their inability to distinguish most vowels, diphthongs and short pure vowels. They aspire to speak as natives, which can be fulfilled by exposure to native content and repetition or imitation. After which, they hint at their speech deficiency in applying word stress and sentence stress as concluded previously.

Moreover, there comes the issue of practising more spelling combined with instant articulation for better memorisation. Female respondents accentuate the importance of how they feel which can be reflected on their speech and attitude while speaking. That is, females tend to be affected by their emotions, if lacking motivation, feeling stressed out or panicking in front of an audience, this is reflected on their performance and affects their confidence in themselves and their skills. They also express their readiness to be exposed to RP more outside of the classroom, to be able to speak one accent of choice more consistently, and to obtain more requisite of Phonetics' science; as well as familiarise themselves with other accents or other world Englishes.

The last two least provided answers are provided by some students who feel that their English is poor as demonstrated on the thirty-seventh figure, and those who consider their English flawless as also demonstrated on the same graph. Although a minority (2%), there exist female students who are confident in the speaking skill that does not require any improvement, although it can be considered vanity to some extent. Males as a majority; on the other hand, agree that the main obstacle impeding them from perfect and correct pronunciation is word stress and rhythm.

Previously, it was concluded; in accordance with their recordings results, that male respondents' pronunciation lacks stress and they had lower scores in stress placement and stress marking activities. They (10%) also express lacking regular use and practice of English outside the classrooms which might affect their prosody. Moreover, male respondents demonstrate an interest in learning and speaking RP and listening to authentic sources. Therefore, and as female respondents, male participants do not express any affective factors that may hinder their performances, which is a point that was previously hinted at by female respondents who thought that male learners had more self-confidence and spoke English without being restless, self-conscious or uncomfortable about making any mispronunciations or being judged by others.

Q30. Students need Phonetics classes until graduation.

The last inquiry in this section intends to reveal the opinions of LMD3 EFL graduates towards Phonetics' classes' extension for another year and if they find it short-lived or sufficient as a training before their graduation; in order to complete their licence tuition in Phonetics alongside the rest of fundamental modules.
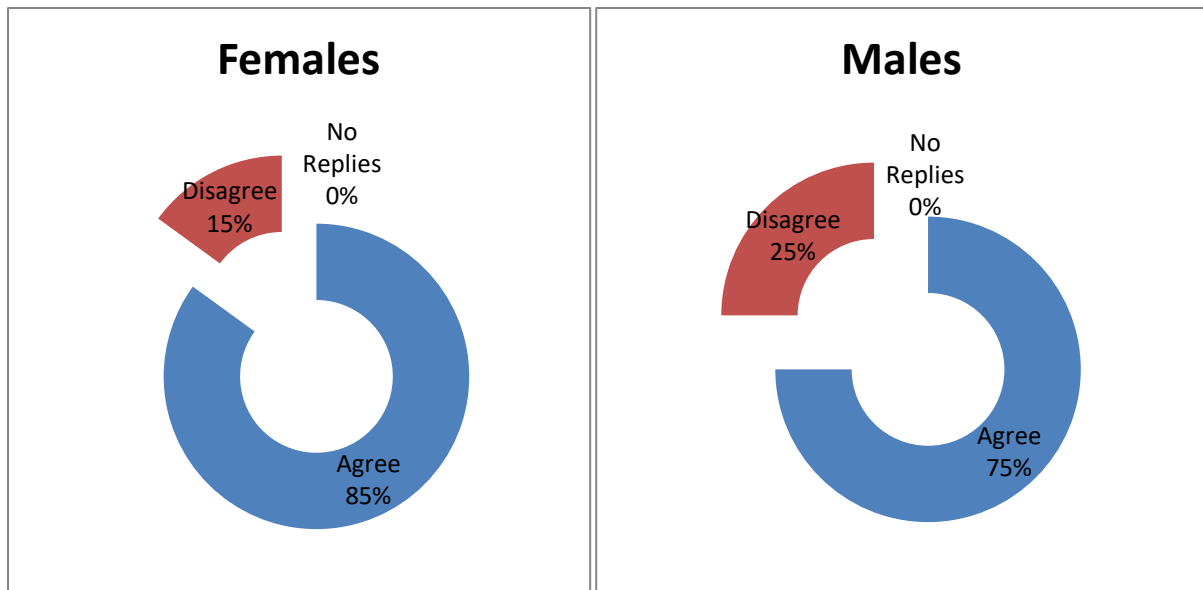
Figure 38. Females and Males' Views on Phonetics' Tuition Continuity until Graduation

Although the last inquiry in this section does not require participants to justify their replies, results only show that both genders agree by higher majority that Phonetics' classes should be included for a third year to complete their Phonetics' tuition properly. Not to forget that Phonetics' syllabus is a little bit overloaded for second year learners, and they often feel overwhelmed with Phonology lessons and supra-segmental instruction that require more time and practice.

LMD3 EFL graduates are about to specialise afterwards and with their previously-examined level of English and loads of misspellings and mispronunciations, it is of utmost importance to monitor their level and improve their performance through intensive phonetic and phonological instruction. Phonetics' classes are essential in LMD tuition, as not only does it teach students how to correctly pronounce, it also enhances and strengthens their phonetic knowledge and phonological awareness, it guides them through a rich syllabus or articulatory Phonetics and Supra-segmental instruction, it prepares them as future teachers and it corrects their mispronunciations' fossilisation and phonetic errors and misperceptions as well.

IV. 1. 3. Section 3: Choice of Accent

The third section of the present survey seeks to reveal male and female students' accent of choice, the reason behind such a choice and whether they work harder to improve it as EFL speakers and learners. Moreover, it intends to uncover students' awareness about the model accent taught at university and evaluated in exams.

Q1. What accent of English do you speak?

Participants are requested to mention their accent of choice in order to distinguish speakers of RP and those of GA, and which gender speaks either accent more. They are also requested to provide the reasons behind their choice as well, in order to identify if it is purposeful to speak that accent or is decided on a mere whim.
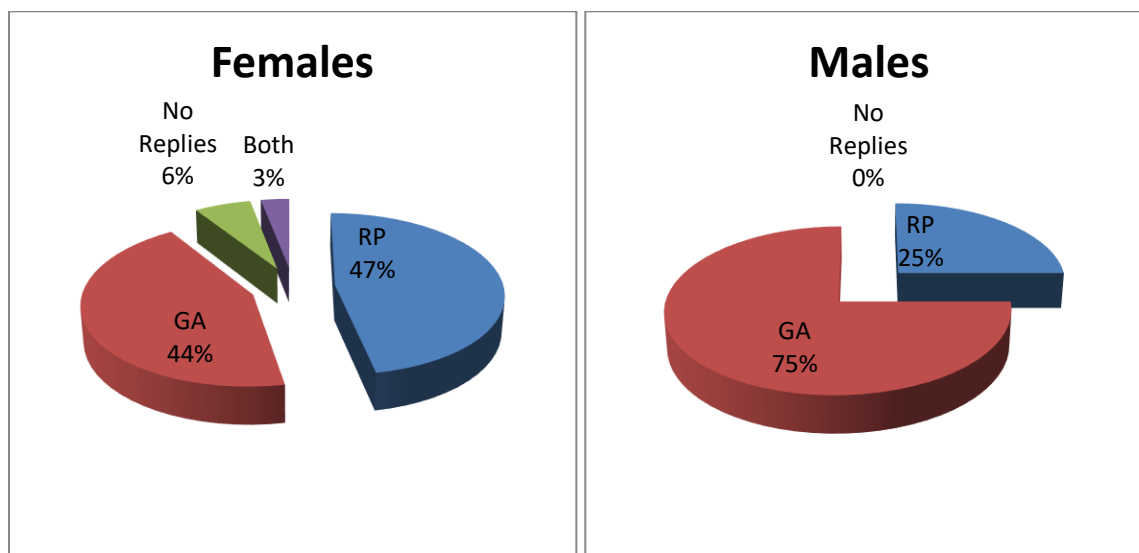
Figure 39. Females and Males' Accent of Choice

At first, EFL learners tend to begin speaking English either by being exposed directly to native speakers or at school; generally, in Algeria, by the sixth or seventh grade in middle schools. Presently, with technology assisting the spread of learning languages and English becoming one the most frequently-spoken languages and a lingua franca in the world, different sources cause EFL learners to speak it inconsistently, where they combine aspects of both main accent models into one. Although Phonetics' class aims to expose such a phenomenon and teach the differences in articulation and transcription, it requires a more elaborate practice programme to succeed in overcoming students' fossilisations in terms of articulation and accentedness, as well as orthography.

Females' replies between RP and GA are sufficiently close to spot no noticeable majority; still, with a slight difference, RP tends to be the choice of most female graduates (47%). The reasons behind their choice are provided and listed as follows,

- Easy and simple to learn and speak.
- It is more formal and academic.
- To follow the curriculum, lessons and exams' evaluation.

- It is spoken more slowly and clearly than GA.
- When listening to British speakers, the accent is beautiful.
- Being influenced by British movies, such as Harry Potter.
- It is more elegant and prestigious.
- They love it.
- It makes them feel confident.
- It sounds stronger than GA.

Male respondents; by contrast, speak more American than British English. Although a small fragment, male respondents who speak RP have provided similar replies or reasons; mainly, because RP is more formal and academic, because they are influenced by British culture through TV, because it is spoken in a slow and clear manner, and finally because they love using it. The male's majority (75%); however, appears to be more GA-directed and prefers it for a number of reasons including,

- They are exposed to more American content.
- It is easier and simpler in acquisition.
- They like it.
- They grew up speaking it more often.
- It makes them sound confident and have a strong personality.

Females' majority that claims to speak RP is followed by a second majority that spoke GA and provided more reasons than males did; although most of them were similar.

- Got influenced by American culture through TV shows and movies.
- It is easier to understand and acquire.
- They like it.
- They grew up speaking it.
- It is more popular than British accent.
- They were influenced by their middle school teachers.
- It is fun to sound American-like.

As a summary, female respondents tend to be RP-directed (47%) for its formal and academic use; especially in studies and communication; as well as being imposed in their curriculum and programmes; mainly, Phonetics' module. RP for them is easy and simple to learn, because it is spoken in a slower and clear manner that can be intelligible to all listeners.

Additionally, the accent is described by them as beautiful and its speakers sound more knowledgeable and prestigious, even more confident. The last reason is their affection for the accent.

Whereas, males' majority (75%) speaks GA for almost similar reasons to the female participants', where they appear to be exposed to American content on a regular basis as hinted at in the recordings' results and they have got less accented speech. Moreover, selecting GA as their accent and adopting it comes as a result of growing up listening to and speaking it; as well as their affection for it. Affectively speaking, they aspire to sound native-like, confident and communicate with a strong personality.

Q2. Can you tell the difference between RP and GA?

This inquiry intends to find out if LMD3 EFL learners can distinguish RP from GA, by requesting them to state how they are taught RP more in Phonetics' classes. They are occasionally taught the main characteristics of and differences between these standard accents. It is significant to make the distinction and not to mix both systems in speaking, because it is not consistent and it is important to distinguish them in speaking and writing.
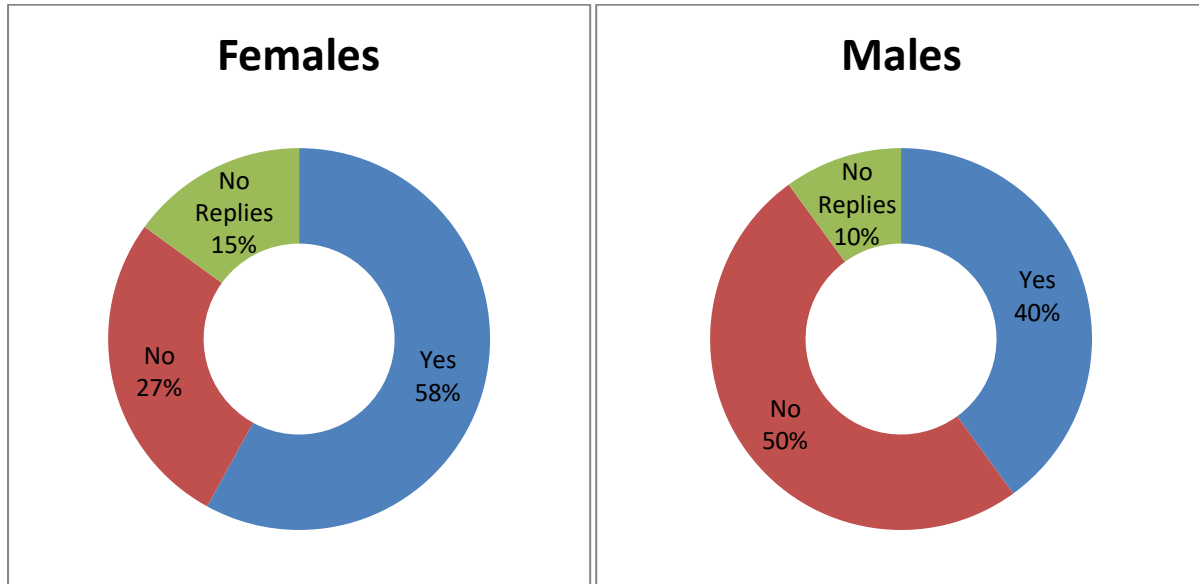
Figure 40. Females and Males' Ability to Distinguish Model Accents

Females' majority claims to have the ability to distinguish articulation differences between both suggested model accents; whereas, males' majority claims the opposite. Female respondents; therefore, have provided plenty of differences which, to some extent, prove female learners' attentiveness and comprehension, as they tend to pay attention to details

more than the males who can be considered less attentive. Participants who answer positively; mainly females, have provided the following medley of similarities according to them,

- GA is a rhotic accent where retroflex [r] is pronounced and is silent in RP.
- Each accent is different in how it sounds.
- RP is prestigious, beautiful and sounds intellectual.
- The British speak slowly and Americans speak fast.
- GA is informal and RP sounds formal and academic.
- RP is pronounced clearly while GA drops and assimilates sounds.
- They have got different orthography.
- GA has got slang expressions.
- GA is more popular and widely spoken than RP.
- [t] is flapped in GA and is glottalised in RP.

As it appears, selected participants are successful in pinpointing some of the differences between American and British accents; mainly rhoticity. In Phonetics' classes, the most recurrent aspect in articulation and transcription is voiced post-alveolar approximant [r] that is always silent in British only in one case where it should be pronounced; that is, when preceded by a vowel in a syllable or in a word boundary. The second aspect is the allophonic aspect of voiceless alveolar plosive that is mostly flapped in GA and glottalised in the British accents sometimes. The rest of suggestions; nonetheless, fall into different categories that encompass spelling, status and perhaps stereotypes.

Q3. How did you pick up this accent?

This inquiry attempts to highlight the possibilities and ways by which LMD3 EFL students pick or picked up their accents. Male and female participants have provided similar replies which can be considered the main instruments resorted to by graduates in order to facilitate their pronunciation acquisition process. The provided answers are a combination of direct exposure and communication.

- Exposure to English through TV, movies, songs, and gaming, through intent listening to native speakers; such as YouTubers and through listening to their teachers.
- Imitation of native speakers.
- Smartphone educational and learning applications.
- Admiration and affection for UK and RP accent.
- Natural acquisition.

- Speaking to natives, to themselves and to friends or family members.

Q4. Did you have any difficulties while acquiring this accent at the beginning?

This question intends to identify any possible obstacles which students may encounter while acquiring English accents. Truly; with technological advances and social media, access to authentic sources and pronunciation models are by the dozen. Yet, speaking like a native or acquiring a native-like pronunciation comes with a lot of mistakes, much concentration, and practice. This question goes in parallel with acquiring sounds' production and which process (segmental or supra-segmental) is less problematic.
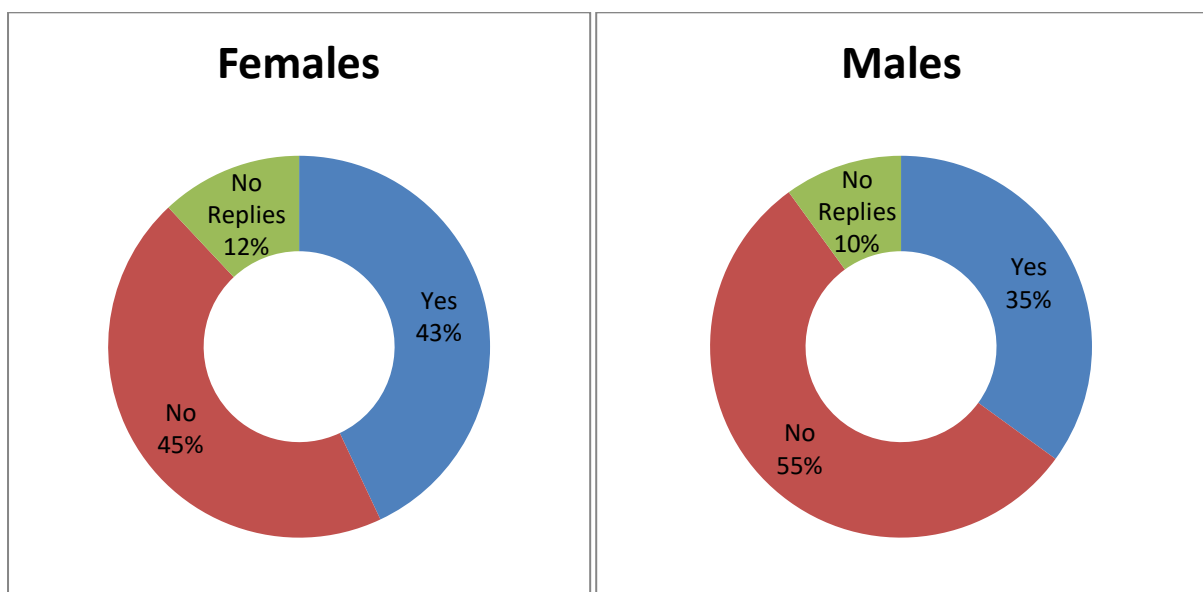
Figure 41. Females and Males' Possible Difficulty in Acquiring the Accent of Choice

The majority of female respondents has not come across noticeable or challenging difficulties when speaking the accent of choice. They attribute such a smooth acquisition to the following reasons. Males' majority has not faced any obstacles as well, the reasons might be similar but fewer; therefore, they are combined next between parenthesis.

- Constant exposure and practice (Males as well).
- Picked up the accent at an early age; easy acquisition (Males as well).
- GA is easy to acquire.
- The British accent is easier to acquire.
- British accent is harder.
- Love and passion to speak RP (Males as well).
- They do not know exactly.

The rest of participants, which represents the minority of both genders have come across some obstacles that might hinder their progress and they include the following,

- GA as a foreign language is different from Arabic.
- RP accent is harder at first (Males as well).
- They were not exposed to native content early and constantly.
- RP is not spoken properly at schools.
- GA is harder at first, because the Americans speak fast (Males as well).
- Speaking GA is time-consuming and needs practice and exposure (Males as well).
- A lot of exceptions and silent letters.
- Mixing both model accents (Males as well).

Despite the fact that female and male participants' majority has not encountered obstacles while acquiring the accent, the reasons provided by those who had are quiet reasonable. In this respect, some participants pinpoint how Arabic is different from English implying phonological dissimilarities that include prosodic patterns like intonation and rhythm or unit of foot and tonic stress. Moreover, they attribute such difficulties to improper or lack of exposure to the target language, either at school or at home.

By contrast, participants who have managed to acquire their accent of choice properly do accentuate constant exposure that may overcome mother tongue interference; especially at an early age, that is a reference to an age before lateralisation takes place. In addition, their affection towards learning English may be a good incentive to succeed in picking up the accent properly. It is worth noting that the last obstacle listed is actually an existing issue even facing students who claim to speak English excellently.

Q5. Which are the differences between American and British accents that you know of?

Consequently, participants are asked to identify the pronunciation or articulation differences between RP and GA, if they do know of them from frequent exposure to English accents or if they recall them from Phonetics' classes; for instance, [ɒ] vs. [ɑː], shift from RP to GA, silent "r" in RP and rhotic [r] in GA and [æ] vs. [ɑː] to name a few. Previously, in the second inquiry, respondents were required to explain how they were able to distinguish GA from RP. Nevertheless, instead they listed some of the main differences which can be properly added to this inquiry. Although it can be stated how respondents have provided more replies as listed below,

- Rhoticity (Males as well).

- GA speakers assimilate a lot (Males as well).

- RP is formal and GA is casual (Males as well).

- Flapped [t̪] in GA and glottal [ʔ] in RP (Males as well).

- "T" is more glottalised in RP than in GA (Males as well).

- Some vowels (Males as well).

- Phonetic transcription.

- GA sounds cool and RP serious.

- No idea.

As a result, graduates are familiar with some aspects of English accents which were mentioned in the previous chapters. However, realising such differences cannot indicate full commitment to them as EFL learners tend to pay less attention to accent aspects. For instance, some participants are aware of the different use of vowels between RP and GA, but could not specify. In this case, they were referring to the case of [æ] vs. [ɑː] and [ɒ] vs. [ɑː]. There are a few features provided by female and male participants that are purely opinionated and are not even phonetically or phonologically related.

Q6. Which aspects do you like in the accent that you chose to speak?

Naturally, when an EFL learner chooses to speak an accent of English, they are attracted to certain features and because they differ from one speaker to another, they are requested to mention the aspects that make them prefer the accent they speak over the other one. The ear hears first and because Phonetics in teaching comes before phonology or the abstract aspect of speech rules and systems, EFL learners may be attracted to an accent after listening to it and after being exposed to it on a regular basis. Being able to answer this question properly may indicate a degree of attentiveness by LMD3 EFL graduates instead of clueless and oblivious learning.

Male and female respondents emphasise how RP accent sounds musical and sweet to the ear, being an accent of prestige, smooth and clear to listeners, it boosts self-confidence and self-esteem, and it is formal and academic; stated by a participant as "original". By contrast, the majority of males and females who speak GA accent have provided similar aspects from their viewpoints including how easy and smooth GA is in learning with no obstacles encountered, it is spoken rapidly which allows its speakers to sound fluent and careless about making mistakes, the way it is musical to the ears of the listeners, it is more

popular, informal and casual than RP, as the latter is formal and academic and last the use of flapped [t̬] rather than regular alveolar [t].

Q7. If you speak American English, throughout Phonetics' classes, British English is the one implemented in the curriculum and syllabus, was it hard to shift from American to British in terms of words articulation and transcription?

