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Socio-cultural Environment and Speaking Difficulty in EFL.

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master's Degree
in Didactics and Linguistics.**

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Dedication

To the dearest people in life:

Our beloved parents may Allah bless them.

Our dear brothers and sisters.

Our relatives and friends.

To our Nation, we dedicate this work...

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

This dissertation aims at investigating a learning difficulty from a sociolinguistic perspective. This difficulty is concerned with foreign language learners, precisely with EFL learners while they are speaking. In this case, a reading from a sociolinguistic view allows running an efficient investigation to understand the real causes behind students' speaking difficulties. As an attempt to understand this phenomenon, we opted for a sociolinguistic reading. Precisely, in this study we are aiming to investigate on whether there is a link between the socio-cultural environment and speaking difficulties or not. Finally, the investigation showed that the four socio-cultural dimensions (environment, language, gender, and age) have an important effect students' oral-expressive rendering (speaking).

Keywords: socio-cultural factors, EFL learners, speaking difficulty, sociolinguistic reading.

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General Introduction

This study aims to expose a learning difficulty from a sociolinguistic point of view. It dwells in the difficulties foreign language learners, precisely EFL learners, do face while speaking. It is thought that a reading from a more encompassing view allows running an efficient investigation to understand the real causes behind students' speaking difficulties.

Statement of the Problem

Previous research has shown that EFL learners' speaking difficulties were due to dysfunction in applying the teaching learning process in the classroom caused by students' lack of motivation or excess of anxiety (Lukmani, 1972 - MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994)

or the poor linguistic competence. Now, research has turned to another intriguing phenomenon: some EFL students at university might have an acceptable level in the other linguistic skills with clear notions on phonology and phonetics, but when it comes to speaking they misapply their knowledge. We came to observe this in the department of English at Adrar University. There, we noticed that the module of speaking for first year students contained low marks comparing to other modules of the curriculum. This was intriguing and pushed us to ask teachers of oral expression module as well as with teachers of other modules in the same department about the quality of oral performance produced by the students. The results confirmed the existence of a problem of oral performance at the level of first year. In fact, the explanations provided by teachers of the department generally concerned hesitation, anxiety, poor linguistic competence, and mainly lack of motivation as being the cause of some manifestations of speech difficulties such as: blocks, mispronunciation, stuttering...etc

However, factors that do generate lack of motivation and anxiety problems are often specific to the individual (Schachter & Singer, 1962: 379.399). We think that ending with such conclusions would make it difficult for EFL planners to surround the problem with an adequate teaching methodology. For this reason, we opted for a sociolinguistic reading as it will be explained in chapter two on methodology.

Research Questions

- In which way it is possible to say that socio-cultural differences can affect learners' adaptability to EFL?
- How can students' oral performance be concerned or affected on the basis of socio-cultural differences?

Research Objectives

Generally, the aim of this study is to investigate on whether there is a link between the socio-cultural environment and speaking difficulties or not. We think that this would be possible through the accomplishment of the following points that will represent the objectives of the study:

- Determination of a relevant theoretical grounding that allows us to explain speaking difficulties from a socio-cultural view.
- Establishment of an efficient method of investigation that proves the existence of socio-cultural constraints around the phenomenon of speaking.

Justification of the research

In addition to the fact that speaking difficulties were observed as an evident phenomenon, there were many previous considerations and preconceptions that pushed us to choose this topic. Medwar (1972) asserts that research cannot advance without imagination:

All advances in scientific understanding, at every level, begin with a speculative adventure, an imaginative preconception of what might be true--- a preconception which always and necessarily goes a little way (sometimes a long way) beyond anything which we have logical or factual authority to believe in. It is the invention of a possible world, or of a tiny fraction of that world.

(Bell, 2005:p33)

The reasoning

From the experience we have had as students who tried to find their place in the environment called "English", we aspired to reach the level we could notice in our teachers' linguistic performance, or reach the level of an intellectual native language speaker. Practically for ordinary people that is what English licence" means. Surely, as the word "licence" implies in our country was in many other countries-students should be able to teach or practice a profession within a specific field by the end of the curriculum. It was a real shock to watch ourselves as students who ended their curriculum, supposedly by success, with inabilities to adapt our speaking to various situations. As students, this presented for us an aim to achieve as English non-native speakers and an aim as future EFL teachers. In order to be able to teach a language we should have obtained -as teachers-

a good level of awareness about language rules and functions, or at least an acceptable level that will improve by experience (Gebhard & Oprundy. 2005: 122). However, our linguistic awareness about what to use and what is not use was very sensitive and presented a problem for us as language speakers. This was due to our idealization of the concept "the English speaker" to a degree that impeded us to imprint our own identity on the language

Justification of the research

Finding the relevant theoretical grounding to tackle this topic was not attainable, rather, it was blurred by the indistinct overlap of research fields that would cause any researcher-whether in mono-disciplinary or interdisciplinary fields- to lose his objective and descriptive angle. The socio-cultural fields are typically the most complex and tangled branches of research in human sciences, beginning from their titles ending by the terminology and aspects treated within each field (Barnett & Casper. 2001: 465). It was therefore important to look for the domain that will be more useful to guide and justify our analysis as many disciplines hired the name of "socio-cultural". In Lantolf and Thorne (2006), a disambiguation was mentioned about the term socio-cultural and it involved two fields:

Before we proceed further, we believe that a terminological clarification is necessary. In part due to its use by multiple research communities, there has been considerable and understandable debate about the label "socio-cultural theory_ what it means, whom it belongs to, and what is intellectual lineage is. A colloquium at the American Association for Applied Linguistics organized by Zuengler and Cole (2004)

addressed this very issue.) There exists a general use of the term "socio-cultural" sometimes hyphenated as 'Socio-cultural'. in general reference to social and cultural contexts of human activity (for example, Leath 1983: Ochs 1987, Ochs und Schieffelin 1984).

(Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 2)

At the same time there had been an attempt to apply the Vygotskian model to our research, but it seemed too early for our incipient knowledge to apply a theory of mind in such a case and also because Lev Vigotsky's socio-cultural theory lies on recognizing. As noted by Lantolf [2006]: "...the central role that social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts play in organizing uniquely human forms of thinking." Lantolf continues with clarifying the theory of Vygotsky that is more concerned with explaining how a cultural identity is being built. He also argues:

The term 'socio-cultural theory' as we use it is meant to invoke a much more specific association with the work of Vygotsky and the tradition of Russian cultural-historical psychology, especially within applied linguistics research.....Moreover, it is heavily focused on the impact of culturally organized and socially enacted meanings on the formation and functioning of mental activity. Our adoption of the term 'socio-cultural theory' in this second and more con- strained sense presents a paradox in that it is unlikely that Vygotsky himself ever used the term.

(Lantolf and Thorne, 2006)

This might seem rather interesting and relevant. However, Vygotsky's theory is more concerned with describing the construction of cultures from an internal view and not from a comparative view. It appeared that linking to such a psychological basis will need a grounding that attests the effect of socio-cultural environment on language. Lantolf continues with the clarification by presenting another method:

L2 researchers, most especially Norton (2000) and her colleagues (Norton and Toohey 2004), have situated their research within the broader socio-cultural domain. This research is concerned primarily with socialization and the discursive construction of identities for example: gender, foreigner, native, worker, child, etc.) and is certainly theoretically commensurate with the intellectual project we develop with this volume.
(2006)

Principally, this type of research aims at analyzing socio-cultural elements such as culture, language, gender, age by testing their relation and effect on each other. This was a preferable one, because according to Emile Durkheim, sociological elements are objective, concrete and easy to deal with than cognitive elements which are more abstract. So, the elements treated in this research field are all exposed and easy to deal with. But again, this was not enough since it did not deal with the comparative side between cultures. It was necessary then to add a grounding that supports the idea of intercultural differences and their effect on language through the exposition of the theory of linguistic relativism that we think- could be the explanation for many problems that would happen at the intercultural level.

Hypothesis

Our hypothesis came as an attempt to answer the research questions on the basis of what was available to our observation. The fact that some students excel in other linguistic skills and not in speaking leaves the observer wondering: how and why? Linguistically speaking, the most apparent suspect in this situation is the pronunciation of sounds as a whole, or what Chomsky(1967) called the superficial structure-order of sequence of sounds that can vary from one language to another. Taking into consideration human habits and by involving the daily use of specific and native sound structures, foreign language learners find it difficult to adapt to new sound structures.

Sub-hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: The difficulties experienced in speaking by students are due to a problem of adaptation to EFL sound structures and supra-segmentals.
- Hypothesis 2: EFL sound structures and supra-segmentals are perceived differently due to socio-cultural effect on language.

To test the previous hypotheses and answer the main research questions, this research carried out an experimental design through which the present work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter contains a review of literature that is made of two sections Section one is an introduction to the relativistic thinking theory and linguistic relativism. It is not an adoption of the relativistic claims, but an exposition of different parts of the theory from which we have chosen some important points. It is a preparatory step for the next section. Section two contains a completion of the relativistic

framework as we tried to expose in it the supposition of how speaking would influence our linguistic habits of sound perception and production.

Chapter two is methodological. It contains a justification about the choice of the sociolinguistic field as grounding. It also contains an exposition of the methods of analysis as well as the modulation of the variables that helped us to expose the gathered data to a socio-cultural understanding. The Third Chapter is made through two steps of triangulation where data was collected using different methods beginning with the analysis of students' exam marks then thirdly by applying a battery test. More details on the test quality and how the population has been sampled are provided along the two steps of the chapter.

