**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**
**Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre- Mila**

**Institute of Literatures and Languages**                    **Branch: English Language**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

# The Effect of Teacher Gender on Oral Skill Proficiency

## A Case Study of Secondary School Students

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in Language sciences and Didactics of Language**

**Presented by**                                                                **Supervisor**

**Mr. Khaled MERZKANE**                                      **Dr. Leila BELLOUR**

**Mr. Nadjib ZABAT**

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**Chairman:  Mr. Khalid ZIAD**              **Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila**

**Supervisor: Dr. Leila BELLOUR  M.C.**     **Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila**

**Examiner: Mrs. Amina AGGOUN**          **Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila**

**Academic year: 2016 – 2017**

# Khaled Merzkane's Dedication

For my beloved mother "AICHA" whose love always strengthens my will. For my dear dead father "AHMED", GOD bless his soul. I may not remember your face, but you are always living in my heart. I love you "Dad."

For the ones who gave me love and support; for my lovely second family Mazouzi, especially my uncle Wahid and his precious wife Linda, who like a second mother. For their sons Ishaq, Mehdi, and Mohamed. For all of you, my everlasting love and gratitude.

For all my brothers: Adel, Yassine, Redouene, Bouzid, Fares, Saliha, Fatiha, Razika, Samia and Warda

For the new family member "Aveline".

For all my dearest nieces, nephews, and their mothers.

For all the rest of my family without exceptions.

For my dear friends Howari, boukezzata, tawfik hariti, Lyes hamiroune, Lamine lounis, Nadjib Zemmouri, Momane Zemmouri, Aissam Flifla, Sofiane Seddari, Kadirou Zemmouri, and Foufou Boudchiche.

For all my colleagues and friends without exceptions.

# Nadjib Zabat's Dedication

To Thee

# Acknowledgements

# **ABSTRACT**

The impact of gender in the EFL classroom is an area that continues to evolve as teachers and scholars strive to provide the most adequate learning conditions. The major aim of this dissertation was to examine the effect of teacher gender on students' oral performance in the Algerian high school settings. The speaking skill is crucially important in EFL learning. However, due to many internal and external factors, students often face difficulties when trying to speak English in order to communicate or to perform an oral activity. This study was guided by the hypothesis that the teacher's gender affects students' oral proficiency level. To achieve our aim and test our hypothesis, two research instruments were used: classroom observation and two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was administered to secondary school teachers, while the second was targeted to secondary school students. The overwhelming conclusion, reached from the results of this study, is that the teacher's gender does not have a significant impact on students' oral proficiency. Thus, our hypothesis was not confirmed, and our research topic begs for further investigations.

# ملخص

إن تأثير النوع الاجتماعي في مقياس الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية هو مجال لا يزال في تطور مستمر, حيث يسعى المعلّمون والعلماء جاهدين لتوفير ظروف التعلم الأكثر ملاءمة . إن الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الرسالة هو دراسة تأثير النوع الاجتماعي للمعلّم على الأداء الشفهي للتلاميذ في الثانويات الجزائرية. إذ تعتبر مهارة التحدث أمر بالغ الأهميّة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لكن و نظرا للعديد من العوامل و العراقيل الداخلية والخارجية فغالبا ما يواجه التلاميذ صعوبات عند محاولة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية من أجل التواصل أو لأداء نشاط شفهي. وقد استرشدت هذه الدراسة بفرضية مفادها أن النوع الاجتماعي المعلم يؤثر على مستوى الكفاءة الشفهية لدى التلاميذ. ولتحقيق هدفنا واختبار صحّة فرضيتنا، فقد تم استخدام اثنين من أدوات البحث و هما الملاحظة الوصفيّة واستبيانين. لقد قُدّم الاستبيان الأول لعينة من معلّمي المدارس الثانوية، في حين قُدّم الاستبيان الثاني لعيّنة من تلاميذ المدارس الثانوية. وتوصّلت هذه الدراسة الى نتائج مفادها أن النوع الاجتماعي المعلّم ليس له تأثير مهم على الكفاءة الشّفهية للتلاميذ وبالتالي لم يتم تأكيد فرضيتنا، و يبقى موضوع بحثنا مفتوحا لمزيد من البحث والاستقصاء العلمي.

# List of abbreviations

**CD:** Classrooms discussions

**EFL:** English as a foreign language

**ESL:** English as a second language

**MI:** Multiple intelligences

**MT:** Mother tongue

**OG:** Observation grid

**Q:** Question (in the analysis of the questionnaires)

**ST:** Students' gender

**TG:** Teachers' gender

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## Chapter One:  An Overview of the Concepts of Teaching

# General Introduction

## 1. Statement of the Problem

Awareness of gender issues is of a great importance in today's academia. The issue of gender in language teaching and learning has perplexed and troubled many scholars who aspire to enlighten many spots in this area. The effect of a teacher's gender on his learners' perceptions and academic achievement is a question that has received much consideration in recent academic researches. The role of lecturers is not merely spoon-feeding their learners in terms of the four skills. Their role exceeds that far beyond to providing equal interaction chances for students regardless of their social backgrounds, race, ethnicity, and for sure gender. Acting in such a biased freeway, teachers are vitally building their learners' language competency, learning opportunities, and the language progression process itself (Xiao-yan, 2006). According to Tannen (1992), men feel more at ease in a lecturing role while women find it much more comfortable being in a listening one. In such a sense, males demonstrate expertise and status, while the listening role of females reveals readiness for cooperation, sharing expertise, and confrontation rejection with others. Such contradictory qualities demonstrated by female and male teachers may pave the way to inharmonious teaching styles that may have an impact on learners' oral proficiency development.

