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**Investigating Gender Differences in Pronunciation
Performance Among EFL Learners.**

*The Case of Third Year Students at the Department of English at
M'sila University.*

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Requirements for the Degree of Master**

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to those rare people that make me feel lighter and valued all the time. To the ones that exert efforts to make my world more wonderful:

To my father, who has inspired me to learn this language and go through this splendid experience

To my mother ,who always heals my heart

To my dear sister Hadil , for always making me proud

To my dear friends , the source of encouragement and support in my life.

Hiba

In the name of Allah the most Gracious, most Merciful, all the praise is due to Allah alone, the sustainer of all the world.

I dedicate this work to all those who helped and supported me to complete this work:

To the woman that gave me

unconditional , love, care, and hope Mom "Dr. Soumia Yagoubi "

To my wonderful father" Said Mihoubi "

To my supporter, my dear sister "Asmaa "and my brother "Abdullah amine"

To my special partner" Hiba Bouras"

To all my family and to all my friends.

Sahar

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Abstract

From an early age, women and men start to be socialized to fit the assigned roles related to their biological sex. Those gender roles are reflected in language use ; consequently, females and males adopt different communicative styles and use language differently. This research aims at investigating gender-related differences in pronunciation performance, specifically in consonants, vowels, intonation, linking, and stress, Among EFL third year students at M'sila university. In order to accomplish the research objective, a causal comparative method was adopted. In relevance to this method, a test was designed to assess EFL female and male students ' performance in the five features. In addition, it was distributed to a sample of 40 students. They were divided into two equal groups, mainly 20 females and 20 males, to gather the required data. The obtained results showed that there is a statistical significant difference between EFL female and male third year learners in pronunciation performance at the two levels of significance 0,01 and 0,05. Besides, it has been revealed that female respondents achieved better results than males in these different aspects.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

APA: American Psychological Association

LWP: Language and Women's Place

IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet

PAI: Pronunciation Attitude Inventory

FI: Frequency

DF: Degree of Freedom

H0: The Null Hypothesis

H1: The Alternative Hypothesis

SD: Standard Deviation

M: Mean

N: Number of Students

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*General
Introduction*

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1. Introduction and the background of the study

Women and men have been always treated differently by society, mainly in constructing their roles and behaviors. Males and females interact, behave, move, dress, and gesture differently. Also, they have different concerns, interests, and preferences. As well as, women are often named, titled, and addressed unlike men (Wardhaugh, 2006). As a result of these socialization practices, many differences in language use appeared and the two genders have adopted specific linguistic features. After the women's movement (second wave feminism), gender issues have been connected with the issue of language (Xia, 2013), and it has been claimed that language is affected by the factor of gender. Consequently, scholars started to explore males and females differences as a first phase in the realm of language and gender (Xia, 2013). They have focused on answering specific questions, such as do men and women speak differently, what are the differences between them, and why do gender differences exist, Through using different methodologies to obtain accurate results.

According to Wardhaugh (2006), various languages do seem to prescribe different forms for use by men and women. In accordance with this, Holmes (2013) proved that " The linguistic forms used by women and men contrast – to different degrees – in all speech communities. There are other ways too in which the linguistic behaviour of women and men differs. It is claimed women are more linguistically polite than men, for instance, and that women and men emphasise different speech functions". Therefore, it has been summarized that these differences appear in different aspects of language, specifically in phonology, syntax, grammar, and vocabulary (Jinyu, 2014).

A large number of investigators have assumed that males speak directly during communication, unlike females that tend to speak indirectly and implicitly. Additionally, it has been easily noticed that women perform better in pronunciation than men do. Further, researchers have believed that females are more polite than males. Tannen (as cited in Gu, 2013) hold that males and females come from different cultures and the communication between them should be transcultural communication. According to Xia (2013), "in a conversation involving both sexes, women often play the role of patient listeners. They do not interrupt others often, but encourage others to talk; However, men are eager to be heard, which pushes them to catch as many opportunities as possible". Women are more likely to use rising intonation while answering questions. In a different manner, men answer questions with falling intonation (Lakoff 1973). Moreover, Jennifer Coates, in her book "men, women, and language, claimed that" male and female speakers differ in their use of particular conversational strategies like minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, swearing, taboo language and compliments, in addition to their styles. Since the process of second language acquisition is also influenced by the factor of gender, many researchers explored gender related differences between EFL male and female learners. This study attempts to investigate if there is any statistical significant difference between EFL female and male third year learners in pronunciation performance at the university of Mouhamed Boudiaf of Msila.

2. The statement of the problem

In mixed sex conversations native speakers of both genders communicate successfully and understand each other very well; however, they do not use the language exactly alike. Analogously, foreign language female and male learners may be exposed to the language in the same manner, and acquire its aspects similarly, but

there may be gender differences between them in using language. In the context of Algeria, there are few studies conducted about gender differences in language use between EFL students. Respectively, this study attempts to investigate gender related differences in pronunciation performance between EFL learners at M'sila university.

3. Research Questions

The present research is intended to answer the following questions:

- Is there any statistically significant difference between EFL male and female third year learners in pronunciation performance?
- In what features of pronunciation (consonants, vowels, stress, intonation, or connected speech) the differences between EFL male and female learners can appear.

4. Research objectives

This research is carried out to obtain the following objectives:

- To investigate whether there is any significant difference in pronunciation performance between male and female learners of Mouhamed Boudiaf University of M'sila.
- To figure out in which features of pronunciation the differences between male and female learners can appear.

5. Research hypothesis

The researchers suppose that there is a statistical significant difference between EFL female and male third year students in pronunciation performance.

6. The significance of the study

The present research will be undoubtedly beneficial for both EFL learners and teachers. Basically, it provides teachers with insights about the different language styles and features adopted by each specific gender; therefore, they will design their lectures according to what is suitable for each group. Moreover, Basing on the results of this paper that show students' performance in the five features of pronunciation, educators will know students' level, accordingly they will help them improve this skill. Also, if the findings revealed any difference between females and males, teachers will take into consideration gender variations when teaching pronunciation. Furthermore, this paper seeks to raise EFL learners' awareness about the importance of the skill of pronunciation and help them recognize their weaknesses in these aspects; thus, they will try to enhance their pronunciation to communicate effectively.

7. Research methodology

The casual comparative method has been selected in order to achieve the objective of this dissertation. Appropriately, a test of two tasks, oral and written tasks, is addressed to 40 third year learners, specifically 20 female and 20 male, at the English department in M'sila university. The participants were randomly selected from six groups, and they were recorded while reading the ten sentences. Additionally, they were asked to write the symbols for the vowels in eight words to determine their differences in recognizing short vowels.

8. Dissertation structure

As regards the structure of this dissertation, it comprises of two main chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical part, which is divided into two sections. Section one provides an overview about gender differences, specifically its

definition, the historical background, the difference between sex and gender, in addition the main differences between females and males in using language. The second section is devoted to pronunciation performance. it includes the definition of pronunciation; it presents the segmental and supra-segmental features of pronunciation and then a brief definition of transcription and its different styles. Furthermore, it underlines the factors that affect second language pronunciation learning.

The second chapter is concerned with the practical part of this research. It includes two sections. The research method, settings, participants and the data collection tools are presented in one section. While, Section two includes a detailed analysis for the data. By the end of this paper, pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research will be provided.

9. Key words definitions

Gender Differences: Typical differences between men and women that are specific to a particular culture and influenced by its attitudes and practices.

- **Pronunciation:** The act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability.
- **Performance:** The oxford English dictionary takes performance to be as how well or badly you do something or how well or badly something works, it is also defined as the act or process of performing a task, an action, etc. while the verb perform means to work or function well or badly.

Chapter One

Theoretical Part

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Introduction

Achieving language fluency is the ultimate goal of any language learner. Obviously, learners must develop different skills for successful communication. Pronunciation constitutes one of the most essential skills. Fraser (2000) insisted that “being able to speak English of course includes a number of sub skills involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. However, by far the most important of these skills is pronunciation”. Consistent with Fraser, Gilakjani (2011) determined that "pronunciation must be viewed as more than correct production of individual sounds or words. It should be viewed as an important part of communication that is incorporated into classroom activities" .In addition, poor pronunciation causes communication breakdown (Szpyra, 2014; Iandoli, 1990, as cited in Abdelrahim. A, 2020). In other words, in order for communication to be effective, it requires good and intelligible pronunciation. Moreover, “if the students want to be clearly understood when they speak English and if they want to be able to easily understand what others are saying, they should improve their pronunciation” (Gilakjani,2011).

It has been stated that the aspect of Pronunciation, like other aspects of language, is affected by the factor of gender, and that female and male learners differ in a very noticeable manner in the way they produce their speech. The chapter at hands addresses the theoretical part of this research paper, which comprises of two main sections. The first section highlights the definition of gender differences and its historical background. It also makes a distinction between gender and sex, as well as it provides some of the main differences between females and males in using language. The second section includes the definition of pronunciation; it presents the segmental and supra-segmental features of pronunciation and then a brief definition of

transcription and its different styles. Furthermore, it underlines the factors that affect second language pronunciation learning.

1.Section One : Gender Differences

1.1. Definition of Gender Differences

Society creates entirely non identical two types of people as males and females with specific and different behaviors, characteristics, and roles (Coates, 2015, Cameron, 2006, Bonvillain,2000).These differences are realized as gender differences, that appear in various fields . Xia (2013) identified that «females have more fat and less muscle physically; women are not as strong as men and they mature more rapidly and usually have a longer life span. Females and males often show different advantages and skills in doing their work". Aside from these differences, it has been noticed that there are other differences between the two genders in language use .

According to the APA dictionary of psychology, gender differences, in a general sense, are defined as “typical differences between men and women that are specific to a particular culture and influenced by its attitudes and practices. Gender differences emerge in a variety of domains, such as careers, communication, and interpersonal relationships”. As regards the definition of gender differences in language, they were considered as one aspect of linguistic differences. As Holmes (2013) claimed “Gender differences in language are often just one aspect of more pervasive linguistic differences in the society reflecting social status or power differences”. Similarly, Gu (2013) stated in his article that “gender difference is not only a reflection of the speeches between male and female, but also a reflection of their different living styles and attitudes” . In other words, women and men adopt different styles when using language depending on the way they are treated by society according to its shared beliefs, cultural ideas and attitudes .

1.2.The Historical Background of Language and Gender

The influence of social factors on language has always been the main concern of sociolinguists. Together with social class, age, and ethnic group, gender grabbed sociolinguists attention for three reasons as it was suggested by Jennifer Coates (2015), including the first two stem from sociolinguistics antecedents in dialectology and linguistics, in addition to the changes in the position of women in contemporary society.

For a start,the foremost motive that led sociolinguists to concentrate more on gender was their rejection to the discriminant selection of informants in traditional dialectology, through choosing urban instead of rural, in addition to old informants, younger ones were added. Furthermore, female speakers started to be the subject matter of some studies in the late of 1980s instead of focusing only on male speakers (Coates, 2015). The next motive was the move in emphasis from standard to non standard varieties that was a result of the reaction against mainstream linguistics when sociolinguistics has developed as an independent field. Working class groups, ethnic minority groups, and adolescents have been carefully examined, unlike women that were not even realized as a group because they were unseen (Coates,2015). Besides to these two stems, the second wave feminism, that was a revolution to the inequality and injustice women confronted after the second world war, has altered women's position in the workplace, home, practice, as well as attitudes (Coates,2015).