The data analysis will come as a verification of validity of the variable indices that were established from the literature overview. It is followed by a discussion of the results and finally the general conclusion

Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is the beginning of our reading of speaking difficulties phenomenon for EFL learners using theoretical grounding that involves comparative view at a socio-cultural level. By reminding that linguistic and cultural interferences - even if they are not considered by Sapir (1929) very important to a point of calling them “a correlation”

- leave noticeable effects on both entities. Indeed, Sapir (1929) noted that these interferences are thought to be the main cause of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism, which –in other words- is what would come as the consequence of different linguistic perspectives caused by the influence of the cultural background. With this, we aim to justify the importance of habits on daily thinking and the difficulty in integrating new habits different from the original ones. Then, we will limit our interest to the superficial level of speech as an attempt to avoid the vagueness and debates involved with the first section. We will center the interest on what is believed to be evident facts presented in linguistic relativism. This will be done by linking between the typological differences of Languages and the variation of sound structures and thus to speaking through the concept of prosody.

1. Language from socio-cultural dimension

This is the presentation of Linguistic Relativism with an attempt to provide several definitions made by early anthropologists for the concept of, "culture" for the purpose to surround the term "socio-cultural". Then it is followed by explaining how this concept helped to shape a view that became the roots for linguistic relativism, and finally and most importantly there comes a part that treats general principles of the now-called **Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis**.

1.1. Relativism

According to Pinker (1994), Relativism is not a single doctrine, but it represents a set of philosophical views which considers that some aspects of life such as thoughts, experience and evaluation, are relative to something else for example: standards of evaluation, justification and moral values are related to language, culture, morals or biological conditioning. Relativistic field can contain subjective principles as it can support many objective ones at the same time. Both kinds of principles are called –respectively – "philosophical relativism" and "anthropological relativism". They have engendered later two fields of study "Normative Relativism" and descriptive Relativism". The former will not be a much of focus as the latter - that was founded by Franz Boas - since Sapir and Whorf were Franz Boas 'disciples who transplanted the anthropo-descriptive ideas in the linguistic field (Grimes, 1984:250).

1.1.1. Philosophical/ Normative Relativism

This branch of thought supports the evaluative claim that modes of thought, standards of reasoning and evaluation are right or wrong relatively to the set of beliefs and concepts of a given group or society. These sets of beliefs and concepts are what is called relativistic framework. Normative thinking implies that the thinker produces principles and judgments according to his own environment. This means that norms might support truth or falsity depending on the constraints (culture, language, set of beliefs) that control thinkers' acuity. This seems fitting to what was later alleged to Sapir and Whorf, as the founders of Linguistic Determinism. As noted by Sapir and Swadesh [1946] not rejecting the entire allegation but only the extreme relativism:" It would be naïve to imagine that any analysis of experience

is dependent on the pattern expressed in language". Normative Relativism is often called as the early Humboldtian relativism in reference to Wilhelm Von Humboldt. He had imperialistic considerations (Collins, 1998) due to the romantic nationalist movement as it will be explained through linguistic relativism. This represented a basic step that led to the field of anthropological relativism. This represented a basic step that led to the field of anthropological relativism which came as an improvement of the former movements.

1.1.1.2. Anthropological relativism

It is the principle that alien cultures and beliefs should be understood by others. This represented an important step toward intercultural tolerance. It was first set by Franz Boas at the beginning of the 20th century and later made famous by his students. Nowadays, anthropological relativism represents an axiomatic principle in intercultural issues. Relativism was first articulated by Boas in a normative form, he [1887] states: "Civilization is not something absolute, but...is relative, and...our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes".

Then later, he began to move to a more descriptive consideration about the relative aspects of life when he stated that:

Culture embraces all the manifestations
of social habits of a community, the reactions
of individual as affected by the habits of the
group in which he lives ,and the products
of human activities as determined by these habits.
(Franz Boas, 1930:79)

Boas applied a scientific method to the study of human cultures and societies.

He summed up his anthropological method as follows:

In the course of time I became convinced that a materialistic point of view, for a physicist a very real one, was untenable. This gave me a new point of view and I recognized the importance organic of studying the interaction between the and the inorganic, above all the relation between the life of people and their physical environment.

(Zurwelt, 1988: 70)

This justifies Boas' definition of culture and other anthropological research themes. Thus culture according to Boas, is thought to have two forms (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952:43)

◦ **The non-material culture:** This consists of human's cognitive activities such as knowledge, beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, languages, art, industries...etc.

◦ **The material culture:** It is the objectification of the cognitive activity in human's life as for example: artifacts and architecture and technology, and these objectifications are what allow an anthropologist to understand alien culture. This principle was later used by archeologists to reconstruct truth about dead cultures and ancient languages origins.

However, Grimes (1982) maintained that opponents of relativism rejected the idea as a whole because it represented the source of many conflicts that would threaten human universals. But even if it contained wrong and subjective ideologies often contradictory, it supported many facts such as differences in habits as a general concept. This point was well comprehended and well considered by Boas.

1.1.1.3. Descriptive Relativism

It is what emerged as a relativistic discipline from anthropological relativism covering many areas. It is based on empirical claims of the effect that some groups have different modes of thought and standards of reasoning. Such claims are meant to describe but not to evaluate the principles and practices of other groups. They suppose that all groups are right but in a different way. It is the anthropologist's task to describe these practices and principles but not to evaluate their validity. Later, descriptive relativism has developed in many forms one of them is the linguistic relativism.

1.1.1.4. Linguistic Relativism

Linguistic relativism is the idea that languages are different around the world and that difference may affect the way language users do perceive the world. It was formalized by later linguists in its two suppositions. The first is that language determines thought, and that linguistic categories determine cognitive categories. The second is that, linguistic categories and usage influence thought and certain kinds of non-linguistic behavior. According to Fishman (1982), there is no clear statement made by Sapir or Whorf about the current formulation of the hypothesis. However, there are two points, one implicit and the other explicit, which were tackled by both linguists and are important to our research. They can be expressed through the following:

° Any relativistic claim requires a relativistic framework as grounding that is formulated through the schema $Y \rightarrow X$ (Haak, 1998:1) which means Y is relative to X. That is to say that Y is the dependent variable and X is the independent one.

X represents any factor that can influence Y. In consideration to that, our investigation implies two entities _ Arabic and English _ that are thought to be relative to culture and thus to environment.

°The adoption of language to the surrounding nature and the adaptation of speakers to that language create a pattern of habit that is specific to the environment (Sapir, 1929 and Whorf, 1956: 213)

1.2. Linguistic Relativity

Edward Sapir argued that languages contained the key to our understanding of different views on the world. He added that no two languages are sufficiently similar to allow for a perfect translation. He thought, because languages represented reality differently, it would be supported that speakers of two languages would perceive reality differently. On that Sapir said:

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.
(Mandelbaum,1983:162)

In addition to that, what was explicitly tackled by Sapir is that language shapes our habitual perception of things. This idea expressed by Sapir in:

One reason we find it difficult to believe that the range of possible speech sounds is indefinitely large is our habit of conceiving the sound as a simple , unanalyzable impression instead of as the resultant of a number of distinct muscular adjustments that take place simultaneously.....
(Sapir, 1929:45)

The structural difference between languages causes speech to be produced in various forms. Native speakers will not face any difficulty in recognizing a foreign combination of sounds but the same combination will be too difficult to pronounce. This is for specific social habits that shaped their physical abilities to only sound combinations used in their native language. He said:

Another reason for our lack of phonetic imaginations is the fact that, while our ear is delicately responsive to the sound of speech, the muscles of our speech organs have early in life become exclusively accustomed to the particular adjustments and systems adjustment that are required to produce the traditional sounds of language.

(Sapir, 1929: 45)

This idea implicitly supported the hypothesis of linguistic determinism because the lack of phonetic imagination is a kind of failure in perception of other languages. On this course, Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) stressed on the phenomenon of habitual use of language and its effect on the mind.

Sapir's Explanations about linguistic relativism and determinism remained no more than descriptive allusions (Duranti, 2000:222) where it was to Benjamin Whorf who is one of Sapir's students to broach the analytic and explanatory step of how language would affect one's thinking. On this issue he said:

We dissent nature along lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face ; on the contrary; the world is presented in a kaleidoscope flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts; and describe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way _an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and

is codified in the patterns of our language ...
all observers are not led by the same physical
evidence to the same picture of the universe,
unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar,
or can in some way be calibrated.

(Whorf, 1956:213)

Whorf -who was originally a chemist engineer at a fire insurance company- observed an intriguing behavior when he was analyzing reports of circumstances surrounding the start of fire. The reports sometimes referred to words that habitually cause no harm such as "empty" which implies the usual meaning of nothingness. According to Whorf, this gave people the safety to believe that "empty gasoline drums" do not mean something harmful. So actions such as smoking cigarettes around are not hazardous, while in reality they are more dangerous than "filled gasoline drums", because they contain explosive vapor. Many examples in this form were provided by Whorf to show the effect of habit on meaning understanding and meaning selection (Whorf, 1956: 135)

Most importantly Whorf alluded to some differences of time notions between SAE (standard average European is a name given to European languages as a reference to the whole) and Hopi (Uto-Aztecan language spoken by Hopi pp of northeastern Arizona) languages (absence of nouns for time portions such as day, week, month...etc . This was explained by him as to have influenced Hopi culture and behavioral patterns.

This thinking was categorically opposed by universalists of linguistics such as Noam Chomsky and Eric Lenneberg, who reformulated the now-called Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis into two main principles called respectively the weak and strong formulations:

◦ Structural differences between language systems will, in general, be paralleled by nonlinguistic cognitive differences, of an unspecified sort, in the native speakers of the language.

◦The structure of anyone's native language strongly influences or fully determines the worldview he will acquire as he learns the language.

1.3. Linguistic habits in the cultural context

The most tackled part in language, either as a study or a process is speaking (Ottenheimer, 2007:258). This is due to its important function as the daily means of communication used by most of the human beings. Communication, if considered as the process of conveying relevant meanings, is affected by many constraints that are related to specific contexts (i.e. one's culture). These constraints often come in the form of norms, moral values or standards of evaluation.