Longitudinal studies on oral proficiency by researchers, the like of Dee (2006) and Tannen (1992), supported the belief that someone's mastery of speaking and his/her tongue fluency is a solid standard of evaluating his/her language excellence. Reaching an accredited oral mastery is not the mere outcome of acquiring rudiments, grammar, or vocabulary processing. It is, in fact, the result of interacting with expert speakers who help one acquire the structure as well as the use of the language under practice (Goh & Burns, 2012). While assisted by adults who employ authentic conversational techniques during reciprocal action,

the learner will develop his own linguistic awareness of language form hand in hand with its function (Halliday, 1975).

Learners' oral practices, though being of a great benefit, are futile apart from the teacher's scaffolding role. The latter may, in turn, differ according to the teacher's gender. Ewing (2009) believed that the teacher-learner relationship, in the classroom, is greatly affected by the issue of gender, since girls are consistently rated higher in closeness and boys higher in conflict. In the same vein, McDonald (2007) found that the instructor's gender is a driving factor when it comes to in class interruptions, questions, and interaction duration of the student. Female and male teachers interact differently with students sharing the same gender than they do with the opposite gender, and this discrepancy influences students' oral skill improvement. Instructors' gender could either obstruct and even harm knowledge acquisition or enhance and nurture it (Yepez, 1994).From this perspective, learners' communicative skills can be altered vastly by the teacher's gender .

Sylvester (2004) did spotlight the great need for a thoroughly conducted study in order to examine "how the gendered subjectivities of men and women are not polar opposite, but complex, multiple, Interconnected, locally defined, and intrinsically connected to unequal power structures" (p.396). Our current Algerian classes are a blend of female and male learners and so are the ones entrusted to be their teachers. For sure, equality amongst male and female teachers is a matter of fact in terms of skills and capacities, but they are not necessarily identical. From what has already been stated, the effect of teacher gender on learners' oral proficiency is really worth investigating. There is need to answer the overwhelming question of which gender is the most adequate one for a teaching profession. This is important, especially that the teaching profession, in Algeria, becomes feminized.

Though scholars have started to make substantial inroads into understanding the impact of gender in the EFL classroom, little or non-existent research works have been done on this subject in Algeria. Though there are a lot of research works lavished on the oral skill, the effect of teacher gender on students' oral proficiency in not touched upon to the best of our knowledge.

## 2. Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate the effect of the teacher's gender on learners' oral proficiency. It seeks to uncover the role that a teacher's gender might play in fostering or hindering his learners' speaking skill development.

## 3. Significance of the Study

The research work we conduct aims at a fresh understanding of the effect of teachers' gender on students' oral skill proficiency development. This study aspires to help teachers have a deeper understanding of the gender variable as it will pave ways to serve learners' success by enhancing their speaking skill. The fact that female teachers and students outnumber their male counterparts and the reality of boys' underachievement urged us to examine whether gender counts or not in the oral skill advancement. Classes of opposite gender teachers, equal student numbers, parallel learners' level, and identical schooling conditions uncover yearly as they do daily the inharmonious ratio in covering the pre-stated speaking skill objectives. Some of the latter succeed vigorously while some fail astoundingly. This study would help broadening areas in understanding the true role the teacher gender may act when dealing with oral proficiency in a real EFL class.

**4. Research Questions**

As discussed earlier, the Algerian educational system is a blend of male and female teachers and students.  The following questions can be raised concerning what can affect the smoothness of teaching –learning processes and the oral skill in particular:

1-Does the teacher's gender have any effects on students' oral skill proficiency?

2-Does any frequency differences of teachers' interaction in classes, according to their gender, do exist in our secondary schools?

3-To what extent the Algerian secondary school atmosphere can be considered as a healthy one when it comes to gender equity?

4-Are students who are assigned to male teachers better than the ones assigned to female teachers. Alternatively, is it quite the vice versa?

**5. Research Hypothesis**

To reach the aim of our study and to answer our research questions, we hypothesize that the teacher's gender affects students' oral proficiency.

**6. Tools of Research**

In order to test the already stated hypothesis ,two tools of investigation have been used .A questionnaire has been administered to a sample of 100 secondary school learners hand in hand with a  questionnaires to a sample of twenty high school teachers (ten males and ten females) from different parts of the Algerian territory. We have opted for the questionnaire because it is one of the most practical methods that enables us to gather a large amount of data from a large number of people (100 students, 20 teachers). Also, the data gathered from the questionnaires can easily and quickly be quantified.