Sunderland (2006) stated that “gender and language had been linked in scholarly writings well before the second wave of the women's movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s (for example Jespersen, 1922; Labov, 1966). Further back, popular understandings of gender and language had existed probably for

centuries before ‘gender and language’ was considered worthy of study” . In line with this, Hall Kira, et al (2021,p.1) claimed that the field of language and gender has emerged with the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, language and gender is considered as an interdisciplinary field, as it has been revealed by Crawford (2001) that “The study of gender and language has always been an interdisciplinary field, with theory and research coming from communication, linguistics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, history, literary studies, and philosophy as well as psychology” . Additionally, she added that “By the mid-1970s, the already large research literature had been catalogued in a hundred page bibliography by Nancy Henley and Barrie Thorne (1975), and new books and articles began to appear at a rapidly increasing rate (Lakoff, 1975; Spender, 1980; Stannard, 1977; Thorne, Kramarae, & Henley, 1983)”. Also, researches were guided by three specific questions (Thorne et al., 1983 as cited in Crawford,2019) which include: do women and men use language differently? How does language reflect and help perpetuate gender inequality? And how can sexist language be changed?

A large number of investigators have started exploring this area of study basing on the prominent work of Robin Lakoff (1975). Cameron et al (1988, 75) cited that “because of the importance of language and women’s place (LWP) at a time when the field had yet to establish itself, many later researchers apparently felt obliged to begin their own investigations with the so-called Lakoff ' hypothesis” in which Lakoff asserted that because of the women’s inferior position in society, they tend to utilize specific linguistic devices that distinguish their style of speech from men’s (Svendsen. A.D,2019). In closing, the significance of gender studies to language studies cannot be deniable, and as a first step to study gender, researchers

tend to investigate the differences in using language between women and men (Xia, 2013).

1.3.The Difference between Sex and Gender

Many scholars have tackled the difference between sex and gender in their research papers because people confuse the two terms, thinking that they are used interchangeably; however, sex and gender are entirely different concepts. Sex is determined by the biological traits of the person (Coates 2015, Cameron 2006, Wardhough 2006). By way of explanation, sex is associated with the hormones and chromosomes of the individual. Gender, to the contrary, is not determined by biology; rather it is socially constructed groups based on sex (Coates, 2015). Cameron (2006) pointed out that “gender refers to the cultural traits and behaviors considered appropriate for men and women by a particular society ”. Similarly, Wardhough (2006) identified gender as “a social construct involving the whole gamut of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females”. That is to say, gender is a set of characteristics and roles selected according to the standards of a particular society or culture that women and men should acquire.

According to the Cobuild’s English dictionary (1995), sex (excluding other meanings) is realized as the groups of male and female, into which people and animals are divided according to the function they achieve in producing young. also, the sex of a person or animal is the characteristics of their being either a male or female. while, gender is explained as the fact that they are male or female, and one can refer to all male and female people as a particular gender . Besides, In grammar, the gender of a noun, pronoun or adjective is whether it is masculine, feminine or neuter (ctd. Muhammed. A,2017). Additionally, sex is determined right at birth, it is

something we born with. Unlike gender, which is not something we are born with, and not something we have but something we do, something we perform (Bulter 1990 : 302 as cited in Çakici. D,2011).

1.4.Main Gender Differences in Language Use

It has been revealed that Language use varies according to the gender of the speaker, where females and males distinguish their speech style through adapting specific linguistic features. The differences between women and men can be found in different aspects of language as follows:

1.4.1.Hedges

According to Coates (2015), Hedges are “linguistic forms such as I think, I’m sure, you know, sort of and perhaps, which express the speaker’s certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion”. Aside from this, they are also viewed,by George Lakoff (1975), as “words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy”.

Hedges are expressions used more repeatedly by women, than men, in their speech. In one hand, they are utilized as an indicator to uncertainty and doubt (R. Lakoff, 1975; B. Preisler, 1986, as cited in Coates, 2015); in the other hand, Janet Holmes demonstrated that hedges are multifunctional (Ibid. Coates,2015). That is, they have different uses to denote different meanings like confidence, uncertainty and even politeness as it has been stated by Holmes (1995: 77, in Granqvist,2013) that hedges can be considered as a tool for politeness.

Correspondingly, Coates (2015) elucidated that the choice of topics is the reason why females tend to employ more hedges then males, since they prefer to talk about personal and sensitive topics unlike men who try to avoid them.

1.4.2.Tag Questions

Tag questions are among the linguistic devices that were claimed to be used by women more than men. Lakoff (1973) thought of tag question as “a declarative statement without the assumption that the statement is to be believed by the addressee: one has an out, as with a question. A tag gives the addressee leeway, not forcing him to go along with the views of the speaker”. She believed that using tag questions indicates that the speaker is not self assured, not certain and he lacks authority.

In Lakoff’s point of view (1973) women’s speech contains more tag questions than men’s speech. Analogously, several studies confirmed that English speakers assume a connection between tag questions and female linguistic usage (Coates,2015). She mentioned Preisler’s research (1986) which revealed that tag questions are used significantly more by women than by men. Likewise, as cited in Xia (2013), Fishman (1980) collected many couples’ conversation tapes, and he found that women used three times of tag questions as men did.

1.4.3. Color Words

Using color words is another feature that distinguishes women’s language from men’s. Lakoff (1973) claimed that women use specific items such color words very often than men do. These words were borrowed from French language to describe things, for instance mauve, lavender, azura, magenta, and aquamarine (Xia,2013) . Also, Xia maintained that women are good at using color words, unlike men who do not dare to employ them in their utterances. Further, according to Lin et Al., (2001), Nowaczyk (1982), Rich (1977), Thomas, Curtis and Bolton (1978) (ctd. Mylonas et Al.,2014), women were shown to possess a more extensive and more elaborate color vocabulary than men. Besides, they use more elaborate terms, or BCT hyponyms,

such as mauve, scarlet, or chartreuse in addition to the basic color terms (Berlin and Kay1999, ctd. Mylonas,2014).

1.4.4.Empty Adjectives

Gender difference in using adjectives is clearly remarkable. It has been noticed that adjectives like adorable, charming, lovely, fantastic, heavenly are used more frequently by women, and that men rarely utilize them (Xia,2013). Additionally, Xia clarified that when a woman leaves a restaurant, she will say it's a gorgeous meal. But, when it comes to man, he will express the same idea in simple words like it's a good meal.

Besides, she added “using more adjectives to describe things and their feelings can show that women are more sensitive to the environment and more likely to express their emotions with words, which makes women's language more interesting than men's sometimes”. Empty adjectives are among the multiple linguistic features that formulate women' language through which they demonstrate their subordinate status in society (R .Lakoff,1973).

1.4.5.Adverbs

As maintained by Xia (2013), there are specific adverbs that characterize women's speech from that of men's. For instance, adverbs like awfully, pretty, terribly, vastly, quite, so ... are linked to women's language, while adverbs as very, utterly, and really are used regularly by men. Accordingly, Jespersen (1992, ctd. Xia, 2013) found that women use more *so* than men do, such as “it was so interesting” is often uttered by women.

1.4.6. Diminutives

In addition to specific adjectives and adverbs, women like to use words that have the meaning of small, for example bookie, hanky, and panties. As well as, they like to use words that show affection such as dearie and sweetie. However, if a man attempts to use these words, people will think that he may have psychological problem or he is not manly (Xia,2013).

1.4.7.Swearing and Taboo Language

It has been believed that men swear and use more taboo language than women. In this regard, Coates (2015) pointed out that during an ordinary conversation, there are considerable differences in the use of taboo language between men and women. She indicated that “the stories told in all-male groups contain a great deal of taboo language while the stories told by women to other women contain virtually none”. Furthermore, Lakoff (1973) stated that using strong expletives like shit or damn is linked to men’s language, whereas weaker expletives such as oh dear and goodness are frequently used by women .

According to Kramer’s New Yorker cartoons analysis (ctd. Coates,2015) cartoonists make their male characters swear much more freely than the female characters. Kramer asked students to distinguish male’s captions that were extracted from the cartoons from female’s, then they commented explicitly that swearing distinguished male speech from female speech.

1.4.8.Differences in Choosing Topics

Xia (2013) asserted that “men and women have different interests in choosing their topics. When men are talking, they are more likely to choose the topics of politics, economy, stocks sports, current news. While women have more interest in

talking family affairs, such as the education of children, clothes, cooking, fashion, etc”. Shortly, “ women’s talk is associated with the home and domestic activities, while men’s is associated with the outside world and economic activities ” (Op. cit. Xia).

1.4.9. Differences in Pronunciation

The way female speakers produce their utterances is entirely different from how male speakers do, and this is noticeable in a variety of languages. Several investigations by different researchers have explored gender differences in pronunciation . Consequently, most of the findings revealed that females pronounce better than males. Xia (2013) stated that “ Usually women’s pronunciation is better than men’s, such as the pronunciation of –ing ” .Correspondingly,in an investigation concerning this field, Shy (1969) found that 62, 2% of men pronounced ‘ing’ in a wrong manner, but only 28, 9% of women did not pronounce right (Ibid). Moreover, Xia added that in the learning of second language acquisition, we can notice this difference in which female students have better pronunciation than male students, this is why girls are more interested in learning the language than boys.

According to Jinyu (2014, ctd. Es-skare, H. M et Al.,2018), women’s pronunciation is closer to British pronunciation standards. Besides, they tend to pay more attention to their pronunciation accuracy and try to make their pronunciation better.; therefore, women’s pronunciation is more accurate and concise.

Also, the use of intonation, as a pronunciation feature, varies according to each gender. Women often like to speak in a high pitch voice because of physiological reason and women’s timidity and emotional instability, as well as they prefer to use reverse accent (Op. cit. Xia). As well, Lakoff (1975) affirmed that women and men

use different intonation patterns in order to show different things. Generally, women answer questions with rising intonation for showing gentleness and lack of confidence. On the other hand, men use falling intonation pattern as a sign for confidence and power (Op. cit. Xia). Furthermore, in order to show uncertainty, women use emphatic stress patterns more common in their speech. Also, they use tones to emphasize certain words such as great, so, or really. For example, in the sentence: Did you know my score? Really? The word *really* is an example of an emphatic stress. The word can be used to strengthen the meaning of the utterances (Jinyu. 2014, ctd. Es-skare, H.M et Al., 2018).

In addition to these differences, there are other six candidate universals concerning language and gender that were set by Holmes (ctd. Çakici. D, 2011):

1. Women and men develop different patterns of language use.
2. Women tend to focus on the affective functions of an interaction more often than men do.
3. Women tend to use linguistic devices that stress solidarity more often than men do.
4. Women tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase solidarity, while especially in formal contexts men tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase their power and status.
5. Women use more standard forms than men from the same social group in the same social context.
6. Women are stylistically more flexible than men.

2. Section Two: Pronunciation Performance

2.1. Definition of Pronunciation

Among the skills that ensure for people to make a great first impression through the process of communication is good pronunciation because individuals are most judged by the way they utter their speech. Fraser (2000) claimed “ pronunciation is the concept that most affects how the speaker is judged by others, and how they are formally assessed in other skills” . This saying causes the reader to question about the definition of the concept of pronunciation, and how it has been defined by different researchers.