Logically, in order to make a successful communication, speaking has to be the fit representative of these constraints. Therefore, from a structuralist view, the paradigmatic axis in a human' s mind (axis of words' coherent selection) would undergo other levels of meaning selections than just the grammatical one (Saussure, 1983, 121) - e.g.: the following set of words: { the, dog, is, singing} are words that underwent correct grammatical selections to form the sentence "the dog is singing", but they have not undergone an accurate meaning selection because it is a scientific fact that dogs cannot sing. This would put the speaker in an obligation to adjust his choice to a more meaningful selection such as selecting other words in his mind that fit a convenient meaning such as: replacing the verb singing with barking or

replacing the noun dog with man, which would put the sentence "the dog is barking" and "the man is singing " in a more meaningful position.

While communication implies more adaptations of speech to context, speakers are going to move deeply toward other levels of meaning selection. For instance, the following selection of words : (am, eating, dog-meat, dish) would form the sentence "I am eating a dog-meat dish" as a meaningful selection for some dog-meat eating cultures such as South Korean or some Chinese societies, but not in our society because eating dog's meat is something that may appear unacceptable for the majority of us. Objectively speaking, we can say that because eating dog's meat is unusual to happen in our society. Thus, the selection that is best fit in our context is to select another word in order to adjust the meaning to our culture e.g.; saying " I am eating cow-meat dish". This would be more accurate in our context not for the reason that the first sentence is impossible to say or to happen, but that the second is part of our habit and norms and it might be produced spontaneously without any fear of judgments since there is a unanimity that makes this sentence part of our habits. We think that the same could happen when using different registers or language styles in irrelevant situation as for example: the word "dear" in the English environment is an adjective that can be used either in an intimate or a friendly way between the two genders but in our context this word which means: "Azizi" or "Azizati" is not broadly used in a friendly way between a boy and a girl. This is mainly because it is a special word that often indicate intimate feelings.

We think that the constraints we alluded to in the above would put EFL speaker who is aware of the meaning of that word hesitating about uttering such a word

in an English conversation with the opposite gender. We suppose that this hesitation would manifest itself in some stuttering forms such as blocks and prolongation of sounds (World Health Organization, 2010 Stuttering). And so, many elements such as culture, gender, age would intervene on the paradigmatic axis but varying in manner from a language to another. This stresses the importance of habits in the selection of accurate word combinations while performing the speaking action which makes any alien entity that is not included in daily life habits in need to time and context to integrate our habitual behavior.

These concepts are believed to be part in the components of thought. Thus, they are very important tools of the mind with which mental processes such as categorization, influence, memory, learning and decision making are executed.

This represents a universally accepted truth. Though, the nature of concepts and what are the constraints that act and govern on a set concepts is a controversial matter caused by the opposition of some approaches in their analysis of the mind, language, and culture. This was the core struggle about relativism whether or not our habits are honed by the surrounding environment which makes adapting other views or habits in order to proceed with things quite difficult (Chomsky, 1975: 3 ff. and Pinker, 1994: 57-60). However, in order to escape this controversy about differences in culture and thoughts, and base the thesis on a more reliable fact concerning the issue of speaking difficulties, it was necessary to leave the controversial matter of how languages affected the mind for its complexity. This is why we limited the next section to: the relativity of specific forms of sound production to specific languages and how it can be difficult for speakers to adapt to foreign sound forms. It is important to remind that the historical storytelling here aims to extract a specific idea that justifies our adoption of relativism as a framework to what is coming in the next part as the explanation for native habits and their influence on foreign language

learning. We think that this is strongly involved with the automaticity of the mind (Bargh, 1994).

2. Speaking as viewed in linguistics

Generally, spoken language is divided into two aspects, meaning and linguistic form. According to Iverson (2003) sound is the most sensitive part in linguistic variation, therefore it is a notable element that is distinguishable between languages. In this study, we choose prosody as a concept since it covers all sound phenomenon in order to explain how speaking can be relative to the typology of a given language. This session comes as an accomplishment to the previous one in which we are going to express how speaking is introduced in linguistic view. We are not going to focus on semantic or grammatical side of languages but more interest will be given to prosody and its implications in language.

2.1. Prosody in linguistics

In linguistics, the term "Prosody" is relative to the field it is used in. For instance in Poetry, it is defined as being a series of rules that control the verses. (Trauvain & Gut, 2007 :13). It refers to many elements such as: syllables, accents, rhythm, tone, intonation, flow speed, and pauses. In other words, when speaking is performed, prosody is synthesized through elements that can change to sounds different structures and law of combination. There are many definitions for prosody according to the field it is treated. According to David Crystal (1987), prosody is the linguistic use of pitch, loudness, and rhythm .

more precisely: Prosody is the variations pitch, loudness, speed, rhythm, and pause combine to provide the spoken equivalent of the visual organization and contrastivity of a written text . Question- answer sequences, parenthetic utterances, rhetorical climaxes, and many other features of speech which involve a sequence of sentences are usually signaled through the use of prosodic effects . Several spoken genres ,such as radio news Bulletins and sports commentaries , are also notable for the way they use prosody to demarcate topics and types of activity.

(Crystal, 1995, 2003:232)

We can consider that the previous definitions of Crystal created for general knowledge; However, Akhmanova (1973) gives more applied definition for prosody. She states that Prosody is the distinctive transformations of pitch, force, intensity, duration, and tempo. Which shape together the form of intonation. According to the previous definitions, prosody is seeing as a phenomenon which can be treated from different angles. Since it is a part of the oral speech, it is considered as the best element to represent the linguistic adaptability to specific languages

2.2. Relativity of prosody

Prosody has been found to link between the three aspects of speech such as: intelligibility accent, and comprehension .(Anderson-Hsieh ,1992). Furthermore, it has different variables that enter in the combination of speech such as: dependent and independent elements. To get a clear idea about the prosody's function, we are going to explain and enumerate its elements. However, we will focus on the independent variables in order to clarify the relation between the prosody and linguistic community.

2.2.1. Dependent variables

According to Trauvain & Gut (2007), these elements are not agreed on yet since some phoneticians have set the prosody's elements in relation to their field of study ,but we can consider them as : rhythm, variation of pitch, tone, and intonation .These elements can affect the language's nature and communication context .(Zellner,1998).

2.2.2. Independent variables

It is believed that prosody plays a crucial role in communication which means that it conveys both linguistic and paralinguistic information (Lengeris, 2012). According to Thomas and Warein (2002) prosody can be related to a specific area or linguistic community because it is affected by different dimensions of societies we live in such as : environment, language, age, and gender.

A/Environment

Barnet and Casper (2001) defines environment as the cultural surrounding that affects human beings by the settings they are faced in a subliminal way. These settings might be related to the prosodic variation because:

First, Nutrition can affect the flexibility of vocal cords; according to Shield and Gordon (2004) mucous membranes of lamina propria which enters in the combination of vocal cords, are extremely affected by the food that the human body receives, in other words, the mucous are vary according to the variation of nutrients which lead to affect the voice's state. The flexibility of the vocal cords is influenced by some nutrients for instance beetroot, this vegetable have been studied by some researchers who said that beetroot juice temporarily paralyze the vocal cords. This happens due to the tightness of the vocal cords

which lead to a rough tongue condition (Health -care: 2011) .The same of Alcohol and Tobacco consumption which put speech organs in a rough condition way (World Health Organization: 2011).

Second, the voice performance can be affected by climatic conditions since any organism is very sensitive and delicate to heat and cold .The location of any country and precisely Algeria that covers a great surface with different climatic nature may affect the vocal performance of its inhabitants. An example of that is in the difference between the Northern (Algiers) and Southern (Adrar) Algerian dialects.

B/ Language

Speaking about language, we can say that it is directly related to speech which influences prosody in forthright way. Language is the most affecting position since it represents the prosodic essence and center .This can be explained through the following points:

First, phonotactics in simple definition is a branch of phonology that studies the possibilities of sounds order inside a language .For instance. In classical Arabic two voiceless stops do not meet. (El Samadi, 2008:10-23).The existence of this field proves the depth of structural varieties between languages. As a daily habit of using the native language, the student will certainly find sounds combination in the new language difficult to adapt. A study has been done in 1998 by Kenneth De- Jang and Zawaydeh where students had to repeat a set of declarative and interrogative sentences showed that the stress in words of Arabic and English do not fall in the same syllable, even though these two languages are arranged in the same cadence typology .Without forgetting the variety of emotional prosody in each language. In other words, in each language the way of expressing affirmations, declarations, and interrogations is very clear and without any

amount of ambiguity. This is due to the diversity of production of modulation and intonational manner.

Second, morphosyntactic structures are diverse from one language to another .In Arabic the word yield to many changes for derivational or inflectional purposes, coming to the syntactic structure where the arrangement of words in distinctive and the morphosyntactic components are branched . In case we consider the auxiliary cuts within words and sentences that will be produced afterwards in any shape or stops, this would make different designs of speech rhythm (De Jang & Zawaydeh,1998:4).

C/ Age

It is a common variable which is used to be the topic of a lot of studies concerning prosody and speaking aspects. It represents a relative form of production and perception because:

First, when the child grows up and gets older his voice changes continuously throughout his life. (Voice medicine, 2011). As a scientific fact, the vocal cords consist of lamina's membranes (VFLP) that obtain the elasticity from Elastin protein. (Shields & Gordon, 2004:3).This protein plays an important role in the quality of phonation which is responsible for resiliency in elastic fibers. (Hammond et al ,2000:77-85) . In vocal cords, the amount of Elastin increases gradually with age .In other meaning, in the early ages of growth the vocal cords consist of flimsy fibers that contain the minimal value of Elastin ; the value of Elastin increases in the adulthood age with thick fibers till reach the maximum amount , and then starts to decrease by the older age. The changes in the quantity of Elastin cause different transformations to individual's voice. (Hammond et al, 1998:314-322)

Second, Ross and Mirowsky (2008) state in their study that the more students experienced in language the more they know about their weaknesses in speech which means that They will correct their mistakes unconsciously. In other words, whenever foreign

language speakers get older , their verbal flow will be controlled .(Huang & Jung , 2011:6).