Exclusively addressed to LMD3 EFL graduates who speak the American English accent, they are requested to state the difficulties they might have encountered while learning Phonetics that is presently purely RP-directed, and if the shift was confusing. It is worth mentioning that being EFL learners and future teachers, they must be aware of the difficulties and must adopt both accents in different contexts and for different purposes and not combine them.
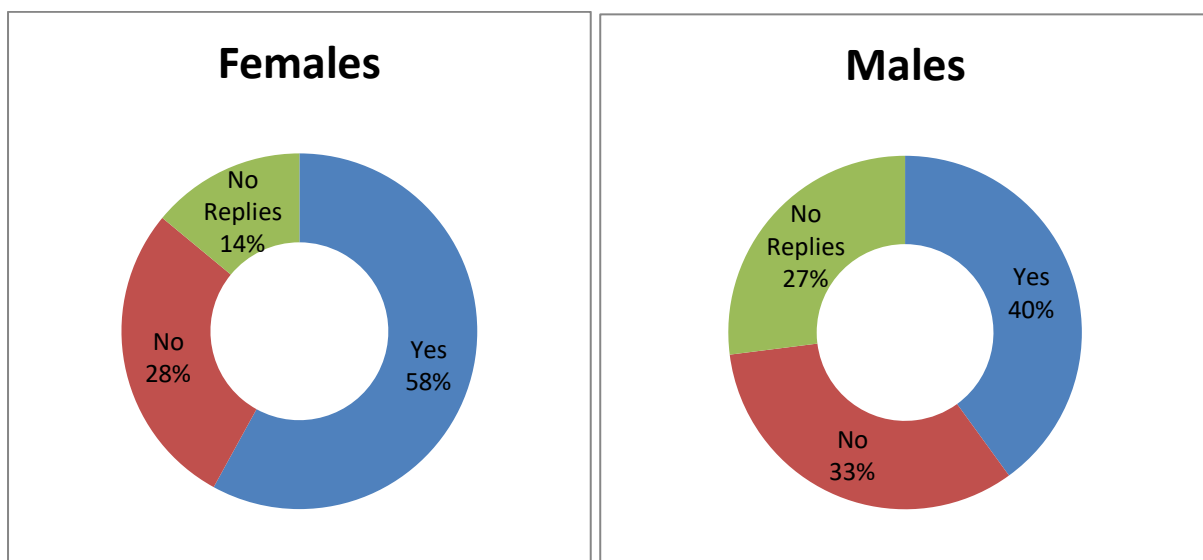
Figure 42. Females and Males' Possible Struggle in Learning both Model Accents

(43%) of female graduates speak GA which is a percentage closer to RP female speakers and the above results demonstrate that the former has encountered difficulties in shifting between the accent they speak and the accent they learn in classes. Male participants' majority (40%) also faces such a difficulty due to their constant exposure to GA everywhere except in exams. However, it is only fair to mention that distinguishing GA from RP and learning their similarities and differences will enhance the graduates' knowledge and attention; as well as provide an opportunity to understand the British accent more. As a result, for graduates to see that learning both accents and differentiating them causes difficulties,

then LMD3 EFL graduates need to raise their awareness and work harder to learn more accents and practise more phonetic transcription. Respondents; furthermore, are requested to justify the difficulties encountered and they are gathered below,

- Both accents have got different vowels' pronunciation.
- They forget to transcribe in British articulation; for example, path [pæθ] in GA versus [pɑːθ] in RP.
- They were not familiar with such differences before.
- They were obliged to pronounce in RP and to transcribe correctly.
- Final silent "r" was problematic.

Male informants add that it is hard to not confuse between them, and distinguishing model accents needs plenty of practice. The above listed justifications to their inability to adapt to learning two accents at the same time only indicates the low amount of exposure to RP outside the classrooms. It is worth noting that in previous inquiries, most participants acknowledged their need to learn and listen to more Received Pronunciation. Male respondents are attentive enough to realise that distinguishing the accents necessitates more practice. The minority of graduates speaking GA as their accent of choice has been kind enough to provide their views about the issue and females' answers are numerous, more enthusiastic and tolerant as listed subsequently,

- They were able to memorise both accents' changes and differences thanks to transcription and simultaneous pronunciation.
- Only vowels were different and it was easy to catch up.
- GA and RP have the same basics and similarities.
- The words were not complicated.
- It was easy to distinguish between model accents.
- They had teachers' help and dictionaries.

Q8. Arabic is different from English in structure and phonology; so, do you think that Arabic can influence the acquisition/learning of correct pronunciation of English?

Because Arabic and English descend from two different language families, they do have different structures, and phonologies; therefore, investigations conducted by Saudi Arabian researcher Hussam Rajab (2013) confirm that Arabic as a mother tongue does influence oral speech and accent to a great extent. Participants are requested to state their opinion and justify their answers regarding this matter.
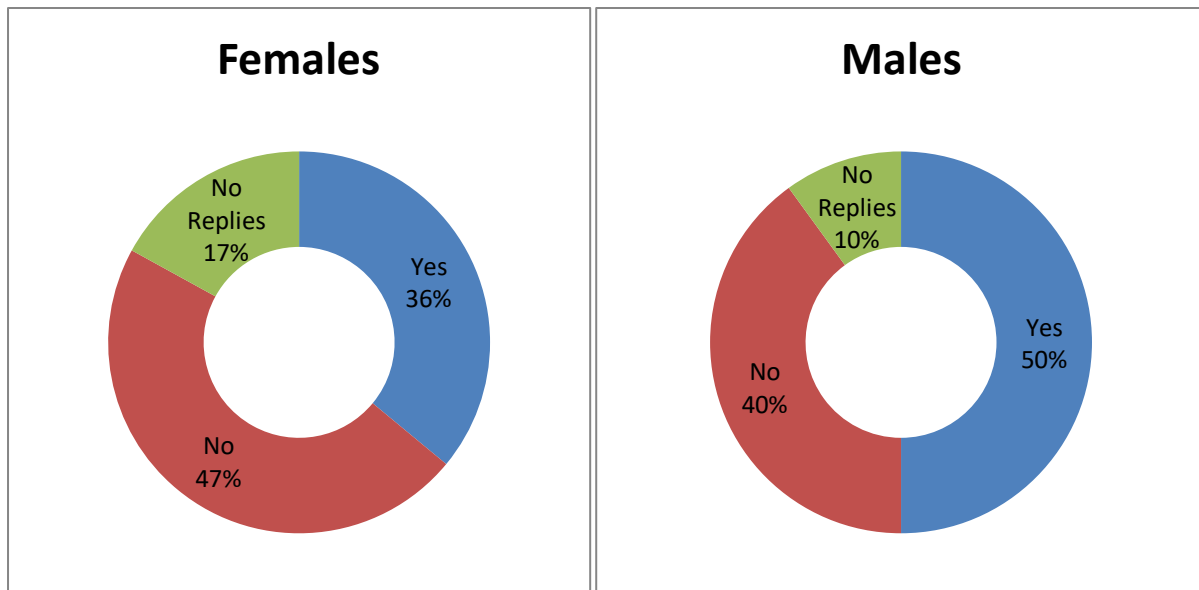
**Figure 43. Females and Males' Possible Mother Tongue Interference in English Accent**

Arabic and English come from two different families where the former has a wide range of sounds and letters that most of them are found in English. The latter; however, comes with different accents that contain specific features which can be acquired and learned through exposure and proper instruction and methods' application. Their differences and similarities may or may not affect English pronunciation attainment. The influence here can be either positive or negative, which is left for the participants to decide. The graphs show a difference in opinions between female and male graduates, where the former's majority claims that Arabic does not affect English accent acquisition considering the following reasons according to them,

- Arabic is an additional strength point with similar sounds; for instance, [ʒ], [θ] and [ð].
- Arabic influences speech which can be accented.
- There are different aspects that affect pronunciation.
- Arabic's sounds may interfere in pronunciation, for example [p] and [b].
- It becomes harder only when growing up or older.

To some extent, opposers to the statement conclude that Arabic has got a degree of influence that can facilitate acquiring the target language, and at other times can negatively affect the process, such as sounds that do not exist in one of them, as well as prosodic features. With regard to opposers that are more females than males, fail to provide any relevant answers or justifications.

Q9. Thanks to being exposed to French, Algerian learners pick up English sounds easily, such as [p] and [v] which do not exist in Arabic.

This inquiry targets the issue of how other foreign languages, in Algeria's case, it is the first foreign language "French", may positively influence the acquisition of certain sounds that exist in their second inventory of English but not Arabic. Therefore, the exposure to French may possibly facilitate the process of sounds' perception/production of English.
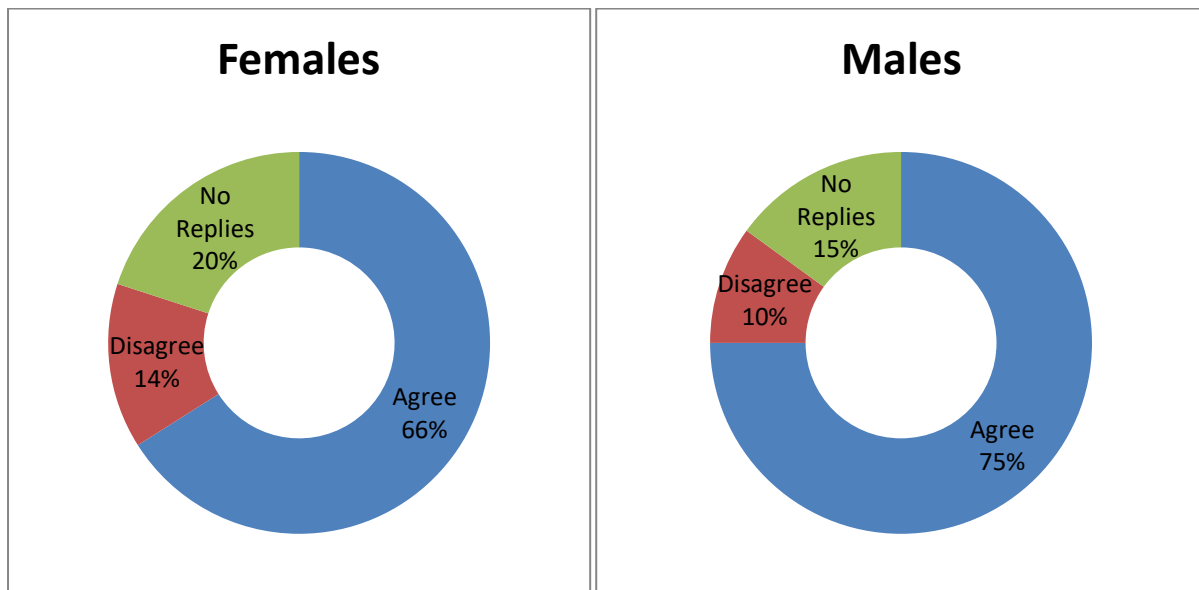
Figure 44. Females and Males' Opinion on French Contribution in Articulation of Roman Sounds

With Algerian learners being multilingual, every language learned and spoken will inevitably cause a challenge in learning other languages and also provide learners with more skills. This can be said about French being the first foreign language to be taught in primary schools before the recent integration of English. With similarities along with English sounds' system, it can be said that Algerian learners have got an advantageous hand over English's sound system mastery. Results show a majority of both genders has provided similar justifications in favour of such a statement and they are listed as follows,

- It helps them to be easily familiar with sounds that do not exist in Arabic and facilitates pronunciation acquisition in the long run.
- French and English have got similar spelling systems and learning French ahead does help.
- One's tongue becomes more flexible with sounds that do not exist in Arabic or even English.

- Algerian learners adapt to foreign languages' composition and pronunciation easily.

- Without French's early exposure, learning English can be challenging and difficult, such as Egyptians' struggle.

On one hand, participants who agree to the statement appear to be attentive and have critically analysed similarities and differences between two or more languages, which they speak. The majority of respondents, who disagree, on the other hand, have provided a few reasons for the disagreement which can be described as to some extent biased. Only the females who oppose the statement have provided reasons which are listed below,

- Their dislike towards French.

- There are plenty of differences between French and English.

- Arabic is closer to English than French is.

- Arabic has got more difficult sounds.

- Every language has got its own privileges.

Q10. Write "Truth" or "Myth"

Participants are requested to state if the suggested statements are true or false by labelling them as "truth" or "myth" respectively. These statements function to some extent as some generalised dissimilarities between RP and GA; as well as some general opinions and stereotypes and they target the present matter of model accents. Participants who have provided their own versions of true and false stereotypes are numbered; still, the answers are included as follows,

- -American and British accents have the same vocabulary (Myth).

- American accent is easy and spontaneous (Truth).

- British accent is more difficult and complicated than American accent (Myth).

- RP is more academic and intelligible than GA (Truth).

- GA is the most popular English accent (Myth).

Table 20. Females and Males' Opinions of Model Accents' Stereotypes

Females' Statements	%	Males' Statements	%
1- Truth	(65%)	1- Truth	(70%)
Myth	(35%)	Myth	(40%)
2- Truth	(70%)	2- Truth	(55%)

Myth	(30%)	Myth	(45%)
3- Truth	(75%)	3- Truth	(80%)
Myth	(25%)	Myth	(20%)
4- Truth	(71%)	4- Truth	(65%)
Myth	(29%)	Myth	(35%)
5- Truth	(47%)	5- Truth	(30%)
Myth	(53%)	Myth	(70%)
6- Truth	(77%)	6- Truth	(70%)
Myth	(23%)	Myth	(30%)
7- Truth	(84%)	7- Truth	(90%)
Myth	(16%)	Myth	(10%)
8- Truth	(71%)	8- Truth	(50%)
Myth	(29%)	Myth	(50%)

As a summary, the above results demonstrate a majority that signifies agreement between male and female EFL graduates with regard to the statements provided. Accordingly, results show that both genders believe some statements are true or close to the truth. LMD3 EFL graduates believe that in the statements (1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7), RP is clearer and easier to understand and learn while GA tends to be harder to follow when spoken fast, referring to assimilation and overlapping sounds in vowels and consonants' reduction. Moreover, RP appears to be easier to imitate because it is spoken slowly and clearly; of course for the purpose of teaching and description. They find GA sounds informal and casual in opposite to RP, because the latter affects speakers' attitude by sounding prestigious, confident and smart. It is worth noting that even the participants' previous replies contained such beliefs; especially when referring to aspects they liked about their accent of choice or when requested to present similarities between both academic model accents.

It is noticed that for the second statement, males' majority is closer to the rest who disagree with GA being harder to understand. The statement is meant for beginners who are learning English and trying to acquire a new accent that is to mean. Concerning the fifth statement, the majority of both genders appear to reject it as a truth and RP does not sound feminine or spoken by more female learners than male ones. Except this, every statement is true for females' majority but not the males'. (50%) half of male participants' total believes speaking GA makes speakers sound casual, informal and at ease, while the rest considers it a

myth. Previously, male speakers mentioned how speaking GA allowed them to appear speaking the target language effortlessly and fluently.

IV. 1. 4. Section 4: Pronunciation Learning Strategies

The last section in this survey targets the case of how EFL students may employ certain pronunciation learning strategies in order to improve their enunciation and speak the accent of choice better, and to be more fluent and accurate.

Q1. What basic pronunciation acquisition methods are more efficient in your opinion? (You are allowed to tick more than one answer.)

This question inquires about students' most effective methods in acquiring the right pronunciation but from their personal perspective, as each one of them possesses different learning styles and different skills and potentials. It is worth mentioning that most of these suggested methods are learned throughout their course of studies, and it is more likely that they have been employing them in most of their studies and tasks.
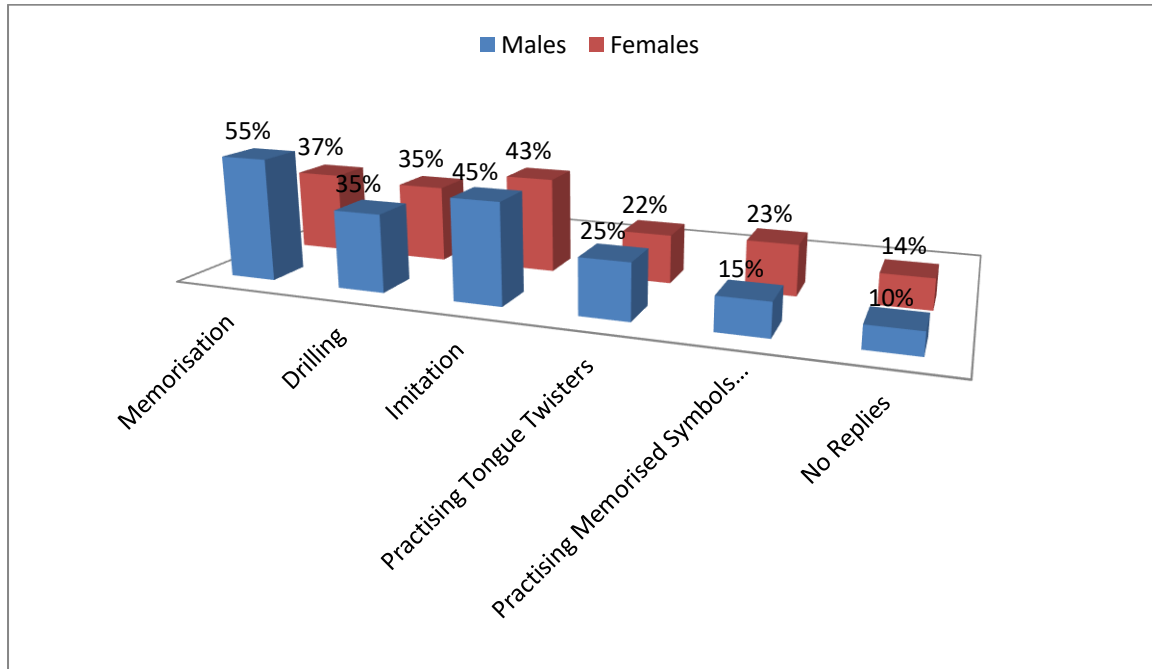
Figure 45. Females and Males' Efficient Pronunciation Acquisition Preferred Methods

Participants are allowed to tick more than one option, because in learning languages, they cannot stick to one single method or technique, but are rather eclectic. Therefore,

females' majority (46%), as illustrated, finds imitation of native speakers more efficient in pronunciation acquisition followed by memorisation and drilling (37%). Male respondents, on the other hand, selected by majority the memorisation of symbols and rules (55%) followed by imitation and drilling (45%).

Q2. Please tick the strategies that you usually use to acquire pronunciation properly.

Participants are provided with a variety of pronunciation learning strategies which were mentioned before in the second chapter. They are a selected collection of strategies presented by Kolb's Construct Cycle (1984) and which are most likely to be used by EFL students during the period of their graduation studies. The list contains thirty-six suggested strategies provided with a direct explanation to simplify the objective of each for the students. This part intends to expose EFL graduates' mostly employed strategies and categorise them as cognitive, meta-cognitive, compensation, social, memory and affective strategies and which of which are used more by female and male students.

Moreover, it aims to find out if constant usage of numerous strategies allows them to gain superiority in English pronunciation. Such strategies are listed without a global labelling, because they belong to different categories, the ones discussed in the second chapter with relation to foreign language pronunciation learning strategies. The table below is generally categorised and data is analysed in terms of higher percentages and lower average between male and female respondents.

The first category "Input/Practice" marks higher percentage of usage by male respondents, especially listening types of strategies which emphasise the pronunciation of words, other speakers' speech and memorisation of sounds. Female respondents; similarly, focus on listening but their total does not reach half of the batch. It appears that there is less use of articulatory gestures of others' speech and syllabification. Although the latter is a useful technique to learn stress placement and vowels' articulation, LMD3 EFL graduates do not integrate it in their pronunciation acquisition/learning process.

Regarding "the practice", once again the males tend to employ more practice strategies, such as new vocabulary and sounds in isolation. They practise reading aloud while females do not, which might explain the latter's weakness in spelling and pronouncing words that contain silent letters correctly along with them. The only strategy that appears to be used commonly by both genders is imitation of native speakers' articulation; namely with the accent of choice. In this category, what distinguishes female respondents more is the high number of them employing facial muscles' activities, such as articulation of L2 sounds in

front of a mirror. Another point is that only a minority (13%) of female participants; compared to the males (50%), that uses or practises isolated words and again in context of words.

For the second category "Noticing/Feedback", lower rates are reported by female graduates that did not exceed (30%). such result may indicate low observational skills or low attention performed by the females in pronunciation acquisition. By contrast, male respondents' selection shows higher rates in the use of strategies that involve the capacity to observe and distinguish other speakers' errors, such as mispronunciations or prosodic anomalies; as well as pay attention to errors made by native speakers out of careful listening in order to reach a conclusion of how sounds are made and corrected. The rest of pronunciation strategies appear to be less used, such as observing the small details and differences between their mother tongue and the target language, focusing on supra-segmental features, which is one of their weaknesses, and acquiring basic and general knowledge of Phonetics' science and its aspects.

With regard to feedback, results have not reached high percentages but mark very low rates provided by the females that reach numbers below (20%) and the males' results are slightly higher; especially with the employment of self-monitoring strategies that implies male respondents' ability to observe their level and progress in the long run for alteration or improvement. Focusing on supra-segmental aspects of their mother tongue and the use of phonetic transcription are not part of their practice routine, perhaps because the latter is practised in class more often.

The third category, referred to as "Hypothesis Forming", indicates female respondents' lower rates once again. Accordingly, they do not attempt any of the strategies that involve observing their mother tongue influence with their English accent, finding out other aspects of the target language articulation nor resulting to self-correction. The latter, if not employed, regularly with attentiveness, may only cause fossilisation of mispronunciations for longer periods of time. However, what strikes and draws more attention is not asking for others' help. Male participants, conversely with higher percentages, attempt seeking others' help if self-correction is not an option for improvement.

Average rates indicate that male participants may monitor negative effects of their mother tongue and attempt to eliminate them by exploring the target language's pronunciation more. Another point to be added is the average rate of both genders employing some strategies, such as cooperating with peers like power or group work in class; as well as practising with activities that deal with different sounds from both L1 and L2. This can be a

reference to classroom pair-work activities concerning minimal pairs or rhyming sounds. Although, only a speculation, no details were added by participants at this point.

The fourth category, called "Hypothesis Testing", comprises various pronunciation acquisition strategies in which the first strategy used by females' majority is using clear speech in articulation as they claimed before. Nonetheless, compared to their recordings' analysis, the females' majority tends to reduce speech volume as they have been requested to repeat several times for low hearing and unclear utterances. Male participants; by contrast, spoke louder than their female counterparts and their speech was much clearer and was heard better. For the rest of hypothesis testing strategies, females' use is average, below (35%), where the lowest rate is in employing lowering anxiety strategy. Consequently, it is confirmed how females speak and interact with shown anxiety, because they tend to not conceal it or practise techniques to reduce it; especially during oral tests. The majority appears to prefer performing written tasks to oral ones compared to their male counterparts.

Male respondents, by majority, have stated performing the drilling of new terms or vocabulary after guessing previously their pronunciation, which is the aim of such a strategy. This could be utilised when applying word stress patterns onto difficult or new words before consulting a dictionary or an authentic source for confirmation. Furthermore, the males claim to speak with a clear voice and reduce their anxiety level which is confirmed by their oral tasks and evaluation as shown previously. Only a minority tends to speak slowly, control speech volume accordingly and skip difficult words.

Respondents have been requested to add strategies of their own which they may find useful in acquiring pronunciation or improving it alongside their education. Female respondents have provided more strategies than have the males, and which include the following,

- Constant exposure to American sources, such as movies, TV shows and songs.
- Careful listening to English speech.
- Practice with the teacher.
- Learning from one's mistakes.
- Reading books aloud.
- Establishing communication with native speakers.
- Daily speaking in English.
- Consulting the pronunciation of every new world.
- Picking up new vocabulary from TV shows and movies.
- Memorising pronunciation through mind-mapping.

- Reading or reciting aloud to spot errors in speech.
- Be motivated to learn more.

Male respondents as well have provided their own employed strategies although not numerous, but are different from the females'.

- Pronouncing the phonetic transcription of words.
- Using dictionaries in order to find and search for the correct transcription and pronunciation.
- Constant exposure to English content through TV shows and movies.
- Talking to peers outside the classes.
- Going through discussions with native speakers or strangers.

Q3. What methods or changes do you suggest teachers of Phonetics should use for the improvement and betterment of English pronunciation teaching/learning?

The question intends to collect students' feedback as they are the main target of teachers' designed practices. Their needs are to be met during the period of studies in order to obtain satisfying results for both parties. Nevertheless, teachers' methods and practices need be renewed and need receive innovative touches for better outcome.

One of the most significant elements in EFL classrooms is the programme of the subject matter taught and for its successful course; it must be compatible with the learners' needs and capacities. Although, the present programme of Phonetics for LMD EFL students serves the main objectives, each teacher has their own methods and way to approach Phonetics' lessons. Still, adopting the right syllabus or adapting it to meet students' needs is required. Participants' majority does provide their main suggestions that are summarised below. It is worth noting that female participants appear much eager and enthusiastic to share their viewpoints than most of male participants as previously mentioned.