In addition to the questionnaire, an observation grid was used as a tool to observe objectively teachers as they interact with their learners in a real EFL classroom setting. The observation is a very direct method for collecting data, and it is one of the best ones for human and behavior studies. Another reason why we opted for the observation is to confirm or deny the findings from both learners' and teachers' questionnaires.

In fact, our research method is qualitative and not quantitative. We could have used the experimental method because it is considered as the best one for testing cause and effect relationship; however, it cannot test abstract variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). It was also impossible for us to use the quantitative method, because it could have been effort exhausting and time consuming.

**7-Structure of the Dissertation**

Our research work is divided into a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part is made up of three chapters which review the literature related to our investigated variables. The first chapter provides an overview of the concepts of teaching and gender. This chapter covers gender definitions, the distinctive features between gender and sex, the main tenets of teaching, and teacher's role. The second chapter of this dissertation sheds light on the speaking proficiency via reviewing its definition, importance, tasks to promote it, its hindrances, and the in-class interaction for a better speaking skill development. The last chapter of the theoretical part is a crucible which tries to discuss gender in relation to learning. It also attempts to figure out the relation between the teacher's gender and students' oral proficiency. Chapter four is an in-depth practical exploration of the above mentioned variables (teacher's gender and students' oral proficiency level) through the administration and analysis of learners' and teachers' questionnaires hand in hand with an observation of a sample of male and female teachers in real Algerian EFL classrooms.

# Chapter One: an Overview of the Concepts of Teaching and Gender

**Introduction**

The Algerian school is a crucible of intricate variables and a complex environment that consists mainly of learners and teachers who interact actively for a desirable proficiency to be attained. The first chapter aims at identifying and clarifying some key aspects related to our research work's key concepts, which are gender and the teacher. This is very important because it helps us see if one's gender has an effect on his/her method of teaching and his/her students' level of achievement.

**I Gender**

**1. Gender Definitions**

There is no one unique definition to the term gender since every researcher defines it in consonance with his or her interest field. So, as to comprehensibly define it, various definitions are in need to be tackled.

**1.1. Dictionary Definition**

The Oxford online dictionary defines the term gender as the state of being male or female, which is typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. On the other hand, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as the sum of behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex.

**1.2. Sociological Definition**

Baker (2013, p.140) regarded biological sex as being far different from gender. Gender, according to him, is that set of social roles that makes someone male, female, or even of another role in their own society. Gender identities, in such a glance, are too fluid and may

depend on one's age, social situation, and may be influenced to some extent by biological determinants such as genitalia. From such a perspective, the person's physical characteristics may not matter in the role he or she may assume. For instance, a physically female person may embrace a male's traditional role in some societies and vice versa. To put it another way, not all women are necessarily feminine and men are masculine. Sometimes, there is a toppling and destabilization of the traditional gender roles. The sobering reality is that Algerian men become effeminate while women become more assertive.

Zimmerman (1987, p.125) argued that gender is mainly a part of one's own physical appearance; the fact is that gender definitions should be built on the basis of shared cultural values and thus attributed objectively rather than subjectively according to the role played by the individual. Hitherto, it will depend on how everybody treats the targeted person and how this person assume his role, how he does address his identity to determine his gender. Gender, in few words, is ultimately up to socialization (Zimmerman, 1987, p.125). In other words, the sociological view of gender is based on the premise that social standards of masculinity and femininity are imposed on all biological men and women.

## 1.3. Psychological view of Gender

From a psychological perspective, gender is seen as somehow identical to the sociological view. Psychologists agree on the isthmi separating gender from sex. They refer to the former as masculinity and femininity that are determined by one's culture (Andrew, 2010). Therefore, male and female definitions are subject to difference across countries, societies, and even subcultures. Together, all of these socially defined expectations make up the gender roles for masculinity and femininity. An example of gender can be spotted in New Guinean tribe where masculinity is measured according to the number of elk that a tribesman

has hunted, whereas in America some might define masculinity according to how much fortune one makes or how much weight one can lift.

Unger (2001, p.73) defines gender to be the set of characteristics and traits socio-culturally considered appropriate to males and females. According to cognitive development, one's gender is to be achieved by the child and fixed irreversibly via modeling the same gender act. In other words, gender identity is constructed via vicarious learning, like Unger, Butler (1997, p.144) argues that gender is produced as a ritualized repetition of conventions, and that this ritual is socially compelled. While sex pertains to what is biologically inherited, gender pertains to what is learned culturally and socially too. From this gender functions under the norm of universality of categorization

## 2. Gender Differences

### 2.1. Gender vs. sex Differences

Gender and sex are two different terms with too different meanings that are used vastly by language users interchangeably, the thing that may lead to semiotic misunderstanding between language users. The word gender is believed to be a much softer and politer way to address one's own characteristics in terms of the role played or believed to be played by a member socially and/or culturally. Gender role is mainly a picturesque of feminine and masculine performance according to one's social norms, expectations, and stereotypes. However, sex is believed to be a much naked term which is used to refer to the biological differences among males and females. By differences, here, we mean the concrete physical appearance, that is biological qualities.