D/ Gender

Another variable that has an effect on prosody is gender. This factor deals principally with pitch. In 1996, a study has been done by Sluijtera and Heuvenb, showed the differences between males and females in stress and focus production .Scientifically proven, men and women do have different sizes of vocal cords. Titze (1994) stated that the size of woman do range 12.5 mm to 17.5 mm, whereas man do range from 17.5 mm to 25 mm . This diversity in vocal cords gives the variety on pitch ranges for each sex.

Another study was conducted by Fitzsimons et al (2001) under the title of "Gender and integration of Acoustic dimensions of prosody. This study tested 10 short sentences performed twice by 10 adults from both sex male and female. First, when they asked to speak the sentences in declarative and interrogative form, the findings showed the presence of physical distinctive in speech. Since the emotional speech is more spontaneous, it makes the variety of pitch large in some extent.

According to Homma et al (2004), foreign languages would offer more diverse pitch ranges for each gender than in their original language. This can be provided either restriction or additional effort that could be done by the most flexible vocal organs, otherwise there would be a speech diversity which may affect prosody.

Conclusion

The linguistic variety can be explained by the different geographical expansion that provides various environmental conditions. (Swadesh, 2006:40). According to Dolgopolsky (1998), it is believed that the process of cultural development was occurring at the same time with linguistic development. In other words, in the development of any language, it starts to emerge with new forms and sounds without excluding the role of culture since it implies the adaptation of people to nature in a social way. These links do not confirm the question of the cultural and linguistic correlation but as a sign that the two were related by the same tool. In general, this illustrates the importance of the environment in shaping the habits of its inhabitants. Whatever the answer about the research question, the issue of language relativity to environment is always present. In the end of this chapter, we can say that there is a theoretical grounding on which our analysis can be done in the next part.

Chapter Two

Research Methods and Procedures

Introduction

This chapter is in general, the explanation of methodology. It is composed of two sections. The first section contains an explanation in which we justify our choice of methodology as well as the reason behind our adoption of sociolinguistic analysis. The second section is about methods of analysis that we opted for. It also explains the method of how variables were set for investigating the relationship between the socio-cultural environment and the difficulties students face when speaking.

2.1. Why Sociolinguistic reading and methodology ?

Statements such as "Foreign languages need their context so they can be practiced and mastered" are common conjectures that remain unfounded. This is mainly because we cannot tell exactly "why? " or give a clear explanation so the assumption can be confirmed. That's why, many researchers attempted to solve this problem, but they remained at a descriptive level where explanations stopped at causes such as: anxiety (Phillips, 1992), and motivation and lack of interest (Oxford, 1994). This would not lead us to general conclusions on which fit adjustments can be done to teaching methods. As a result, the entire problem of students' adaptation can be solved. But it can generate specific fit solutions that can help few students - the concerned ones - to adapt to EFL learning.

Our first challenge during this research was to build a relevant theoretical framework that directly aims at speaking draws a comparison between Arabic and English. Studies that tackled this problem from such an angle and following such reasoning are very rare (Huang & Jun, 2011: 2).

But mainly, we opted for a sociolinguistic reading after collecting the facts cited in the statement of the problem. We believed that it would be better to seek for an explanation that is relevant to those facts in order to provide more evidence about the processing of the phenomenon of speaking. More specifically the main reason behind our choice is that studying this problem socio-linguistically will allow us to look differently at the phenomenon and to read what is available as data with a more flexible possibility of explanation.

2.2. Methodology of Analysis

Two methods were adopted in analyzing the data namely, the quantitative and qualitative methods. We also opted for specific methods in order to make part of the two approaches , grounded theory and triangulation.

2.2.3. Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

An investigation about a socio-cultural phenomenon involves the use of the quantitative method of analysis to observe the movements of students' performances through the results obtained during exam. However, the analysis began to move gradually toward a qualitative angle as we started to sample, observe and assess students reactions in smaller numbers.

2.2.4. Data Collection and analysis

The deductive nature of this theme made us look for more evident signs that might indicate the impairment of the process of analysis. That's why the data must be valid and reliable so the analysis can be objective and factual.

It seemed that exam marks were the most reliable indicator about students' linguistic competency. However, the available data was in a raw state, so there was a need for a data interrogation method in order to exploit it. Thus, we have opted for grounded theory method that is known to hold a powerful capacity of extraction for its inductive nature (Glaser and Strauss's , 1967).

2.2.4.1. Grounded theory

Grounded theory is by far the most popular and analytic technique in qualitative analysis. An online survey on researchers using qualitative analysis was done by Professor Graham Gibbs (ggsurveyors.co.uk:2005). It showed that 50% of the researchers who completed the survey used grounded theory method. About a third of the answers were from postgraduates or PhD holders and the other thirds were research fellows. According to Professor Graham Gibbs (2005), this is a proof on the popularity of the method in research fields, adding to the fact that numbers of books were published on it.

In general, Strauss and Corbin ,(2008) argued that grounded theory aims to be inductive. The idea behind this method is to generate or discover theories. It is not specifically a method of research, but a logical way that allows the discovered theories to be grounded. It is based on generating theoretical ideas of hypothesis from the gathered data, it is therefore recommended to start without any preconceptions about the studied phenomenon. However, it is easier and much simpler to use it as a deductive tool of research and this is for the reason that hypothetical thinking constrains the research and makes it more objective and makes it move faster (Glaser: 1998:50). Besides, the data we were about to analyze was in a raw-like state and needed an interrogation that would afford for us socio-cultural

answers. First, available data must belong to the phenomenon that the theory will be grounded on. Then, as a next step, it is important to proceed with the inductive reading of the data by the application of codes to elements that are thought to be in interaction with the phenomenon. This implies a coding approach. It is important to mention that the flexibility of this method is what allowed us to integrate the method of data triangulation with the six steps of grounded theory that are exposed below:

✓ Core Elements of Grounded Theory

- Codes: Identifying anchors that allow the key points of the data to be gathered
- Concepts: Collections of codes of similar content that allows the data to be grouped
- Categories: Broad groups of similar concepts that are used to generate a theory
- Theory: A collection of explanations that explain the subject of the research
- Cross tabulation: Crossing variants of the dependent variable (elements which are affected) on the variants of the independent variable (elements which do affect) and observe if there is any change in rates that probably - is due to the socio-cultural phenomenon.

2.2.4.2. Triangulation

In the social sciences, triangulation is often used to indicate that more than two methods are used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results. This is also called "cross examination" (Cheng, 2005: 72). The aim is that we can be more confident in research findings if different methods would lead to the same result.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2006), triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon . It is the preferred line in the social sciences.

In our situation we have opted for methodological triangulation which involves using more than one method to gather data, namely tests and questionnaires.

2.2.4.3. Population and Sampling

The population of the study consists of 150 first year students in the department of English at Adrar University. This population was sampled - following the logic course of investigation - to a sub-sample of 81 students then another sub-sample of 35 students. More details about the sampling method are explained in our discussion of the two steps of Chapter 3.

2.2.4.4 Variables

It has been stated in the core elements of the grounded theory that an identification of the most prominent factors is needed. According to our relativistic framework, we divided those factors into two types, one influencing and another one being influenced by the first type.

A/ Dependent variables

First, we have searched for what element that reliably assesses students' linguistic competency and which is utilizable in analysis. In addition to speaking which is the main topic of the research we ended up choosing the other three basic language skills:

- Reading.
- Listening.
- Writing.

The reading, listening and writing skills were used as indicators of the grammaticality of utterances speakers produce for eliminating any condition of poor linguistic competence when analyzing the socio-cultural phenomenon.

According to Powers (2010) Estimating skill in a specific domain - speaking for example- can be facilitated by testing skills in other, related areas as well.

All the skills were interwoven by the socio-cultural factors. Our hypothesis, predicted speaking to be the most affected skill by those factors. For this aim dependant variables were limited to three variants:

- Under average
- Average.
- Good.

These variants were set according to a simple scale of assessment which is Under-average, Average and Good, in order to make the analysis more adaptable and flexible, so it can be easily computed later.

B/ Independent variables

Independent variables are agents pertaining to socio-cultural effects on language and by far on speaking:

- Gender.
- Age.
- Environment.
- Language " mother tongue".

Gender: through this variable we aimed to observe how English language, precisely speaking is acquired by both genders. As stated in the previous chapter, gender issues might make a difference in the ability of the student to learn and produce a foreign language. The variants of this variable are:

Female.

Malc.

Age : the perception of foreign languages may also vary according to age. Age can have an important effect on students' motivation in language learning. On the other side, there is also the physical condition of speech organs that can vary over age.

The variants of this variable are:

-18 or less (Age 1): includes students who have followed normal official curriculum and are generally inexperienced in the matter of awareness about language and probably the most anxious about learning. This is mainly because, they are considered to be adolescents as Wilder (2003) who believes that the age 18 is the end of the adolescence.

- 19 to 25 (Age 2): according to Wilder the age 19 is believed to be the beginning of the young adulthood. So, students who generally have failed their grades could have developed more awareness, experience, and less anxiety about foreign language learning.

-26 and more (Age3): refers to students who have had a diploma before and are studying as an additional major or they are employed, so their previous experience make their motivation free from anxiety.