Table 21. Females and Males' Suggested Methods and Ideas for the Improvement of Phonetics' Classes

Females' Suggestions	Male's Suggestions
- More focus on oral activities.	- Providing listening opportunities along with
- Pronunciation of different and new vocabulary.	pronunciation drills of words.
	- Drilling new vocabulary at the end of every

- Repetition and drilling of new words alongside explanation of meaning. - The use of authentic sources, such as audios and videos. - More practice of vowels. - Making lessons shorter and clearer. - The use of real hard-copy dictionaries. - Motivating students to attend Phonetics' classes through the use of the right methods and activities. - Using more examples in explanations. - Articulation of the target sounds by instructors and repetition by students. - Using less digital explanation and more board explanation. - Using applications to demonstrate sounds' articulation. - Providing laboratories. - More homework and assignments. - More sessions for oral articulatory practice.	session. - More oral and articulatory practice. - Giving less time to theoretical background and more for practice. - The integration of technological tools. - More oral sessions than written ones. - Providing learners with more practice at home as assignments.

Q4. Can oral tests be better than written ones in Phonetics?

My experience of teaching Phonetics for seven years so far has shown that students prefer oral evaluation of their pronunciation and oral performance of English. Still, a mix of both is opted for as Phonetics' classes require an evaluation of their phonemic/phonetic transcription knowledge alongside articulation. The question; therefore, targets their preference of evaluating their phonetic/pronunciation knowledge and abilities and which gender is more confident of their articulatory skills. Afterwards, participants are requested to propose a form of oral evaluation that seems sound and proper to meet their needs in tests or examinations.
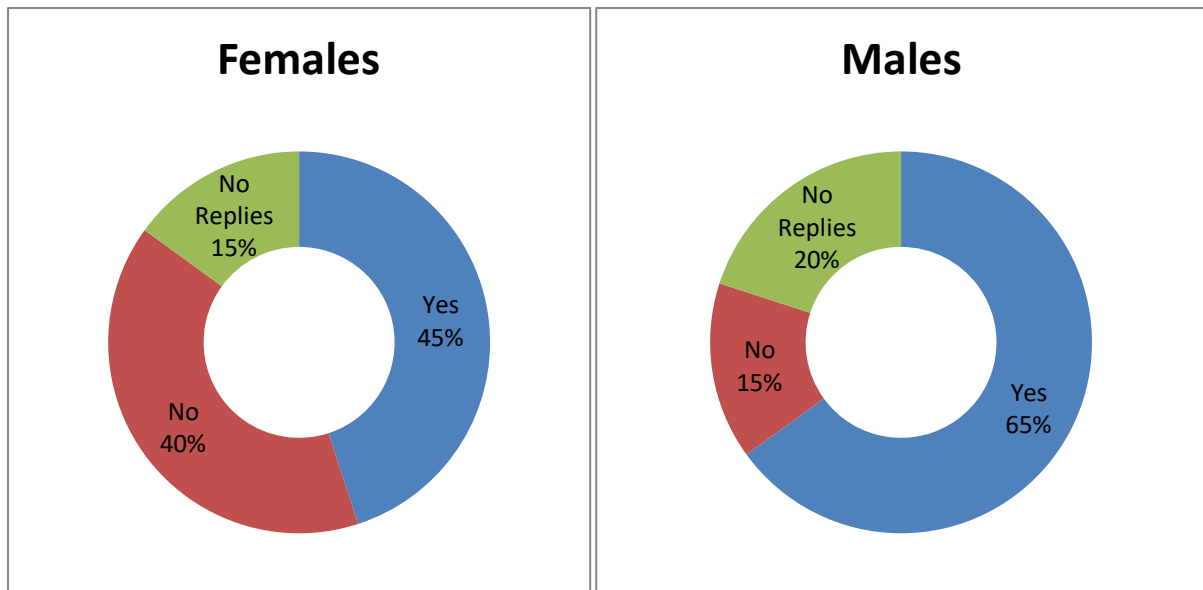
Figure 46. Females and Males' Preference of Oral Tests in Phonetics

Although this question involves only Phonetics' tests and not addressing taking tests of other modules, results are different from the previous eighth question in Section One, where the females' majority has voted for written tests rather than oral. Whereas, male respondents have voted in reverse. The above results may demonstrate contradiction from female participants' part, where there is not a significant gap between supporters and opposers. Still, their majority prefers oral tests for Phonetics. Both genders have provided similar reasons for their choice and they are listed as follows,

- To test one's pronunciation and correct mispronunciations.
- It is better to transcribe and pronounce at the same time in order to understand and memorise simultaneously.
- No need to transcribe or write, only pronounce.
- It is less time-consuming.
- It allows teachers to know their students' level.
- Because Phonetics is oral.

Participants who prefer written tests; however, are marked by more female supporters than male ones and they have got their own reasons behind such a selection as well. They are listed as follows,

- Because there is enough time to think and recover stored information at ease; especially transcription symbols.
- Phonetics requires written exercises, such as phonetic transcription for improvement.

- Written tests are easier and cause less stress as they require focus only.
- It helps revise and find out errors before submission.

This question has got two extreme answers, as either yes or no, but the real answer is to be evaluated through those types of tests, oral and written. Phonetics is oral indeed, but it involves both skills, speaking and writing, because pronunciation cannot occur without spelling and vice-versa. Phonetics succeeds to combine both skills and improve them both as well- when respondents were requested to suggest a manner of evaluation if oral tests were opted for, they provided the following,

- By indicating mispronunciations and correcting them based on sounds articulation, stress and intonation.
- By constant participation.
- By counting the number of mistakes which settles the final score.

Q5. In speaking, what is more important to you? Please order by priority.

The question attempts to investigate students' preferences and focus with regard to elements of English speaking in terms of priority in learning. These elements include interaction regardless mispronunciations. Pronunciation which includes accurate and correct articulation of sounds and stress. Tone and attitude focus less on segmental errors. Communication refers to fluency in speech that does not involve exact supra-segmental and segmental accuracy, where the message can be conveyed as long as there is intelligibility established between interlocutors. It is worth mentioning that a certain balance between all these elements is compulsory for adequately correct pronunciation. Students are requested to justify the reasons of their selection or order.
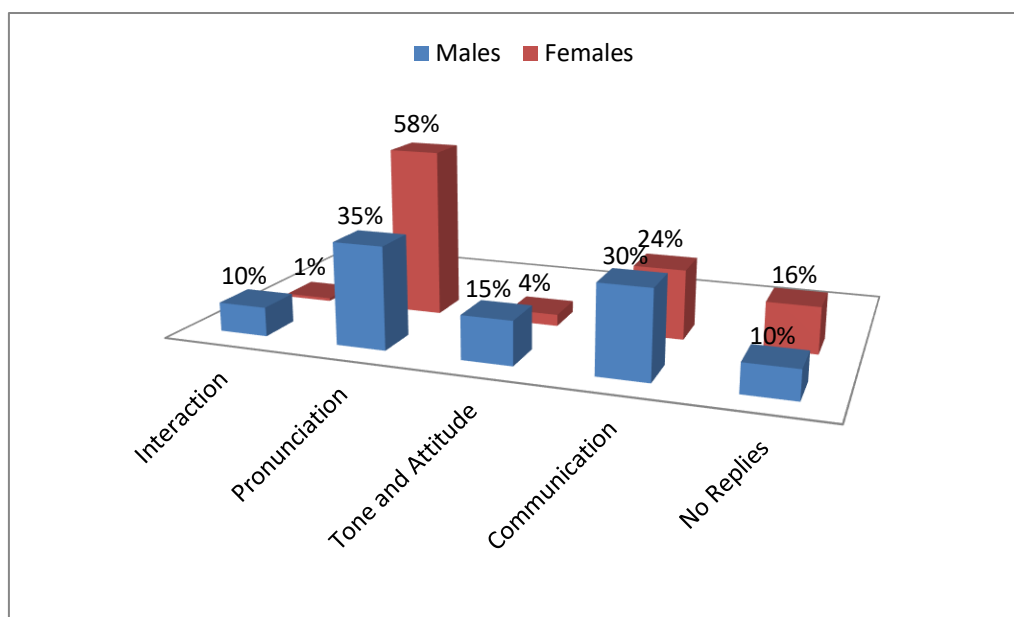
Figure 47. Females and Males' Speaking Elements by Importance

Statistics show that both genders prioritise pronunciation which signifies accurate articulation. In second place comes communication which signifies fluency and intelligibility. After that, tone and attitude follow and last interaction with minimum of votes. In fact, all the above listed elements are interrelated and come in a particular order that serves students with complete and homogeneous learning. Pronunciation indeed comes first because it begins with the smallest units to be articulated accurately and is followed by tone and attitude, which are stabilised through prosody instruction in order to understand the differences between L1 and L2 supra-segmental instruction. After that, there comes interaction that may be referred to as intelligibility, and through that communication is established. In brief, all four elements are components to intelligible and correct speech and are elements that connect accurate and fluent speech as well.

Not all participants have provided the reason why they selected the order of these elements, but all that have been provided is illustrated below with the focus primarily placed on pronunciation first and communication second for females, whereas pronunciation first and tone and attitude second for male participants.

Table 22. Females and Males' Speech Elements by Priority

Females' Selection	Males' Selection
Pronunciation	**Pronunciation**
- To avoid making embarrassing mistakes. - It is important to be fluent but no one will be listening with plenty of mispronounced words. - Having correct and fluent pronunciation makes one feel confident. - Speaking like a native is not necessary, but the language needs to be correct and well heard, not all mistakes and gestures. - A lot of mispronunciations make no one interested in conversing. - Mispronunciations also cause misunderstandings and inconvenience.	- Pronunciation is very important to understand and be understood. Fluency comes afterwards after practice. - Correct pronunciation ensures flow and communication and avoids misunderstandings, because of the possibility of transmitting the wrong meaning. - Pronunciation is top priority for EFL learners, because once mastered, the other steps follow smoothly without seeking them.
Communication	**Tone and Attitude**
- Communication develops one's language. - Good pronunciation comes after fluency. - - Fluency facilitates communication.	- Focus is placed more on attitude of the speaker. - The speaker will understand no matter how many mistakes are made.

As shown above, justifications provided by both genders in support of proper pronunciation are reasonable and only reflect their desire to acquire correct enunciation as equally as possible, only different capacities, approaches and strategies. Therefore, pronunciation accuracy only entails sound communication and better interaction. Female participants who prefer attaining communication before pronunciation only miss the point that

it is impossible to communicate if not understood, be it with plenty of mispronunciations or accentedness. Male participants who prefer tone and attitude are oblivious to the same situation and its entailment and how all elements are connected.

Conclusion

The present chapter serves to expose data collected through LMD3 EFL graduates' questionnaire that targets four interrelated elements in Phonetics/Phonology through four sections in addition to a section to cover the participants' personal data. The elements included are selected for the purpose of collecting and analysing data with relation to male and female participants' phonological awareness, phonetic coding ability, accent of choice consistency and accuracy; as well as the main pronunciation learning strategies employed by them. The questionnaire is purposeful in the sense that it displays LMD3 EFL graduates' opinions and attitudes towards Phonetics, pronunciation classes, their level of English and suggestions for better and homogenous classes with their needs.

In conclusion, it has been revealed in accordance with data analysis' results that male respondents describe themselves as motivated and assertive individuals, proud of and pleased with their level of English. Females as well consider themselves motivated and proud speakers who are pleased with their English too. Still, more females describe themselves as being afraid of others' judgement, anxious while speaking and a category is ashamed of their lacking English, but not risk-takers as their worksheets have proved. Both genders are aware of the importance of accurate pronunciation in conversations and both prioritise pronunciation accuracy. However, male students prefer tone and attitude alongside pronunciation while female students prefer communication or fluency. Furthermore, female participants' majority tends to be more enthusiastic and affectionate towards improving their studies and English, whereas, male respondents pay less attention to phonetic knowledge and phonological awareness in class or exams.

Additionally, both genders highly regard Phonetics' classes to some extent, as well as their pronunciation amelioration with respect to lessons. The females tend to welcome and suggest more renovations in the programme of Phonetics and classes than males do. The latter would appreciate more oral practice and exams than the written ones. Both genders do employ similar and basic pronunciation acquisition/learning strategies in accordance with their claims, including intent listening and native speakers' imitation and exposure.

Male learners appear to have the tendency to use more various ones that encompass different and several categories including; notably, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies

that concentrate on intent and active listening to the target language, mimicry of native speakers' speech, reading and practising new words aloud even sounds in isolation, distinguishing errors and mispronunciations in others' speech, self-monitoring negative mother tongue interference, self-correction, using clear pronunciation and finding more about the Phonetics and pronunciation of the target language. Moreover, they employ a few compensation and memory strategies that include guessing intelligently the pronunciation of new words, using proximal articulation and the memorisation of sounds and words' pronunciation respectively. They appear to consider their affective side as well, where they emphasise lowering anxiety during speech or conversations but rare use of social strategies.

By contrast, female respondents have provided very few and selective strategies that are approximately cognitive referring to intent listening to the target language, imitation of native speakers' speech, practising facial expression and mouth movements, using comprehensible speech and practising words regularly. No affective, compensation or memory strategies, except for one social strategy that is cooperating with their classmates; despite the fact that their suggested strategies include aspects mostly related to memory and social strategies.

Introduction

Chapter five represents the last part of the whole research work that gathers and lays the fruit of data analysis down. With two previous chapters examining and scrutinising collected data and tools through which data are obtained, this one delivers a detailed discussion of results and findings. In a detailed review of results, research questions are to be answered through error analysis and comparison/contrast of gender differences obtained so far in relation to pronunciation acquisition. The present chapter includes primary and secondary data comparisons as well. That is, most findings to be discussed in this section are to be compared and contrasted to previously exposed experiments in the literature review. With the main variable in this study "gender" to be analysed with relation to phonetic/socio-phonetic, socio-cultural and affective themes discussed in the first two chapters.

Additionally, the present chapter comprises a list of self-devised recommendations. Such a list should serve as a guideline for Phonetics' teachers to bear in mind while designing or adopting methods for employing strategies or simply teaching Phonetics in order to succeed in pronunciation classes and allow students to enjoy them more. Motivating EFL learners lies on instructors' shoulders and once being fully involved in such classes guarantees satisfying results. The chapter concludes with limitations to the study and further research implications.

V. 1. Findings' Discussion

With the analyses of students' worksheets laid down in the third chapter alongside the research design adopted as an outline for the analysis and scrutiny of collected data for the present socio-phonetic investigation, results accumulated; therefore, are to be discussed first subsequently. The following discussion of findings is divided into four categories to ensure a clear and systematic layout of results. These categories represent the main areas and sub-areas investigated in the present study and analysed from a gender perspective which are: phonetic/socio-phonetic, phonological, affective and socio-cultural aspects; as well as employed pronunciation acquisition/learning strategies.

As a reminder, female respondents' number exceeds the males' due to two reasons. The first obstacle is the little number of male students; originally in regular classes due to the little number of males enrolling at colleges. The second obstacle is the number of distributed

questionnaire copies; that were missing; represents almost their third which were not returned in due time. Male and female results are analysed and discussed in general aside from statistical results.

Students' questionnaire consists of four sections. Each section addresses an area. The first section intends to collect data with regard to personal and affective reasons towards learning and speaking English. In addition to their phonetic and phonological background that has taken intentionally the form of a test to assess their basic knowledge comprehension and their views and attitudes towards Phonetics' classes; as well as gender differences in acquiring English pronunciation from their personal opinions. The third section targets accent-related aspects; namely, model accents RP and GA as students' accent of choice and the reasons behind their selection. The fourth section intends to collect as much information with regard to pronunciation learning strategies as possible. Various elements are interrelated and are designed as such to come up with consistent answers as questionnaires have got the tendency to be taken lightly by informants. Questionnaires results aligned with worksheets' results are discussed in the subsequent parts.

V. 1. 1. Phonetic and Socio-phonetic Aspects

The present element discusses students' phonetic capacity and phonetic ear that refer to perception and production of English sounds and words in terms of segments or small units of sounds, as well as corresponding symbols. It also contains inquiring about possible social factors that affect their phonetic abilities. The following sub-elements gather all conclusions of analysed data and are discussed subsequently with reference to gathered secondary sources.

For a successful process though, the following steps are advocated by Schaetzel (2009) in order to highlight the significance of phonological awareness and how phonology plays a role in ESL learning.

✓ Cultivate positive attitudes towards accuracy.

✓ Identify specific pronunciation features that pose problems for learners.

✓ Make learners aware of prosodic features of language - stress, intonation and rhythm.

✓ Focus on developing learners' communicative competence.

V. 1. 1. 1. Phonetic Capacity and Phonetic Coding Skills

This element exposes male and female participants' phonetic ability that encompasses articulation of sounds, syllables and isolated words; as well as decoding phonetic symbols and differentiation of spelling from pronunciation with relation to phonetic transcription. Concerning phonemic symbols teaching, Harmer (2001) advocates implementing the practice of phonemes and their symbols because dictionaries usually give the pronunciation of each entry in transcription. Thus, if learners are familiar with such symbols, they can read and pronounce any word without even having to hear it (as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari et al., 2013, p. 459).

- **Phonetic Transcription**

Phonetic information obtained in classes is prone to vanish without regular practice. Phonetic transcription is considered an inseparable component in Phonetics' classes due to its being found in almost every Phonetics and Phonology's aspect (Harmer, 2001). Thus, based on provided transcriptions of isolated entries in students' worksheets, results demonstrate male participants' ability to provide close misspellings to the right orthography and appear to be better at guessing the right letter's corresponding vowel sound than most of the female participants who tend to drift away from expected misspellings. By contrast, female participants have made more misspellings of words even frequently-used ones, such as "student". Such a case is attributed to little exposure to reading and writing material.

Additionally, female respondents alter the right spelling of transcribed text or words more than males do and risk exposing their inability to distinguish between letters and diagraphs that correspond to the right phonemes, such as "oo", "ea" and "ou"; as well as consonants [tʃ]-[dʒ] and [tr]-[dr] in consonant clusters. It is worth noting that a few male respondents have had a similar confusion between [ʃ] and [tʃ]. Still, there is a phenomenon repeatedly showing up in female answers which is the case of voiced velar nasal stop [ŋ] that is represented by them as [g] in most of the answers or as socio-phonetically referred to as soft "g" and hard "g" respectively; even in pronunciation.

As for male participants, they tend to either misspell the words or mistake a few vowel symbols for others; especially, mono-phthongs and diphthongs. In several instances, they write initial consonants in uppercase form, which may be attributed to their occasional

practice of transcription. Nonetheless, the males have kept track of model accent RP when transcribing and pronouncing, usually the case of silent "r", despite the fact that their majority speaks GA. Another point is that both genders' ability to transcribe correctly decreases by the increase of syllables; that is, penta- and multi-syllabic words are challenging and both genders have failed in correctly transcribing them. Even marking the stress is occasional and seldom correct.

What is more noticeable from the females' side is attempting unreadable transcriptions. They tend to use American dictionaries to transcribe and used non-RP symbols; such as [ɛ]. They also transcribe most of the entries in the American accent rather than RP as instructed and taught previously; which may show lack of concentration. Additionally, it must be noted that the majority of participants, both genders, rush in their answers considering how they fail to notice that the sounds that rhyme in the third activity are not only consonants, but also vowels. Moreover, sounds are not mingled because rhyming consonants come first and the rhyming vowels' category follows.

It is worth noting that both genders support and advocate combining both of practice and memorisation as a technique to be better at phonemic transcription and to succeed in understanding how transcription works and be/get used to/familiar with phonetic codes. Nonetheless, from a keen affective personal view, female respondents provide deep and personal experience and opinions with regard to their selection as if to convince the reader of their choosing either option.

In transcription, the females' most successful answers mark their ability to transcribe better than their male classmates. However, the latter succeeds in reading transcribed words better than their female counterparts. This could be explained by how female learners memorise sounds by writing or practising written form of sounds, whereas the male learners may practise sounds by memorising them verbally. Still, female respondents' amount of misspellings exceeds by far that of the males'.

V. 1. 1. 2. Segmental Features and Accuracy

This type of instruction is primary and necessary for the continuation and completion of pronunciation classes. It is the first step towards proper articulation; thus, with one misstep, it can lead to, if not accented, incomplete and lacking enunciation. If one considers arguing about the importance of two scientific studies, Phonetics and Phonology, or prioritising one

over the other, it is unadvisable and futile to separate both or prioritise one, as they make the perfect combination. Yet, others may advise learners to skip the segmental instruction and move to supra-segmentals; as it benefits the learner in building successful communication basis. However, Paul Skandera and Peter Burleigh (2005, p. 05) insist on the fact that Phonetics and Phonology are mandatory sciences that are related and they complement each other for a complete instruction.

As a reminder, male and female students have expressed mixed feelings towards phonetic codes and transcription on different occasions due to its tricky and cumbersome form. However, it rates first place as one of the most enjoyable aspects of Phonetics' class followed by pronunciation practice, stress patterns, consonants/vowels' production and description and Voicing, Place and Manner of Articulation (VPM); in accordance with their replies. It appears that most of their concern is segmental features at first and then supra-segmentals targeting stress first and then prosody.

Presumably, there has been a significant shift from segmental instruction to an emphasis on supra-segmental instruction in many pedagogical materials. Therefore, such an emphasis is tested for effectiveness by Derwing et al. (1998), in which three types of instructions are tested on forty-eight ESL learners. The learners should attend ESL classes for twenty hours per week for twelve weeks. The first group receives no pronunciation instruction; the second one receives regular intervals of segmental training and the third one receives intervals of supra-segmental instruction.

Results show that both groups that receive pronunciation instruction have shown improvement when loudly reciting individual sentences, but only the group that received supra-segmentals having showed improvement in terms of spontaneous speaking (as cited in Jennifer A. Foote, Amy K. Holtby & Tracey M. Derwing, 2011, p. 05). It is recommended to combine both instructions for a successful pronunciation class; because Algerian university classes are mixed-ability classes and have got a tight schedule where it is unlikely possible to meet each student's needs individually. For this reason, segmental instruction always comes first, before moving forward to the next level.

Furthermore, Irene Thompson's research findings (1991) show that female speakers are more accurate than males. By contrast, Busch's research (1982) in Japan concludes with the males being more accurate than females and Badran's (2001) research findings report that the males outperform the females in their accuracy tests (2001, pp. 17-18). The segmental aspect of English pronunciation that is accurate and correct articulation remains a mandatory requirement for communication effectiveness and continuity (Kriedler, 1989; Morley, 1998

and Fraser, 1999-2000). Compared to the present research results, male graduates are more accurate in segmental pronunciation because the females' speech and production have got more imperfections that are mentioned in detail subsequently.

V. 1. 1. 3. Problematic Sounds

Learners of English with Arabic as a mother tongue encounter articulatory or perceptual impediments by the beginning of their tuition that give birth to problematic sounds in the long run of their educational career. However, errors and mistakes are expected from non-native speakers who; in return, should not take English for granted due to its non-phonetic orthography that may cause them continuous struggle in articulation without self-monitoring and self-correction. Difficult sounds to pronounce by Arab learners include [tʃ], [ʃ], [f], [v], [p], [b], [θ], [ŋ], [ð], [r], [l], [dʒ] and consonant cluster [gl] (Altaha, 1995; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989 and Avery & Ehlrick, 1992; as cited in Elmahdi & Khan, 2015). However, in the case of Algerian learners, very rare instances may take place.

For adult Arab learners, their acoustic analysis of vowels' production shows that they pronounce vowels shorter than equivalent vowels produced by native speakers and vowels' length is similar in the production of long vowels followed by voiced and voiceless consonants (Munro, 1993, as cited in Ioup, 2008). In the minimal pairs' activity, it is noticed that female participants struggle with vowels' length, where they confuse between long and short vowels; as well as some mono-phthongs and diphthongs; in examples such as, keep [kɪp] or event [iːvent], leak [lɪk], mud [muːd], pack [pɑːk]and roll [rɒl] to name a few. Among male participants; however, it is estimated as seldom.

To mention a few findings, the schwa [ə] appears to be a challenging case to both genders and which they keep confusing with other short mono-phthongs including [ɪ] and [e]. This confusion leads to various misspellings and mispronunciations. Vowel letters that represent the schwa are tricky to decipher in accordance with the result for the first activity, where most of words containing schwa are mistaken, or to which participants do not provide an answer to them. Such words include "Separate", "Necklace", "Wrinkles", "Stairs", "Letters", "Handkerchief", "Reason", "Order" and "Bottom". Female participants also struggle with the case of silent "r" in transcription and minimal pairs where they are unable to discern some long vowels from the short ones as explained earlier.