Labov (2003, ctd .Marulanda and Restrepo,2018) stated that pronunciation is the awareness and recognition of various characteristics of the target language in terms of the phonological system and the capability of appropriating its usage in the discourse. In addition, Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994:1, ctd. Huwari and Mehawash, 2015) referred to pronunciation as “ the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (supra-segmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language ”. As an illustration, it is the manner of how a word is uttered basing on the characteristics of its phonemes (whether consonants, vowels, diphthongs, or triphthongs), and taking into consideration the features beyond the level of these phonemes as mentioned above, as well as non verbal cues in order to deliver a particular meaning according to the context . In line with this, “ Pronunciation includes all those aspects of speech

which make for an easily intelligible flow of speech including segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing, and more peripherally even gesture, body language and eye contact. Pronunciation is an essential ingredient of oral communication, which also includes grammar, vocabulary choice, and cultural consideration and so on” (Fraser,2000,p. 6).

By the same token, Cook (1996, Marulanda and Restrepo,2018) viewed pronunciation as the practice and production of the variety of sounds in oral language. Moreover, it is the way of uttering a word in an accepted manner (Otlowski, 1998 in Gilakjani,2016). To sum up, pronunciation simply means the way words are spoken.

2.2.Segmental and Supra-segmental Features of Pronunciation

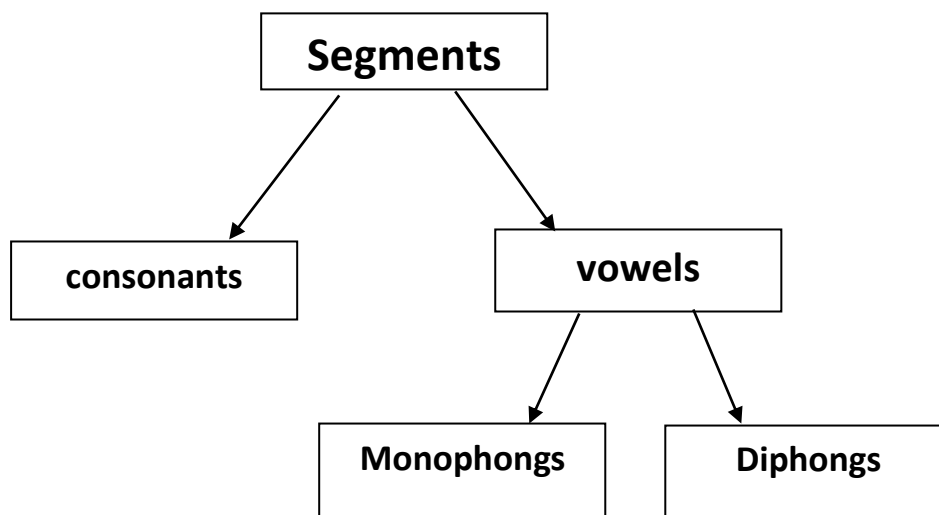
Speech sounds are produced basing on two different features, which they are segmental and supra-segmental features . “ The segmental level is interested in phonemes or their allophonic variants, as each of these is considered to be a single segment of speech. On the other hand, the supra-segmental level is interested in units which are larger than a single sound realization, such as the study of connected speech, rhythm, word and sentence stress and intonation ” (SD López,2018,p. 5). They are totally significant for the sake of effective communication.

2.2.1. Segmental Features:

When we speak, we produce a continuous stream of sounds. In studying speech we divide this stream into small pieces that we call segments (Roach,1991,p .36). These segments are also recognized as phonemes. According to Collins and Mees (2013),“phonemes are the contrastive units of sound which can be used to change meaning”. They also added that “each phoneme is therefore really composed of a number of different sounds which are interpreted as one meaningful unit by a

native speaker of the language .This range is termed allophonic variation, and the variants themselves are called allophones”. Correspondingly, Kelly (2000) defined phonemes as the different sounds within a language. Then, he mentioned that these set of phonemes consist of two categories, namely consonants and vowels. In linguistics, the segmental features of speech are defined as “any discrete unit that can be identified, either physically or auditorily, in the stream of speech” (Crystal, 2003, pp. 408–409 ctd. X. Tong, 2014).

Figure 1: Segmental Features of Pronunciation



2.2.1.1. Consonant

It has been believed that Consonants are the sounds that contribute more to make English understandable (O'Connor 1980). In English, the 21 consonant letters stand for a number of 24 consonant sounds in most accents; each letter is at least linked to a particular sound. According to Cambridge dictionary, « Consonant is a speech sound produced by human beings when the breath, that flows out through the mouth, is blocked by the teeth, tongue, or lips». Furthermore, Rogers (2000) defined consonants as the sounds that involve a major obstruction or construction of the vocal tract. Besides, Kelly (2000) explained how these sounds are formed, mainly by

interrupting, restricting, or diverting the airflow in a variety of ways. The place and manner of articulation, as well as voicing are the three prime ways of grouping the consonant sounds.

1. The Place of Articulation

The place of articulation is defined as “the description of where the obstruction occurs in the vocal tract by stating which of the lower articulator articulates with which of the upper articulator” (Rogers,2000). That is, the place of consonants in the vocal tract. There are eight places of articulation, specifically:

A. Bilabial

/b/ **b**utter, cu**b**

/p/ **p**in, ta**p**

/m/ **m**ute, gu**m**

/w/ **w**ord

B. Labiodentals

/f/ **f**lower, **p**hilosophy

/v / **v**log, mo**v**e

C. dental

/ θ / **t**hrough, **t**eeth

/ ð / **t**hese, **f**urther

D. Alveolar

/t/ atmosphere, fat

/d / date, mood

/s/ swear, fast

/z/ zoo, please

/n/ friend, phone

/l/ fabulous, fool

E. Post alveolar

/ʃ/ ship, sugar

/ʒ/ genre, vision

/tʃ/ chip

/dʒ /jam, fridge

/r/ red

F. Palatal

/j/ yes

7. Velar

/g/ gun, green

/k /skip, milk

/ŋ/ bang

G. Glottal

/h/ he, hold

2. The Manner of Articulation

It refers to the interaction between the various articulators and the airstream (Op. cit. Kelly). Additionally, Rogers (2000) described it as “the degree and kind of constriction in the vocal tract” (p. 23). Simply, it is the way consonants are produced. Plosives or stops, fricatives, approximants, affricates, and nasals are what is known as the manner of articulation.

Plosives : /p/ /b/ /t/ /d/ /k/ /g/

Fricatives : /f/ /v/ /s/ /z/ /h/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/ /ð/ /θ/

Affricate : /tʃ/ /dʒ/

Nasal : /m/ /n/ /ŋ/

Lateral : /l/

Approximant : /j/, /w/, /r/.

Figure 2: Chart of English Consonant Phonemes (ROACH, 1991)

		PLACE OF ARTICULATION							
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
MANNER OF ARTICULATION	Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
	Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	Nasal								
	Lateral approximant				l				
	Approximant	w				r	j		

3. Voicing

Together with the place of articulation and the manner of articulation, voicing is another dimension that classifies consonants in which sounds may appear as voiced and this happens when there is a vibration in the vocal cords such as (/b/,/d/,/g/, /dʒ /v/, /ð/),or unvoiced (voiceless) when there is no vibration in it like (/p/,/f/,/t/ /k/,/ θ/, /s /). Kelly (2000) claimed that it is easy to tell whether a sound is voiced or not by placing one or two fingers on your Adam's apple, if there is a vibration, you are producing a voiced sound, and if there is no vibration it is voiceless sound.

2.2.1.2.Vowels

Vowels are sounds which differ totally from consonants in their patterns of distribution, as well as the way they are made. They are realized as “the sounds in which there is no obstruction to the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips” (Roach,1991). Supporting this idea, Kelly (2000) and O'Connor (1980) have explained how vowel sounds are produced. Kelly indicated that “vowels are produced when the airstream is voiced through the vibration of the vocal cords in the larynx, and then shaped using the tongue and the lips to modify the overall shape of the mouth”. Similarly, O'Connor stated that “vowels are made by voiced air passing through different mouth shapes; the differences in the shape of the mouth are caused by different positions of the tongue and of the lips”.

Three fundamental criteria have been introduced as the basis for characterizing vowel sounds, namely height, backness, and rounding. The first two criteria are linked to the position of the tongue, while the third one describes the position of the lips. First, Height is concerned with how near or far the tongue is from the roof of the mouth. In other words, if the tongue is close to the roof of the mouth, the vowel sound

is described as a high or close vowel; however, if it is distant from the surface of the mouth, the vowel sound is realized as low or open vowel. For example, the sound /i:/ is a close vowel, while the sound /æ/ is clearly an open vowel (Roach,1991,p. 11). Also, vowels could be considered as mid vowels, and this is where the tongue is placed in the mid of the mouth such as the sound /ε/. Secondly, the criteria of backness has to do with the front part and the back part of the tongue, that is to say which part is the highest when producing the vowel. If the front part is the highest, the vowel sound is described as a front vowel, like /æ/. But, if the back part of the tongue is raised, the vowel is called a back vowel as /ɑ:/ (Roach,1991). In addition, if a vowel is pronounced in the center of the mouth, that is between front and back vowels, is known as central, for instance the vowel /ə/. In closing, the third dimension that is used to describe vowels is rounding, which refers to whether the lips are rounded or unrounded. As an illustration, when producing the vowel /i/ in the word key the lips are rounded. In an opposite way, the lips are unrounded when uttering the sound /u/ in the word coo (Rogers,2000,p. 30).

English language contains two distinct types of vowel sounds. Monophthong or pure vowel is the first type to be mentioned .It is represented only by one single vowel, specifically long or short vowel. There are five main long vowels as follows:

/i:/ **heat**

/u:/ **fool**

/ɑ:/ **plant**

/ɜ:/ **thirsty**

/ɔ:/ **all**

Short vowels are a number of six major sounds, including:

/ɪ/ sit

/ɒ/ lot

/æ/ apple

/ʊ/ cook

/e/ get

/ʌ/ umbrella

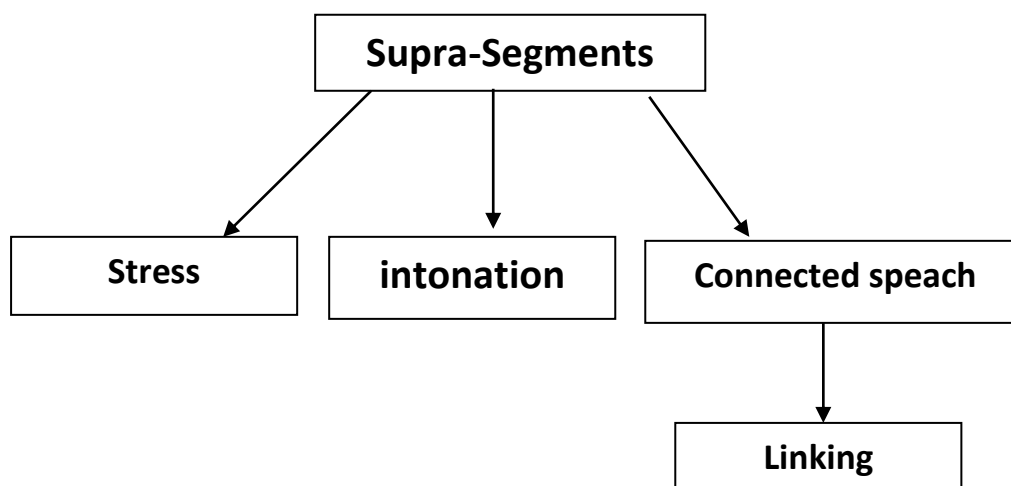
Furthermore, the second type is known as a diphthong, which is a combination of two vowels with a movement from the first vowel that tend to be strong, to the second one. According to Rogers (2000,p.31), “a diphthong can be defined for the time being as a sequence of a simple vowel and a glide”. In respect to this, Roach (1991) claimed that diphthongs are “sounds which consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another” (p.28). Besides, they can be a combination of two vowels as diphthongs or a combination of three vowels that are referred to as triphthongs.