Diamond (2002, p.457) stated that sex is an indication of physical or physiological disparity between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity. Gender is

a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female. Gender identity is the extent to which one identifies himself/herself as being either masculine or feminine.

A person's sex does not always come in a harmonious way with his or her developed gender. Therefore, the terms sex and gender are not interchangeable. A baby boy who is born with male genitalia and physical appearance will be identified as male. It is a matter of fact that sex signifier is of a shared signified between different human societies. For example, all male persons, in general, regardless of culture, will eventually experience muscle enlargement and develop facial hair. Characteristics of gender, on the other hand, may vary greatly unspeakably between societies (Diamond, 2002, p.461). For example, in American culture, it is considered as feminine (or a trait of the female gender) to wear a dress or skirt. However, in many Middle Eastern, Asian, and even African cultures, dresses or skirts (often referred to as sarongs, robes, or gowns) can be seen as a masculine factor. The kilt worn by a Scottish male does not make him appear feminine in his culture; in fact, it is all the masculinity that one can act out by the Scottish.

## 2.2. Gender Psychological Differences

It is well known that there are many differences between males and females. These differences go beyond what a naked eye can spot. They also go beyond what an ear can see, taking its nature beneath and in every aspect that makes us the ones we are, as humans. Research has revealed major divergences between male and female brains.

Psychologically speaking, cross-gender brain differences are of two main branches. One of which is related to the brain side and how it functions in the two genders, while the second dress itself in a behavioral nature. That is how behavior vary from one gender to another (Jantz, 2014, para.1).

The differences between male and female brains show up all over the world, but some exceptions to every so-called gender rule was discovered by scientists (Jantz, 2014,para.2). One might find some boys who are very sensitive, immensely talkative about feelings, and just generally do not seem to fit boys' way of doing things. As it is with different genders, there is no such ways as better and worse in doing things. The following will display some simply generalized differences in brain functioning, and it counts a lot to remember that all and every difference has some advantages as well as disadvantages to be played (Jantz, 2014, para.2).

**2.2.1 Processing**

Savic (2010, P. 5) explained that our brains contain what is called "Gray matter", which refers to the spots used to analyze and process various data. Such spots had been proven to be used differently by males and females, and they exist in various proportions as well.

According to Savic (2010, p. 5), gray matter areas of the brain are localized. They are responsible for information- and action-processing centers in specific splotches in a specific area of the brain. The brain's gray matter can be seen in some tunnels vision when they do something. Such tunnels, when deeply engaged in a task, may marginalize their sensitivity to other surrounding like people around.

According to Frith (2014, p. 22), brain analysis shows that women have more white matter and men more gray matter related to intellectual skill. This reveals that no single neuroanatomical structure determines general intelligence and that different types of brain designs are capable of producing equivalent intellectual performance, yet cannot be said to be identical. Girls tend to make transition between tasks more quickly than boys do. Allen

(2009, p. 221) pointed out that the gray-white matter difference may explain why, in adulthood, females are great multi-taskers, while men excel in highly task-focused projects.

Sprenger (2010, p.194) demonstrated that females' brains integrate information from different areas in the brain, the thing that allows them to master many language abilities such as listening, talking, and communication. Female gray matter analyses show that they are even allowed to reach levels males are too far to even get close to. It encourages them to utilize relationships so as to reach their goals. Gray matter also allows them to make good use of memory centers on both hemispheres. While in work, they can process the work at hand in concordance with the people, and the context elements that surrounds the objective targeted. They are in few words gifted empathizers and multitaskers.

From another perspective, Cohan (2003, p. 5) claimed that males systemize, generally, to a larger degree than females. They tend to cooperate better in large groups. On average, males score better than females at certain spatial tasks. Specifically, males have an advantage in some sort of tests that require the mental rotation or manipulation of an object. Males also tend to outperform females in mathematical reasoning, while females do far better than males in verbal intelligence, yet odd cases might exist. Concerning decision making, females exhibit a tendency to be guided by avoidance of negativity while decision making in males is mainly guided by assessing the long term outcome of a situation (Halpern et al., 2007)

**2.2.2 Chemistry**

In terms of neurochemicales, males and females process exactly the same things, yet in different proportions and through gender-specific body connections (Jantz, 2013, para.6). Some dominant neurochemicals are 'serotonin', which, among other things, helps us sit still; testosterone, our sex and aggression chemical; 'estrogen' is female growth and reproductive

chemical; and oxytocin is a bonding-relationship chemical. These all together are the fuel that make us what we are, and they construct our responses the way they are whether female or male ones.

In part, owing to differences in processing these chemicals, males, on average, tend to be less inclined to sit still for as long as females. They tend to be more physically impulsive and aggressive. Additionally, males process less oxytocin chemical than females. Overall, it is such chemical processing that rise the need to deal with boys in a way different than educators and parents deal with girls especially in terms of stress situations (Jantz, 2013, para.7).

**2.3. Gender Societal Roles**

As defined by Greenwood Dictionary of Education, gender roles are the set of roles, behaviors, and expectations assigned to males and females by societies and cultures (Collins & O'Brien, 2011, p.198). For example, traditional gender roles in the United States delineated men as providing for the family economically by working outside of the home and women as attending to domestic tasks, including child bearing. In contemporary society, there is greater acceptance of females performing traditionally male roles than males performing female roles. Many present-day religious and cultural groups are based on traditional gender role expectations.