Furthermore, Fledge's (2006) research study indicates how longer periods of exposure to the target language help improve pronunciation of English language learners. Ardibald

(2009), Lightbrown & Spada (2006) claim that adults who actually rely on their L1 Phonetics make pronunciation errors and also have L2 accents (as cited in Wallace Nilsson, 2011, p. 16). So, as the males make a few mispronunciations compared to their female classmates in several tasks and under different conditions, it leads to believe that one of the main causes is the degree of exposure. In the production of sentences, males' superiority in GA pronunciation is lucid.

V. 1. 1. 4. Sounds' Substitution

The same case of Arabic and English conflicting Phonologies can carry other expected and unexpected commitment of errors. This issue takes place in non-natives' speech with improper perception and retention of sounds or words. There are very few substitutions made by both gendered participants, and it is the case of [ʃ] - [tʃ] and [ʒ] - [dʒ] as very rare instances spotted in their worksheets' oral pronunciation activities. Another case that is more noticed in females' speech than the males' is the articulation of post-alveolar approximant [r] as the Arabic trill [r]. This case is apparent even in pronunciation of females' category "B".

V. 1. 1. 5. Differentiation

As a reminder, differentiation refers to the substitution of independent phonemes in L2 as interchangeable phones in L1. Fledge (1995) refutes CPH effects in his Speech Learning Model, where he explains that for a learner either young or old, their production mechanism ability remains intact. It is rather their perception process of such sounds that reduces and changes with development or growing up which leads to a foreign accent (as cited in Hansen Edwards & Zampini, 2008).

Another point is that young learners, children precisely, do not possess the perceptual categories of their native language as firmly fixed in their phonological system as older learners. Fledge (1995) emphasises the phenomenon. He calls it "Equivalence Classification" that impedes learners from establishing a separate sound system for L2 which occurs due to their inability to properly classify L2 sounds' equivalents with L1 sounds.

This case; in particular is encountered in narration or isolated words articulation where no more than two females and males have pronounced the following sounds: [ʃ] - [tʃ] and [ʒ] -

[dʒ] interchangeably in examples such as, "Chance", "Champion", "Champagne", "Job" and "Imagination" to name a few.

V. 1. 1. 6. Under-differentiation

As another reminder as well, under-differentiation refers to allophones in L1 being different phonemes in L2. The case of altering [p] with [b] is made by some females. The reason behind such a substitution is believed to be haste in replying or mother tongue interference.

V. 1. 1. 7. Over-differentiation

This sub-element is the opposite of the previous one, where allophonic sounds are similar in L2, but are different in L1. No case as such is found or to be mentioned.

V. 1. 1. 8. Final "s" and Final "ed"

These rules are essential basics of English; if mispronunciation occurs and is fossilised, one's speech will only sound awkward, accented and annoying. In accordance with the participants' recordings' analysis, only a slight minority of female EFL graduates committed errors in final "ed" pronunciations. Examples of such an error include, "Faced" [feɪsd] instead of [feɪst], "Cooked" [kʊkd] instead of [kʊkt] and "Pronounced" [prɒnaʊnsd] instead of [prəˈnaʊnst]. No cases of final "s" mispronunciations are found; yet, this element needs further scrutiny.

V. 1. 1. 9. Fossilised Mispronunciations

Mispronunciations are expected to occur by the beginning of learning a foreign language. However, one's speech and enunciation will be imperfect or improper with rigid fossilisation of mispronounced words afterwards. Without perseverance, constant practice and monitor of their English, fossilisations are rendered more durable to change or remedy.

Both participating genders also fall in another trap which is transcribing their own fossilised mispronunciations. That is, the wrong transcription of words only reflects their wrong pronunciation of those words. It only demonstrates how EFL graduates are unaware of

the gravity of mispronunciations leading to unfamiliar or irritating speech. Such a case is observed in their articulation of connected speech sentences; where most of their reading parts are unrecognisable or meaningless. Such a phenomenon is noticed in females' production more than the males'. It could be due to either poor initial perception of words, although females deny having any perceptual difficulties, or could be due to articulation of words without hearing the original pronunciation. The majority of female participants' articulation of words; frequently-used, familiar and unfamiliar words was defective.

Gathered examples from worksheets' results include [mɪˈmɒri], [dɒv], [hæˈpiː], [ˈkləʊzʌp], [ˈkɒnteɪnər], [ˈsiːriʊs], [ɪmˈpɒsɪbɪlɪti], [ˈʌmɪrɪkən], [ˈmɒtɪveɪʃən], [ˈsændwɪtʃ] and [tɔːlk] to name a few. A longer list of such mispronunciations is provided in the third chapter after the analysis of their recordings. Fossilised mispronunciations, mispronunciations of some words and misplacement of stress may be due to females' majority not monitoring their acquisition carefully; as well as controlling their anxiety that may level up during tests and exams and which affect their performance; only to be alluded to practise in class and not at home. However, the actual speech demonstrates more accentedness due to lower use of stress in words and sentence stress to balance rhythm as intended.

V. 1. 1. 10. Palatalisation

This element could not be investigated properly due to the fact that very few examples that differentiate both model accents at hand are provided. Moreover, no examples requiring palatalisation are found in the participants' free speech.

V. 1. 1. 11. Affrication

Because the absence of affrication may entail characteristics of accentedness, in both RP and GA model accents, this element is a significant aspect of native-like pronunciation. In the present research, only affrication within words could be observed due to brief voice-clips. Therefore, the absence of affricates [tr] and [dr] is noticed in females' speech and not an instance in males' speech. The categories of their articulation referred to at this point are: "C" and below it. Females classified as having an average or poor pronunciation pronounced certain words, such as "Betray" and "During" without a degree of affrication but rather a voiceless alveolar stop followed by a trill [r] instead of a post-alveolar approximant as mentioned earlier in sounds' substitution. Affrication within words' boundaries is not noticed and needs further inspection in the form of turn-taking conversations to be spotted and pinpointed.

V. 1. 1. 12. G-dropping

Presently, the g-dropping phenomenon is largely growing among today's EFL learners and speakers due to the influence caused by exposure to native-speakers' articulation. In previously collected secondary data, it is concluded that the males use non-standard [ɪn] more often than females because it is not prestigious (Trudgill, 1974 and Fischer, 1964; as cited in Adelaide Haas, 1979). The notion of prestige to Algerian EFL learners is not related to the pronunciation of [ɪŋ] as they tend to pronounce it inattentively. Still, it is indeed dropped by most of male and female participating graduates regardless their accent of choice, but only participants classified as "A" and "B" categories. The rest of students; mainly females, pronounced the hard "g" instead of the soft "g"; that is, the articulation of [g] is conspicuously heard in final position of words and syllables.

V. 1. 1. 13. Yod-dropping

Similar to the palatalisation aspect in EFL LMD3 graduates, no clear results are obtained. It is worth mentioning that Hannisdal (2006) points at the competition between yod-coalescence and yod-dropping that will eventually overshadow the traditional forms with the yod in the future, (as cited in Olivier Glain, 2012, p. 12). This is also speculated to be generalised among EFL learners. Nonetheless, it must be noted that, RP speakers should not drop the yod, because it is still regarded as an important aspect of RP accent.

V. 1. 1. 14. Glottalisation

Numerous research studies come to the conclusion that females create the glottalisation variant in their speech as prestige form (Morley, 1994 and Mees & Collins, 1999; as cited in Drummond, n.d.). Thus, despite that it is not frequently applied in all participating females' speech, it is more apparent in their pronunciation of [t] in intervocalic and final positions than the males. It is believed to be used by females who speak both RP and GA. Only one case is found among the male participants who pronounce with a glottal stop. This element requires more scrutiny as well; especially in speech for a longer period of time.

By contrast, in other research studies, female learners are revealed as more supportive and facilitative conversationalists and they usually aim at stressing solidarity and establishing good social relations. Therefore, they tend to be more receptive towards new linguistic items. Accordingly, these two principles could be in the advantage of women to be successful in Foreign Language Learning (Holmes, 1992 and Ellis 1994; as cited in Lopez Rua, 2006, p. 103). Nonetheless, it is not the case of Algerian female graduates whose misspellings are surprisingly numerous, enunciation of various isolated words unsuccessful and their production of sentences inadequate. Such mishaps are believed to be caused by little exposure to English writing and pronunciation and little practice despite the fact that female graduates have attempted the usage of various vocabulary.

V. 1. 1. 15. Aspiration

As regards this aspect, no differences are found between male and female learners; which requires more in-depth investigation.

V. 1. 1. 16. Words' Production and Perception

This element exposes the real struggle of LMD3 EFL graduates that is going past segments: syllables and words. It also discusses male and female participants' phonetic ear that requires much training and practice in the future. Third year LMD3 EFL graduates indeed confess coming across articulatory difficulties with regard to silent letters as deduced from their recordings' results. Although the listed entries are diverse in terms of familiarity and form, it only shows females' struggle in producing them, as well as not being familiar with some entries more than males are, as stated by them in section two – twenty-fifth inquiry. Students who listen to native speakers and are exposed to the target language perform better at word recognition tasks than those who do not (Nygaard, 1994; as cited in Foulkes et al., 2005).

With regard to the issue of sounds' production and perception, most female respondents in accordance with their answers do not face any difficulty while their minority has indicated a certain struggle in articulation of vowels, some consonants, silent letters and unfamiliar vocabulary. With males having stated similar difficulties, pronunciation recordings indicate a certain superiority of males with vowels and silent letters; as well as words'

articulation. Furthermore, female participants state that they misunderstand others' speech which can be more problematic than producing words due to some speakers' different accent, poor pronunciation or numerous mispronunciations. However, unlike the males, recordings' results reveal that females experience lack of vocabulary when they mispronounce words that contain silent letters and tend to skip certain words more often than males do.

Moreover, most female participants disregard the existence of silent letters that represent (60%) of English orthography. Although the males are not excellent at figuring out all spelling that contains silent letters, considering the number of participants, they scored better than their female counterparts. Therefore, females' unfamiliarity with words that contain silent letters mainly in initial position is most conspicuous.

Previous research has shown that whereas the males consider greatly grammar and practice with audio-visual material, females demonstrate better language ability. Moreover, females tend to learn foreign languages faster, better and are more superior to males except in listening and vocabulary (Boyle, 1987 and Kimura, 1992; as cited in Zafar & Minakshi, 2012). In opposition, Xing Xiong (2013) highlights females' superiority in language skills where they excel in listening, speaking and experiencing because they are physiologically more mature than male learners and they are more susceptible to fast learning as they tend to express themselves better.

Bailey's research (1993) has concluded that females in FLL outperform males socio-culturally but not verbally (as cited in Badran, 2001). That is, they may possess positive attitudes, are more motivated and have got useful learning habits, the males outdo them in pronunciation and speaking. Similar results of males' superiority in pronunciation are demonstrated in this research; especially in terms of vowels, words and silent letters' recognition.

According to Jones (1997), previous arguments against the explicit teaching or instruction of pronunciation could be due to two basic assumptions related to the acquisition of second language phonology. First, it is based on the CPH that refers to the inability of adult learners to acquire native-like pronunciation in a foreign language. Second, it; primarily, emerges from Krashen's work in which he claims that pronunciation is an acquired skill, and that focused instruction is useless and damaging (as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari, 2013, pp. 457-458). By contrast, Celce-Murcia and Goodwin (1991) believe that pronunciation can and should be taught at any level.

Whenever pronunciation teaching is delayed, it is due to the challenges it involves. Therefore, Gilbert (2008) illustrates some; for example, little attention is paid to teaching

pronunciation, because teachers often do not have sufficient time in class to teach it properly. When they do have time, they drill it to death through the practice of boring and unrelated topics which; consequently, discourage both teachers and learners who end up avoiding pronunciation instruction all together (as cited in Zohreh Gooniband Shooshtari, Khodayar Mehrabi & Seyyedreza Mousavina, 2013, p. 455).

In relation to Algerian educational settings, such as middle and high schools, very little attention is paid to pronunciation elements, and once pronunciation has a chance to be learned, it is undermined directly by lack of material and training in phonetic competence. This might be due to frequent stereotypes; such as pronunciation cannot be taught, it is not important or learners can pick it up through time on their own (Silvera, 2002; as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari, 2013, p. 457).

V. 1. 2. Phonological Aspects

The present element explores the main phonological aspects that encompass supra-segmental problematic cases to Algerian male and female graduates of English in accordance with results acquired from both research instruments. Such results are also being compared to and contrasted with each gender to obtain some gender differences.

V. 1. 2. 1. Phonological Awareness

This element encompasses learners' phonological background and knowledge that should be stored as important information for usage afterwards. It includes notions, definitions, rules acquired in Phonetics' classes and sounds. Jenkins (2004) cites Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994), Morley (1994) and Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (1996) whose research and studies on pronunciation teaching are concerned with promoting awareness of pronunciation's larger and effective roles in communication, on the different ways it affects speakers' degree of transmitting the right meaning for the right situation, how their identities are reflected onto it and being a member of a certain group or community, to mention a few (as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari et al., 2013, p. 458).

Therefore, having appropriated one's mindset on the right and correct references of Phonetics and Phonology and their objectives will allow EFL learners to appreciate the significance of English pronunciation. The latter encompasses speech accuracy, fluency and the basic background knowledge, IPA system of sounds, syllables and phonemes'

comprehension that trigger successful learning. In accordance with their paper survey results, the majority of females compared to males provided close definitions of Phonetics, Phonology and transcription which may demonstrate their superiority in phonological and theoretical background retention. Only a small fragment of male participants attempted to provide brief and approximately correct notions. Their answers overall mark males' limited and reserved replies contrasted with the males'.

Despite female participants' ability to discern phonetic/phonological terms to some extent and their displaying enthusiasm about learning more about the sciences, their phonemic/phonological awareness is lacking in terms of practice and exposure outside the classrooms. This could be the difference shown compared to the male participants whose minority shows interest in the field, perhaps their level of comprehension and exposure is superior to that of the females. Such a result directs attention to investigate psychological phonology and perceptual phonetics as further research in order to explore the area of investigation that goes beyond phonemes.

V. 1. 2. 2. Phonological Working Memory

As one of the main tools for proper acquisition/learning of any foreign language, PWM represents an indispensable trait for EFL learners. As long as such an instrument is being sharpened and crafted, one's level keeps improving for the better. Carroll (1962) explains the possibility of losing phonetic information or material previously exposed to with low PCA which can also affect imitating speech sounds (as cited in Hu et al., 2012, p. 01). Hence, obtained results show a certain superiority of female graduates over the males in transcription but the former surprisingly failed in decoding symbols where the latter proved to be better at the verbal and written levels. Such results may demonstrate both genders' weak PWM at certain aspects of Phonetic coding that may be speculated as low exposure to vocabulary for females and lack of exposure to transcription by males.

A number of research studies have come to the conclusion of no gender superiority in pronunciation acquisition and learning (Olsen & Samuels, 1973; Purcell & Suter, 1980 and Elliot, 1995; as cited in Eckstein, 2007). Conversely, the present research has identified certain dissimilarities in both male and female's speech including word stress. (88%) of females and (33%) of males overlook marking the stressed syllable. Still, those who do remember to mark it tend to misplace it often. Moreover, (27%) of females and (03%) of

males tend to stress mono-syllabic words. Such results may be due to the wrong acquisition of phonetic information and wrong retention of rules in the first place which equals low Phonological Working Memory.

V. 1. 2. 3. Accent Consistency

With various English accents promoted via social media, American and British accents, as model accents in teaching, take the lead and are most well-known. Thus, EFL learners by the beginning of their acquisition/learning process may speak English blending both accents. Still, consistency is most required for a more successful and proper pronunciation.

In terms of accent of choice, results show that the females tend to be more RP-directed for a number of reasons; among which they follow the accent imposed and taught in classes mainly; as well as the fact that RP is formal and academic, speaking it only makes one sound intelligible, confident and prestigious. The males; however, tend to be more GA-directed as confirmed in their recordings' results for their own reasons which include regular exposure to American pop culture and TV programmes, and for others at a young age, through video games. Moreover, acquiring GA for them has come along easily and in a natural manner; because of the exposure once again, their readiness to learn it and their affection to speak it. Speaking GA boosts their self-confidence and self-esteem as justified by them.

As regards accent acquisition, after the interpretation and analysis of participants' replies, it appears that exposure to the target language has got a crucial impact on their pronunciation. Most females claim to speak RP to various reasons and among which they mentioned how British English sounds musical, clear, formal, academic and most importantly prestigious. Speaking RP to them boosts their self-confidence and accentuates their femininity. Not the majority agrees to that, as RP for male graduates also is more musical, prestigious and clearer than GA. The latter is widely spoken by both male and female EFL graduates who provide reasons for their choice of it as well. Acquiring its accent was easy and fun by being exposed to direct native sources for long periods and at an early age. Speaking American accent also made them sound self-confident and fluent.

Nonetheless, both genders could not figure out the trap in activity three of the phonetic coding worksheet. As a reminder, participants were required to cross out the odd word that did not rhyme, for both consonants and vowels. A four-list of words that contains the same vowels [ɑː] in RP pronunciation rhyme together, [Cart, Pathway, Heart and Guitar]. This

indicates how EFL graduates cannot conceive and perceive that pronunciation of [ɑ:] in British accent is different from GA phoneme [æ] in some words and they still need more practice that requires their full attention when speaking one of the model accents. Therefore, this inability to differentiate those vowels hinders students in pronouncing accents separately and accurately instead of mixing them both. It is naturally expected to be easy for females whose majority claims to speak RP, but it only shows inconsistency in their pronunciation.

Female participants' replies emphasise once more their emotional trigger to learn more and better, their motivation; as well as their emotional suppressors that eventually affect their performance including anxiety, stress, panic and lack of self-confidence. Additionally, they explain their desire to be exposed to RP accent more often, but outside classes, more English accents other than GA and RP and learn more about the science of Phonetics. The most significant issue which they must concentrate on is to be able to speak the accent they love consistently, which refers to the issue of speaking in a combination of accents unconsciously and which requires guidance and instruction, as well as attention because these model accents have got more similarities than differences.

With regard to English model accents' stereotypes, both genders have got a common ground in believing and disbelieving them. The provided statements are intended to demonstrate contrast between RP and GA in terms of use, acquisition and impression; as well as whether Algerian EFL graduates agree or disagree with them. In accordance with their results, female and male respondents strongly agree that RP is spoken more clearly and easily which facilitates its acquisition and understanding; whereas referring to assimilation, GA at first appears unattainable and intimidates them because it is spoken fast. They strongly agree that RP is imitated more easily due to its slow and clear enunciation; whereas they grow accommodated to acquiring GA through constant exposure.

Moreover, both genders disagree that speaking RP is associated with femininity, referring to (25%) of male respondents who do speak it. Both genders strongly agree that speaking GA gives away informal and casual vibes; whereas RP remains an accent of prestige, confidence, elegance and intellect. Participants add more stereotypes as they believe both accents have got different vocabulary, GA is an accent of spontaneity, and that RP is more academic and intelligible than GA. They disagree with how RP is considered unpopular and difficult to acquire. In conclusion, females speak English with a mixture of both accents, RP and GA and most of them cannot differentiate between both. As for the males, their majority speaks GA, and in accordance with their oral recordings, they tend to speak in an African-American accent.

V. 1. 2. 4. Supra-segmental Features

After segmental features' introduction and learning, supra-segmental instruction follows. It combines all elements beyond a segment; syllabification, stress, rhythm and intonation. Such elements guarantee less accentedness and more fluency. With regard to the males, it is worth noting that most of them have joined their opinion on one issue which is how lacking their speech is in terms of stress; word stress and rhythm. Accordingly, their recordings' results have indicated more absence of word stress than sentence stress; mainly due to their tendency to speak GA faster. Nevertheless, their fluency and connected speech appears to be better than the females' where only a slight fragment of male participants is documented of having robotic speech and a few mispronunciations that can be said to be; to a certain extent; fossilised.

Regarding stress placement in speech, Hahn (2004) has carried out an investigation on non-natives giving lectures to native speakers in which he, in the first lecture, demonstrates correct primary stress, in the second incorrect stress shift and no primary stress in the third. Therefore, listeners have shown positive feedback and have retained more information and highly evaluated the lecturer. Hahn concludes that sentence level stress is significant to ESL learners' intelligibility. Accordingly, Field (2005) demonstrates negative effects on intelligibility by incorrect placement of lexical stress (as cited in Jennifer A. Foote et al., 2011, p. 05). Both types of stress are significant to proper speech and because most females' speech; especially in reading tasks, is interrupted by several pauses and no linking, it becomes irritating and the listener requires repetition several times.

Another point is that the females' majority claims to imitate native speakers' accent in order to acquire correct pronunciation, while males' majority prefers to memorise symbols and rules. However, considering their previous replies, females instead prefer memorisation of symbols and rules because they work harder than males in achieving academic scores. That being said, female and male graduates' current pronunciation, as evaluated and concluded through their recordings' analysis, is to some extent "Very Good" to "Average" and "Excellent" to "Very Good" respectively where their speech is intelligible and fluent. Conversely, they rarely accentuate stressed syllables and their pronunciation lacks linking and at times rhythm where such absence is more apparent in females' speech than males'.

EFL learners are instructed that young English native speakers are unconsciously aware of the rules surrounding Phonetics and Phonology of the L1. That is, they do not

actually study stress or intonation rules for example, they only learn how to identify real words and single them out from other words that are possible to create. By contrast, L2 acquirers must go through learning Phonetics and Phonology as part of language instruction to recognise all possible and impossible patterns of speech or pronunciation (as cited in Margaret Wallace Nilsson, 2011, p. 07). Nonetheless, the present participants' recordings demonstrate females' weakness in supra-segmental features where most of them do not apply word stress because they articulate rapidly, they rarely place weight on content words, they stress structure words, such as contracted forms and model verbs and their intonation is closer to that of Arabic.

V. 1. 2. 5. Assimilation and Linking

These are extra elements that smoothen speech and create a chance to speak and sound native-like. With regard to the male participants' speech recordings, their pronunciation to a great extent is marked with instances of linking at the level of words boundaries where females below category "B" rarely achieve it. There is a degree of similarity in linking of words that sound like a flap [t̬], such as "but I" [bəˈt̬aɪ] and "that I" [ðəˈt̬aɪ]. This is most apparent in male and female graduates who speak GA and not RP.

V. 1. 2. 6. Standard vs. Non-standard Forms

Formal speech is learned through academic sources, such as books and courses or writing lessons and rules. Informal speech is easily acquired through social media and television. However, both forms of speech require perseverance, hard-work and regular exposure for mastery. The former is a must because it is requested for academic research and status; whereas the latter is applicable in informal situations among acquaintances and other foreign speakers. Zajac (n.d.) refers to it as "phonetic convergence" or "phonetic accommodation" where non-native speaker attempts to imitate the speech and accent of the target language upon exposure. Accordingly, results show that only male and female participants who speak GA and are categorised as "A" and "B" attempt to use non-standard forms including "yeah", "like", "lotta", kinda", "gonna" and "you know" to name a few.

According to Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014), "GA's sound system is somewhat simpler than that of RP since due to rhoticity. It is closer to spelling and it lacks central

diphthongs" (p. 32). That is the reason why most of Algerian EFL learners speak GA and those who speak RP cannot be fully consistent in their accent. It is claimed by Ida Wilson (2012) that boys use more non-standard form or slang expression than females (Jenny Cheshire, 1982; Senstorm, 1993 and Eva Berglund, 1999). However, such a result could not match the present and more scrutiny is required in order to confirm it. What is observed as well is the application of rhoticity in speech. As it is not an obstacle for male participants because they are GA-directed, females' speech is a fusion of both accents and they unintentionally include and exclude the rhotic "r". Therefore, such a conclusion matches Mompéan Guillamon's (n.d.) where both male and female speakers use the rhotic "r" equally.