Environment: Due to limitations of the study, we were not able to carry out an accurate analysis on the variable of environment. For example analyzing the social environment would imply referring to established facts or descriptions about each environment which is possible only through available anthropological references that are mostly inexistent. Ergo, we have looked for an alternative to this variable which would play the same importance and effect on students' rendering. This method is called in statistics "Proxy". According to Upton (2002), it consists of using an alternative agent that conveys the same information when there is incertitude or impossibility in gathering data about the original agent.

Field of study at lyceum as an alternative to "environment": as mentioned previously in the definition of "Environment", and after exposing the idea that relativity is a phenomenon caused by habit in Chapter1, we judged that fields of study at Lyceum are the most fit for this case because:

- First, Algerian students in general are not self engaged with studies. So, most of them do not make extra personal efforts in studying which means that their rendering cannot be linked to such a reference.
- Second, taking into consideration the difference in amount and quality

of each syllabus taught in lyceum would set a default level (unintentional) for each student pertaining to a different field, For example: scientific field students generally excel in all type of studies at university, because their syllabus at lyceum was the heaviest and the most qualitative and encompassing one (considering the previous teaching system).

The obligatory nature of course attendance in lyceum implies the obligation to fulfill extra tasks such as homework and revision for exams. This would inevitably put a student in a position to adapt himself to the obligatory tasks he is exposed to and by time this will develop as a subconscious habit that increases students' rendering. We think that students' fields are highly responsible for their extrinsic motivation. This issue was addressed by (Charms, 1968) as a form of motivation that is in reality an externally regulated behavior.

Variants of this variable are:

- Foreign languages field.
- Literary field.
- Scientific field.
- Technical field (including economics).

2.3. The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

In order to confirm that there is a relation between culture and language as well as to verify the existence of socio-cultural impairment with students' oral performance such as environment, language, gender and age, we come to set different results that have been taken through the teachers questionnaire that helped us to gather important information.

Table 2.1: Teachers' Questions 4/5

- ✓ Do you think there is a correlation between culture and language?
- ✓ Do you think your students face cultural hindrance while speaking English?

Teachers answers with 'yes'	Non-ticked choices
10 (100%)	0 answer

Table 2.1 all the teachers agree that there is a correlation between culture and language. Most students face cultural hindrance while speaking English and that is mentioned before in the theoretical background.

Table 2.2: Teachers' Question 6

- ✓ According to your experience, which skill of the following is affected most by the cultural differences in EFL classroom?

	Frequency	Percentage
Listening	1	10%
Speaking	8	80%
Reading	0	0%
Writing	1	10%

We mentioned before that the speaking skill is the most affected by the cultural differences in EFL classrooms and this is confirmed by the majority

of teachers who argued that :

- Native speakers use a lot of cultural references in their speech
- The environment and society affect learners' speaking.
- Misunderstanding can be caused due to the lack of language's cultural background/ knowledge.
- EFL students need to know the cultural background of the language .

Table 2.3: Teachers' Question 9

- ✓ Who are the best speakers of English, considering the factor of gender?

	Frequency	percentage
Male students	1	10%
Female students	6	60%
Both	3	30%
Total	10	100%

It is confirmed by the teachers' answers that females are good speakers of English. In other words, gender may affect and play a crucial role in mastering the language in EFL classroom. This is because of the effective focus and flexibility of female speakers in performing non-native prosody (Homma, 2004 :124).

Table 2.4: Teachers-Question 11

- ✓ Who are the best speakers of English, considering the factor of age?

	Frequency	Percentage
Age 1(18 and less)	7	70%
Age 2(from 19 to 25)	2	20%
Age 3(26 and more)	1	10%
Total	10	100%

In the variable of age, the highest rate should go to younger students ranging from Age 1 then Age 2, and finally Age 3. In other words, foreign language speakers who are still young, can speak fluently, because their verbal flow is less controlled . (Huang & Jung , 2011:6).

Table 2.5: Teachers-Question 23

- ✓ Who are the best students of English, according to your experience?

	Frequency	Percentage
The literary stream	1	10%
The scientific stream	2	20%
The technical stream	0	0%
The foreign stream	7	70%
Total	10	100%

Table 2.5 represents students' fields of study in secondary school . The majority of the teachers maintained that the best students are of foreign languages, scientific stream, then literary stream .

Table 2.6: Teachers-Question 13

- ✓ Do you think there are areas in Algeria which encourage English learning "speaking" as an environment? If "yes" please, grade the parts according to their importance.

	Frequency	Percentage
North, ,central, then South area	7	70%
Central, North, then South area	3	30%
South , Central, then North area	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The issue of region was also asserted in teachers' questionnaire. the prevalence in encouraging EFL speakers should go respectively to students from northern region ,central region, and southern region.

Conclusion

This chapter was an overview on the procedures we will apply in our analysis. As a summary, we are attempting to consider both the qualitative and quantitative patterns of research and this is by using medium procedures that count for both quantitative and qualitative analysis, grounded theory and triangulation. Also, by defining the variables of our case, it would be easy for us to manage the data we have gathered in the next chapter. As standard on which our findings will be measured, we tried to establish records as expectations by relying on available literature and teachers' opinion. By following them, we will be able to compare the data and present the results in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Results and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter we present different results of cross-tabulation obtained from exams and tests that were administered to students. The data gathered is presented in a form of two steps:

- **Angle 1:** It contains information about the population and the cross tabulation of students' marks in four skills that were obtained during the first exam of the academic year 2019-2020.
- **Angle 2:** It explains the sub-sampling process as well as speaking skill test details which were administered to students and its results as a cross-tabulation on the social dimensions (gender, age).

3.1. First Angle

3.1.1. First Sample

We considered conducting a pure longitudinal study in which we can observe gradually students' attitudes. But this seemed to be very difficult, since it takes time besides requiring more knowledge and experience in the psychological field. That's why, we attempted to take the 150 first year students of the English Department at Adrar University as a population for our study and their results obtained during first exam 2019- 2020.

3.1.2. Data Reading

After proceeding with SPSS to transform our data into the following frequency tables, we started with a presentation of each table in order to gain more flexibility with the computation of data. We have converted the marks of the students to scales that are limited in number and easy to treat.

A/ Students' Marks Profile

The first 4 tables represent a profile of students' marks that were classified on a simple scale of Good, Average, Under-average:

Table 3.1: Written expression exam marks

Scale	Students number	percentage
Under-average	20	13,33%
Average	72	48%
Good	58	38,66%
Total	150	100%

We can observe that the highest rates in written expression exam marks are shared between good (38,66%) and average (48%), while students who have had under average marks represent the lowest rate (13,33%).

Table 3.2: Oral expression exam marks

Scale	Students number	percentage
Under	47	31,33%
Average	83	55,33%
Average	20	13,33%
Good	150	100%
Total		

As it can be seen in Table 3.2, the majority of students have had average marks (55,33%). Under-average marks (31,33%) comes in the second rank and finally good marks (13,33%)

B/ Reading and Listening Evaluation

Regarding the receptive skills of reading and listening, we didn't have their exam marks, simply because first year students do not have them as independent modules. So, we used the responses of teachers since they do include these skills in their teaching in order to evaluate students' performance. We analyzed teachers' questionnaire and derived the following results:

Table 3.3: Reading evaluation

	frequency	Percentage
Under-average	1	10%
Average	3	30%
Good	6	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.3 represents reading evaluation which has a similar distribution of rates to writing with (60%) of good, (30%) of average, and (10%) of under average level.

Table 3.4: Listening evaluation

	frequency	Percentage
Under-average	2	20%
Average	5	50%
Good	3	30%
Total	10	100%

As it can be seen in Table 3.4, the highest rate in listening is the average one (50%) then comes good (30%) and under average is the lowest rate (20%).

Observation: It is obvious from the previous tables that there is a significant difference between the Written expression and Oral expression exam marks obtained by first year students of English in Adrar University and teachers' evaluation of reading and listening skills. Specifically, the important difference resides between both reading, listening evaluation and writing marks and on the other side speaking marks. Students' level appeared to be high and average in what concerns the first part (listening, reading, and writing) which is not the case for speaking level marks were generally average and Under-average. This phenomenon is intriguing as it is importantly correlated with our research. So it was necessary to proceed with a more accurate data matching applying the variables thought to be linked to the socio-cultural environment.

3.1.2.1. Gender

The following set of tables is the cross tabulation of gender variable and the exam marks of basic skills of English.

Table 3.5: Gender and Oral expression marks

		Oral expression exam marks			
		Under-average	Average	Good	Total
	Female	30 (28,57%)	61 (58,09%)	14 (13,33%)	105(100%)
	Male	17 (37,77%)	22 (48,88%)	6 (13,33%)	45(100%)
	Total	47	83	20	150

Table 3.5 shows that female's oral expression marks have a high rate of average marks (58,09%), then a lower rate of under-average marks (28,57%) and a noticeable low rate of good marks (13,33%). Male students also presented the same pattern of distribution but with almost equal rates between average marks (48,88%) and under-average marks (37,77%) .They also have a low rate of good marks(13,33%).

Table 3.6: Gender and Written expression exam marks

		Written expression marks			
		Under-average	Average	Good	Total
	female	11(10,47%)	56(53,33%)	38(36,19%)	105
	Male	9(20%)	16(35,55%)	20(44,44%)	45
	Total	20	72	58	150

Table 3.6 shows that female students' marks have a high rate of average (53,33%) and slightly inferior in good marks (36,19%) and an important low rate in under-average marks. Male students marks are of a high rate in good (44,44%) with a slight decrease in average marks (35,55%) and a noticeable low rate in under-average marks.

- **Gender and Reading /Listening skills**

Table 3.7: Gender and Reading/ Listening

	Reading				Listening			
	Under-average	Average	Good	Total	Under-average	Average	Good	Total
Females	1 (10%)	4(40%)	5(50%)	10	2(20%)	5 (50%)	3(30%)	10
Males	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4(40%)	10	3 (30%)	4(40%)	3(30%)	10

Table 3.7 shows both male and female students fall in the good and average range concerning mastery of the reading skill. Only few students have reading difficulties. Whereas in the listening skill, there is a slight dominance of the average level for female students with a low rate in good and a lower rate of under Average. The same occurred for males with average and a low rate in good .