2.2.2. Supra-segmental Features:

The word supra-segment is a combination of the prefix supra, which means beyond, and the term segment, that refers to the smallest unit of language, specifically vowels and consonants. Supra-segmental features or prosodic features refer to the aspects that are beyond the level of syllables, utterances or phrases including stress, intonation, and connected speech.

Lass (1976, op cit. Marulanda and Restrepo,2018) stated that supra-segmental features are usually listed either as the set of features consisting of pitch, stress, and quantity, or defined as features whose domains extend over more than one segment. Moreover, Rogers (2000,p .88) explained that “the study of supra-segmental involves two different aspects. One is how segments are organized to form larger units in particular syllables. The other aspect is the study of phonetic entities which apply to syllables or longer stretches of speech”. Stress, intonation, and connected speech are the three main features to be discussed.

Figure 3: Supra-segmental Features of Pronunciation



2.2.2.1. Stress

In a word that contains several syllables, it is noticed that one of these syllables has some traits that distinguish it from the others as a stressed syllable. Stress has been identified as an emphasis that is added over a specific syllable. According to the adult migrant English center (2001,p .1,ctd Hawari and Mehawesh,2015), stress is the prominence given to certain syllables within words and to certain syllables or words within utterances. It is signaled by volume, force, pitches change, and syllable length, and is often the place where we notice hand movements and other gestures when we are watching someone talking. Similarly, McMahon (2002) claimed that Stress is a

culminative property, signaled by a number of subsidiary phonetic factors, which work together to pick out a stressed syllable from the unstressed ones which surround it.

Stressed syllables are realized as more prominent than unstressed ones (Roach,1991,McMahon,2002), and according to Roach (1991), prominence is produced by four main factors : loudness, length, pitch, and quality. At first, loudness is a component of prominence . If one syllable is made louder than the others, it will be heard as stressed. In addition to that, length is an essential factor to determine the stressed syllable, as if one of the syllables is made longer than the others, there is quite a strong tendency for that syllable to be heard as stressed. Further, if one syllable is said with a pitch that is noticeably different from that of the others, this will have a strong tendency to produce the effect of prominence. At last, a syllable will tend to be prominent if it contains a vowel that is different in quality from neighboring vowels.

Three major levels of stress have been identified by phoneticians, namely primary stress which is considered as the strongest type of stress, as well as secondary stress that is less strong than the first one, and finally, unstressed level where there is no stress on the syllable or the word .

2.2.2.2. Intonation

In addition to stress, intonation likewise is utilized as a sign of the attitudes of communicators (McMahon,2002). However, stress is concerned with the prominence,while intonation is linked to the pitch of the voice in the utterance . Kelly (2000) defined intonation as " the way the voice goes up and down in pitch when we are speaking. It is a fundamental part of the way we express our own thoughts and it enables us to understand those of others" . He also added that it helps us to determine

meaning and gives us clues about the attitude of the speaker, or how he feels about what he is saying .In a similar manner, Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) pointed out that "when one is speaking, there are no steady state pitches .throughout every syllable in a normal conversational utterance the pitch is going up and down", and they indicated that "the intonation of a sentence is its patterns of pitch changes" .

These pitch changes are embodied in falling and rising patterns . Kelly (2000) provided an explanation of how these intonation patterns are connected to some particular types of grammatical structure. Rising intonation is concerned with questions that expect yes or no answers and tag questions that show less certainty, in the other hand, falling intonation deals with statements, imperatives, WH questions and tag questions that expect confirmation,besides it has been added that lists of items contain rising, rising and finally falling .

2.2.2.3. Connected Speech

Within a sentence,different segments in different words are linked together, some sounds are shortened, and others are left out altogether for producing connected speech (Gilakjani, 2012). Connected speech has been viewed as an utterance that is constructed by a continuous sequence of sounds .Furthermore, another definition by Hieke (1987, as cited in Marulanda and Restrepo,2018) in which he indicated that "connected speech is the process that involves changes subjected to different common forms of words considering restrictions related to temporal and articulatory aspects concerning casual language" . The aspects that form connected speech are rhythm,assimilation, linking, and elision, but in this section only linking has been illustrated in details .

Linking

As the name implies, linking means connecting. Language speakers tend to connect phonemes, words, and phrases to each other for producing an utterance in a fluent and speed manner. Gilakjani (2012) defined linking as “the way the last sound of one word is joined to the first sound of the next word”. He also clarified with examples the cases where different segments are joined together in a speech as follows:

- Consonant to vowel an _Australian _animal
- Consonant to consonant next _week; seven _months
- Vowel to vowel. Some sounds such as r, w and j (y) are inserted to link

adjacent words ending and beginning with a vowel:

where (r_) are you?; you (w_) ought to; Saturday (y_) evening

- Sounds that are shortened. When words begin with an unstressed sound they are often pronounced as a short schwa () sound:

when do they arrive?; five o'clock

- Sounds that are left out. Some sounds are so short that they virtually disappear (become elided): does (_h)e like soccer?

we might as well (h_a)ve stayed at home.

2.3. Transcription

The concept of transcription has been described by Crystal (1997: 393, as cited in Jurida,2014) as a method of writing down speech sounds in a systematic and consistent way (also known as a notation or script).Correspondingly, Roach (1992

:115, as cited in jurida,2014) determined that transcription is the writing down of a spoken utterance using a suitable set of symbols. In its original meaning, he argues, the word implied converting from one representation (e.g., written text) into another (e.g., phonetic symbols). In another way, transcription is a way that shows how utterance is pronounced relying on the symbols that are devoted to particular phonemes .

2.3.1. The Styles of Transcription

Phonetic and phonemic transcription are the two styles of transcription .Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams ([6], as cited in Fiktorius,2020), in one hand,claimed that phonetic or narrow transcription is the transcription that attempts to record every single phonological feature (sound) of an utterance, whether it is important to meaning or not . in the other hand, phonemic or broad transcription documents only the sounds that are important to meaning . Fiktotius further,illustrated how each one of them works . Basically, a broad transcription of English speech, we normally would not transcribe the length of vowels, because the length of vowel is unimportant to meaning in English, changing a vowel from length to short or vice versa does not change the meaning of a word in which it occurs . Rather, we would transcribe vowel length in narrow transcription, because in narrow transcription we include even the details that do not influence meaning .

According to Rogers (2000), transcription is the use of phonetic symbols to write down the way an utterance (a stretch of speech) is pronounced .Any language sounds are represented by a specific system which includes a set of symbols .The most known and utilized set of symbols is the international phonetic alphabet system (IPA) .

2.4.Factors that Affect Pronunciation

As poor pronunciation can result in misinterpreting and misunderstanding while communicating, experts in the realm of second language acquisition sought to figure out what factors may affect or hinder the learning or the articulating of speech sounds. They divided these factors into two main categories including external and internal factors such as the influence of the mother tongue, motivation, instruction, and attitude.

2.4.1.The Influence of Mother Tongue

The first language and the second language reveal several differences in their linguistic systems and the way they are acquired. These differences make learners encounter with problems as well as difficulties when producing speech sounds. Rivers (1968, as cited in Zhang, 2009) stated that all learners had experiences that they meet a great difficulty in understanding what foreigner said. This is not because of their lack of knowledge of vocabulary, language structure or grammar, but because the sounds they produce seemed peculiar and the voice rose and fell in unexpected places. The phonological system of the target language may contain rules, sounds, and features that do not exist in the native language thus learners will struggle in recognizing them, because they tend to use their native language phonological categories at the first step in acquiring a new language (Zhang, 2009). Arabic learners for instance, fail in producing the sound /p/ because it does not exist in the Arabic phonological system, instead they replace it with the sound /b/, which later will cause misinterpretation of the words .

2.4.2. Attitudes

It is remarkable that attitudes toward learning a language will minimize or maximize chances for students to accomplish their goals. According to Ellis (1985, p. 292, as cited in Khasinah, 2014), attitude is sets of beliefs about factors as the target language culture, their own culture and, in case of classroom learning, of their teachers, and the learning task they are given . These beliefs can be positive or negative.

Different studies has shown that pronunciation is affected by students attitude. Elliot (1995, as cited in Gilakjani, 2011) indicated that subjects 'attitude toward acquiring native or near-native pronunciation as measured by the Pronunciation Attitude Inventory (PAI), was the principal variable in relation to target language pronunciation . Also, the work of Schumann (1986, as cited in Gilakjani, 2011) insisted on the influence of acculturation, which represents the openness towards or that positive feeling to merge within the target culture, on achieving pronunciation accuracy (Celce-Murcia, et al., 1996). By contrast, negative feelings and believes about the target culture produces poor pronunciation .

2.4.3. Motivation

The acquirement of second language pronunciation is also strongly influenced by a very pivotal factor, that is motivation . Obviously, when students are motivated to obtain the desired orientation they appear to do better than being frustrated . Marinova- Todd et al. (2000, as cited in Gilakjani, 2011) figured out that high proficiency and native like level is obtained if adults are motivated to work on it . Additionally," if the learner has highly motivation to have a better pronunciation, they will become more eager to take part in the activities and pay more attention to

discriminate the sounds of the target language, and grasp any opportunities for using the target language". (Zhang,2009).

2.4.4.Instruction

Since foreign language learners do not have the opportunity to use the language only in educational settings (Zhang,2009), language instruction is another factor which affects pronunciation . It has been claimed that the main focus of foreign language curricula is only introducing pronunciation features at the first year of study (Gilakjani, 2011), which clearly will hinder pronunciation development because teachers try to concentrate more on the other skills . In accord with this, Al fakhri (2003, as cited in Hawari and Mehawesh,2015) discussed that in the EFL Arab classroom, teaching pronunciation is considered as less significant compared to other language skills .

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996,ctd. Zhang, 2009) stated that in EFL settings, especially those where students have little opportunity to surround themselves with native input in the target language, the burden will fall more on the teacher to provide an adequate model of the target language, and to ascertain that students have opportunities outside of class (e.g., in language-laboratory or learning-center environments) to experience samples of the authentic oral discourse of native speakers; similarly, it will fall to teachers to encourage out-of-class conversational use of the target language. (p. 17) . Despite of this, many teachers disregard the importance of teaching pronunciation (Zhang,2009). In addition, most of them are unconfident and face difficulties while helping students to acquire efficient pronunciation (Fraser,2000,p.8).

Conclusion

During the process of language learning, both teachers and learners need to be aware of the fact that there are numerous gender differences in the way of using language. Bearing this in mind will assist in creating successful learning environment. The present chapter has introduced some main differences in different levels of language as an overview to this field of study in the initial part . The second part has focused on the skill of pronunciation and its features in details, as a reference for the investigation in the following chapter .