V. 1. 2. 7. Vowels' Reduction

As part of maintaining rhythm and tonicity, vowels' reduction in connected speech is one of the aspects of native-like pronunciation and fluency in conversations. Dani Byrd (1992) explains that the males who tend to speak faster reduce their vowels more frequently than females who may resort to a different manner of vowels' reduction (as cited n Jahandar et al., 2012). Consequently, it is noticed in their recordings how male graduates efficiently resort to vowels' reduction that only demonstrates their command over GA accent which they speak. That is, they successfully achieved consistency by applying rhythm and beat to their utterances and speech. Unlike most of females, once more below level "B", who could not keep a balance in reducing vowels. In other words, their speech sounds robotic due to the absence of rhythmic units, tonic stress, as well as intonation. Most of the structure words including model verbs and pronouns are pronounced in their strong form without the necessity of emphatic stress.

V. 1. 3. Affective and Socio-cultural Aspects

The last element targets the emotional side of learners; males and females'; and expressive characteristics which they manifest in pronunciation classes and during tests. Both positive and negative factors are included. In English pronunciation, Jepersen (1922) states that there are no dissimilarities; no male/female and old/young non-native speakers' difference in sound production/perception (as cited in Kassaian, 2011). Conversely, Sholten & Engstrand (2002) assert that younger women are less dialectal than men of the same age.

Kassaian (2011) adds that good or adequate production is not necessarily related to proper perception as her students succeeded in production test but did not do well in sound discrimination tests. Such results are similar to Mack (1989) and Sheldon's (1985) who attribute good pronunciation to social condition rather than perception. Therefore, more focus is placed upon socio-cultural and emotional aspects of the learners.

V. 1. 3. 1. Age

This element may not be a hindrance to a number of studious non-natives, but mostly may hinder the acquisition of native-like pronunciation at an older age. As a reminder, "Lateralisation" or CPH interferes with the process as EFL learners' phonological capacity diminishes with time and makes such acquisition incomplete; especially supra-segmental aspects. Age is an element that was not explored fully in the present study, because it was not an essential variable to this investigation. However, in accordance with participants' replies in their questionnaire, male and female participants who claimed to speak "Very Good" English, were exposed to the target language at an early age.

V. 1. 3. 2. Mother Tongue Interference

Various research experiments display results that highlight L1 interference or influence over English learning process at both segmental and supra-segmental levels. However, for university EFL students, it is different. Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) emphasises the possibility of encountering difficulties in L2 pronunciation as impacted by one's L1 sound system. Within Algerian classes; however, what is more conspicuous is the influence of Arabic prosody rather than different sound systems. Concerning mother tongue interference, it is up to the participants to decide whether such an influence has affected pronunciation attainment positively or negatively. Such a phenomenon may take place due to different regional dialects and accents as well. Thus, it is worth mentioning how some phonetic aspects such as differentiation, under-differentiation and dentalisation occur in LMD3 EFL graduates' speech.

The females' majority does not consider such an influence possible and the males' majority does notice a degree of influence. In their justifications; however, females' majority mentions that mother tongue Arabic has got a double effect. Thanks to the Arabic alphabet, they are able to pronounce a variety of similar English sounds; still, it does affect the accent

which is deemed foreign if not properly treated at a young age. In the sense that older learners may come across difficulties with their phonological capacities, exactly as CPH claims and many Arabic sounds may be fossilised.

V. 1. 3. 3. Amount of Exposure

This element, in particular, has been continuously indicated and investigated; as well as decided as effective and essential to the completion of pronunciation attainment process. Regular and rare exposure to the target language have demonstrated; backed up by obtained results, opposite consequences. Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska (2014) mentions that in countries where English is a foreign language, there is a limited or no exposure to the target language outside classes. Nonetheless, present findings show that the majority of males, half of the total, claims to be exposed to authentic sources, such as TV programmes, songs, social media and video games to name a few constantly, if not frequently. By contrast, female participants also utilise such tools, perhaps more, but their exposure is less constant and more occasional. Referring to previous answers, the females are more attracted to Turkish series, cooking channels and fashion as well than to other English programmes.

The females attribute their deficient speech and pronunciation to a number of reasons which are topped by lack of practice and articulation of English on a daily basis. This is strongly related to their low stock of vocabulary as they claim to be in need for vocabulary enrichment and imitation of native speakers of English. They also highlight the issue of little exposure to the target language and imitation of or drilling of native speakers' speech. Recordings' results indicate the females' absence of stress in words, at least not pronounced as loudly as expected and a robotic accent due to the absence of rhythm in sentences.

V. 1. 3. 4. Classroom Interaction and Participation

This element is not explored in the present study due to the fact that classroom observation is not part of the current study's instruments. Therefore, it is not an explored variable in this investigation. It might be investigated in further research.

V. 1. 3. 5. Motivation and Positive Attitudes/Beliefs

Although motivation and attitudes have been over-researched for decades, this cannot deny the fact that they remain two of the top affective factors that drive learners to achieve satisfying scores and seek better performances. For the present research study as well, motivation and positivity rank first place and may be solution to the eradication of the presence of any negative emotions. Moreover, Suter (1979) claims that learners' attitudes towards language learning have a great impact on their performances. Suter upholds that learners having a degree of interest and concern over their pronunciation performed well and had better pronunciation of English as a Second Language (as cited in Badran, 2001, p. 10).

Thus, male and female graduates appear to be sharing a common point with regard to how they perceive Phonetics' classes. This calls for more incentives for them to come to class motivated and eager to study this module. Moreover, the males view native-like pronunciation more positively than females do. The latter has provided views that express having difficulty more than the males have; still, having much admiration towards English than males. Male participants wish to do it; whereas females emit the sensation that they just admire its beauty. A variety of factors that interfere with non-native speakers' pronunciation attainment and Gardner (2007) introduces the main ones.

First, the cultural context that refers to attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the learners may boost their learning process, in this case, pronunciation of English. Second, the educational context may boost their motivation because it encompasses the educational system and its components including quality of the programme, the interest, the curriculum and atmosphere. With a combination of both integrativeness and attitudes where learners identify themselves as part of the target language culture and have got positive expectations, they can achieve better results. In his study, Gardner (2007) lists the most evident affective factors that influence one's learning, which are motivation or integrativeness, instrumental orientation and language anxiety. Although little research and few results have been accumulated, female learners exhibit more interest and positive behaviour and performances in EFL classes (Shoaib & Zoltan Dornyei, 2005 and Karahan, 2007; as cited in Abidin, 2012).

Zhuanglin (1989), Bacon & Finnemann (1992), Larsen-Freeman & Long (2000) and Jacqueline McCormick (2012) (as cited in Rieger, 2009) state that females are more motivated and open to authentic input and have got positive attitudes. More research highlights females' superiority in certain language building areas thanks to their willingness

to learn which reflects better communication in foreign languages (Clement &Noels, 1998; as cited in Zafar and Meenakshi, 2012). By contrast, according to Siebert (2003, as cited in Bernat &Lloyd, 2007), females have got lower beliefs in themselves; whereas males exhibit more positive attitudes towards their learning abilities. Still, terkan Lioglu's research (2005) shows no difference in beliefs between both genders. The present research results could not detect a major difference in motivation, as both male and female graduates are interested and motivated to speak English properly. Nonetheless, the females show more feelings of admiration to learn and succeed.

Spoplsky (1969) claims that foreign language learners will not easily admit their original motives, but will insist on instrumental motives. By contrast, in Japan, Benson (1991), surveyed over three hundred freshmen and evaluated their motivation towards learning English. Results show the importance of integrative and personal reasons for English learning rather than instrumental ones. Consequently, male and female participants appear to be both instrumentally motivated to learn English. However, the females remain more personally and affectively-directed as they express interest in various aspects of English including the English accent and culture. The males' majority is heavily directed towards gaining an advantage by using English either to communicate or travel, and it does not necessarily become special to them.

Male participants tend to be easy-going and less stressful when speaking or learning which can be a bonus to their natural acquisition and demonstration of English enunciation. Moreover, as compared to the females' emotional bond towards proper learning and constant improvement and monitoring of their speaking skills, the males have demonstrate a desire to be integrated in an English-speaking country which can be considered as the main objective to speak the accent as accurate as possible and produce it correctly. Accordingly, Peacock (2001) believes that once personal beliefs are established for learners, very little can be done to alter those underlying beliefs.

V. 1. 3. 6. Negative Emotions

Negativity is the enemy of progress and evolution. Male and female students go through a journey of personal and emotional growth that involves a variety of sentiments. Still, in EFL classes, it is important for instructors to realise the effect of such negative feelings in the psychology of their students that is undeniably reflected on their performances. Females pay more attention to how they should speak, sound and are thought of as prestigious

and distinguished may cause them more anxiety and hesitance when speaking. This only leads to being self-conscious, as they do sound perturbed in all tasks and keep requesting for repetition multiple times during oral tasks.

A few research studies have laid down different results. According to Aida (1994), females score higher results; whereas for Papamihiel (2002) and El-Khafaifi (2005; as cited in Wilson, 2006) claim that the females demonstrate more apprehension and anxiousness in speech than males do in general anxiety tests. Males outdo and outperform their female classmates in mainstream classrooms and peer interaction; whereas females do better in ESL classrooms and individual tasks. Conversely, no significance in general anxiety tests is found in other research (Onwuegebuzie, 1999 and Dewaele, 2002; as cited in Alkhafaifi (2005) Looking at their answers; although quite few; male participants tend to focus more on the phonetic aspect and disregard the phono-tactic one, because they pick up the accent without calculating differences; whereas female learners pay more attention to details and tend to work harder to conceal such imperfections in their speech.

Nonetheless, females' attempt to ensure better and flawless pronunciation sometimes leads to making errors because of fear, stress, self-consciousness, over-caution and anxiety while performing a certain task. Additionally, because female participants are more numerous, their weak phonetic coding ability is displayed more clearly than male participants'. In order not to be unfair to the females, wrong answers are examined and scrutinised compared to half of each batch of participants. Therefore, the analysis of replies and their performances is individually and separately looked at and scrutinised. Males; on the other hand, display caution and attentiveness when decoding phonetic transcription, where they either nail the answer or prefer not to reply at all and keep a certain stability in showing their ability in phonetic coding.

V. 1. 3. 7. Confidence and Self-esteem

Such elements can be considered sufficient incentives in the improvement of EFL pronunciation attainment. They reflect comfort in speaking English; as well as demonstrate a certain command over the target language. Replies show that both genders' main objective is to improve speaking pronunciation and fluency. They also have got affective factors that drive them to, including love, delight and more practice to perfect it. The males; however, use stronger expressions, such as "speak perfectly" and "it feels like a native". The females express a degree of struggle when speaking English in public due to self-consciousness about

their level and pronunciation. Their answers, unlike males, express more effective aspects such as shyness, shame, stress and fear. After going through the main shortcomings in their speech, unlike females, male respondents do not mention any affective factors that might influence their pronunciation acquisition.

It is worth referring to females' previous answers where they speculate that their male classmates do not consider mistakes seriously and tend to speak English more comfortably and more confidently than do the female participants. In her deficit Model, Lakoff (1975) approaches females' speech as being various and colourful in the use of adjectives. In her difference approach, men's demonstrate more assertiveness and confidence in their speech and answers; whereas women are less confident. By contrast, Robert Powell (1979) and Powell & Batters (1985) conclude that female learners show more confidence in their linguistic competence and regard themselves positively; whereas, male learners are less self-assured with their linguistic skills in SLL (as cited in Lopez Rua, 2006).

Both genders realise how important it is to combine emotional elements in their English speech. So, speech that is equally accurate and fluent guarantees continuation of speech and communication without being interrupted or embarrassed. Such parameters must be considered in equal measure of significance. Males confirm this point by justifying that making mispronunciations cause the speaker, EFL learner in particular, to sound "ignorant"; whereas, correct pronunciation allows the speaker to sound more confident and assertive. Finally, it should be pointed out that individuals with poor pronunciation often lack the confidence to speak up and try to say as little as possible. On the other hand, good pronunciation provides the speaker with the confidence to engage in conversations with other speakers of English allows them to sound able and competent and gives them a sense of achievement. It is an asset that cannot be underestimated (as cited in Jolanta Szpyra-Kozlowska, 2014).

V. 1. 3. 8. Risk-taking

This element can be a double-edged sword depending on results obtained through taking risks in learning. Risk-taking only can be a practical and clever technique if it assists EFL learners in pronunciation by making the right guesses and answers and employing the right strategies and tools. It; however, can cause EFL learners obstacles if it harms their progress that leads to incorrect outcome.

It has been detected that females are hasty while answering and do not consider familiarity with the spelling provided if it does/does not exist in English and are not afraid of making words up. Moreover, male participants do not take risks replying, and those who do cannot outnumber those who do unlike their female counterparts. Male participants tend to not take risks providing wrong answers; they either leave written replies empty or occasionally skip oral replies; while the females risk providing unorthodox and unrecognisable spellings; such as "noam" for "gnome", "flawar" for "flower/flour" and "deap" for "deep" to just name a few.

V. 1. 3. 9. Introversion and Extraversion

This element as well is not explored in the current study due to time constraints in creating more criteria within research instruments.

V. 1. 3. 10. Preferences

Male and female learners with differences explored and exposed by various linguists and researchers, prefer learning/acquiring foreign languages differently. This may be attributed to their personality, familiarity with the language learning, possible tools and desire to improve. In their questionnaire, both genders are requested to answer which type of exams and evaluation they prefer to have. Results show that the majority of females prefer the written form of evaluation due to their requirement of sufficient time to think and answer, being intimidated and shy when confronting other interlocutors and are more expressive in an individual state of mind while writing. Whereas, the majority of male participants express more enthusiasm towards oral expression and who prefer oral evaluation due to their familiarity with listening/speaking at first in the learning process, helping them improve their pronunciation and build a strong phonological system.

The majority of males prefer oral evaluation to the written one; this may indicate that they pay more attention to pronunciation aspects and prefer to speak more confidently than females. Therefore, they absorb more aspects of the English accent which they speak better. Moreover, the females' lack of spontaneity while speaking and lack of confidence are major reasons for their fallback in oral expression and are not used to speaking aloud. Little oral expression enthusiasm could be due to lack of interaction and exposure to the target language;

as well as the influence of written exams that makes up most of their evaluation since primary school and onwards. It is worth noting that although only a fragment; more females advocate evaluation that involve both systems; oral and written. Those who select either might miss the point that both skills go hand in hand and compliment one's level.

Who can judge classmates if not themselves? Speaking within a pronunciation classroom, interacting in English and articulating and drilling words, EFL male and female learners cannot deny the fact that they notice each other, how they progress or how their speaking skills and aspects manifest. Peer observation; therefore, is a demonstration of how male and female learners can be the right judges of their own learning process and others' sharing the same setting. Male and female statements cannot be fully unbiased or objective. When the selected participants are requested to select which gender tends to acquire correct pronunciation more quickly, the majority of both gendered participants agree that females do. They attribute that to how females are hard workers, pay attention to details and apply rules properly; as well as being more motivated to perfect their speech and pronunciation. This is; mainly because male learners do not give much consideration to accent or their Phonetics' studies. By contrast, the males can be as superior in rapid acquisition of English pronunciation due to their constant exposure to; primarily, American English content through TV series and video-gaming.

Females' answers to the questionnaire emit a feeling of emotional involvement with the subjects being inquired and more transparency. Males, although provide honest answers; especially when discussing their improvement thanks to Phonetics' classes and which aspects of Phonetics they enjoy, their answers are limited, objective and short. Male participants provide fewer details that may help understand their motives or apprehensions during their two-year tuition of Phonetics. This only calls for more research to be conducted with a large scale of male respondents than the present. Female participants are more open and frank about their progress and insecurities with their mispronunciations; whereas, the males are more reserved and do not worry to provide justifications to most of their selections.

Females, furthermore, tend to lack simultaneous practice of spelling and articulation. Previous results showed indeed how females committed more misspellings than males did and created unfamiliar words and other writings that did not exist in English. Female participants state before that practice and memorisation go hand in hand which can be applicable in this case; to be able to memorise spelling and its corresponding oral production along with constant practice.

Moreover, participants indeed highlight quite important elements in their proposals. They were requested to propose reforms to be carried out in order to improve Phonetics' classes and include useful tools to help students adapt to university, overcome the difficulties they had previously and also facilitate phonetic background attainment. It is worth noting that female participants' suggestions are more numerous than males. This only indicates how females may be concerned with their speech development by welcoming more novel ideas and experiments. This also shows a further affective side of females who can be emotionally attached or secluded, even motivated or less motivated. Female respondents express more interest in phonetics' background and phonological awareness development as well.

V. 1. 4. Strategies Employed by Learners

The current element is suitable for the demonstration of necessary pronunciation attainment/learning strategies proven handy in accelerating the process; as well as exploration of LMD3 EFL graduates' frequency of utilising such strategies and which type is more dominant among male and female learners. Considering Kolb's Construct Cycle (1984), a variety of pronunciation learning strategies is laid out to selected participants to disclose the main strategies which they usually employ in their English attainment and learning. Therefore, in accordance with their questionnaires replies, it appears that females' input relies much on intent listening and at times active listening and memorisation of sounds; whereas their practice generally involves imitation of native speakers' speech and facial muscles exercises. However, in accordance with their speech and pronunciation recordings' results, low rates are much more noticeable with regard to practising sounds in isolation followed by sounds in context of words.

With regard to noticing strategies, very low rates that fail to reach half of female participants where only a slight minority may be able to notice different system sounds between L1 and L2; as well as possessing prior knowledge concerning Phonetics as a science. Followed by feedback strategies, female participants' majority rarely employs any significant strategies to increase their own feedback where only a fragment might pay attention to their mother tongue supra-segmentals. In hypothesis forming, only a considerable faction attempts cooperation with their classmates and focuses on sounds that do not exist in Arabic. By contrast, low rates were shown in the use of strategies, such as asking for help and self-

correction. In hypothesis testing, a majority is marked with the employment of clear speech when pronouncing and a minority in lowering their anxiety in speech.

When such results are contrasted with their recordings results, it is noticed that there is a degree of inconsistency. Female respondents' English speech and pronunciation vary between "Average" and "Very Good" except (02%) with excellent enunciation in sentence reading and narration as explained previously in chapter three. Such results might indicate a degree of exposure to the target language boosted by listening carefully; as well as mimicry of native speakers' speech and accent. Their lower scores in many minimal pairs activities might be due to less integration of practice of new words, syllabification, reading or playing roles aloud, practising sounds in isolation and in full words, not noticing errors and others' speech, not using phonetic symbols despite that they mentioned earlier practice, because results of worksheets show females' capacity to transcribe better than males by distinguishing symbols more easily.

On the other hand, male respondents attempt a variety of input strategies that rely on several types of listening, including intent, careful and active listening; as well as eager attention towards new vocabulary. The males also tend to be exposed to authentic content and be involved in the context integratively for best experience and results. Moreover, they claim to practise representation of sounds in memory, practising more new words by reading aloud and mimicking native speakers' speech and pronunciation; as well as memorising and practising individual sounds and in different contexts. However, very little interest is shown in strategies which involve role plays and facial articulation or prosody (L2), which might be reflected on their performance when stress and rhythm are involved. Concerning noticing strategies, male respondents claim to observe speech and notice errors in others' pronunciation, thanks to intent listening even errors made by native speakers themselves.

Nevertheless, a minority might consider problematic pronunciation differences between their L1 and the target language, the former's supra-segmentals and the latter's Phonetics. In hypothesis forming, a large portion of male participants attempt to monitor and eliminate negative interference of Arabic due to different prosody. They tend to welcome help from and ask for others help and carry out the process of self-correction when necessary, which is an excellent strategy that reflects critical thinking and desire or willingness to improve themselves. In addition, they show interest in discovering various aspects of the target language pronunciation. In hypothesis testing strategies, the males' majority may execute activities that require repetition of sounds, words' articulation based on guesses; they use clear speech when speaking and reduce anxiety level unlike the females.

Looking back at the numbers and statistics collected in their worksheets and recordings' analysis, it can be concluded in relation to the above results that third year EFL male graduates employ more strategies than females do. With listening and constant exposure, the males appear to have sharpened their American accent. They listen to and practise new vocabulary which is manifested in their superiority in pronouncing words that contain silent letters and in discerning long from short mono-phthongs. Their ability to mimic native English is closer to native speakers' than females whose speech contain accentedness; especially female speakers within the "Average" category and downward. By practising isolated sounds and in context of words, male respondents encounter less difficulty in reading words and sentences without noticeable struggle or mispronunciations that may cause misunderstanding; as well as pronouncing vowels and minimal pairs better than the females. Moreover, male participants tend to pay more attention to mistakes, especially the ones committed by them, which means they do employ self-monitoring, because they correct themselves occasionally. They also acknowledge asking for help or instruction, particularly from classmates and friends.

During tests and oral activities, males' majority while replying appears composed, at ease, confident and less anxious and they articulate loudly and clearly. They; moreover, demonstrate more focus; especially in their second chance to repeat. Notwithstanding, with little use of strategies that require practice of and concentration on their supra-segmentals and the target language; as well as prosody and syllabification which cause their speech to be missing stressed syllables and linking at times. A minority, it appears is interested in practising phonetic transcription as male's results show inferiority compared to the females.

In a study conducted by Aslan (2009), he reports that gender actually influences strategy choice, because as learners come from different cultures, they use language learning strategies differently (as cited in Maghsudi et al., 2015, 163). Accordingly, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) come with results that show that gender has got an important effect on the frequency of strategy use and that women use memory, cognitive and social strategies more than men do (p. 165). Despite such findings, in the present case, females' results show the opposite, where they utilise a smaller number of strategies to attain proper pronunciation than do the males. EFL learners need raising awareness about the importance of implementing and getting used to such strategies.

Fraser (2000) points out the issue of ESL/EFL teachers' inability to convey effective pronunciation is due to a shortage of equipment. That is, teachers' courses' efficiency requires courses and material to aid them improve the effectiveness. Such material could be computer-

based with audio demonstrations. Moreover, Fraser highlights the immediate shift from teaching the importance of pronunciation to the methodology of teaching pronunciation through changing teachers into "pronunciation coaches" and learners into "proactive individuals" (as cited in Gilakjani et al., 2012).

Eckstein's (2007) results show that learners with higher pronunciation scores use strategies from all four stages,

- ✓ Noticing others' mistakes
- ✓ Adjusting facial expressions
- ✓ Soliciting pronunciation help

Whereas participants with lower scores employed the following strategies,

- ✓ Speaking loudly
- ✓ Silent repetition

Moreover, Gulcin Berkil's study (2008) concludes that female learners utilise numerous strategies in learning pronunciation more than males (as cited in Akyol, 2013). Peterson (2000) explains how pronunciation learning strategies need more investigation because most learners may not be familiar with strategies and may use some unconsciously (as cited in Eckstein, 2007). Daif-Allah (2011) study has shown that males do not employ many strategies compared to females because they believe that mispronunciation will improve by applying guessing techniques and regular practice girls apply repetition and memorisation.

V. 2. Recommendations

Accordingly, in the same survey, LMD3 EFL graduates are requested to provide any other aspects, from their points of view, that are probably missing in their regular classes. At times, pronunciation instructors keep an eye on their students' feedback as it is necessary for the betterment of their class flow and satisfaction of their students' needs. Therefore, the following ideas and guidelines are recommended in accordance with EFL learners' request for a more entertaining and successful Phonetics' classes all throughout the two years of their Phonetics' tuition.