Observation: The current set of tables showed that there is no important relation between the variable of gender and the four language skills except some slight shifting between average rates and good rates. The speaking skill showed an important increase for both genders in under-average marks compared to other skills with a prevalence of male students (37,77%) over female students (28,57%).

3.1.2.2. Age

Table 3.8: Age and oral expression exam marks

	Oral expression marks			
	Under average	Average	Good	Total
Age1(18 or less)	21(26,92%)	45(57,69%)	12(15,38)	78
Age 2 (19 to 25)	18 (36%)	24 (48%)	8 (16%)	50
Age 3(26 and more)	8 (36,36%)	14 (63,63%)	0 (0%)	22
Total	47	83	20	150

Importantly, table 3.8 shows that oral expression exam results for the first range Age 1 which has a high rate of average marks (57,69%), a slightly low rate of under-average marks (21%), and a low rate of good marks (15,38%).The second range Age 2 exhibits a similar pattern where the highest rate was that of average marks (48%), a medium rate was of under-average marks (36%), and finally a lower rate of good marks (16%).Students of Age 3 obtained a high rate of average marks (63,63%), a medium rate of under-average marks (36,36%), and a null rate of good marks (0%).

Table 3.9: Age and written expression exam marks

	Written expression marks			
	Under average	Average	Good	Total
Age 1(18 or less)	20 (25,64%)	26(33,33%)	32(41,02%)	78 (100%)
Age 2 (19 to 25)	0 (0%)	33 (66%)	17 (34%)	50 (100%)
Age 3(26 and more)	0 (0%)	13 (59,09%)	9(40,90%)	22 (100%)
Total	20	72	58	150

Table 3.9 shows written expression marks where Age1 students obtained a high rate of good marks (41,02%), a medium rate of average marks (33,33%), and a low rate of under-average marks (25,64%). Age2 students' results are characterized by a high rate of average marks (66%), a medium rate of good marks (34%), and a null rate of under-average marks (0%). Similarly, Age 3 students' marks are characterized by a high rate of average marks (59,09%), a medium rate of good marks (40,90%), and a null rate of under-average marks (0%).

Age and Reading/ Listening

Table 3.10: Age and Reading/ Listening

	Reading				Listening			
	Under-average	Average	Good	total	Under-average	average	Good	total
Age 1(18 and less)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	10	2 (20%)	3(30%)	5(50%)	10
Age 2 (from19 to 25)	2(20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	10	2 (20%)	4(40%)	4 (40%)	10
Age3(26 and more)	0 (0%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10	0 (0%)	6(60%)	4 (40%)	10

Table 3.10 introduces teachers' responses to the questionnaire, students Age1 have good level in reading, and both Age2 / Age3 students are falling in the average and good range. On the other hand, we noticed the opposite in listening skill. Teachers assumed that Age3 have good level compared to Age1 and Age2 who are in between average and low level in listening.

Observation: As it can be noticed from the analysis above, the evaluation of the reading, listening, and writing skills is obviously good, average then under-average. However, speaking level is ordered in the opposite way. That is to say, speaking marks have a high rate of under-average level, average, then good.

3.1.2.3. Field at Lyceum (environment)

The following set of tables is the cross tabulation between the variables of four skills levels and the educative background students have had during their secondary education.

Table 3.11 : Lyceum and written expression exam marks

	written expression exam marks			
	Under-average	Average	Good	Total
Foreign language stream	2 (2,82%)	41 (57,75%)	28 (39,43%)	71
Literary stream	7 (18,91%)	10 (27,02%)	20 (54,05%)	37
Scientific stream	0 (0%)	1 (9,09%)	10 (90,09%)	11
Technical stream	11 (35,48%)	20 (64,51%)	0 (0%)	31
Total	20	72	58	150

Table 3.11 shows the average is dominated in foreign language students marks (57,75%) followed by good marks (39,43%) then a low rate of under-average marks (2,82%). Literary stream witnessed a rise in good marks (54,05%) then average marks (27,02%) with a low rate of under-average marks (18,91%). Scientific stream students who have presented a high rise of good marks (90,09%) with barely existent average marks (9,09%) and a null rate of under-average marks. Technical stream results are marked by a rise of average marks (64,51%) and a low under-average rate (35,48%) with a null rate of good marks.

Table 3.12: Lyceum fields and oral expression exam marks.

	Oral expression exam marks			
	Under-average	Average	Good	Total
Foreign language stream	2 (2,82%)	58 (81,69%)	11 (15,49%)	71(100%)
Literary stream	20 (54,05%)	10 (27,02%)	7(18,91%)	37(100%)
Scientific stream	8 (72,72%)	1(9,09%)	2(18,18%)	11(100%)
Technical stream	17(54,83%)	14 (45,16%)	0 (0%)	31(100%)
Total	47	83	20	150

Table 3.12 shows foreign language students' average rate is the highest (81,69%) while only few students got good marks (15,49%) and fewer got under-average marks(2,82). Literary stream students presented a rise in having under-average marks (54%) and a low rate of average marks (27,02%) with a lower rate with good marks (18,91%). Scientific stream students' rise in under-average marks is remarkable (72,72%) while They obtained good marks in second rank (18,18%) with a slightly low rate in average marks (9,09%). Technical stream students also presented a high rate of under- average marks (54,83%) and a lower with average marks (45,16%) showing a null rate of good marks (0%).

Observation: What can be observed about this set of tables is that, there was prevalence in obtaining good marks, respectively, for foreign language students and scientific stream students and an average to Under-average for students from literary and technical stream which alludes to the significant relation between all the skills and the educational background of the students.

Lyceum fields and reading / listening evaluation

According to teachers' responses to the questionnaire in Table 3.13, both foreign languages and scientific streams' students fall in the good range concerning the mastery of reading skill. There is a slight dominance of average level for literary stream students and under-average one for technical stream students. However, foreign languages students have a good level in listening compared to scientific and literary stream students who fall in the average level. Technical stream students level in listening remained as the same as reading which is under-average.

Table 3.13: Lyceum and Reading / Listening evaluation

	Reading				Listening			
	Under-average	Average	Good	Total	Under-average	average	Good	total
Foreign language stream	1 (10%)	1(10%)	8 (80%)	10	1(10%)	3(30%)	6(60%)	71
Literary stream	2(20%)	5(50%)	3 (30%)	10	2 (20%)	6(40%)	2(20%)	37
Scientific stream	2 (20%)	3(30%)	5(50%)	10	0 (0%)	6(60%)	4(40%)	11
Technical stream	5(50%)	3(30%)	2 (20%)	10	5(50%)	3 (30%)	2(20%)	31

3.2. Second Angle

- ✓ As a first step of the angle, we administered a questionnaire to 81 first year students representing our first sample. Our main goal was to select our final sample among the students and to collect maximum information for the research which might enhance our understanding and help us answer the research questions of the study.

Students' questionnaires contained mainly:

1. Closed questions: by asking this kind of questions we aimed to obtain precise and relevant information.
2. Open questions: They come sometimes joined to closed questions as a request for more explanation; this would help us in the interpretation of the results and also to confirm or disconfirm our expectations and to obtain more qualitative results too.
3. In the students' questionnaire, we aimed to select only entries stating that speaking is the most difficult task in the questionnaire by mean of a selection criterion. Thus we were able to form our final sample.
4. Selection criteria: we aimed by this to select from the sample cases that are directly relevant to the dependent variable of our hypothesis (speaking), more precisely, only the case of students who have well understood the questions. According to Norman. M, the questions came in closed form and they were scattered along the questionnaire so they cannot be noticed. This method is called selection coding or sub-sampling.

- ✓ The second step consists of applying the final test that will allow us to link the two angles.

3.2.1 Sampling

In the second part of our triangulation, we aimed to collect our data from a different angle. But instead of following a method of sampling, we selected the sample according to aspects present in the First Angle, which we thought are directly related to the topic

- Aspect 1: In order to have an equilibrated description we have selected equal numbers from both genders.
- Aspect 2: Students who have lived in one area, because moving between the three areas of the country might affect directly their contact with foreign languages.
- Aspect 3: Students who had the mark under-average in Oral expression and good to average in the other skills were the ones selected. Thus our sample reached the number of 81 students.

The main questions that we focused on when giving the questionnaire were selection-criterion questions, since they will allow us to select the final sampling that is concerned with the final test.

A/ First step

Which of the following is more difficult for you to master?

Listening - speaking- reading – writing

This question is the main selection criterion. So, students who have ticked the second choice will constitute the sub-sample only if their answers for the following questions do not contradict their answer to the first. The sample at this step reached 65 students.

B/ Second step**Of these two, what is the easiest in English?**

(To understand? Or to express?)

Here is a question instilled in the questionnaire for the purpose of selecting students who have carefully read and comprehended the questions, as well as to weight their awareness about their deficiencies. As a second step, students who presented contradictory answers - for example, those who have ticked "Listening" in the first step and ticked "To express" in this step- were eliminated from the sample and so on. The sample at this step reached 57 students.

C/ Third step**• Which skill do you find easy to master and you are good in?**

Listening - speaking - Reading - Writing

Here comes another question of the same type with which we have finalized our sampling. As a third step, students who have presented contradictory answers were eliminated such as: ticking "Speaking" as an easy skill for example. Those who have ticked writing were also eliminated, even if it might not be contradictory as an answer; it is more probable that students did not understand the question. The sample at this step reached first 42 then 35 by eliminating those who chose "writing" as an answer.

The following test is not very detailed because the number of the students who were selected was obtained through a qualitative criterion, We aimed by this to put the analysis in a median position between qualitative data and representative data.