Chapter Two

The Practical part

Introduction

1.Methodology

1.1.The Participants

1.2.Instrument

1.2.1.The Description and the Aim of the Test

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2.1.The Analysis of the Findings

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Conclusion

Introduction

A considerable amount of related literature about gender differences and pronunciation features has been introduced in the previous chapter as a reference for achieving the objective of this study, that is to investigate if there is any statistical significant difference in pronunciation performance between female and male EFL learners at M'sila university.

The current chapter is devoted to the field work and data analysis of this research. It is comprised of two basic sections. Section one includes a comprehensive description of the methodological framework utilized to conduct this study, in particular the research method choice, which is the causal comparative method, the research settings, the participants and the tool used to gather data. While in the second section, the obtained data are analyzed, discussed and interpreted. In addition, pedagogical implications, suggestions for further research and general conclusion will be provided by the end of this chapter.

1. Methodology

Since this investigation is sought to compare between EFL female and male third year learners in order to investigate their differences in pronunciation performance, the causal comparative method is regarded to be the most appropriate method for conducting the present research. If the comparison' results showed that there are some existing differences between the two genders, it indicates that the factor of gender affects the variable of pronunciation, and this what causal comparative research concerns about.

Casual comparative method has been defined as "a research design that seeks to find relationships between independent and dependent variables after an action or event has already occurred. the researcher's goal is to determine whether the independent variable affected the outcome, or dependent variable, by comparing two or more groups of individuals " (N J. Salkind,2010). Furthermore, usually this research design utilizes a test for gathering data through examining the groups of individuals,then comparing and contrasting them with each other , accordingly a test was designed to fulfill the researchers' purpose.

1.1 The Participants

Among all third year students of English as a foreign language at the department of English language and literature at Mouhamed Boudiaf university of M'sila during the academic year 2021/2022, a sample of forty (40) students was taken to conduct this research paper. The extracted participants were randomly selected from six different groups, and they were divided into two equal categories as males and females. Obviously, twenty students were females, and the other twenty were males in order to accurately demonstrate the differences between them.

The selection of EFL third year students as a sample for this study is due to the fact that they are graduating this year; therefore, they have already acquired sufficient knowledge about when and how to use the different pronunciation features.

1.2 Instruments

As it has been mentioned above this study opted for one research instrument, which is a designed test to collect the required data for exploring if female and male third year learners use the five pronunciation aspects differently.

1.2.1 The Description and the Aim of the Test

The researchers have ascertained that examining EFL students' pronunciation skills will assist in obtaining the desired data to answer the research questions. Respectively, a test of two tasks (written and oral tasks) was designed. The aim of this test is to assess female and male learners' pronunciation performance of the five features, namely consonants, vowels, word stress, linking, and intonation, and to compare their scores in order to reach a specific conclusion. It was submitted to a number of forty students, specifically twenty female learners and twenty male learners ,to be answered.

The first task (oral task) is devoted to test /p/ and /b/ consonant sounds, words stress, linking,and intonation,which is up to 16 points. The students are asked to read aloud ten written sentences that were randomly extracted from the book of peter roach (1991), then be recorded to analyze their performance. Additionally, each single sentence is addressed to test different aspects, rather than being specified to only one feature. The /p/ and /b/ sounds were tested in sentences number 1,2,3,7,8,9,and 10. Further, the researchers selected only 14 plosive sounds to concentrate on,and they were up to 3,5 marks .Moreover, the sentences number two, three, five and six were assigned to test the use of intonation , their total score is up to 4 points. Besides, the investigators have chosen some words from all the sentences, except from the sixth one, to examine syllables' stress,that is up to 4 points .

In addition to the oral task, a written task was taken also from peter roach's book (1991,p.17) to examine the last feature, that is short vowels. It consists of eight words where EFL learners are required to write the symbols for the vowels in each word. The total score of this task is 4 points.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The distribution of the test to collect participants' answers and evaluate their performances is considered as the first step to finish this work. It is clear that the data obtained from the test needs to be analyzed and interpreted as the last step to draw out a general conclusion. Accordingly, this section is concerned with the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data, basically through presenting females and males' scores separately in tables of frequency, and showing their means and standard deviations regarding each aspect, as well as the total mean score of the whole test and displaying them in figures.

2.1 The Analysis of the Findings

2.1.1 The Analysis of the First Task

Table 01: Female Students' Scores in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

Scores	Fi
3,5	15
3,25	3
3	1
2,75	1
N	20

Table 02: Female Students' Performance in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

Mean	Standard deviation
3,40	0,20

As regards the outcomes of female participants in producing the /p/ and /b/ sounds, table (1) and (2) above show them in a detailed way. It is apparent from the table (2) that the majority of EFL female students succeeded in producing the two plosive sounds, considering that 15 of them have obtained the full mark and the rest have attained good results. The highest score obtained by females is 3,5 and the lowest is 2,75 up to 3,5. Additionally, the figure (4) demonstrates the mean of females that reached to 3,40, besides to the standard deviation of the data (0,20). It can be interpreted from the tables that female respondents have performed perfectly in this aspect. This could be explained by the fact that EFL female learners always exert more efforts and work harder to advance their pronunciation in order to acquire a native like accent.

Figure 04: Female Students' Performance in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

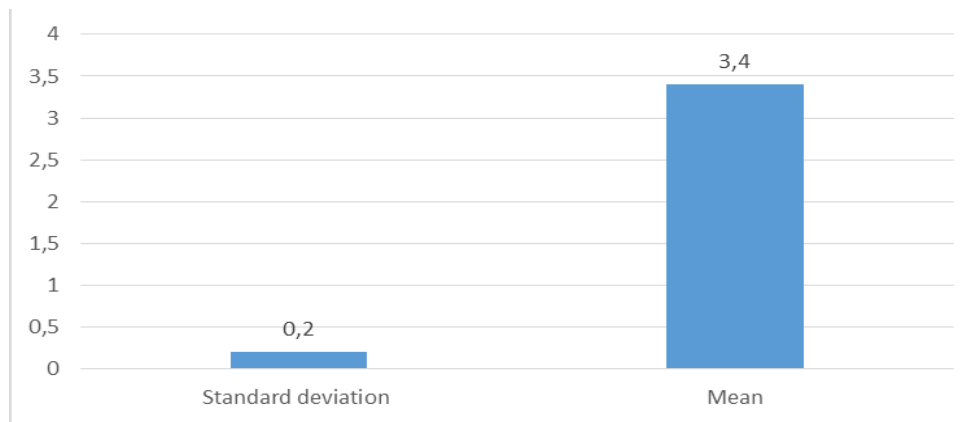


Table 03: Male Students' Scores in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

Scores	Fi
3,5	9
3,25	4
3	2
2,75	2
2,5	2
2,25	1
N	20

Table 04: Male Students' Performance in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

Mean	Standard deviation
3,16	0,28

Table (4) represents the mean and standard deviation of male participants in recognizing consonants, specifically the /p/ and /b/ sounds. 9 students have got the full mark in this task as they produced these sounds successfully without substituting them. In addition to that, four participants have made only one mistake. The students' mean of this feature, which is 3,16, indicates that EFL third year male students are pretty good in producing these consonant sounds.

Figure 05: Male Students' Performance in Producing /p/ and /b/ Sounds

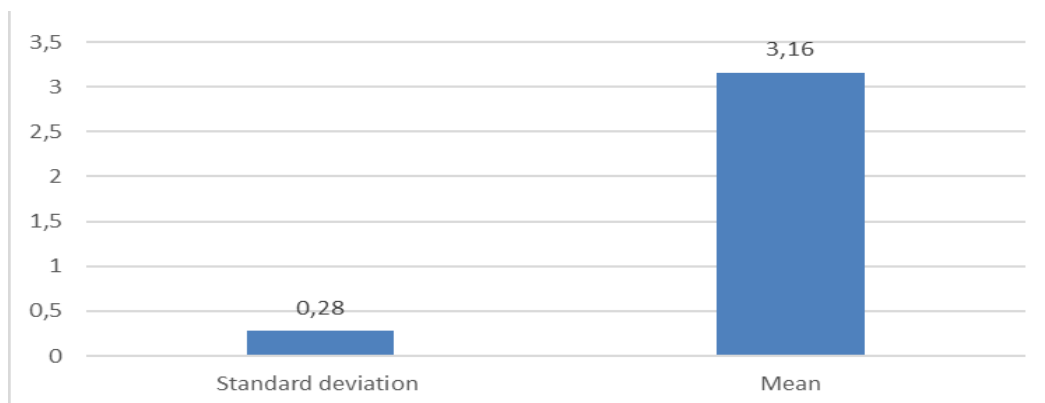


Table 05: Female Students' Scores Regarding Word Stress

Scores	Fi
2,25	1
2,75	1
3	2
3,25	4
3,5	2
3,75	6
4	4
N	20

Table 06: Female Students' Performance on Word Stress

Mean	Standard deviation
3,47	0,40

The table (5) reports that the majority of female learners were able to identify the right place of stress in most of the words. Specifically, Four students have got 4 points and 14 of them have scored between 3, 3,25, 3,5 and 3,75, subsequently the mean and standard deviation of EFL female respondents were calculated to be 3,47 and 0,40 as it is shown in the figure number (6). The results presented above can point out that the level of third year female participants, as EFL learners, in producing the stress is pretty good.

Figure 06: Female Students' Performance on Word Stress

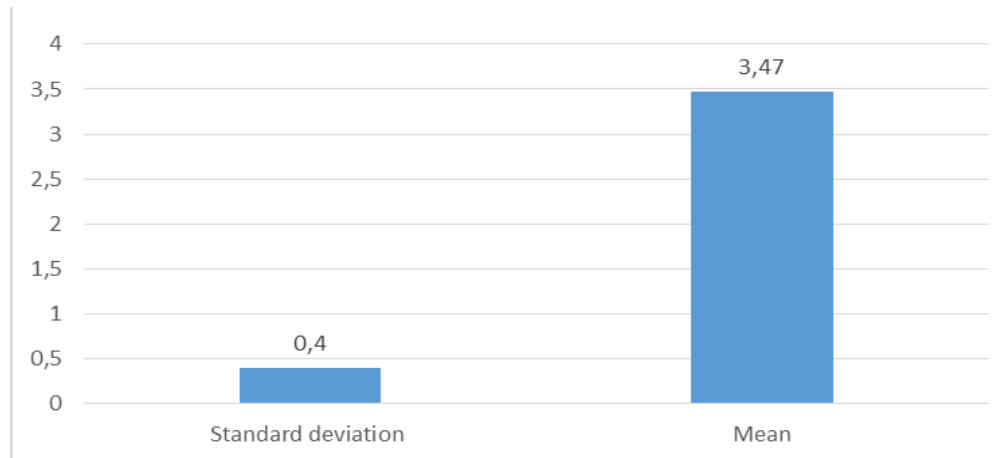


Table 07: Male Students' Scores Regarding Word Stress

Mean	Standard deviation
2,92	0,64

Table 08: Male Students' Performance on Word Stress

Scores	Fi
1	1
1,75	1
2	1
2,25	4
3	4
3,25	3
3,5	2
4	4
N	20

The table number seven arranges the scores and their frequency of male students that were obtained from testing their stress production in the first task. The results as well as the mean (2,92) ,displayed in table (8), reveal that most of male respondents are good in placing the stress on the right syllable.