V. 2. 1. A Better Instructor

In the past decades, the instructor was the only source of knowledge and had very little material; if not none, but their voice; to transmit their message. Nowadays, with the wide spread of technology and internet, one is only one click or tap away from millions of sources and material. Still, a teacher's presence is needed in our classrooms as guide and facilitator of such resources. If the learners lose faith in their teachers for any reason, it only deteriorates their learning and puts the instructors' credibility at risk in front of their learners. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To pay attention to their students' mistakes, take notes and must address each of their learners by using flashcards.
- ✓ To ensure smooth course of the lesson by explaining rules slowly and surely, by highlighting rules to be used through a variety of examples and by reminding their learners of each sessions' recapitulation.
- ✓ To provide their learners with boosters; such as pluses each time students achieve something hard, either requested by the instructor or intuitively by the learners themselves.
- ✓ To use a follow-up sheet in order to monitor their active and inactive students. Such a method will help them expose learners who participate regularly and prepare tasks beforehand and reward them. Inactive learners who might consider the module or class uninteresting must be addressed individually to understand and cure the reasons behind their de-motivation.
- ✓ To constantly monitor their syllabus and lesson plans for any loopholes that might prevent their learners from fully comprehending lessons.
- ✓ To specify a five-minute break to listen to all their students' feedback, needs and suggestions.
- ✓ To sort out the needs' flashcards and design a syllabus in accordance with the major needs accumulated.
- ✓ To dedicate the first session for a diagnostic assessment, in order to assess their students' current level of English and come up with corresponding objectives.
- ✓ To break the ice by the beginning of every session with a joke, an anecdote, an event or anything that loosens the atmosphere, puts them in the mood to learn and to introduce the lesson at hand.

- ✓ To prepare a variety of exercises to ensure positive attitudes and avoid redundancy that creates boredom and recoil.

- ✓ To tolerate mistakes and ensure that their students learn to correct themselves.

- ✓ To assess the progress of their students and provide them with regular feedback, scrutiny, advice or instructions.

- ✓ To sharpen their pronunciation and fluency as instructors themselves to be role models.

- ✓ To be reachable and approachable for/to your students in order to connect with each other, and because being moderately sociable with your learners will cause them to make efforts to impress you.

- ✓ To inform other colleagues of your ideas in order to brainstorm better programmes and renew objectives as well in accordance with new challenges.

- ✓ To dedicate a few minutes to reflect on your students' abilities, compliment their progress and encourage them more to boost their self-confidence to achieve better academic performance and scores.

- ✓ To seek new knowledge and update your requisites.

- ✓ To support learners' homework with an essential bibliography and encourage research without teacher-dependency.

V. 2. 2. Phonetic Transcription

In Phonetics' class, phonetic transcription is a mandatory aspect and asset to achieve and acquire and which needs to be learned correctly and sharpened by practice. Therefore it is recommended

- ✓ To introduce the IPA notation first before commencing the first element in first year/second year EFL Phonetics' programme.

- ✓ To practise the IPA chart of English sounds shortly after their introduction.

- ✓ To familiarise your students with sounds' distribution for the best retention of sounds equivalent symbols. Regular practice of transcription is mandatory, both in class and at home.

- ✓ To acquaint students with all possible sounds' distributions in English by brainstorming words and transcribing on board or on special worksheets.

✓ To inform learners that phonetic transcription must be practised even at home; so, homework is essential in every session.

✓ To use a special paper chart IPA during every session as a reminder in case students do not practise at home. This is likely because learners may be tempted not to practise at home while they rely on teachers in class.

✓ To begin with transcription of monosyllabic words for L1 learners until sounds and equivalent symbols are retained properly.

✓ To practise transcription and pronunciation simultaneously by emphasising stress placement and drilling of corrections if mispronunciations occur.

✓ To explain the differences between sounds, letters and symbols before embarking on lessons and to explain how English is a non-phonetic language.

✓ To explain the importance of teaching and learning phonetic transcription in understanding length and voicing and other aspects; such as rhoticity, aspiration, affrication, palatalisation and glottalisation to name a few.

✓ To remind learners how they can be independent in fully and reliably using a dictionary reading the pronunciation from phonetic transcription without asking for teachers' help and not relying on unreliable spelling because it can be misleading.

✓ To facilitate understanding concepts; such as phones, allophones, homophones and homographs to name a few.

✓ To explain how symbols and letters should not be used interchangeably for the purpose of memorisation. For example [j] is the first sound of "yes", but if students resemble it in their brains to [dʒ] in judge, it can grow hard to change its conception at first. Thus, it is preferable to retain symbols as they are without referring to similarities to other letters.

✓ To emphasise the importance of diacritic details in phonetic transcription including [ː], [ˈ], [ˌ], [ʰ] and [] to name a few.

V. 2. 3. Oral Practice

As it has been repeatedly surfacing in EFL graduates' survey answers, most of them preferred oral practice of words and sentences. It is an undeniable fact how writing goes hand in hand with speaking in English due to the fact that English being a non-Phonetic language; where its orthography does not precisely and necessarily reflect its pronunciation and vice

versa. Although only a fragment had realised such a fact, exercises must include both systems and both oral and written forms and skills. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To design activities that begin with the articulation of syllables, monosyllabic then more than one syllable and multisyllabic words alongside their transcription and spelling on the board.
- ✓ To allow learners to correct themselves if they can or wish to even with little time remaining.
- ✓ To provide instant oral demonstration of the mispronounced syllables or words by asking learners to pay attention to mouth articulation as well.
- ✓ After correction, either self-correction, peer correction or instructors' correction, ask learners to brainstorm similar examples of vowels or consonants' articulation.
- ✓ To dedicate more practice time after theory of phonetic and phonological rules. This might be the last half an hour if the group of students does not exceed 20 persons. If the group is numerous, time allotted for it should be reduced.
- ✓ To dedicate more time for reading aloud to spot mispronunciations and prosodic errors; as well as to improve their comprehension skills and vocabulary.
- ✓ To encourage and persuade EFL learners to practise English during breaks at home and intensify such practices during holidays in particular; in order to prevent them from getting their own skills weakened by long ruptures.
- ✓ To employ activities that involve listening and speaking skills to focus on the right pronunciation and perception of others.
- ✓ To allow learners to speak to each other and spot errors, as well as listening to native speakers to test their perceptual skills.
- ✓ To assign students one by one to tell a story by the beginning of every session to help you in pinpointing their speech errors individually and also to boost their self-confidence and self-esteem while speaking to/in front of an audience.
- ✓ To ask afterwards for their classmates' constructive feedback; and not destructive; about their pronunciation in general.
- ✓ To ensure everyone is listening to their teacher and classmates on board by providing full intent and active listening through prohibiting using any distractions; such as phones or other modules' documents.
- ✓ To remind learners to keep quiet, because reading or speaking in a free-noise environment facilitates spotting one's errors and strengthens interaction among peers.

✓ To provide learners with transcribed words instead and allow them to choose the words they desire to pronounce or write their spelling.

V. 2. 4. Phonetics/Phonology's Theory

Phonetics' theory might be perceived by learners difficult, complicated, uninteresting or unnecessary. Nonetheless, theoretical background is as important as its practice. The latter cannot take place without the former which serves as the food for brains before all articulation occurs. Learners tend to request shorter theoretical background and more practice; therefore, it is recommended

✓ To introduce the lessons' theoretical part that includes definitions, notions and rules through an icebreaker first.

✓ To use the board to write the main keyboards during explanation as a manner of emphasis and an aid for visual learners.

✓ To use the side of the board for a glossary of Phonetic/phonological terminology or a handmade paper poster.

✓ To introduce definitions or rules separately after each explanation and each demonstration and its examples.

✓ If the instructor is not using the board, but a projector instead, it is recommended to integrate images or gifs to attract visual learners. It is worth noting that learners following an explanation via a projector non-stop can turn dull and de-motivating to them; where learners can be easily distracted and bored.

✓ The instructor should be eclectic in their demonstration of theoretical background and should provide a simplified background for easier and faster retention of theory. Moreover, implementing explanatory images or videos are useful in the case of breaking the silence and longer exposure to theory during a whole session.

✓ To conclude theoretical explications with an activity to remind learners of acquired knowledge so far, and as an attempt to embed it for a longer period.

✓ To explain how Phonetics teaches learners to combine and strengthen various senses, ears and eyes and mouth by hearing speech, looking at the differences between spelling and phonetic codes and its articulation using speech organs.

V. 2. 5. Mouth Articulation

Mouth articulation is important in the visualisation and production of sounds in isolation, as well as within the context of words. Because Phonetics is a science that studies human speech sounds, Articulatory Phonetics is the first sub-branch that introduces sounds' production in detail and emphasises the physiological aspect of that production. In other words, mouth articulation and movement are important in raising students' awareness about the physical aspect in Phonetics and how to familiarise themselves with mouth movement alongside contact between other speech organs. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To teach EFL learners how to pronounce each phoneme individually in front of a mirror.
- ✓ To watch and compare how each phoneme's production is different from the other before pronouncing syllables.
- ✓ To facilitate their understanding of description parameters of both consonant and vowel sounds.
- ✓ To facilitate the categorisation of each phoneme in accordance with its articulation with respect to speech organs involved in the speech process.
- ✓ To remind learners of paying attention to mouth and tongue movement when pronouncing isolated sounds, syllables and words.
- ✓ To explain how vowels' articulation involves only tongue movement while consonants form a point of contact or close contact between organs of speech.

V. 2. 6. Peer Participation

Peer participation comes as an important element in EFL classrooms, because it serves as a means to boost competition spirit among classmates and encourage timid students to engage in turn-taking replies; as well as to create a stress-free, positive and active atmosphere for learning. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To politely comment on students' efforts when participating solely as it highly increases motivation and self-esteem.
- ✓ To allow your students more allotted time for participation and several chances for those who wish to participate again.

✓ To avoid inhibiting learners when they are not ready to answer, make errors or refrain from participating or speaking; by moving on to others who can reply.

✓ To allow other students to correct their classmates and nurture positive attitudes towards correction of errors through peer correction if self-correction does not work.

✓ To make sure that everyone's contribution is heard and understood, because focusing on certain students only causes the rest to feel left out and; consequently, lose interest.

✓ To allow capable students to come to the board and perform a teacher's role if possible, which is a move that may promote self-confidence and active learning and may facilitate comprehension and reduce tension.

✓ To politely alert audience of classmates not to cause the speaker or participating classmate interruptions or embarrass them with unnecessary remarks.

✓ To promote the idea of embracing one's mistakes and the possibility or likelihood that errors take place and allowing peers to correct them without condescending each other.

✓ To remind learners of equality in learning and not to look down on any of them, because everyone is likely to commit errors at a certain time.

✓ To raise comfort and flexibility between teacher and learner by being tolerant towards errors and questions.

V. 2. 7. Using Dictionaries

Using dictionaries is one of the most requested elements to be integrated within EFL classrooms by instructors who teach vocabulary including Phonetics, Written Expression and Grammar. Other specialties, such as Civilisation and Literature or Linguistics may employ tools like specific terminology dictionaries. Dictionaries; nowadays, have got several forms and types and are known to be quite useful for different learner categories and with various learning styles. Therefore, it is recommended

✓ To request first year students to buy pocket dictionaries in order to use them in transcription activities and most importantly for every subject matter.

✓ If the majority of students cannot purchase their own dictionaries, they can download the following dictionary applications from Play Store with pronouncing features, examples like "Dictbox" and "McMillan Company" or use photo dictionaries.

✓ To choose dictionaries which provide RP pronunciation and GA to compare between accents, but not GA alone, such as "Oxford Dictionary".

✓ To pre-order a number of hard-copy dictionaries from the university's library as to borrow or use one dictionary per table.

✓ To teach learners to value time and utilise it in learning new vocabulary correctly.

✓ To explain to learners how the constant reliance on digital keywords and phone predictions may weaken their writing skills and memorisation.

✓ To remind EFL learners that utilising a dictionary is an essential skill if they are ever cut off of internet connection or ineffectiveness of their digital devices.

✓ To remind them that a dictionary improves all skills; especially that does it not only provide entries' pronunciation and meaning, but also example sentences.

V. 2. 8. More Enjoyable Exercises

Simple and direct exercises to practise acquired theoretical background is an essential step in pronunciation classes. EFL learners' majority tends to retain phonetic information better with practice and plenty of examples. As a result, Phonetics' instructors should be eclectic in their selection of exercises by including diverse tasks that attract their learners' attention and avoid falling in the trap of boredom and disinterest. Therefore, it is recommended

✓ To prepare beforehand a list of objectives of each lesson to narrow down the number of tasks for each session appropriately.

✓ To create, design or adopt pronunciation activities in accordance with such objectives.

✓ To choose activities that trigger critical thinking, that require students to employ guessing, that allow them to work independently and that draw their attention until the end.

✓ To design certain activities which target the main difficulties which they encounter in English pronunciation.

✓ To insert trick questions or elements in their activities for learners to expect a different level from what they previously expected, and anticipate trick questions, especially between GA and RP accents

V. 2. 9. British and American Accents

In accordance with the department of English curriculum, RP is the official model accent to be spoken and taught in classes. Still, for those who specialise in American Civilization or Literature must be proficient in GA both spoken and written forms. Nonetheless, in Phonetics' class, both model accents are emphasised, taught and compared.   Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To comprehend the necessity of differentiating each accent's aspects.
- ✓ To explain the obligation of using the accent of choice consistently in order to master either RP or GA before graduation and gain the ability to discern them.
- ✓ To inform EFL learners that such differences can be written, phonetic and phonological and to provide them with examples to illustrate them.

V. 2. 10. Rectifying Fossilisations

EFL learners acquire pronunciation in various ways and manners and in such a process, speaking the accent with errors is probable due to learners unsharpened auditory and perceptual skills. Moreover, it has been noticed that the majority of EFL learners is not used to speaking and writing simultaneously, where they lack the ability to write correctly what they pronounce right or the other way around. In this case, if misspellings and mispronunciations are not rectified or remedied sooner, they might be fossilised forever. Once errors are fossilised, the perception and production become fixed in a manner that might create obstacles for the speakers in the long run of time. Therefore, it is recommended

- To pay extra attention to all types of mispronunciations committed by EFL learners when speaking.
  - ✓ To practise reading sentences or paragraphs as connected speech tasks or reciting words in isolation to detect their mispronunciations in articulation; as well as stress, intonation and prosody.
  - ✓ To remind learners who struggle with fossilised mispronunciations to recite or read one last time after the others have finished making sure of their progress.
  - ✓ To include spelling and transcription alongside articulation as a wholesome practice students by student.

- ✓ To pronounce the correct articulation for students several times with spelling and transcription on board before students' turn.

- ✓ To pinpoint mispronunciations of basic or advanced words before rhythm in sentences using visual aids, such as short video clips or audio clips to enhance their listening skill; as well as to sharpen their perceptual senses and capacities.

- ✓ To employ voice clips of their own articulation recordings and allow them the opportunity to self-correct and self-reflect on their mispronunciation or identify fossilisations and remedy them.

- ✓ To pair up students in tasks that require an interviewer and an interviewee and when each one of them speaks, the other jots down the errors they hear if there are any and then declare them.

- ✓ To test learners' attentiveness and phonological awareness through an activity of wrong spelling.

- ✓ To allow your students time to share words they are not sure of how to pronounce and to learn directly or indirectly through a dictionary.

V. 2. 11. Homework

Written or oral homework and assignments at home can be considered an essential tool in the continuation of the learning process. Phonetic information tends to fade away without regular practice and, the latter contributes in the efficiency of students' Phonological Working Memory. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To make sure to provide EFL learners with assignments at the end of the class in order to practise them in the upcoming session.

- ✓ To grade homework assignments and include them within tutorial tasks or participation as part of the tutorial mark.

- ✓ To boost EFL learners' self-confidence and motivation to work harder by providing them with classes or bonus points for the efforts.

- ✓ To teach EFL learners to be responsible about their progress and set their personal and educational properties and how to problem solve.

- ✓ To teach learners to be independent, rely on their own knowledge, identify shortcomings in their level and employ resources; such as the internet to research instead of aimlessly serving the net.

✓ To demonstrate strictness concerning undone or unfinished homework in order to teach EFL learners' discipline and time management.

✓ To teach learners how to adopt positive habits and train memory in absorbing information healthily and not lazily.

V. 2. 12. Native Exposure

Native content exposure can make a huge difference in pronunciation of the target language. Native speakers are one of the most essential and reliable authentic sources for best acquisition of the accent of choice, be it RP or GA, Australian or Scottish to name few. Even if learners read or listen to native speakers without intent focus on their speech and imitation of the accent and prosody, the accent will sound lacking to some extent. Therefore, it is recommended

✓ To teach and inform EFL learners how to identify their learning styles and their strategies accordingly.

✓ To integrate native content, audio-visual aids in Phonetics' classes and lessons; as well as pronunciation practice activities.

✓ To expose EFL learners to a variety of English accents in order to familiarise them with the interaction with different kinds of varieties.

✓ To listen to EFL students' fear or hesitation and insecurities about their shortfalls in pronunciation or accent they wish to improve.

✓ To alert and inform learners of the paramount role of native content on their speech if their goal is to achieve both accuracy and fluency.

✓ To create a chat group or Facebook group that permits the instructor to post videos or podcasts regularly for students to have fun and learn at the same time.

✓ To advise EFL learners to drill or repeat after native speakers when watching television or a movie scene, listening to songs or an audio-books.

✓ To explain how practising English regularly through authentic sources may reduce accented speech or L1 influence if their goal is to speak accurately and fluently.

V. 2. 13. Raising Motivation and Reducing Fear and Anxiety

EFL learners come with different mentalities and from different socio-cultural backgrounds, so that intake and acquisition may take different forms and rates. There are various factors that influence their learning process either positively or negatively. Positive effect needs nurture and negative effect requires reduction or eradication. Such effects are related to learner strategies, teacher's methods and learners' will to work hard to achieve better results. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To request EFL learners to highlight their strength points and weakness points in their English level. Afterwards, they should focus on eliminating such weaknesses both in class and at home.
- ✓ To ensure a stress-free and threat-free environment while teaching in order to invite learners to be open with their teachers about their fears and difficulties.
- ✓ To boost positive attitudes and motivation to study Phonetics.
- ✓ To eliminate negative views towards Phonetics module being a difficult or complicated module to attain.
- ✓ To emphasise each obstacle your students might encounter during speaking or learning pronunciation and set the right remedies for them.
- ✓ To pay attention to your students' feedback and monitor the effectiveness of your strategies and techniques.
- ✓ To renew methods and keep updates on pedagogical renovations; especially the ones that concern the affective factors of learners.

V. 2. 14. Learners' Attentiveness

Even well-equipped and organised classes may fail in producing and satisfying results without attention to instructions and knowledge transmitted during sessions. Attentive learners are key-elements in successful EFL classrooms; however, learners may lose attention or get distracted due to various factors. Generally, external reasons, such as smart-phones, noise or routine to name a few. Teachers, therefore, it is recommended

✓ To notify students that using smart-phones is not allowed unless requested by the instructors themselves.

✓ To request learners to switch off their mobiles or put them on the silent/vibrating mode.

✓ To instruct learners not to go through little discussions or chitchats among themselves unless as part of group or pair-work to avoid noise and distractions.

✓ To instruct learners to keep quiet and pay attention to the speaker, engage in activities and nurture peer correction and participation.

✓ To include learners who sit at the back or those students who keep quiet during activities.

✓ To allow each student time to answer and take turns in answering on the board and even explain the answers to their classmates.

✓ To select fun and entertaining activities that attract all students into replying and participating.

V. 2. 15. Segmental Instruction

Phonetics' teaching/learning first step is segmental instruction that begins with the smallest unit of pronunciation, a sound. After phonetic transcription has been introduced, it is recommended

✓ To practise sounds in isolation first in a repeated manner and afterwards, practise them in mono- and di-syllabic words.

✓ To practise basic word pronunciation and transcription on a regular basis in order to not forget phonetic codes and their equivalent sounds' articulation.

✓ To introduce word stress in pronunciation in order to facilitate retention of the stress placement and shift later on in the syllabus of the second semester.

✓ To explain the difference between vowel and consonant sounds in general and then move forward to the classification of consonants and vowels.

✓ To introduce the descriptive parameters of consonants first and explain all consonants' categories using simplified handouts and drawings of mouth movement when articulating phonemes and isolation.

✓ To explain consonants' description more often as a recapitulation through the diagram of speech organs.

- ✓ To post or hang big posters or large handouts of symbols and phonetic diagrams and charts to remind your learners of previous lessons in case they forget.
- ✓ To reward your learners who pronounce advanced vocabulary correctly; especially difficult words or words that contain silent letters.
- ✓ To explain the importance of tenseness, length, roundedness and tongue movement in English pronunciation through the descriptive parameters and minimal pairs.
- ✓ To emphasise revision of lessons and rules previously dealt with, and to include plus points by the beginning of the session. This trick can help boost competition spirit and reduce laziness among learners and, because learners are best motivated through points, pluses and good grades.

V. 2. 16. Supra-segmental Instruction

Supra-segmental instruction comes second after proper introduction to and retention of segmental features. As students' survey and experiments have shown learners' interest in segments rather than stress and prosody first. The latter has turned into an obstacle in their pronunciation attainment process later. Most male and female learners lack stress and rhythm in their speech and they tend to overlook it; therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To introduce supra-segmental features along with segmentals to ensure balance in understanding both types of instruction relationship between them and how to highlight them instead of prioritising one over the other.
- ✓ To begin practising word stress first through patterns of words stress intensively in transcription and pronunciation.
- ✓ To move forward into practising words stress through lists selected by learners themselves and to include peer correction before the teacher intervenes.
- ✓ To assist the learning process with authentic material, such as videos or videos of native speaker for repetition and drilling to practise English prosody and rhythm.
- ✓ To familiarise learners with listening intently to native speakers' prosody in class and as assignments.

V. 2. 17. Fun Games and Exercises

As the present survey has shown, EFL graduates requested to practise Phonetics and Phonology abundantly through fun games and exercises. What appears to be hindering their attention and reducing their interest is the routinish manner of laying the lessons, theoretical backgrounds and answering the following tasks and activities. Therefore, it is recommended

- ✓ To design or redesign activities that are direct and traditional into enjoyable activities that interest learners, such as listening to songs and then writing all the words they can possibly retain, transcribe and pronounce, playing crosswords and then pronouncing and transcribing simultaneously.
- ✓ To employ jigsaw games in the identification of similar phonemes or contrast them; as well as to identify GA pronunciation from RP utilising the same vocabulary or even to teach final "s" and final "ed".
- ✓ To utilise ready-made words collage for pronunciation practice and phonetic transcription.
- ✓ To utilise phone's educational applications to facilitate learning and to make EFL learners more interested and enjoy their learning experience.
- ✓ To appify their smart-phones with the most useful applications recommended by teachers including "WordUp, "Codycross", "Crosswords with pictures", "Word craze" to name a few.
- ✓ To raise your learners' awareness about using such apps for learning and studying and not cheating or wasting time.
- ✓ To play rhyming games or crossing the odd word out in order to find out similar phonemes and contrastive ones.
- ✓ To tell stories, be them true stories, anecdotes, movie plots or jokes at the beginning of every Phonetics' session to ensure self-confidence and to spot mispronunciations and remedy them before getting fossilised.
- ✓ To transcribe favourite words of animals, months, numbers, countries, or songs and movies' titles for first year students to ensure correct articulation of basic vocabulary.
- ✓ To employ Round- Robin reading technique for each student to read a single sentence and transcribe it fully or only transcribe content and structure words separately.

✓ To use the letters' jar that requires all students to write short letters and fold them back where they pick up every day one letter,, read it, reflect on it, transcribe it for LMD2 students' second semester after being introduced to sentence stress.

✓ To employ words' family game, that requires learners to add words to the one word on board suggested by the teacher and try to collect as many as possible. This way, not only to enrich vocabulary, but also to correct mispronunciations. For example, war equals peace, warfare, weapons, soldiers, army, military, airplanes, warheads and so on.

V. 2. 18. Technological Devices (ICTs)

Teaching in EFL classrooms is becoming more demanding. Old traditional methods are being overshadowed by technological tools which appear to be spreading rapidly, are serving the purpose of being less time-consuming and capture learners' interest more. Still, there are instructors who either stick to traditional tools, such as handouts and board explanation, while others integrate tablets, overhead-projectors and audio-visual aids. The best solution is to employ both ways intelligently in order to keep away from routine. Therefore, it is recommended

✓ To employ ICTs in Phonetics' teaching to be up to date and to gain extra time for more practice.