Gender roles are determined by the specific social roles occupied by women and men in a society. In contrary to sex definition, some gender roles may differ greatly from one society to another. Women work almost exclusively in the home, taking care of all domestic chores. Anything that involves leaving the house is taken care of by men, including shopping. According to Collins and O'Brien (2011), only 7 percent of women work outside the home.

Most of these jobs are traditionally female professions such as secretarial work, teaching, or nursing. However, this 7 percent does not include women who work in agriculture. It is common for women as well as men to work in the fields. Women are allowed to run for public office, but such attempts are still extremely rare.

As in Arabic culture in general, women in Algeria are to a large extent still considered weaker than men, and in need of a male protection. Men are entrusted with the most important decisions related to family. Women live in a very confined circle of house and family, they and are deprived of that male freedom of visiting that place or another or staying out without permission and a trusted family companion. Their only contact aside from male family members is with other women. Men, on the other hand, have a much broader sphere, which includes the mosque, the streets, marketplaces, and coffee shops.

The Berbers have their own concepts and practices regarding gender, which vary widely among the different groups. The role of Kabyle women is most similar to the Arabic tradition; they are unable to inherit property or to remarry without the consent of the husband who divorced them though some changes can be noticed in recent times. The M'zabites advocate social equality and literacy for men and women within their villages but do not allow the women to leave these confines.

From the division of labor in society, most social behavior is embedded in the performance of specific roles. In all cultures, women and men tend to specialize in different behaviors. People have different beliefs to what males and females have to or had better to do. These beliefs, all together, yield in shared stereotypes within a society in terms of the social role of the two genders. In essence, gender roles are reflected in a society's stereotypes about men and women (Wendy & Eagly, 2009, p.630). Thus, women may be viewed as kind and compassionate and men as bold and fearless. These gender stereotypes may have their

expansion to the various skills, associating some skills with women while considering others men's field of expertise. For instance, women are referred to as having the ability to cook , clean and take care of children and men to take care of crops.

Roles are schemas, or abstract knowledge structures, pertaining to a group of people. When role schemas are shared among members of a society, they constitute structures at the societal level, as well as the individual level. Roles are, thus, symbolic aspects of the social structure, which consists of persisting and bounded patterns of behavior and social interaction (Levine & Hogg, 2001). Gender roles, like roles based on group memberships such as age, social class, and race, apply to many aspects of daily life. Deaux and LaFrance (1998) compared gender to air, as a never-present part of people's experience. By contrast, roles that are more specifically based on factors such as family relationships (e.g., father or daughter) and occupations (e.g., teacher or police officer) are relevant mainly to behavior in a particular social context. For example, occupational roles are pertinent mostly at work.

Gender roles are not of a neutral nature; they may change from one society to another. A role that is defined as feminine, in a European country can be seen as nonnegotiable masculine in an Asian one. These intersections of gender roles with other roles lead complexity concerning the behavior of some female and male members. Gender roles specify how a woman or man usually acts and what they should perform. Roles are descriptive, prescriptive, and possibly injunctive (Levin & Hogg, 2009, p. 41). Gender roles may stand as an obligation in some cultures, and if a gender is seen as responsible for that role but opposes the society's expectation in terms of doing or not doing it, that opposition may lead to some sort of social punishment whether in material form or in the form of moral sanction.

Levin and Hogg (2009) stated that gender roles are of powerful influence on individuals who consider them as he/she strives to reach important goals, enhance their self-

esteem, and gain approval and acceptance from others. Even without conscious awareness of gender roles, individuals have strict mental associations about men and women samples that guide their thoughts and behaviors and help maintain traditional arrangements. However, not every sample is a trustworthy one. Because masculine and feminine associations are elicited automatically by cues related to gender, these associations influence virtually all social interaction (Levin & Hogg, 2009).

Violating others' expectations about male or female expected behavior could bring negative feedbacks, whereas meeting their pre-conceived expectations can bring rewards of social acceptance and cooperation. In an Algerian context, a female is expected to be a house worker, someone who takes care of cleaning and cooking and not the one who acts as a taxi driver or a builder. The latter can yield some aggressive behaviors toward such females and the least could be verbal harassment. In addition, living according to one's own gender identity can yield rewards of self-esteem and satisfaction. Although the change of gender role can defuse traditional norms and societal expectations about how men and women should behave and thus allow more behavioral flexibility, other consequences include ambiguity, confusion, and debates concerning what must be the role and deed of some gender in his/her society (Eckes &Trautner ,2012,p.64). In fact, the change in gender roles can even lead to psychological problems.

## II Teaching

## 1. Definition of Teaching

Teaching is a multifaceted activity, which often requires instructors to tackle multiple tasks and goals simultaneously and flexibly. Teaching is a word that is simple to be uttered but hard to be manifested. Gage (1969, para. 2) maintained that teaching is a form of

interpersonal influence which aims at changing the behavior potential of another person. Additionally, Brubacher (1979) defined teaching as an arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which an individual will seek to overcome and from which he will learn in the course of doing so. Hence, teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and making specific interventions to help them learn particular things.