Figure 07: Male Students' Performance on Word Stress

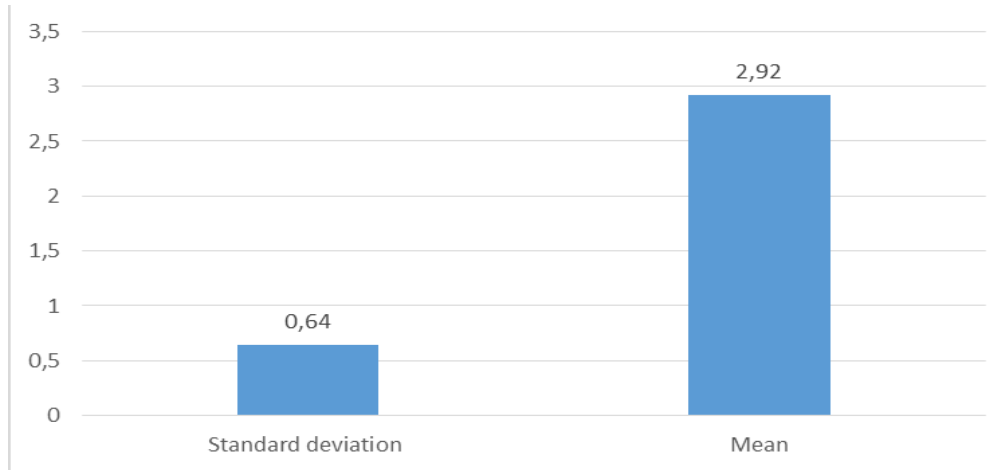


Table 09: Female Students' Scores Regarding the Use of Intonation

Scores	Fi
0	6
1	7
2	3
3	2
4	2
N	20

Table 10: Female Students' Performance in Using Intonation

Mean	Standard deviation
1,35	0,79

The table (9) above shows the grades of all female participants concerning the use of intonation pattern. According to this table, a large number of females did not pronounce all the selected sentences with an intonation. Also, it reveals that the full

mark was obtained only by two students , conversely six of them did not use any intonation while reading the items. Further, the majority of female participants used it just once, consequently their mean and standard deviation of this feature were found to be 1,35 and 0,79, which clearly indicate how their performance is so low.

Figure 08: Female Students' Performance in Using Intonation

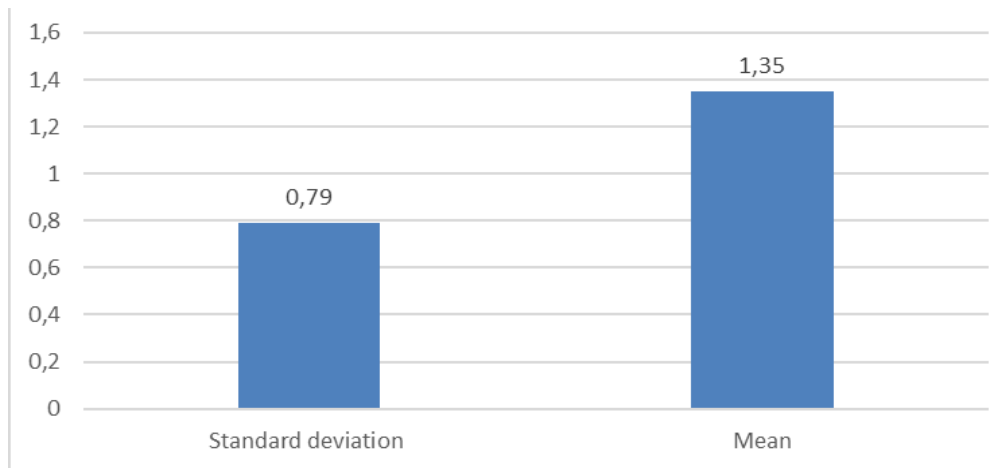


Table 11: Male Students 'Scores Regarding the Use of Intonation

Scores	Fi
0	10
1	5
2	2
3	2
4	1
N	20

Table 12: Male Students' Performance in Using Intonation

Mean	Standard deviation
0,95	0,90

Over than half of third year male participants ignored the use of intonation while reading the addressed sentences in the first task ; as a result, ten students have got zero and five of them used the aspect of intonation only once as it is revealed in table (11). Furthermore, the mean of this group reached (0,95), which indicates that their level in recognizing and using the intonation is so low.

Figure 09: Male Students' Performance in Using Intonation

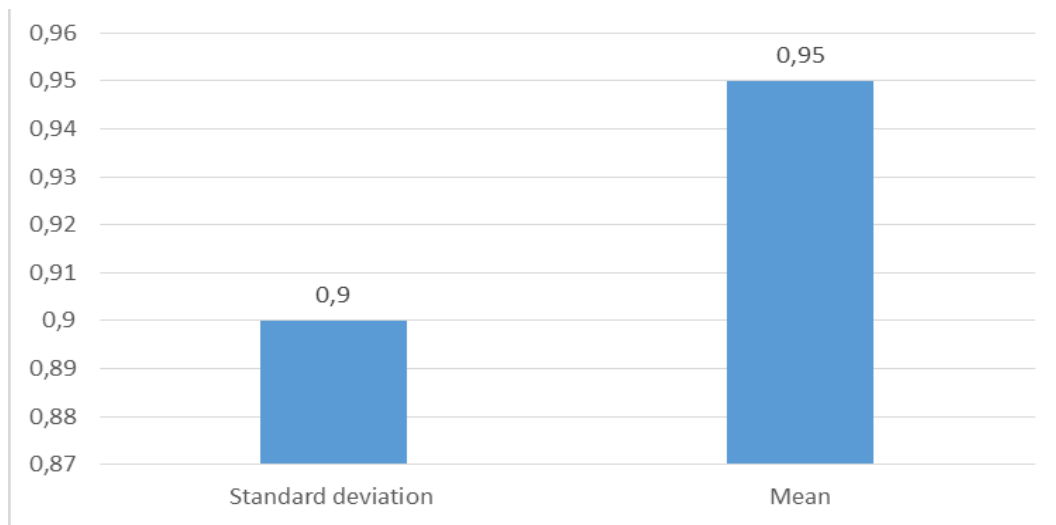


Table 13: Female Students' Scores Regarding the Aspect of Linking

Scores	Fi
1,5	1
2,25	2
3	3
3,75	7
4,5	7
N	20

Table 14: Female Students' Performance in the Aspect of Linking

Mean	Standard deviation
3,63	0,57

The table (13) demonstrates that most of female respondents were so good at connecting the words to each other when reading the items. The highest score is 4,5 and it was obtained by seven students, additionally other seven participants have got 3,75 out of 4,5 that is considered as a good score. The lowest score is 1,5, which can be noticed from the table that only one student got this mark. The last five students have scored between 2,25 and 3. The mean and standard deviation of the group of females were shown to be 3,63 and 0,57 in the table (14) and figure (10).

Figure 10: Female Students' Performance in the Aspect of Linking

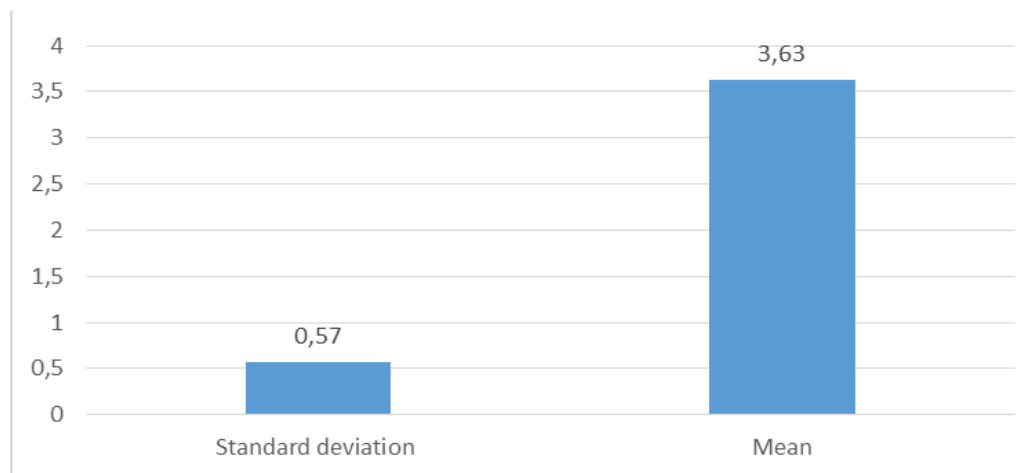


Table 15: Male Students' Scores Regarding the Aspect of Linking

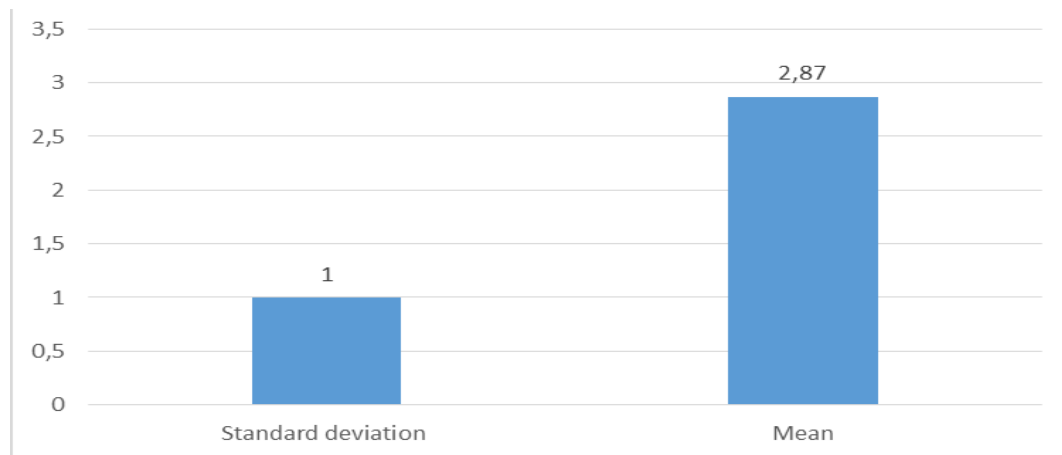
Scores	Fi
0	2
0,75	3
1,5	1
3	3
3,75	6
4,25	1
4,5	4
N	20

Table 16: Male Students' Performance in the Aspect of Linking

Mean	Standard deviation
2,87	1

The table (15) introduces the scores of third year male students in performing the aspect of linking. It reveals that half of them performed well, since their scores ranged between 3 and 4,5. The rest others did not achieve good results, because they have scored between 0 and 1,5. From the mean and standard deviation that were calculated to be 2,87 and 1, it can be stated that EFL males are somehow good at moving smoothly from one word into the other.

Figure 11: Male Students' Performance in the Aspect of Linking



2.1.2 The Analysis of the Second Task

Table 17: Female Students' Scores Regarding Short Vowels

Scores	Fi
0	4
0,5	2
1	3
1,5	2
2	1
2,5	1
3	2
3,5	3
4	2
N	20

Table 18: Female Students' Performance in Writing Short Vowels

Mean	Standard deviation
1,8	3,41

According to the table (18), the mean and standard deviation of a group of twenty female participants, in testing students awareness about the symbols of short

vowels, were found to be 1,8 and 3,41. Clearly, it can be noticed from the figure (12) how the scores of EFL females are spread apart and how low they are. The obtained results indicate that EFL third year female students did not perform well in this task because they lack knowledge about short vowels.