✓ To avoid accumulating information on handouts constantly and switch to summaries and bullet-point ideas.

✓ To avoid crowding PowerPoint slides with information in the case of using a projector and to intelligently summarise theoretical background for better transmission and retention.

✓ To employ educational applications and integrate them within Phonetics and pronunciation regular practice and homework.

✓ To employ flipped classroom by sending instructions to learners via social media groups or platforms and forums.

✓ To monitor their effectiveness of recently employed technological devices, tools and tricks by consulting learners' opinions and feedback.

✓ To utilise the right pronunciation learning/acquisition techniques and strategies and raise learners' awareness about them.

V. 2. 19. Recommended Strategies Layout

In her study conducted on Lebanese speakers, learning English as their second/foreign language, Hanadi S. Mirza's (2015, p. 492) results show that pronunciation learning strategies help improve their poor pronunciation significantly during twelve sessions. Her results come from both pre- and post-tests. Similarly, in his thesis, Alejandro Daniel Muniz Chafez (2018, pp. 38-46) lays out maps of the main types of strategies which are forwarded in this section as recommendations for Phonetics or pronunciation teachers to introduce to their students.

Figure 48. Memory Srategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning (Muniz Chavez, 2018, p. 38)
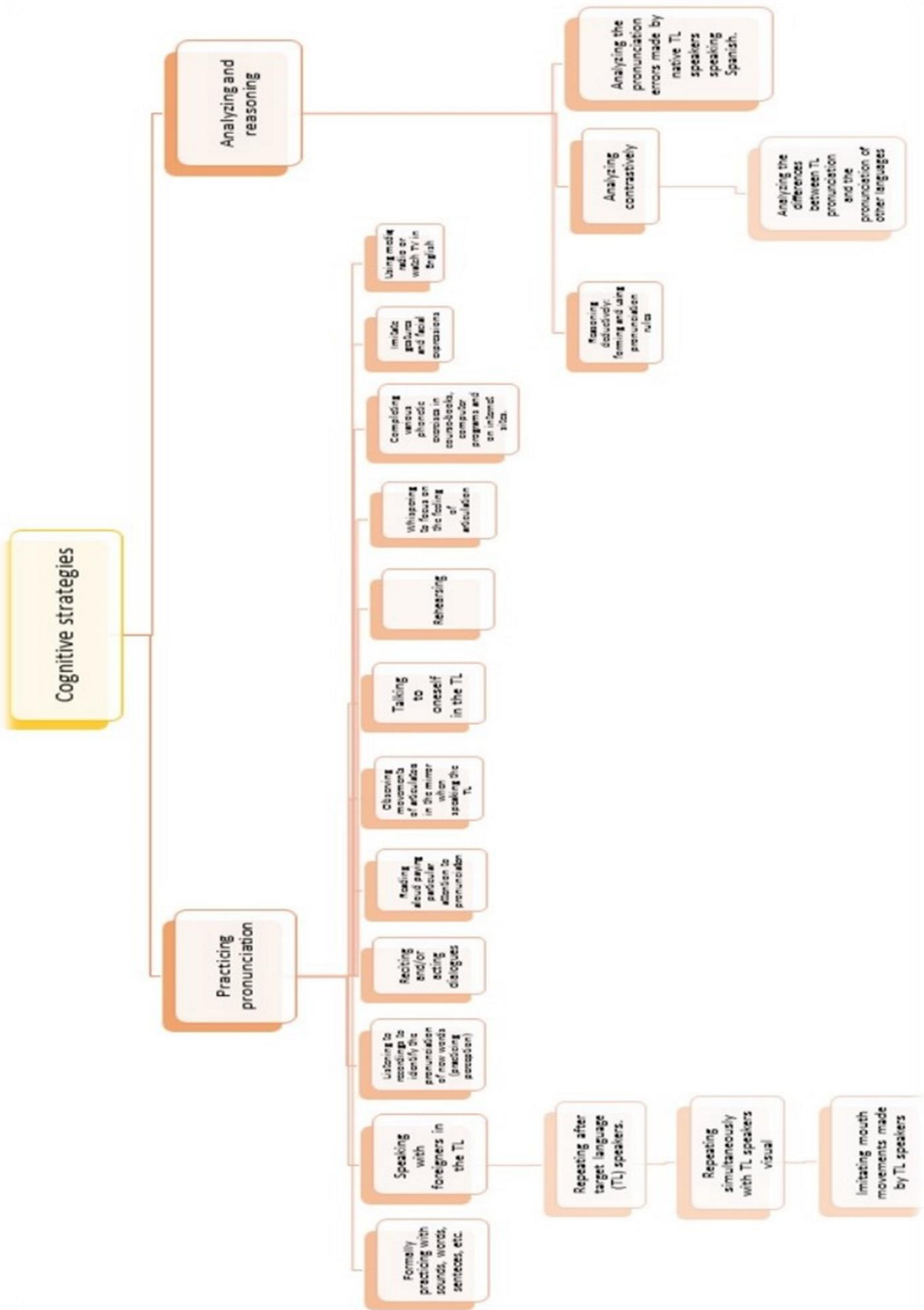
Figure 49. Cognitive Strategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning (Muniz Chavez,

2018, p. 40)
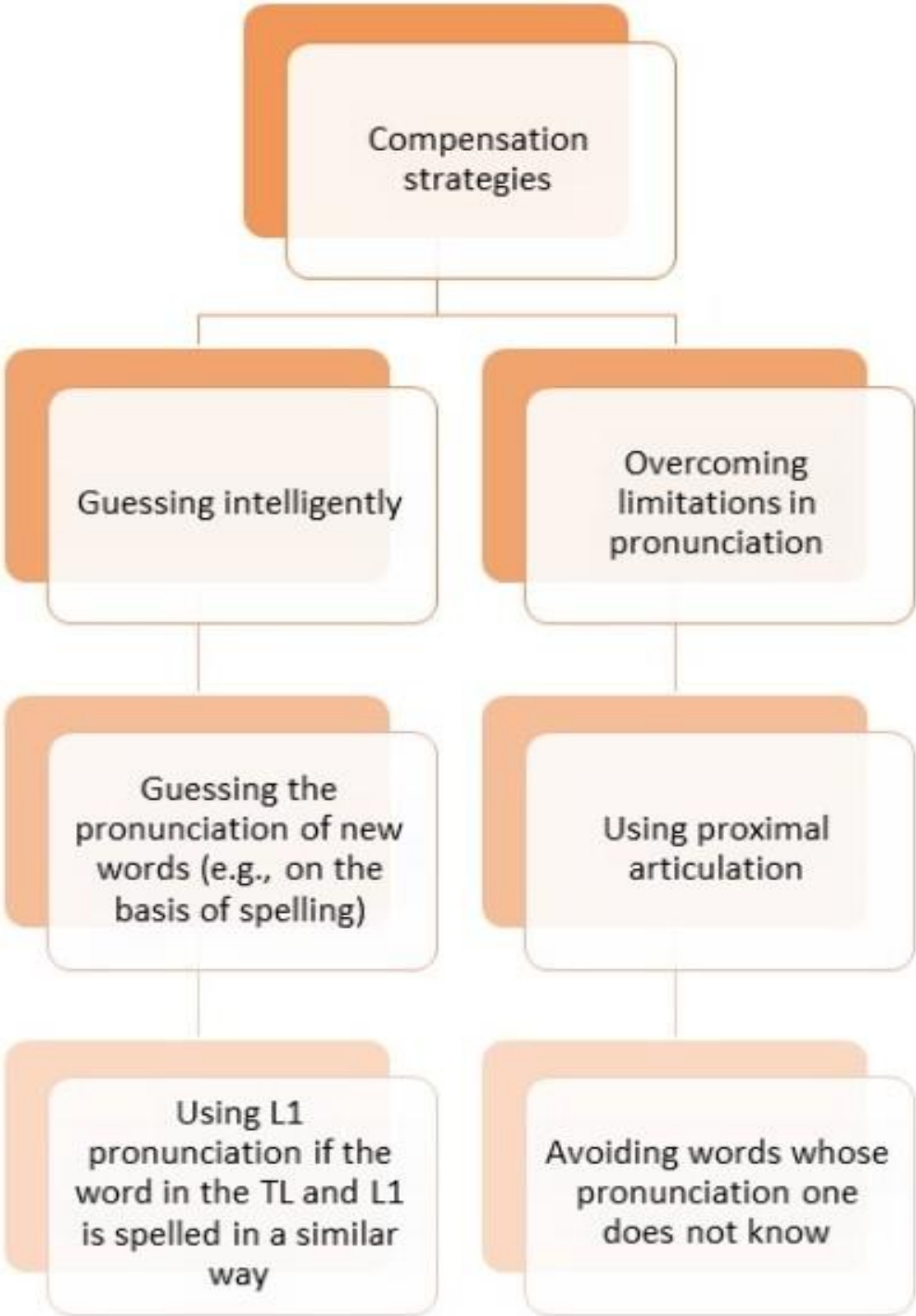
Figure 50. Compensation Strategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning

(Muniz Chavez, 2018, p. 41)

Figure 51. Meta-cognitive Strategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning

(Muniz Chavez, 2018, p. 42)
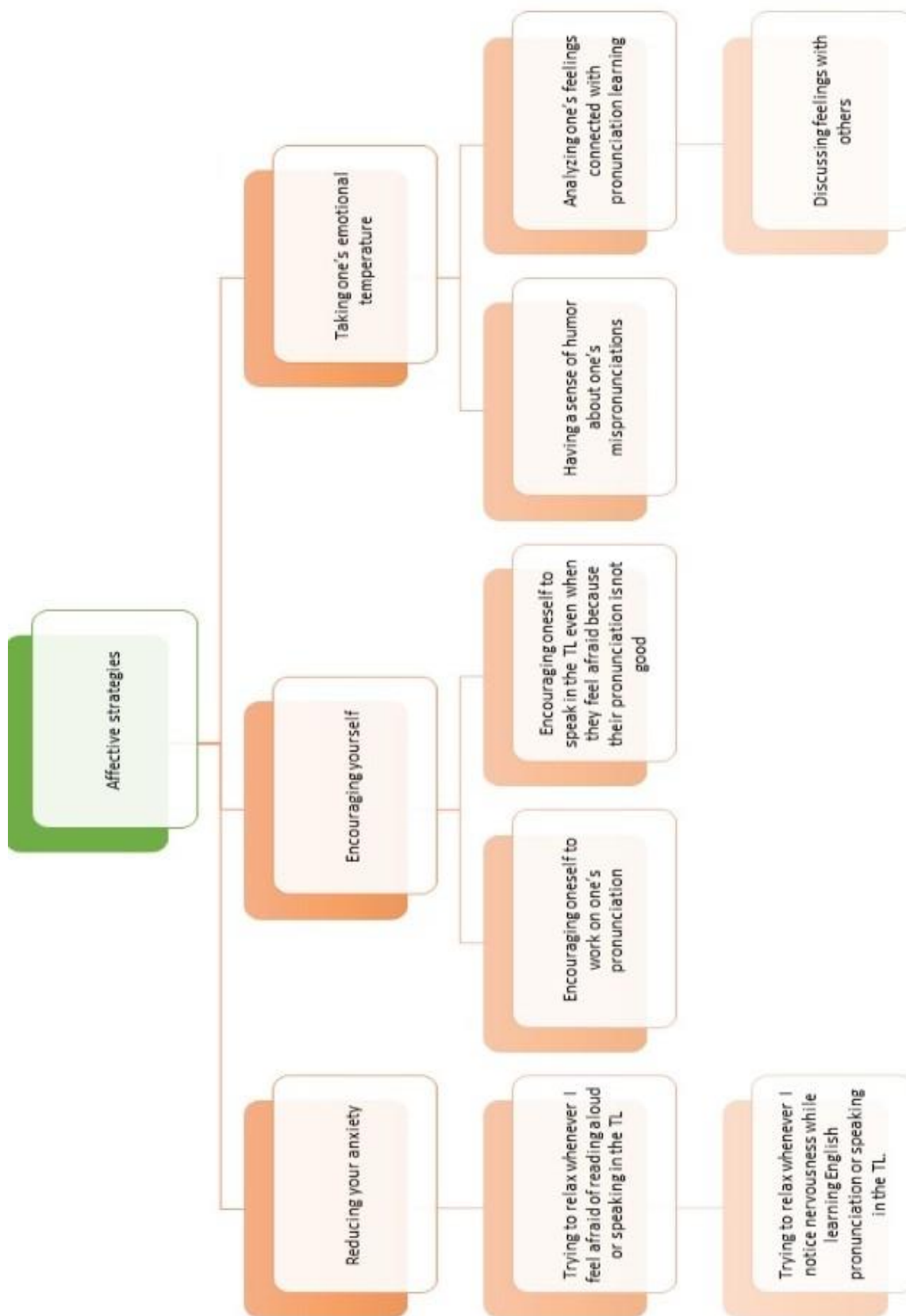
Figure 52. Affective Strategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning (Muniz Chavez,

2018, p. 44)
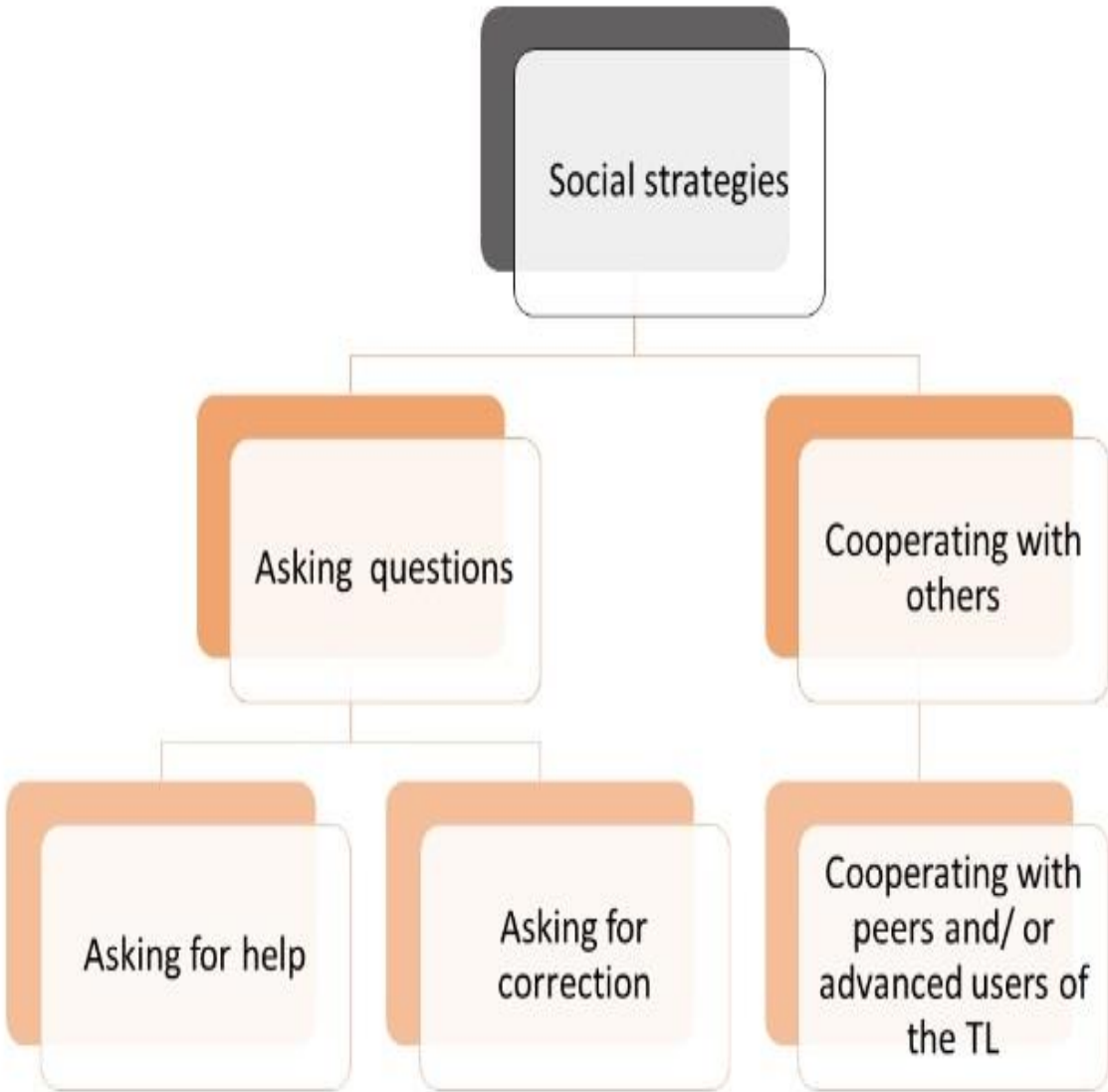
Figure 53. Social Strategies for Pronunciation Attainment/Learning (Muniz Chavez, 2018, p. 45)

V. 3. Research Limitations

The present research has encountered a few impediments before its completion. The first obstacle encountered is the advancement of the field work that got interrupted by the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. It was resumed the year after; however the studies circumstances were not helpful due to health procedures. The second obstacle is the few male participants compared to the females number due to their little actual number in regular classes (in one group of twenty to twenty-five students, there are only eight or less males). The third obstacle is that more time is required for such a variety of themes and elements to be investigated and scrutinised properly. Another limitation is that the present work could not be purely socio-phonetic, because the field of Socio-phonetics places more attention on the acoustic aspect of sounds. This requires more time to use digital devices and a special reading ability of the spectrograms.

V. 4. Further research and Implications

The present work intends to expose some pieces of evidence of the very first attempt to reveal the socio-phonetic features of male and female speech. Findings cannot be conclusive at this stage as more empirical evidence is required with a large scale investigation of EFL learners; mainly males. Men and women as two different beings who behave, think, perceive and speak differently may project other features with regard to pronunciation attainment/learning and performance. This investigation can only serve as a stepping stone for forthcoming research studies in the same arena and assist in providing additional empirical evidence.

Conclusion

Although the literature review provided in this thesis does offer a view on little research conducted on gender dissimilarities within pronunciation classes, such research only provides so little and invites more to be investigated in such a matter. The present work serves only as a stepping stone to upcoming research with regard to socio-phonetic dissimilarities between male and female EFL learners. This chapter covers the part where results are discussed and exposed in an orderly and detailed manner and concludes that male and female Algerian graduates, to some extent, do acquire English pronunciation differently which is reflected in the way they speak English. Themes investigated with relation to gender are a variety of phonetic, socio-phonetic, phonological, socio-cultural and affective features.

Such themes are relied on as guidelines for an organised conclusion, and in order to clearly answer the raised questions. During oral performance, it has been noticed that female participants are more anxious, fidgety, stressed out and hesitant than males, which cause them to pose more, ask for a chance to repeat and even mispronounce and stutter. Males by contrast, state by majority that they tend to memorise but previously acknowledged their weakness in transcription and applying speech rules. Such a controversy has been cleared by their recordings' results which have shown their ability to read phonetic codes, but scored less than females in phonetic transcription of isolated words. Moreover, certain dissimilarities that stand out include how females commit various mispronunciations, whose speech lacks word stress and misplacement of stress once applied; pronounce fast with obscure and accented speech, as well as inconsistency in the accent they speak compared to the males. However, the females demonstrate more eagerness and readiness to learn and raise their phonological awareness than males who demonstrate over self-confidence and assertiveness in their level.

General Conclusion

Within a hierarchical structured society distinguished by a patriarchal hand of authority, women revolted against men's constant dominance and underestimation and fought for claim to equality in positions, rights and social status. The present research study is not conducted with the intention to spread more stereotypes between male and female language use or highlight existing ones, it only serves as a means to comprehend gender differences that can be part of each one's identity, as additional evidence to how language's enunciation is learned and spoken and to uncover more of their tendencies within EFL classrooms.

Gender analysis in relation to pronunciation efficiency is gradually growing as a scope for investigation which combines two disciplines that have fought for a stable status among sturdier and more popular disciplines. Pronunciation, for decades, has been labelled the orphan or the Cinderella of ELT contexts which has been marginalised for decades. It has only regained its status with the appearance of difficulties in acquiring it by non-native EFL learners. Difficulties in pronunciation efficiency and accuracy rose this past decade as a red flag to warn practitioners and speakers of its significance for intelligibility and communication continuity. Along with gender differences, the present study attempts to shed more light on how differently male and female learners acquire and improve their English pronunciation, explore their attitudes towards intelligible and accurate speech and draw more attention towards the importance of equal instruction of segmental and supra-segmental features. The present research also has inquired about the various possible gender dissimilarities of male and female third year EFL graduates in their pronunciation and its attainment.

The present study comprises two theoretical chapters that highlight the main variable in this study "gender" and its notions with regard to language use. It introduces the main differences of gender with relation to linguistic discourse and speech characteristics with reference to gender approaches and other works prior to that; as well as factors that may enhance or impede non-native learners of English. The second chapter covers the second part of the literature which reviews gender and pronunciation acquisition and accuracy correlation within EFL classrooms. It also tackles the various phonetic, phonological and socio-cultural aspects possibly influence their enunciation.

Methodology and research design are introduced in the third chapter specifically, which explain the mixed-method employed for data analysis. This study has opted for a combined approach in order to obtain large-scaled results both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. Therefore, statistics are presented and illustrated through gendered graphs and pie-charts; male and female results individually described and scrutinised. The present investigation targets third year EFL graduates as respondents. Although their number is initially one hundred and eighty, only one hundred and fifteen are officially part of the study; ninety-five females and twenty males, although it gets larger in their oral activities because of their compulsory attendance to classes. The number of males remains smaller due to respondents not returning questionnaires and due to the conspicuously fewer male students within Algerian classrooms.

The fourth chapter exposes results of the students' questionnaire that are represented through pie-charts and tables with their respective descriptions and analyses. Results are presented in an orderly manner and are utilised as extra data to compare and contrast with the male and female participants' recorded utterances and pronunciation. Accordingly, the fifth and last chapter wraps up all obtained findings in a discussion that follows a systematic directory. All tackled themes are discussed with instances of secondary material re-mentions from the literature review before coming to one large conclusion.

Three research instruments are utilised for the collection of data necessary and they are student-related tools; a lengthy questionnaire that addresses students' attitudes and phonetic/phonological background with two enclosed student worksheets. The first worksheet targets graduates' phonetic coding skills and phonological efficiency, and the second worksheet attempts to test their current enunciation after a two-year tuition in Phonetics. The third tool is recordings of the participants' speech to test their efficiency and accuracy in prosody and accent consistency; as well as detect phonetic features in their speech including glottalisation, affrication and aspiration to name a few analyse them from a gender perspective.

Phonetically and socio-phonetically, female participants are better transcribers than the males to some extent. However, the latter has proved to be better readers of phonetic codes. Both genders commit errors in transcription, such as marking the stress rarely or in some monosyllabic words; as well as writing phonetic symbols in uppercase form; even devising non-RP symbols. Moreover, in reciting a list of isolated words, female participants could not detect silent letters in spelling and pronounced them occasionally, where they should not.

Even in transcription, most of them failed in detecting correct spelling and made more misspellings to count compared to the males.

The females mispronounced a great number of words in the narrative analysis, even basic or commonly-used words; whereas, the males' mispronunciations were quite a few. The females failed to pronounce stressed syllables which required the listener to strain themselves and focus on the utterances, ask for repetition, or caused them to misunderstand their speech. The females have got a weaker spelling performance compared to the males. That could be due to lack of writing practice or focus while decoding phonetic transcription. The females exaggerated in decoding phonetic transcription as they provided meaningless spelling or words that do not exist in English.

For problematic sounds, the majority of females appeared to struggle with vowels' length where they swapped short mono-phthongs with long ones or even with diphthongs. Sounds substitution or differentiation was noticed in very few participants' speech but was more conspicuous in the females'. Similarly, a few females mispronounced final "ed" and no cases for the males were spotted. Other phonetic features revealed in findings include the absence of affrication of [tr] and [dr] in several words pronounced by the females, g-dropping was more apparent in males' speech without exception as for the females, only in a minority that spoke English fluently. Aspects like dentalisation marked the speech of a small fragment of females which was not on purpose, but rather was caused by influence of the mother tongue. The case of the trill [r] marked the speech of numerous females instead of post-alveolar [r]. Aspects, such as palatalisation, yod-dropping and aspiration require further research.