3.2.2. Final test

The method of testing we have followed in this part is simple, it is called: Emotional Batteries Test. According to Luna, A. R(1976), Emotional Batteries Test is a neuropsychological test that helps in discovering psychological dysfunctions that we think are linked to socio-cultural factors. The method consists of asking students to read and repeat a set of sentences with specific emotional indicators. As a first step, productions are assessed by an expert instantly. Then, they are assessed again as recorded materials by another expert who was not present during the conversation so his assessment would not be affected in case a student expresses facial emotions. Nevertheless, due to time and means limitations, we focused only on oral teachers' assessment and to a limited set and type of sentences which are:

- Emphatic sentences: including exclamation and imperative sentences.
- A combination of a declarative and interrogative sentence.

The test contained the following sentences:

- 1) What a wonderful day this is!!! (happiness)
- 2) Go to work at 7:30 in the morning. (order)
- 3) It is raining outside. Can I take your umbrella? (permission)

The scale of assessment contained Good, Average, and Under-average performance.

3.2.3. Data reading

The table 3.10 represents a profile of students marks in speaking that was classified on a simple scale of Good, Average, Under-average:

Table 3.14: Speaking marks

Scale	Students Number	Percentage
Under average	6	(17,14%)
Average	13	(37,14%)
Good	16	(45,71%)
Total	35	(100%)

Table 3.14 indicates that the rate of Good marks (45,71%) has remarkably risen compared to Angle 1/Table 3.2. Whereas under-average marks have unexpectedly dropped (17,14%) compared to the first angle (33,33%).

3.2.3.1. Gender

Table 3.14 is the cross tabulation of the gender variable and the variable of speaking skill battery test.

Table3.15: Gender and Speaking

	Under average	Average	good	total
Female	4(16,66%)	9(37,5%)	11(45,83%)	24(100%)
Male	2(18,33%)	4(36,36%)	5(45,45%)	11(100%)
Total	6	13	16	35

Again, table 3.15 shows a serious drop in under-average performance for both genders compared to Table 3.5/Angle 1 (Female from 28,57% to 16,66% and male from 37% to 18,33%). This drop is opposed by a rise in good performance for both gender (both from 13,33 % to 45,45%).

3.2.3.2. Age

Table 3.16 presents the cross-tabulation of the Age variable and the variable of speaking skill battery test.

Table 3.16 : Age and Speaking

	Under average	Average	good	total
Age 1	3 (19%)	6(38%)	7 (43%)	16 (100%)
Age 2	2(14%)	5(36%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)
Age 3	1(20%)	2(40%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Total	6	13	16	35

Compared with Angle 1 /Table 3.7, we witnessed slight drops in under-average performance (from 26%, 36%, 36,36% under-average marks for Age 1, 2, 3 to 19 %, 14% and 20% in the same ranges). This was attended by a serious rise in good marks for all ranges (from 15%, 16%, 0% to 43%, 50% and 40% in the respective ranges).

3.2.3.3. Fields of Lyceum 'environment'

Table 3.17: Fields and Speaking

	Under-average	Average	Good	Total
Foreign language stream	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	4(80%)	5(100%)
Literary stream	5(29%)	5(29%)	7(41%)	17(100%)
Scientific stream	0(0%)	6(60%)	4(40%)	10(100%)
Technical stream	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	3(100%)
Total	6	13	16	35

Results presented in Table 3.17 show that there is an improvement in the performance of students if compared to table 3.10 Angle1 with practically low to null rates in under-average performance with 0% for students of foreign languages and 0%for scientific stream then 29% and 33% for literary stream and technical stream.

3.3. Discussion of the Results

Here come the observations that we could notice through the data analysis. They are divided to two parts:

At the beginning of analysis (Angle 1), there was an apparent problem of speaking in comparison to other profiles. This can be seen between Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, and Table 3.4, that there is an important difference between students' skills which alludes to their ability in the first three skills (Reading, Listening and Writing) and not the Speaking skills. On the other part, by comparing Writing and Speaking skills, the obvious difference in results between the two skills, links to a problem that is not related to their cognitive aspect which is "production". We think that this problem is more related to the difference between their physical aspects.

In "Angle 2", we tried to tackle the problem of speech directly by giving students written information (stimulus) and asking them to read and repeat it following intonational indications. As represented in Table 3.1, students performance had witnessed a considerable improvement which was unexpected since it appeared that it is the opposite of "Angle 1". However, after reconsidering the nature of the test administered to students in "Angle 2", we have come to the conclusion that even if the highest rate is represented as a "good performance" (45%), it does not exclude the existence of a difficulty. The fact that students were given sentences with emotional indications to repeat is a proof of the simplicity of the task though in what concerns linguistic competency, the majority of them obtained Average (38%) to Under-average (17%) assessments.

Second, the following discussion is about the effect of the three dimensions of society that are thought to influence linguistic perception and thus affect the degree of difficulty encountered in speaking.

- **Gender**

In "Angle 1" there is an apparent prevalence to male gender in both speaking and writing skills as it can be seen in Angle 1/ Table 3.5 and 3.6. According to teachers' evaluation, the same happened in the mastery of reading and listening. This prevalence cannot be explained by the quantitative presence of male (45) and female students .

We deduce that the results obtained from cross-tabulation of the skills, we were unable to verify the effect that gender plays in the perception of EFL In general.

The same happened for Speaking where results on Angle 1 Table 3.5 went for the advantage of male students and in Angle 2/ Table 3.15 confirmed female students' prevalence which leads to an equal state. However, regarding the answers provided by teachers Table 2.3 and the qualitative sampling of Angle 2 adding to the prevalence of female students in Average marks in both Angle1 /Table 3.5 and Angle 2/ Table 3.15, it is possible to say that there is a difference in perception of sound structures and supra-structures of EFL for the advantage of female gender.

- **Age**

Students Age1 have good level in reading, and both Age2 / Age3 students are falling in the average and good range. On the other hand, we noticed the opposite in listening skill. Teachers assumed that Age3 have good level compared to Age1 and Age2 who are in between average and low level in listening. According to information in "Angle 1", there was an unexpected high rate in reading for Age 3 (Angle 1/ Table 3.10) and prevalence for Age 3 over Age 2 in reading and listening (Angle 1/ Table 3.10).

Generally, the cross-tabulation of four skills over Age did show interesting differences in the perception of EFL. It is important to remind that the choice of variables' prevalence came in an ascending order. However, we have expected the prevalence' of Age3 over Age1 and this is supposedly linked to the different quality of motivation considering that mature students would be more responsible and motivated in learning (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001:191-501). In what concerns Speaking and as it can be seen in Angle 3/ Table3.15 which alludes to a difference in perception of sound structures of EFL under the influence of age development.

- **Field of Study (Environment)**

According to "Angle 1", the results that were obtained by scientific stream students are of prevalence over foreign languages students in writing, speaking Angle1 table 3.9/3.10 which is as similar as their reading level. There are also some cases of prevalence for technical stream students over literary stream students in Reading and Listening according to teachers' evaluation. These traits confirm the existence of a difference in the perception of EFL as a whole. More specifically, they confirm the difference in the perception of the structures under the effect of the environment, when comparing Angle1 table 3.10 to Angle 2 Table 3.15.

Conclusion

Across the two steps of triangulation in this chapter, we aimed at exposing and comparing the results that we have obtained through the cross-tabulation of independent variables and exam marks in Angle 1 and a test in the speaking skill in Angle 3. According to the sub-hypotheses generated in the main introduction, results appeared to be as follows:

First, by linking results of Angle 1 and 2, it can be said that students are facing a difficulty of adaptation with sound structures including supra-segmental features.

This comes as a confirmation to the first sub-hypothesis.

Second, by considering the results obtained for Field, Gender and Age, it is clearly evident that sound structures of EFL are not perceived with the same degree among the students. It is possible to say that the results have validated our second sub-hypothesis.

Limitations

Although this study provided useful insights into the relationship between socio-cultural factors and speaking difficulty, it did not come without methodological limitations. Due to outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic, research and academic activities in universities are affected to a great extent. The second semester was delayed, so we couldn't attend classes in order to observe students' performance. We could only rely on students' first semester exam marks of both oral and written expression modules and analyzed them to evaluate their language skills.

Additionally, this investigation took place over one term during the 2019-2020 academic school year, which is a fairly short amount of time. If more time were permitted, more information could have been pulled from each variable to increase the validity and legitimacy of this study. However, time did not allow for a completed study to take place. By incorporating multiple data collection instruments and methods of analysis, we attempted to validate our findings by investigating the effect of the four independent variables (Gender, age, language, and environment) on speaking. Unfortunately, we could investigate only the three variables except the one of language which needed some adjustments since it was not possible to surround all the Algerian dialects by a simple study. Therefore, a future study could be replicated to investigate the influence of language "mother tongue" on students' speaking skill. It would have been better to do so in the hope that more information about their socio-cultural identity and its connection to foreign language learning could be observed.

General Conclusion

Through our research, we tried to investigate the link between socio-cultural constraints and the difficulties faced by EFL students when speaking. Our main objectives, as stated in the main introduction, were: first, to find a theoretical grounding with which we would be able to explain the link of the socio-cultural environment and language, and second, to find an effective method of investigation that proves the existence of a socio-cultural influence on EFL students rendering and specially speaking. We think that we were able to achieve these objectives through the exposition of a relative framework, we were able to treat comparable and different aspects of L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English). This led us to the extraction of four variables that are linked to our society and are believed to represent different dimensions in a society. These variables are: gender, age, and environment. By bounding the difficulty experienced in speaking to the superficial structure, we were able to sharpen our study to what is applicable to the different socio-cultural attitudes provoked by those four variables.