The act of teaching primarily involves class room talk which takes place between the teacher and his/her pupils, and it occurs during a certain definable activity, taking into its perspectives not only and blindly the learner's own interest but the various needs of the pillars building up this learner's environment too.

For teaching to take place, all we need is a student, a teacher and some log to sit on. The log here stands for the tools an instructor as well as the learner is in need to attain the objective(s) targeted (Parini, 2011, para.1). One sees that the teaching triangle below has for its vertices the tools, the teacher and the student. All three are essential for teaching to happen successfully. However, what ties together all these three vertices is the subject of discussion. Thus, it is more of a pyramid with the subject of discussion forming the fourth vertex (Parini, 2011, para. 2).
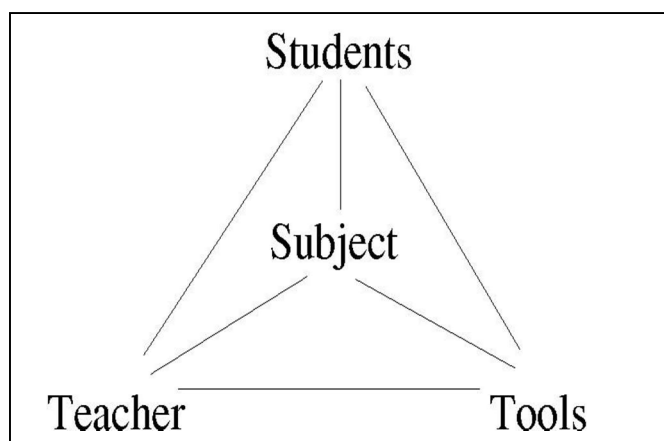

**Figure 1: The Teaching Pyramid**

## 2. Characteristics of a Teacher

If we refer to a dictionary definition of the term teacher, for instance Meriam-webster online dictionary, it would be stated that he is the one that teaches; especially *o*ne whose occupation is to instruct. Yet, for sure, the actual role a teacher assumes exceeds that unspeakably.

The issue of defining a teacher and what makes a person a real teacher has been extravagantly discussed before the days and decades Socrates tackled the matter. For Socrates, teaching is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based mainly on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and the underlying presumptions. A teacher, for Socrates, is not seen as the source of knowledge or the most knowledgeable group member. For him, a true teacher is a guider and nurturer of the child's mind (Garlikov, 2011). The teacher is no longer the purveyor of encyclopedic knowledge, as he was perceived in the tradition method of teaching which used to put the teacher at the center and the student at the periphery. Now, with the increasing calls for a learner-centered approach, the teacher becomes a partner in the teaching-learning process. He/she helps stir discussions in the classroom to make learners more involved, but he/she is not expected to have an authoritative role that makes learners feel marginalized. For Nyerere (1966, p. 5), the teacher is

> the only person who is capable of imparting knowledge and shaping the youths to the wider scope of knowledge. Teachers are capable of living and molding the youths such that their power is paramount as they determine the fate of the society. Both teachers and parents live with the children for a long time and hence they are capable of imparting knowledge, skills and values that cannot be easily challenged by the society.

Nyeree (1966) posited that the role of teacher exceeds knowledge providing to value implementing and skill nurturing. Teachers can shape the personality of their students. In fact, they are able to exert a radical change in the society because they may influence students' attitudes and their behaviors. Thus, great teachers can help develop and civilize their societies. Gardner (1986), though not referring to teaching and teachers exclusively, preached another theory that paved the way to a teaching experience turn-about. In his Multiple Intelligences theory, he claimed the differences our learners are subject to and the great need of the small family as well as the vast society to respect and to welcome them. A teacher, according to learning styles' advocates, is an orchestra man who should know the value and the role of every and each member in his class. He needs to know the uniqueness of every mind and the unseen color of it since a wee unawareness of a learners' unique design style is a merciless death sentence to that learner (Armstrong, 2009). For a teacher to be successful in helping his learners develop in their learning, an understanding of their learning styles is quite important. Teachers must teach the way their learners learn better. They must color their lessons in the way their students understand most. Teaching practices that are egocentric are doomed to failure.

**3. Characteristics of a Successful Teacher**

According to Miller (1987), knowledge accumulation is the pillar that may deliver a good teacher; it is the one that can make the teaching learning experience a pleasant one. For Miller the main element in building that skillful teacher is his own perspective about himself/herself. A great teacher should keep on being an eager learner. He should believe that the task of learning cannot be sealed or ended. A teacher may benefit a lot from his own students and the peer school staff learning from each other's mistakes and accomplishments.