Aside from vowels' length, female graduates did not appear to struggle with pronunciation or perception of single sounds; however, they mispronounced words which were both familiar and unfamiliar ones. In accordance with their questionnaire replies, most female graduates admitted little practice of and exposure to the target language. Their mispronunciations could be due to such a lack of exposure to English in various skills, which caused their low words' recognition and mispronunciations.

Phonologically, worksheets' analysis indicated low Phonological Working Memory of the females' majority with reference to their numerous mispronunciations, as well as lack of word stress that was absent in their speech even for fluent female graduates. Moreover, only a minority spoke English with placing tonic stress which made their speech less accented. The majority's speech; nonetheless, lacked rhythm, was pronounced in a robotic manner, had several pauses and repetitions, or respondents provided short answers which

made the degree of fluency very low, especially their voice quality that caused their utterances to be unheard at times. The male speech was clearer and more intelligible without confusing utterances or long pauses that distract listeners.

With regard to accent of choice, the males were more GA-directed and the females more RP-directed. In terms of consistency, the former appeared more consistent in pronouncing the American accent which was naturally fluent. The female's majority; however, pronounced with a mixture of both accents where the case of silent "r" was missing in final position in particular, but pronounced elsewhere. Furthermore, fluent male and female graduates' pronunciation contained more non-standard forms including g-dropping. This was apparent in utilising colloquial expressions that were informal as well. Concerning linking and vowels' reduction, male's majority respected connected speech forms and mostly weak forms. However, females' majority did not where they unnecessarily stressed structure words which caused their pronunciation to be robotic and accented.

Regarding the affective side, the females' pronunciation can be said to be influenced by emotional disturbance more than emotional stability. In other words, although their questionnaire replies expressed enthusiasm, motivation and regard for accurate pronunciation and Phonetics' classes, as well as being optimistic for more hard work and renovation in the field, their pronunciation accuracy fell back due to certain negative emotions including; first, lack of self-confidence in their English level in general and pronunciation in particular. Second, it was more apparent in their reluctance in answering, the hedges utilised; as well as fast and incomprehensible speech.

The males; by contrast, were poised and they spoke confidently and clearly and did not hasten in replying. The females, almost all of them, demonstrated degrees of anxiety or fear of pronunciation, which affected their utterances' consistency, fluency and accuracy in oral activities. In written tasks, female graduates appear to be more risk-takers. Answering aimlessly caused their replies to be full of errors, mistakes and misspellings. It is worth mentioning that during their narratives, the females who spoke RP; to a great extent, sounded unnatural and stagey as if posing where their intonation rose in unnecessary places. Such feelings were not apparent in male graduates' speech or attitude and they showed a better command and stability over their emotional reactions and interactions. It has been noticed that the females connect intelligibility with RP as it is clearer and slower and beautiful. The males believe so as well, but they prefer GA because it is faster and easier to acquire with constant and proper exposure.

Socio-culturally, a variety of factors was included to be investigated, but some of them required more scrutiny including age and classroom interaction in phonetics; as well as introversion/extraversion in order to be conclusive. Results obtained from students' questionnaire were compared to their worksheets and recordings' results which indicated little exposure to the target language by female respondents who relied on a few instances and did not back them up with more educational resources. Another factor was mother tongue interference; although not entirely at the segmental level, but rather at the prosodic one. Segmentally, only a fragment was noticed to be substituting some sounds, such as [ð] and [d] due to some Algerian regional dialects. Supra-segmentally, more accentedness was noticed in most of females' speech as they paid little attention to their intonation and rhythmic patterns. Although the males scored as low in reading and placing the stress in isolated words, in free speech they scored better in terms of accuracy and fluency.

Another aspect was their preferences and selection of pronunciation acquisition/learning strategies. The majority of male graduates selected a larger number of strategies which they claimed to employ unlike the females whose strategy use came noticeably below the males'. Accordingly, male learners' strategies were; mainly, cognitive, meta-cognitive and occasionally compensation, memory and affective strategies which focused on intent and active listening to the target language, mimicry of native speakers' pronunciation, reading and practising new words aloud, distinguishing errors and mispronunciation, self-monitoring negative interference of mother tongue influence, self-correction, guessing intelligently pronunciation of new words, memorisation of new sounds and words' articulation and reducing anxiety while speaking.

As for the females, their preferred types were mostly cognitive, and which focused on intent listening to the target language and imitation of native speakers' speech as well, practising facial expressions and mouth movements, using comprehensible speech and practising words regularly. Their questionnaire results showed no constant use of affective, compensation or memory strategies use, despite that some of them suggested strategies that involved memorisation and requesting peer correction or soliciting help. As a result, proper employment of strategies could be a major factor in male and female graduates' display of correct pronunciation. As a reminder, their Phonetic Coding Ability fluctuated between male and females; still, the males were better decoders and the females were better transcribers. The males paid extra attention to spelling; especially, with silent letters although this could not be generalised because the number of male participants in this study was not representative enough. Still, compared to the females, they scored better in Phonetic coding.

Regarding their Phonological Working Memory, it was evidently low for female learners and average for the males who spoke GA more accurately. Female graduates' pronunciation was inconsistent in terms of accent of choice RP. It is worthwhile to say how females used more colourful and attractive expressions than males did. The former's language demonstrated passion and admiration while the latter's language showed practicality and down-to-earth demeanour.

The three suggested hypotheses in the present work are confirmed to a large extent through obtained results. To a certain degree, there is a noticeable difference between male and female EFL graduates in their English acquisition caused by gendered features. Such features manifest in the degree of exposure to the target language and employment of certain techniques. The male participants' enunciation, in accordance with their questionnaire and worksheets' findings, is more superior to the females' because it contains less deficiency and is to some extent native-like; where fluency and accuracy requirements existed in their pronunciation. However, the majority of females appear to be lacking proper practice and use of strategies to self-correct, self-monitor and keep track of their progress before more fossilised mispronunciations surface.

Results and findings show that pronunciation of female graduates indeed necessitates more attention as it proves to be inferior to the males' due to phonetic and phonological aspects lacking in their pronunciation and impairing their intelligibility. Female graduates appear to struggle with vowels' length production in words despite that their ability to distinguish sounds and their symbols is better than the males'. Silent letters and spelling seems challenging as the former committed more mispronunciations in isolated words' articulation; as well as sentence reading and narratives where accentedness due to rhythmic and prosodic patterns was affected by their mother tongue Arabic.

During their tuition in Phonetics' classes, EFL learners are introduced to Phonetics and Phonology to raise their awareness about their English phonological background and to serve as a training to improve their fluency and accuracy in pronunciation. Consequently, various aspects influence their progress both positively and negatively. From an affective viewpoint, acquiring and learning pronunciation goes through a process that involves the emotional state of the learner. Thus, the main factors that tend to impede female learners from articulating and speaking English as fluently and accurately as their male counterparts are lack of confidence and self-esteem in their level of English, higher levels of stress and anxiety during tasks and oral tests; as well as lack of self-correction and self-improvement. With regard to socio-cultural aspects and their personal tendencies, they are marked; namely, by

little exposure to the target language four skills, lacking the usage of dictionaries or educational resources; as well as little employment of pronunciation strategies.

The present research has to a certain extent succeeded in laying down the very pieces of evidence of the first attempt to reveal the main socio-phonetic and socio-cultural features of Algerian male and female students' speech. Findings cannot be definitely conclusive at this stage as more empirical evidence is required with a lager scale investigation of non-native EFL learners. Men and women as two distinct beings anatomically and socio-culturally who behave, think and speak differently may project other features with regard to pronunciation attainment and performance. This investigation can only serve as a stepping stone for upcoming research studies in the same arena and assist in providing additional empirical evidence.

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Appendix N° 1
LMD3 EFL Students' Questionnaire

You are kindly requested to answer the questions listed below; as well as, provide your opinions truthfully. It is of utmost importance to provide the justifications for your answers. It is for the sake of only research purposes that your replies will be utilised. Besides being the basis of the present research field work, the questionnaire aims to identify the students' phonetic/phonological background, their tendencies in speaking different accents of English and English pronunciation practice tendencies, learning strategies, progress and mastery.

I- Personal Background

1. Gender: □ Male   □ Female

2. Years of learning English: ……………
   - **Wilaya**: …………………………………

3. Foreign Country Experience (English-speaking Country)

    □ Yes   □ No

  - If yes, how is correct pronunciation important for communication?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………

4. When you learn and speak English you are,

    □ Motivated   □ Anxious   □ Afraid   □ Ashamed   □Assertive

    □ Proud   □ Pleased   □ Inhibited □ Risky   □ Perseverant

Others
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………….

5. Studying English was your choice

    □ Yes   □ No

  - Why?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What makes English special to you?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………

7. Complete the following sentences the way you desire,

  - Phonetics' class is …………………………………………………………………

  - Phonetic transcription is ………………………………………………………….

- Native-like pronunciation is ……………………………………………………….

- English spelling is ……………………………………………………………….

8. Algerian learners have a rich phonological system and can speak various languages easily.

☐ I agree   ☐ I disagree

9. Which type of tests and exams do you prefer?

☐ Oral   ☐ Written

-Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………..

II- Phonological/Phonetic Background

1. What is the difference between Phonetics and Phonology?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………

2. What is meant by Phonetic Transcription and where is it found?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

………………………………………………

3. Please do explain the difference between narrow and broad transcriptions, if you can

………

………

………

………

………

………………………………………………………………………………..

4. Did your instructor explain the importance of Phonetics/Phonology teaching?

□ Yes   □ No

5. If you practice phonetic transcription more frequently, you will begin to notice repeated patterns that will help you to easily understand and memorise transcription symbols more,

□ I agree   □ I disagree

-**Why**?

………

………

………

………………………………………………

6. In your opinion, what ways can help you succeed in phonemic transcription?

□ Practice   □ Memorisation   □ Others …………………………………….

-**Why?**

………

………

………

………………………………………………

7. How do you find English pronunciation and spelling?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………

8. Which of the following do you find more helpful learning?

□ Sounds Production/Perception

□ Stress and Intonation patterns

- Would you please state why?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………

9. Do you think by attending Phonetics' classes your level of English pronunciations improved these past two years?

□ Yes □ No

- Ho?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………

10. What aspect (s) of Phonetics did you enjoy most?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…….

11. What might have motivated you more in Phonetics' class?

……
……
……
……………………………………………………..

12. Did the instruction on phonetic transcription help you to develop ways to improve your oral production of English?

      □ Yes   □ No

- **Why**?

……
……
……
……………

13. Did Phonetics' lessons and practice in class assist you in identifying and overcoming your mispronunciations?

      □ Yes   □ No

-**How**?

……
……
……
……………

14. Do you speak English outside the classes?

      □ Yes   □ No

- **Why?**

……
……
……
……………

15. Is correct pronunciation important in daily speech, with classmates, foreigners and teachers?

□ Yes □ No

- **Why**?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………

16. Does it make a difference speaking to English native speakers and speaking to non-native speakers?

□ Yes □ No

- **How?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………

17. How often do you listen to native speakers?

□ Always □ Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely □ Never

- **Through what?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……

18. What conditions do you think can possibly prove useful for learning Phonetics better?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………
………
……………………………

19. Do you find phonetic codes (symbols) hard to memorise?

   □ Yes   □ No

20. Do you use dictionaries to consult pronunciation?

   □ Yes   □ No

 - **Why?**

……
……
……
……………………

21. If you do not use dictionaries, how do you acquire correct pronunciation of new vocabulary?

……
……
……
……………………

22. In learning English, who do you think is quicker in acquiring correct pronunciation?

   □ Male Students   □ Female Students

 - Why?

……
……
……
……………………

23. In your opinion, who can speak English more properly and less accented (Algerian Accent)?

      □ Male Students   □ Female Students

  - Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………

24. In your opinion, who speaks English better in terms of making fewer mistakes in pronunciation of words?

      □ Male Students   □ Female Students

  -   **Why?**

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………

25. Have you had any difficulties with the articulation (production) of some sounds while acquiring English pronunciation?

      □ Yes   □ No

  - Which are they and how did you correct them?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………

26. Have you had any difficulties with the reception (Retention) of some sounds?

      □ Yes   □ No

  - Which are they and how did you correct them?

………

………

……………

27. In English pronunciation, which do you find more difficult?

　　　□ Sounds' Production (articulating words)

　　　□ Sounds Perception　(Understanding others' speech)

　　-Why?

………

………

………

………………

　28. How do you find your pronunciation of English so far?

□ Excellent　□ Very good　　□ Good　　□ Average　　□ Poor

29. What does your English pronunciation need to improve?

………

………

………

…………..

Q30. EFL Students need Phonetics' classes until graduation.

　　　□ I agree　　　　　　　□ I disagree

III- Choice of Accent:

1. What accent of English do you speak?

　　　□ American　(G.A.)　　　　　□ British (R.P.)

-　　**Why?**

………

………

……
……………

2. How did you pick up this accent?

……
……
……
……
……………………

3. Can you tell the difference between RP and GA?

□ Yes   □ No

  - How?

……
……
……
………………………………………………..

4. Did you have any difficulties learning this accent at the beginning?

□ Yes   □ No

  - Why?

……
……
……
…………………………………..

5. Which are the differences between American and British accents that you know of?

……
……
……
……
……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………

6. Which aspects do you like in the accent you chose to speak?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………..

7. If you speak American English,

- throughout Phonetics' classes, British English is the one implemented in the curriculum and syllabus, was it hard to shift from American to British in terms of words' articulation and transcription?

□ Yes   □ No

- Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………

8. Arabic is different from English in structure and phonology, so do you think that Arabic can influence learning correct pronunciation of English?

□ Yes   □ No

- How?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………

9. Thanks to being exposed to French, Algerian learners tend to pick up English sounds easily; such as [p] and [v] which do not exist in Arabic.

　　□ I agree　　　　　　　　□ I disagree

　- Why?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………

10. Write **TRUTH** or **MYTH**

1- British English is clearer and easier to understand and learn. (　　　　)

2- American English is harder to understand when spoken fast. (　　　　)

3- British English is easier to imitate because it is spoken slowly. (　　　)

4- American English is easier to learn with constant exposure. (　　　　)

5- British English sounds more feminine than American English. (　　　)

6- American English sounds more informal than British English. (　　　)

7- Speaking British English makes you sound prestigious, smart, and confident. (　　　)

8-Speaking American English makes you sound casual, informal, and at ease. (　　　)

　* You are free to add more myths and truths about these accents

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………

IV- Pronunciation Learning Strategies

　　　The following list of strategies is the fruit of the collective work and effort of several practitioners who managed to provide us with them in order to facilitate classifying them later.

1. What basic Pronunciation learning methods are more effective in your opinion?

□ Memorisation of symbols and rules

□ Drilling of sounds or words (Repetition)

□ Imitation of native speakers' accent

□ Practising tongue-twisters

□ Practising memorised symbols by transcribing

2. Please tick the strategies that you usually use to acquire/learn pronunciation properly.

□ Intent listening (listening with intention as if the listener is in the speaker's shoes)

□ Focusing on articulatory gestures of others (facial expressions mainly mouth)

□ Active listening (hear all the words and intend to obtain the message of the speaker)

□ Eagerly listening to new sounds (like cockney or Scottish accents)

□ Putting self in proximal points for hearing L2 pronunciation: TV, Movies, Radio, etc. (helping yourself with authentic English-speaking references)

□ Representing sounds in memory (visualization of sounds)

□ Focusing on individual syllables of words (disassembling words into parts)

□ Reading aloud

□ Practising new words

□ Imitating and/or mimicry of native speakers

□ Practising "Mock Talk" (imitating scenes by native speakers from movies) or imitating L2 prosody (stress and intonation) using L1 words

□ Talking aloud/role-play

□ Memorising the pronunciation of words

□ Helping facial muscles become accustomed to accommodating L2 pronunciation (Sounds articulation in front of the mirror)

□ Practising different sounds, first in isolation and then in the context of words

□ Noticing the intricate differences between L1 and L2 pronunciation

□ Focusing on supra-segmentals of language (stress, rhythm and intonation)

□ Distinguishing errors among other speakers (finding mistakes in classmate's speech)

□ Listening carefully to errors made by native speakers to infer (conclude) key sounds or structures

□ Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics <mark>(read about Phonetics)</mark>

□ Self-monitoring <mark>(self-observation)</mark>

□ Focusing on supra-segmentals of your own speech (<mark>stress, rhythm and intonation)</mark>

□ Using phonetic symbols and transcriptions

□ Monitoring (checking) and eliminating negative interference (<mark>when mother tongue creates obstacles)</mark>

□ Asking for help (instruction and guidance)

□ Cooperating with peers

□ Self-correcting

□ Doing special exercises for sounds not existing in your native language (minimal pairs)

□ Finding out more about the target language pronunciation

□ Repeating new words according to new hypotheses (<mark>your own guessing or speculation</mark>)

□ Skipping difficult words

□ Rehearsing sounds

□ Increasing or decreasing volume of speech

□ Using a slower rate of speech

□ Using clear speech

□ Lowering anxiety

- **Please do name other strategies of your own!**

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………

3. What methods or changes do you suggest teachers of Phonetics should use for the improvement and betterment of English pronunciation teaching/learning?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………….
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………

………

………

………

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4. Can oral tests be better than written ones in Phonetics?

□ Yes □ No □ A mix of both

- Why?

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………

………

………

……………………………………………………………………

- **If it is oral, how can students' pronunciation be evaluated?**

………

………

………

…………………………………………………………

5. In speaking, what is more important to you? (Please order by priority)

□ Interaction

□ Pronunciation (Accuracy)

□ Tone and attitude

□ Communication (Fluency)

- **What is the reason for your choice?**

………

………

………

………………………………………………………………

6. Do you think that studying Phonetics for two years is enough?

□ Yes □ No

- Why?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix N° 2

LMD3 Students' Phonetic Coding Worksheet

You are kindly requested to answer the activities below. It is for the sake of only research purposes that your replies will be utilised. Besides being the basis of the present research field work, the present worksheet aims to identify the students' phonetic/phonological background, English spelling and phonetic skills, as well as, gender differences with regard to phonetic coding skills.

Gender: □ Male □ Female

- **Activity 01**

- Write the spelling for the following transcribed words

- [ˈstjuːdn̩t] …………………..   - [ˈsɜːvɪs] …………………

- [wʊlvz] ....   - [ˈletəz] ………………..

- [nəʊm] ………………   - [diːp] ………………..

- [ˈflaʊə] ………………..   - [breθ] …………………

- [ʃʊə] …………………   - [ˈhæŋkətʃɪf] …………………

- [hɑːf] …………………..   - [ɪmɪgˈreɪʃn̩] ………….………
- [naɪt] …………………..   - [ˈræpɪŋ] ………………….…
- [ˈsepəreɪt] …………………..   - [kləʊn] ………………….…
- [nʌm] …………………….   - [ˈrekɪdʒ] ……………….
- [tʃeɪnd] …………………..   - [ˈrɪðəm] ……………
- [ˈdʌmi] …………………..   - [tɔɪz] …………………..
- [ˈnekləs] ……………………   - [ˈɔːdə] ………………...
- [ˈrɪŋkl̩] ………………………   - [klɪə] ………………...
- [steəz] ....   - [ˈbɒtm̩] ....

- **Activity 02**

- Transcribe the following words phonemically

- Stop ……………………   - Memory ……………………………..
- Risk ……………………   - Container ……………………..
- Dove …………………..   - Hospital …………………………..
- Help ……………………   - Serious …………………………
- Happy ……………………   - American ……………………………
- Close-up ………………..   - Motivational ………………………..
- Father …………………….   - Impossibility ………………………
- Decide ……………………   - Industrialisation ……………………

- **Activity 03**

- Cross the odd word (that does not rhyme) out and provide the symbol of the repeated sound

e.g., - Church   - Chester   - Machine   - Such   [tʃ]

 - Shape   - Passion   - Push   - Hissing   [   ]
- German   - Justice   -Postage   - Beige   [   ]
- University - Moustache   - young   - Mutant   [   ]
- Gate   - Bigger   - Germs   - Haggis   [   ]
- Leather   - Teat   - Meat   - Cheat   [   ]
- House   - Howl   - Own   - Towel   [   ]
- Aunt   - Manly   - Bandage   - Snack   [   ]

- Cart	- Pathway	- Heart	- Guitar	[ ]
- Thought	- Mammoth	- Breath	- Breathe	[ ]
- Poor	- Door	- Endure	- Tour	[ ]
- Seizure	- Genre	- Brochure	- Treasure	[ ]
- Husband	- Basic	- Lazy	- Physician	[ ]
- Climb	– Prize	– Slim	– Size	[ ]
- Ate	– Straight	– Flake	– Plaid	[ ]
- Brim	– Gist	– Bless	– Spick	[ ]
- Wax	– Swamp	– Lamp	– Flax	[ ]
- Steer	– Fear	– Rear	– Bear	[ ]
- Flute	– Mood	– Wood	– Fruit	[ ]
- Stuck	– Flood	– Sprung	– Wound	[ ]
- Drape	– Friend	– Sled	- Blend	[ ]

Appendix N° 3

LMD3 Students' Recordings Worksheet

You are kindly requested to record the activities below. It is for the sake of only research purposes that your replies will be utilised. Besides being the basis of the present research field work, the present worksheet aims to identify the students' phonetic/phonological background, English spelling and phonetic skills, as well as, gender differences with regard to accent of choice and pronunciation skills.

Activity 1.

- **Would you please state the English accent you speak regularly?**
- **Please narrate a short story of your choice**

Activity 2.

-   **Would you please pronounce the following words separately (include pauses between each word please!)?**

(Minimal pairs for contrastive analysis and accent)

Beat – Bit – Bait – Bet – Bead – Bid – Bad – Bed – Cheek – Chuck – Chick – Choke – Check -- Fur – Far – For – Fire – Log – Lug – Lag – Leg – Lake – Lack – Lick – Leak – Who'd – Hood – Hoed – Had – Hoot – Hit – Hat – Hot – Joke – Jerk – Junk – Pit – Pat – Pete – Pet – Luke – Luck – Look – Lock – Leap – Lip – Loop – Line – Loan – Lane – Lean – Lamb – Lime – Loom – Mad – Mud – Mend – Male – Mall – Mole – Mash – Mush – Mesh – Pack – Pink – Puck – Puke – Peck -- Rail – Rule – Roll – Rip – Rap – Rope – Room – Rome – Ream – Seep – Sheep – Steep – Soap – Stoop – Stump – Stamp —Tail – Tell – Tall –Toll – King -- Bing – Bang – Tong -- Dung

(Stress placement and shift)

Civil – Civility – Civilise – Civilisation

Equal – Equality – Equalise – Equalisation

General – Generality – Generalise – Generalisation

Mobile – Mobility – Mobilise – Mobilisation

Fertile – Fertility – Fertilise – Fertilisation

Stable – Stability – Stabilise – Stabilisation

(Silent Letters)

Aisle – Almond - Altitude - Attitude - Autumn – Balk – Capitalisation - Calm – Castle - Champagne - Civilisation - Climb - Comb - Could - Crumb – Data- Daughter - Dilemma – Dimension - Direction - Dumb – Folk - Fasten - Feign - Foreign - Fought - Fragile - Genre – Gene - Half - Heir – Herb - Honest - Honour - Hour – Hymn - Island - Issue - Knee - Knife - Knock – Knickers - Know - Knowledge - Light – Listen – Mayor – Might - Muscle - Often -

Pneumonia - Psychiatrist - Right – Salmon - Sandwich - Should - Sign – Signature - Status - Strife - Talk – Thistle – Tissue - Thought - Through - Wednesday - Weigh - Whistle - Would – Wrap – Wrong – Wrestle - Yolk