However, testing this theoretical claim was not easy. This was due to the surrounding nature of the phenomenon that puts the student under a subconscious influence. For that reason, we tried to read and test attitudes not by asking students direct questions mainly, but by collecting a maximum of information concerning students' speaking performance. This was strengthened by the establishment of indices through what was understood from the theoretical background and teachers' questionnaire.

As it is stated in Chapter 2, and then we proceeded with comparing the two results. On that, we were able to find the following: First, Gender effect on speaking has been tackled by many previous researches, and it was confirmed by teachers of the department of English at Adrar University. This allowed us to predict the results for the advantage of female over male in EFL perception. Second, it appeared that Age can affect

students' oral performance and this was also predicted by previous' works and teachers' answers for the advantage of Age 1 and Age 2 students. However, there was an expected competition between the flexibility of young students and the motivation of older students. Finally, students' oral performance is widely affected by environment. Surely, it was not possible to surround all the aspects of the Algerian environment. However, this was perceived through the influence of a miniature agent that is believed to regulate students' behavior, which is their previous scholastic curriculum. From what could be understood in teachers' answers and results of the analysis, the field of study at lyceum largely affects students rendering.

By tackling this study, we were introduced to other perspectives that strengthened the importance of the latter. The notion of linguistic relativism, though not accepted by many researchers is very important. Objectively speaking, The EFL teachers are the intermediary between English environment and native environment of their students. This requires the teachers to be aware of a maximum of differences between L1 and L2, which will allow them to recognize exactly the causes of any incorrect production made by students and thus provide the relevant correction. If not this would interrupt the learning interaction by which a student is waiting for validation or correction of his/her knowledge. The second is very important, because relevant corrections are necessary in order to avoid interlinguistic learning cessations caused by the process of fossilization (Han, 2004. 15). We think that this is possible to happen for students who are experiencing difficulties in speaking if the nature of their deficiencies remains misunderstood.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

First Year Students' Exam Marks of Oral and Written

Expression Modules

	Written Expression	Oral Expression
Student1	5,25	11
Student2	6,75	12,75
Student3	5,13	11,25
Student4	7,25	135
Student5	7,25	15,5
Student6	12,75	7
Student7	5,75	12,5
Student8	6,5	13,75
Student9	13	10
Student10	13,5	9,45
Student11	12	12,5
Student12	5,25	11,25
Student13	12,75	16
Student14	10	11
Student15	7	5
Student16	13,5	12
Student17	12	12
Student18	7,25	13
Student19	12,75	11,6
Student20	5,25	10,5
Student21	13,75	96
Student22	9,5	9,25
Student23	12	10,5
Student24	10,25	12
Student25	11,25	14
Student26	5,75	12
Student27	12,75	10,15
Student28	7	1
Student29	17,75	14,5
Student30	5,75	15
Student31	10	12
Student32	6,25	12,5
Student33	6,25	11,5
Student34	14	14,75
Student35	16,75	5,5
Student36	12	12
Student37	6,38	11,5
Student38	14,25	17
Student39	6,25	12,75
Student40	10	11,5

Student41	11,25	95
Student42	11,25	5,75
Student43	14,75	12
Student44	15,25	7
Student45	9	12,25
Student46	12,25	7,75
Student47	13,75	11,75
Student48	7,75	11
Student49	12,5	10,5
Student 50	12	10,5
Student 51	16	14,25
Student 52	14	12,25
Student 53	10,75	10,25
Student 54	7,25	10
Student 55	13,75	8
Student 56	11,5	6,25
Student 57	9,5	12,5
Student 58	8,75	6,25
Student 59	10,5	8
Student 60	12	6,25
Student 61	11	5,75
Student 62	10,5	6,25
Student 63	15,5	10
Student 64	15,75	14
Student 65	10	10,5
Student 66	11,5	7,75
Student 67	9	3,25
Student 68	10,5	10,75
Student 69	10	13,75
Student 70	8,75	6,25
Student 71	13	11,75
Student 72	10,5	13
Student 73	16	13,5
Student 74	10,5	11
Student 75	13	5,75
Student 76	13,25	6,75
Student 77	12,5	10
Student 78	14,7	7,25
Student 79	13,75	11
Student 80	13,75	10,13
Student 81	14	5,25
Student 82	11,5	7,25
Student 83	8,75	9
Student 84	12,5	15,25
Student 85	11,75	8,5
Student 86	13,5	7,75
Student 87	15,5	5
Student 88	16	16,75
Student 89	11	13
Student 90	11,5	9,5

Student 91	15,5	14,75
Student 92	14,75	7,75
Student 93	11,5	10,5
Student 94	14,75	5,25
Student 95	8,75	7,25
Student 96	11,5	11
Student 97	15,75	6,25
Student 98	15,25	13,25
Student 99	12,25	7,75
Student 100	17	10,75
Student 101	11,75	18
Student 102	12,25	13,5
Student 103	11,75	6,25
Student 104	11,75	10
Student 105	10,5	8,5
Student 106	0	11
Student 107	11,1	10,75
Student 108	9,5	11,5
Student 109	9,5	11
Student 110	1375	625
Student 111	1425	165
Student 112	13	55
Student 113	12	1725
Student 114	8	525
Student 115	15	625
Student 116	115	1075
Student 117	1075	12
Student 118	14	925
Student 119	45	825
Student 120	1375	675
Student 121	14	135
Student 122	11	975
Student 123	12	12
Student 124	10	12
Student 125	115	125
Student 126	1425	1175
Student 127	15	1125
Student 128	115	575
Student 129	13	10
Student 130	125	14,25
Student 131	15	5,75
Student 132	6	18
Student 133	18	6,75
Student 134	17	575
Student 135	15	575
Student 136	1225	1225
Student 137	115	1425
Student 138	155	525
Student 139	1275	725
Student 140	12	775

Student 141	145	575
Student 142	1275	16
Student 143	11	674
Student 144	14	625
Student145	145	1025
Student146	1325	9
Student147	975	575
Student 148	115	8
Student 149	1325	775
Student 150	13	7

b- Listening

Females: **under-averag** **averag** **good**

Males: **under-averag** **average** **good**

11. who are the best students of English , considering the factor of age ?

a- In Reading

18 and less students: Under average average good

19 to 25 students: under-average average good

26 and more students: under-average average good

b- In Listening:

18 and less students: Under average average good

19 to 25 students: under-average average good

26 and more students: under-average average good

12. Do you think Algerian dialects may affect students' oral performance in English?

Yes No

13. Do you think there are areas in Algeria which encourage English learning as an environment? Ye no

- If "yes" please, grade the parts according to their importance?

The Northeastern area The Northwestern area The central area

The Southeastern area The Southwestern area

14. Which languages do your students shift when they are unable to continue speaking?

Arabic French Other

15. Do you think students' previous exposure to foreign languages can influence their speaking? Yes no

16. Do you sense any linguistic interference during the oral performance of your students?

Yes No

- If yes, is it from : Arabi French other

17. Does their oral performance meet the standards of English (relevant tone, good intonation.....etc.) during their oral expression? Yes no

18. Do you think your students are conscious of their deficiencies in English?

Yes No

- If yes, In a general way or specific

19. Do you think your students practice speaking English on their own ?

Always often sometimes rarely never

20. Do you think students feel responsible and try to improve their oral proficiency?

Yes No

21. Who are the best students of English in Reading ; according to your experience?

Those who at high school specialized in:

-Literary stream under-average average good

-Economy and management stream: under-average average good

-Scientific stream: under-average average good

-Foreign languages: under-average average good

-Technical stream: under-average average good

22. Who are the best students of English in listening; according to your experience?

-Literary stream under-average average good

-Economy and management stream: under-average average good

-Scientific stream: under-average average good

-Foreign languages: under-average average good

-Technical stream: under-average average good

Thank you very much . your answers are valued and your time is appreciated!

Appendix 3

We kindly ask you to fill out this questionnaire , which is necessary for the completion of our MA dissertation.

1. Gender:.....

2. Age:.....

3. The Wilaya you grew up in :.....

4. The Wilaya you live in actually:.....

5. If you have moved to live in other Wilayas mention which place :.....

6 .How many years have you lived in Adrar ?.....

7. Your field at lyceum:

- Literary stream
- Scientific stream
- Technical stream
- economy and management stream
- Foreign languages

8. Do you think language learning is a difficult task? yes No

- If yes, what is difficult in it?.....

9. Of these two ,what is the easiest in English ?

To understand or to express

10. Which Skill of the following is most difficult for you to master?

Listening Speaking ? Reading ? Writing ?

- Why ?.....

11. Which Algerian dialect do you speak ?.....

12. Do you always use your mother dialect whenever you go in order to communicate?

Yes No

13. Did you come to study English :

By your choice or you were redirected (university or parents choice

14. What is your aim in studying English
?.....

15. What do you think about your level in English is :

Very good Good Average Weak very weak

16. Which skill you find easy to master and you are good in ?

Listening Speaking Reading ? Writing ?

- Can you tell why
?.....

17. When you are asked to read a sentence in the classroom, do you feel satisfied with your answer ?

18. Is your teacher satisfied with your answer ?

Always often sometimes rarely never

- If he is not satisfied , do you ask to know why?.....

19. Your ability to speak in French is ?

Very good Good Average Weak very weak

20. Your ability to speak in English is ?

Very good Good Average Weak very weak

21. Why do you think foreign languages should be used in our environment (country)?

- In order to communicate with foreigners?
- For studies?
- You do not need a specific reason to use
- other reasons ?_....._....._.....

22. Do you speak English outside the classroom for reinforcement?

Always often sometimes rarely never

23. Are you aware of your weaknesses in speaking English ? yes no

If yes , what are they?.....

24. Does your mother tongue help you speak English better ? **yes** **no**

25. Is your mother tongue an obstacle to speaking English ? **yes** **no**

Thank you very much .Your answers are valued and your time is appreciated!