Miller summarized the teacher characteristics in ten qualities. The more a teacher can be of them, the more his teaching would inspire and the greater his teaching can positively

affect learners (1987, pp. 36-38). The first of the characteristics needed to be present in a teacher's character is enthusiasm for his teaching. Enthusiasm here refers to the love manifested to the students and the work a teacher does. Acting in an undesirable profession will motivate in no way to provide one's students with the needed learning passion. Doing a job that is not one's first desire is likely to end in making students hate the subject matter and even the teacher. Second, a teacher must be creative; he must not be a robotic creature that follows blindly a textbook or a teaching approach. Teaching must be more than simply opening a book, doing exercises, and following an outline written by someone else. In the tedium of repetition, the student can go through the motions of doing the exercises without his mind, his curiosity and motivation being present.

A successful teacher must also have a sense of humor in the class. That humor is of educational colors that can alleviate nervousness, reduce affective filter and create an atmosphere of trust and belonging to a class family. As Krashen (1988) said, when the affective filters of the students are low, acquisition would be facilitated and successful. Krashen (1998) claimed that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up', it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own for acquisition to take place (Krashen, 1998).

Moreover, a teacher must be a challenger, someone who raises the students' confidence concerning the topic under discussion. A teacher switching codes with his learners shows that he trusts their level, and he believes that they can do better. Challenging a learner's level is a way to move smoothly with them from the achieved to the wanted to be

achieved objective. Speaking in the target language to the learner prepares and challenges him to speak in that language. Another important characteristic is that a teacher needs to be encouraging and patient. A successful teacher demonstrates an incredible level of patience with all the students, and he never shows the smallest traces of displeasure to cross their faces. On the other hand, encouragement must always be present so as to break ice and offer a learner the push he needs to practice and overcome his own learning challenges.

A great teacher must also show his interest in his learners as being of a great importance and not just list numbers that he must deal with. He should always bear in mind that inside the learner there is a human being. Discussing topics of interest to learners tighten the relation and the trust scope among the learner and his/her educator. Hobbies, family, travel and the like could matter more and weigh better for a successful lesson that rigidly rough grammar points. Students are more likely to be interested in subjects that are relevant to their real life. A teacher's competence in his subject matter is an essential element too. The great teacher must be of knowledge that allows him to master the class and to be seen as the unmistaken leader. That does not mean closing rooms of discussion, but it means the intangible and wise answers when needed, and clarifications when asked for by learners as Einstein stated it once "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough"(as cited in Lau, 2011, p. 13).

Allocating a few minutes to cover learners' inquiries, asking and answering their questions can be of a great influence and importance to them. Teachers may also check what learners did on their own in order to guide, witness their advance, encourage their autonomous learning, and most of all appreciate their efforts. Teachers should encourage students not only to study what is required, but also to pursue on their own areas of interest and their own pace as well.  When acting on that basis, a successful teacher must leave no feeling of discrimination among learners. He/ she must act on an equal basis with all the

members of the class regardless of their gender, marital status, race, or educational background. Any sign of marginalization or group prejudice would be discouraging to the student, and that is not conducive to progress. Teachers must look carefully at their classes to be certain that they are including everyone equally.

Finally, it is advised that teachers leave their negative emotional baggage outside the classroom. The classroom is a stage and teachers should not hold any stereotype; they must, in many cases, be actors. He/she must choose the best strategy and adopt the fittest way according to the situations encountered in class to make sure that he/she is not blocking any learning or acquisition that might take place.

## 4. The Teacher's Roles

A good teacher's characteristics are molded by his awareness of the roles he must respect and perform as perfectly as possible. Teachers' roles have been subject to change in a parallel way with the change of the various pedagogical assumptions, scientific discoveries, technological advance, economic status, social and cultural needs. (Sindhi & Shah, 2013, para. 1, 2).

Over the past decade, teachers have adapted colorfully to the demands of the new-age learner commendably. The new world transformations have left teachers with few options. It will not be enough for a teacher to be that old character of knowledge provider, class authority, and a group leader. The role of the teacher, and the approach to teaching, has evolved. Even Darwin would have raised an eyebrow at the speed of this evolution (Khambatta, 2012).

Harmer (2001) described teachers, generally, as being actors, orchestral conductors, and gardeners. The teaching profession requires them to be able to cover the various personalities and characters, whether the learner is introverts, extroverts, kinesthetic, visuals

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and even spacial. The teacher must be of readiness to address him/her the way he learns best (2001, p. 1). Harmer summarized the roles that teachers must cope with for a successful teaching in eight influential elements, as will be clarified in what follows:

First, a teacher must be a controller of his entrusted classes. Transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the pupils is not the most ranked role. A controller here is in terms of facilitating the knowledge to be transmitted and giving an equal chance for every student to practice and satisfy his learning needs whether it is in inquiring or recasting his understanding.

Secondly, a teacher must be an organizer of the in-class activities and learning phases. Teachers must organize the lesson's targeted, objectives, how to do the activity, and when to request students to work in pairs or groups. These tasks are important to get full advantage of in order to avoid chaos. The teacher must help students get involved and ready. He must speak an accurate language and present instructions in a logical order. Being organized could include within its scoop students' in-class interaction, feedback, engagement, initiation, and practice time and form.

Third, an important role of the teacher is that of being an assessor. By assessing learners, the teacher can compare their needs to their accomplished learning objectives. Thus, this enables him to know what must be remedied. Pupils should know what teachers are looking for and what success looks like.