Figure 12: Female Students' Performance in Writing Short Vowels

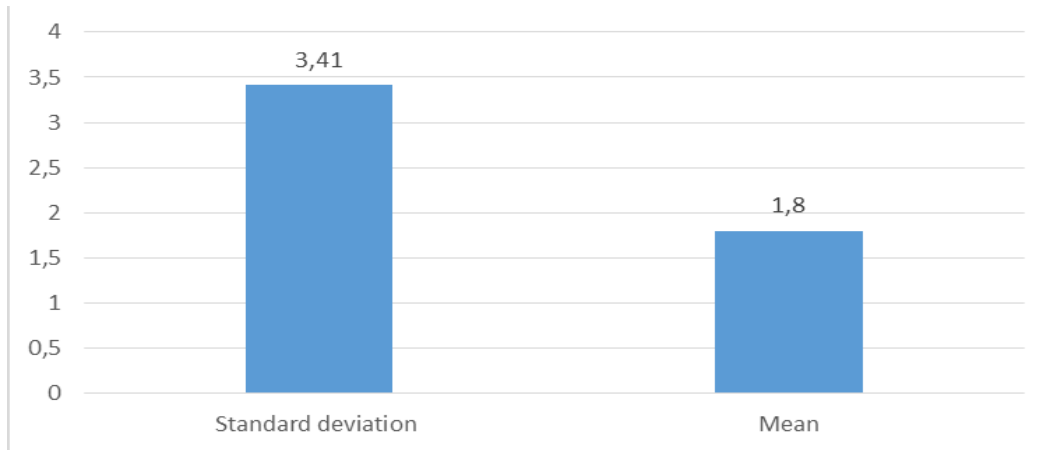


Table 19: Male Students' scores Regarding Short Vowels

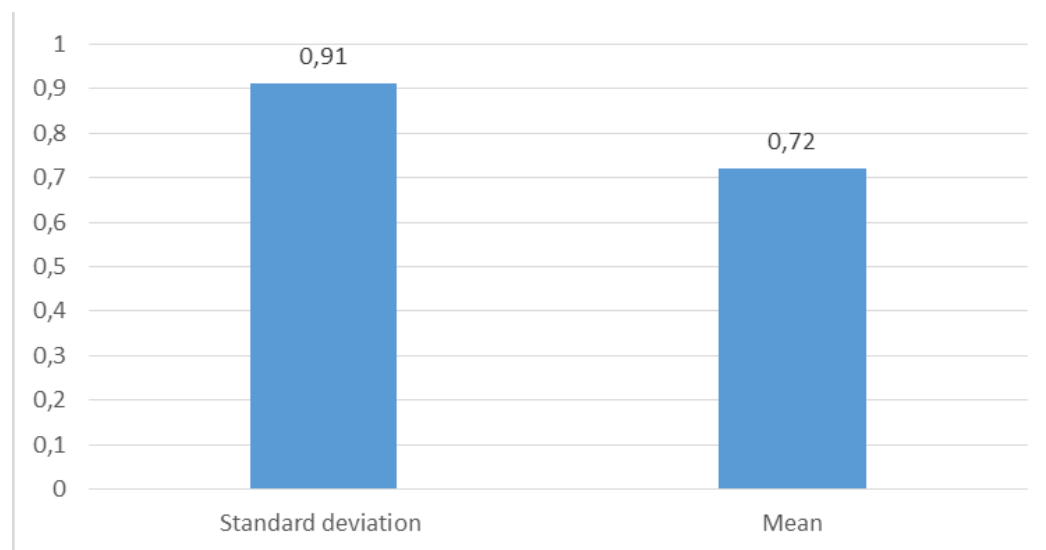
Scores	Fi
0	13
0,5	1
1	1
1,5	1
2	1
3	1
3,5	2
N	20

Table 20: Male Students' Performance in Writing Short Vowels

Mean	Standard deviation
0,72	0,91

The scores of EFL male learners of writing short vowels' symbols in the second task are introduced in the table number (19). It reveals that the majority of male respondents failed in matching all vowel letters with the sounds they represent. Further, 13 students have got 0, other participants' performance is low, and only 3 of them have performed well in this task. Students mean and standard deviation are represented in figure (13), from which it can be suggested that most of EFL male participants do not have sufficient knowledge about what are as well as how the symbols of short vowels are written.

Figure 13: Male Students' Performance in Writing Short Vowels



The Scores of EFL Female and Male Students on the Whole Test

Table 21: Females ' Scores Regarding the Whole Test

Scores	Fi
10	2
11	1
11,25	1
11,5	1
11,75	1
12	1
12,25	2
13	1
13,75	1
14,5	1
14,75	2
15,5	3
16,75	1
17	1
20	1
N	20

Table 22 : Females' Performance on the Whole Test

Mean	Standard deviation
13,65	2,38

Figure 14 : Females' Performance on the Whole Test

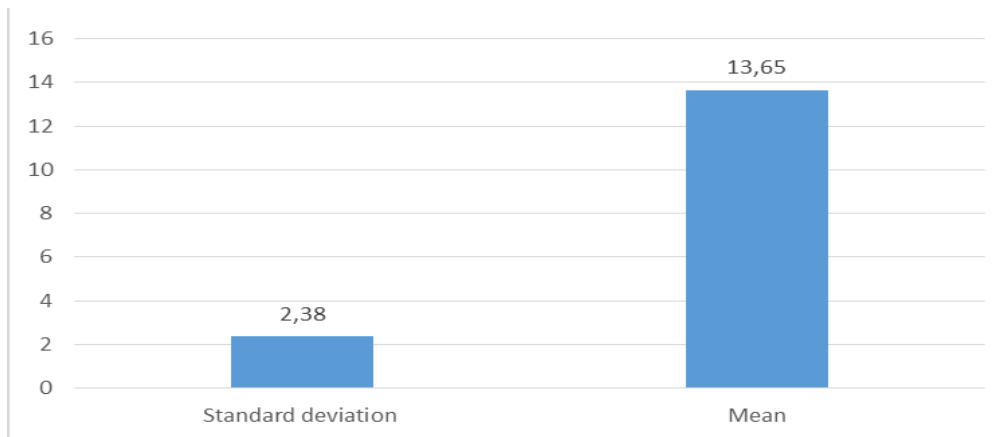


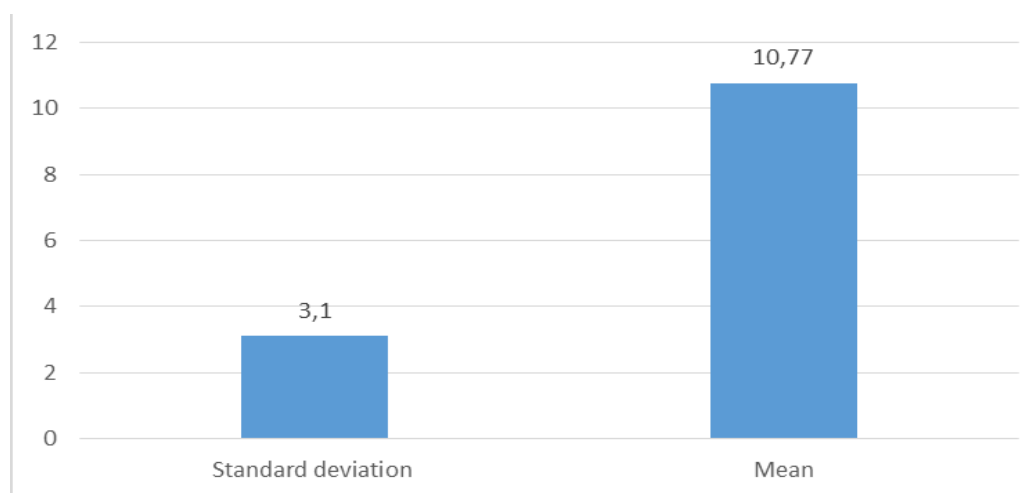
Table 23: Males' Scores Regarding the Whole Test

Scores	Fi
5,25	2
6	1
7,5	1
8	1
8,5	1
9	1
10	1
10,5	3
11	1
11,25	1
12	1
13	1
14	1
14,75	2
15,25	1
18,5	1
N	20

Table 24: Males' Performance on the Whole Test

Mean	Standard deviation
10,77	3,1

Figure 15: Males' Performance on the Whole Test



As it has been mentioned before, the test was designed to assess third year female and male students, as foreign language learners, in order to accomplish the objective of this research paper. Accordingly, the total means of the two gender groups concerning their pronunciation performance in the test were calculated. The figures number (14) and (15) show that the mean of female participants was found to be 13,65, whereas males' mean was 10,77. Basing on these results, it can be stated that females' performance exceeded the males' one, and apparently there is a difference between them.

In order to check if the observed difference is statistically significant, the researchers opted for the T-Test as a hypothesis testing tool.

Table 25: T Test for EFL Female and Male Students

Groups	G1: Females	G2: Males
N	20	20
\bar{x}	13.65	10.77
SD	2.28	3.1

T calculated= 3,23 **DF**= 2 (20 – 1) = 2(19) = 38

H0 : There is no statistically significant difference between males and females performance

H1 : There is a statistically significant difference between males and females performance.

From the table of critical values of T, a significant difference was detected at the levels of significance 0.01 and 0.05, where the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative one is accepted because the calculated value is more than the tabulated value. the researchers affirm that there is a statistical significant difference between EFL female and male third year learners in pronunciation performance.

2.2.Discussion of the Results

A set of results were obtained from the analysis of the test that targeted foreign language third year female and male learners at M'sila university during 2021/2022 academic years, to assess their performance regarding some segmental and supra-segmental features of pronunciation in order to figure out if there is any difference between the two gender groups. The findings demonstrated that female respondents achieved better scores than males in all the five features, which confirm the idea that

female students outperform males as they are more open to new linguistic forms in the target language and eradicate inter language forms that deviate from target language norms more readily than their male counterparts (Ellis, 2012, in D Głowska ,2014). Also, the results showed that there is a statistical significant difference between the groups of participants.

To begin with, one unanticipated finding was that both EFL female and male students were successful in recognizing the two consonant sounds. Likewise, they performed approximately equal to each other as the mean of female participants for the aspect of consonant reached to 3,40. On the other hand, males 'mean was calculated to be 3,16. It can be indicated that the majority of female and male respondents have good and correct perception of the tested consonant sounds. It is clear from the outcomes that there is no considerable difference between the two genders concerning this feature.

Additionally, the analysis of the second task that is concerned with evaluating the awareness of EFL third year participants about short vowels, particularly their symbols, revealed that both female and male respondents failed in achieving good results because they did not perform well . Further, it can be said that females performance is quite better than males'. The mean of female students was 1,80, whereas the calculated mean for males was 0,72. A possible explanation for these results may be because students lack knowledge about what and how these symbols are written.

Another significant finding was that EFL third year male respondents performed good at determining the right place of stress for most of the words in the first task ;thus, the mean of this group was found to be 2,92. Moreover, the mean of female

participants as regards this feature was 3,47, because the obtained outcomes by females were pretty well, since over half of them have scored 3, 3.75, 3.25 and 3.5 , which are considered to be perfect marks. When comparing between the two means of both groups (males, females) in performing this aspect, obviously it can be concluded that female learners' performance exceeded males' performance.

Furthermore, the obtained data show that the majority of female and male participants ignored the use of intonation when they were asked to read the sentences number 2,3,5 and 6 in task one. It has been revealed that most of male respondents failed in changing the tone of their voices. Therefore, the mean and standard deviation of those individuals were estimated as 0,95 and 0,90. Similarly, females performance was so low ; as a result, their mean and standard deviation were found to be 1,35 and 0,79. According to the means of both genders in this aspect, it can be assumed that EFL female learners again outperformed male learners.

It is worth mentioning that EFL female students are better than male students in the aspect of linking. The mean and standard deviation of female participants were calculated to be 3,63 and 0,57, which indicate that females performance was so good and they achieved good results. while male participants mean is 2,87, and the standard deviation of the data set is 1, revealing that male respondents performance was not bad in connecting the specified words.

All in all, the most meaningful result to be presented is the existing of a statistical significant difference between EFL third year female and male students in pronunciation performance. This result has confirmed the hypothesis of the present study. Further, it supports the idea of Xia (2013) that in different languages there are gender related differences in phonology. Moreover, the comparison between the

means of the two genders regarding their performance on the whole test revealed that female participants (M :13,65) showed higher performance than males (M:10,77). This also accords with Xia's saying (2013) that women's pronunciation is better than men's. In addition to that, the findings of Aslan's research (2009) demonstrated that female learners outperform male learners in second language learning. Furthermore, Omar Ali (2016) claimed that "often, the intonation, tone, voice and some expressions that are used by females are quite different from the ones used by males". This result may be explained by the fact that females are faster in learning second language than males (Lin,2003).

2.3.Pedagogical Implications

Basing on the findings of the current study, some suggestions and pedagogical implications are stated for EFL instructors as follows :

It is crucial for educators to raise awareness about gender related differences, and bear in mind that language use varies from one speaker to another basing on the factor of gender.

Teachers should consider that those differences may appear at different levels of the language, namely phonology, morphology and syntax.

EFL instructors should focus on creating educational settings where the discrimination between female and male learners does not exist. It is better for them to employ teaching methods, procedures and strategies that are helpful and favorable for the two genders.

A special attention should be paid to phonetic rules and pronunciation features, essentially suprasegmental features. Teachers should make learners aware about the

importance of using intonation and stress when communicating to avoid misinterpretation.

EFL teachers are required to assist students at developing pronunciation skills and motivate them to speak English inside and outside the classroom.

For an effective language acquisition, educators should use authentic materials in order to show learners how the target language is really used in real situations by its native.

Audio aids should be used in classrooms to improve students' speaking and listening skills, and to raise students involvement and participation.

2.4.Recommendations for Further Research

Further research might explore gender similarities between EFL female and male students in different aspects of language.

It would be interesting to study the impact of other factors, such as age, attitude, cultural ideologies on the acquisition of second language.

it would be better to conduct the present study with more participants in both groups.

A further study could investigate gender related differences in conversational styles between EFL female and male learners.

Conclusion

The practical part of the dissertation at hands has been presented in this chapter. It dealt with analyzing, interpreting and discussing the obtained data from the submitted test to third year EFL students. After describing the research methodology, participants, settings, and the data collection tool in the first section, the gathered data was analyzed in the next section. Further, the results of female and male students' performances of both tasks were analyzed and showed in tables as well as in figures. Then, The outcomes have been discussed after the analysis. Lastly, this chapter has provided some pedagogical implication for teachers and a few recommendations for further research.

General

conclusion

General Conclusion

This investigation contributes significantly to the field of language and gender , as it provides related information about gender differences in different aspects of language , and it attempts to explore the existence of any difference between EFL female and male third year learners in pronunciation performance at the department of English language in M'sila university. The investigators hypothesized that there is a statistical significant difference between the two selected groups. In order to test the formulated hypothesis , the researchers opted for a causal comparative method in which a test was used to examine the performance of participants in pronunciation , then comparing the averages of the two groups of subjects using the t test to confirm or reject the assumption of this research paper.

Two major chapters are included in this study. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical part, which has addressed the definition of gender differences and the historical background of the field of language and gender. In addition, a distinction between sex and gender, and some of the main differences between women and men in using language are provided. Moreover, It has introduced an overview about the skill of pronunciation, and its segmental and suprasegmental features. By the end, it has presented the factors that affect second language pronunciation learning.

The second chapter is dedicated to the research field work and data analysis. It has described the methodological framework, specifically the selected approach, data collection tool, and participants for the study. The administered test to EFL female and male third year students has obtained relevant data to accomplish the researchers' goal. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using tables and figures, discussed, and interpreted.

The statistical analysis of the data presented in the second chapter showed that there is a statistical significant difference between EFL female and male third year students in pronunciation performance, since the results achieved by female participants were better and higher than males' in all the five features . Moreover, basing on the calculated means of both groups concerning these aspects, it can be stated that the differences most appear in the aspects of linking, stress, and vowels. At the end, it is expected from this work to make teachers raise awareness about gender differences between learners and consider the fact that these differences may appear in different aspects of language.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A:

- *TEST*

Task One : Read aloud the following sentences .

1. James decided to type the letter himself
2. I think I will be late for work
3. There was not even a piece of bread in the house
4. I do not want you to help me
5. Would not you like to read it on train
6. I thought you were on a holiday this week
7. The plane was approaching the runway at high speed
8. There is no alternative to the government' s proposal
9. Opening the bottle presented no difficulty
10. A particular problem of the boat was a leak

Task two : write the symbols for the vowels in the following words :

bread / rough/ foot/ hymn/ pull/ cough /mat/ friend.

Appendix B:

T Distribution Critical Values Table

The critical values of t distribution are calculated according to the probabilities of two alpha values and the degrees of freedom. The Alpha(α) values 0.05 one tailed and 0.1 two tailed are the two columns to be compared with the degrees of freedom in the row of the table.

α (1 tail)	0.05	0.025	0.01	0.005	0.0025	0.001	0.0005
α (2 tail)	0.1	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.005	0.002	0.001
df							
1	6.3138	12.7065	31.8193	63.6551	127.3447	318.4930	636.0450
2	2.9200	4.3026	6.9646	9.9247	14.0887	22.3276	31.5989
3	2.3534	3.1824	4.5407	5.8408	7.4534	10.2145	12.9242
4	2.1319	2.7764	3.7470	4.6041	5.5976	7.1732	8.6103
5	2.0150	2.5706	3.3650	4.0322	4.7734	5.8934	6.8688
6	1.9432	2.4469	3.1426	3.7074	4.3168	5.2076	5.9589
7	1.8946	2.3646	2.9980	3.4995	4.0294	4.7852	5.4079
8	1.8595	2.3060	2.8965	3.3554	3.8325	4.5008	5.0414
9	1.8331	2.2621	2.8214	3.2498	3.6896	4.2969	4.7809
10	1.8124	2.2282	2.7638	3.1693	3.5814	4.1437	4.5869
11	1.7959	2.2010	2.7181	3.1058	3.4966	4.0247	4.4369
12	1.7823	2.1788	2.6810	3.0545	3.4284	3.9296	4.3178
13	1.7709	2.1604	2.6503	3.0123	3.3725	3.8520	4.2208
14	1.7613	2.1448	2.6245	2.9768	3.3257	3.7874	4.1404
15	1.7530	2.1314	2.6025	2.9467	3.2860	3.7328	4.0728
16	1.7459	2.1199	2.5835	2.9208	3.2520	3.6861	4.0150
17	1.7396	2.1098	2.5669	2.8983	3.2224	3.6458	3.9651
18	1.7341	2.1009	2.5524	2.8784	3.1966	3.6105	3.9216
19	1.7291	2.0930	2.5395	2.8609	3.1737	3.5794	3.8834
20	1.7247	2.0860	2.5280	2.8454	3.1534	3.5518	3.8495
21	1.7207	2.0796	2.5176	2.8314	3.1352	3.5272	3.8193

22	1.7172	2.0739	2.5083	2.8188	3.1188	3.5050	3.7921
23	1.7139	2.0686	2.4998	2.8073	3.1040	3.4850	3.7676
24	1.7109	2.0639	2.4922	2.7970	3.0905	3.4668	3.7454
25	1.7081	2.0596	2.4851	2.7874	3.0782	3.4502	3.7251
26	1.7056	2.0555	2.4786	2.7787	3.0669	3.4350	3.7067
27	1.7033	2.0518	2.4727	2.7707	3.0565	3.4211	3.6896
28	1.7011	2.0484	2.4671	2.7633	3.0469	3.4082	3.6739
29	1.6991	2.0452	2.4620	2.7564	3.0380	3.3962	3.6594
30	1.6973	2.0423	2.4572	2.7500	3.0298	3.3852	3.6459
31	1.6955	2.0395	2.4528	2.7440	3.0221	3.3749	3.6334
32	1.6939	2.0369	2.4487	2.7385	3.0150	3.3653	3.6218
33	1.6924	2.0345	2.4448	2.7333	3.0082	3.3563	3.6109
34	1.6909	2.0322	2.4411	2.7284	3.0019	3.3479	3.6008
35	1.6896	2.0301	2.4377	2.7238	2.9961	3.3400	3.5912
36	1.6883	2.0281	2.4345	2.7195	2.9905	3.3326	3.5822
37	1.6871	2.0262	2.4315	2.7154	2.9853	3.3256	3.5737
38	1.6859	2.0244	2.4286	2.7115	2.9803	3.3190	3.5657
39	1.6849	2.0227	2.4258	2.7079	2.9756	3.3128	3.5581
40	1.6839	2.0211	2.4233	2.7045	2.9712	3.3069	3.5510
41	1.6829	2.0196	2.4208	2.7012	2.9670	3.3013	3.5442
42	1.6820	2.0181	2.4185	2.6981	2.9630	3.2959	3.5378
43	1.6811	2.0167	2.4162	2.6951	2.9591	3.2909	3.5316
44	1.6802	2.0154	2.4142	2.6923	2.9555	3.2861	3.5258
45	1.6794	2.0141	2.4121	2.6896	2.9521	3.2815	3.5202
46	1.6787	2.0129	2.4102	2.6870	2.9488	3.2771	3.5149
47	1.6779	2.0117	2.4083	2.6846	2.9456	3.2729	3.5099
48	1.6772	2.0106	2.4066	2.6822	2.9426	3.2689	3.5051

الملخص

يبدأ النساء والرجال في سن مبكرة في التنشئة الاجتماعية ليتناسبوا مع الأدوار المعينة حسب جنسهم البيولوجي. تنعكس هذه الأدوار بين الجنسين في استخدام اللغة ، وبالتالي تتبنى الإناث والذكور أساليب تواصل مختلفة ويستخدمون اللغة بشكل مختلف. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استقصاء الفروق بين الجنسين في أداء النطق ، وتحديدًا في الحروف الساكنة والمتحركة والتجويد والربط والإجهاد ، بين طلاب السنة الثالثة من اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة المسيلة . تم اعتماد طريقة مقارنة سببية من أجل تحقيق هدف هذا البحث . وانطلاقًا من هذه الطريقة ، تم تصميم اختبار لتقييم أداء الطلاب والطالبات في الميزات الخمسة .بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تم توزيعه على عينة من 40 طالبًا ، تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين متساويتين ، 20 أنثى و 20 ذكرا ، لجمع البيانات المطلوبة . أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن هناك فرقا إحصائيا كبيرا بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من الإناث والذكور في السنة الثالثة في أداء النطق على مستويين من الأهمية 0,01 و 0,05. الى جانب ذلك ، تبين أن الاناث حققن نتائج أفضل من الذكور في هذه الجوانب المختلفة .