Moreover, a teacher must be a prompter. It is in the sense of giving the right push so as the learner's zeal will not dim away. If pupils lose the thread of what is going on or they are lost for words, teachers may nudge them forward in a discreet and supportive way. Educators want to help, but not to take over. Taking the initiative away from the pupil is of a great influence since if it is not done wisely, it will negatively affect the learner in hand.

Though participation is greatly expected from the part of the learner; it is still a major role of the teacher as well. The traditional picture of a teacher sitting on a desk, letting learners get on with some activity, and later giving feedback and/or correcting mistakes is no more valid in today's teaching. Sometimes the teacher should join in –not as a teacher but as a participant and a peer in order to pave and guide learning. He must enliven things from the inside instead of organize from the outside. Yet, teachers should cautiously participate; otherwise, they will dominate and turn the session into a teacher talking time only.

Furthermore, teachers should be authentic resources. They should be helpful and available but, at the same time, resist the urge to spoon-feed the pupils because they become over-reliant on them. Teachers need to offer guidance to where their students can go and look for the information. Teachers are also expected to help their students to become more independent in their learning generally. Being a resource does not mean in any way the one who never says "I do not know"; it is okay to say, "I don't know, but I'll tell you tomorrow."

Sometimes it is not enough for a teacher to be a teacher only. He should dress in a tutor role. Teachers should better work with individuals or small groups, combining the roles of prompter and resource by participating in their learners' activities and by asking and working side to side with them. A contact that is more personal gives the learners a real chance to feel supported and helped, but it must be conducted rationally keeping the balance between the personal and the professional. A tutor would show up the times learners of specific needs ask for help implicitly or implicitly such as slow learners or those who exhibit shortage in some language skills.

Finally, yet importantly, a good teacher is supposed to be an observer. Teachers should always observe what the pupils do – especially in oral communicative activities – to be able to give them useful feedback. That role of an observer will allow teachers to plan for future in-class activities and remedial tasks so as to scaffold learners' learning. When taking

notes on pupils' performance, teachers should highlight not only what learners get wrong, but also what they do right. Observing, for success, gives teachers a different feeling of how well they are doing. Teachers need to be able to work and observe simultaneously, listening, watching, and absorbing. Observation is not only for the sake of learner scores and development. It is a teaching strategy to have a self-correction of lesson phases and tasks that did not work as expected. Thus, teachers can make necessary changes and improvements in the future.

**Conclusion**

Basically, the aim of teaching is to make learning simple and attainable. To teach, it is not enough to know very well the subject that is taught. Probably, one of the most important requirements is to know the students and the way that helps them learn better. A teacher's role is greater than transferring data from one mind to another. In fact, it surpasses behavior changing to building society and creating a glorious future. Another key concept that was discussed in this chapter is gender. It was important to explain this concept and its main aspects to clarify and pave the path to our main purpose which is the investigation of whether teachers' gender has any effects on the students' oral proficiency. So, it was important to discuss teaching and the qualities of a good teacher to see, later, if male and female teachers differ in these qualities.

# Chapter Two: Learners' Oral Proficiency

**Introduction**

Learning how to speak is very essential in foreign language learning. It is considered as a tool of communication with which one's thoughts and ideas are transferred and turned into language. The following chapter encompasses the definition of speaking, its nature, components of speaking proficiency, and some factors that affect EFL learners' oral communication. It also covers the speaking tasks and the types of activities that promote the speaking skill. In addition to that, the chapter tackles some problems that might hinder oral proficiency.

**1. Definition of Speaking**

The concept of speaking seems to be very common and well known by almost every one, yet no clear definition was given or agreed upon to be the exact one. In order to clarify it, here are some definitions of speaking given by researchers in the field: Hedge (2000, p, 261) gave a definition to speaking as follows "a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed." That is to say, speaking is an important skill which is attention-demanding in both first and second language learning. In Bygate's view, "Speaking skill is the ability in using oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts and feelings to other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the hearer,"(1987, p. 2).

Speaking can also be defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves   producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). We speak for many purposes, in order to be understood by others, to share ideas and feelings, to express an opinion, and to respond to what has already been said by others. In

other words, we speak in order to be sociable. Brown (2001) claimed that speaking a language means that we can carry out a conversation successfully.

However, students' speech in the classroom is very different and more complex than speaking in the casual contexts. Students rely on the classroom to improve their language mastery and speaking proficiency. Indeed, speaking proficiency is a very hard task which requires time and huge efforts to be made .The students may master the rules of grammar, vocabulary of the target language, but this does not guarantee that they will be able to speak effectively in that language because speaking is a high complex skill for EFL learners.

## 2. The Importance of Speaking

Speaking is of a great importance to EFL learners. It is an essential skill for communication. Actually, speaking is usually a priority for most English learners (Florez, 1999). In-order to become a good language speaker, one needs to be proficient in each of the four language skills viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing, but the ability to speak skillfully, provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. The capacity to express one's thoughts, opinions and feelings, in the form of words put together in a meaningful way, provides the speaker with the following advantages. The joy of sharing one's ideas with others is immense. When we speak to others we come to have a better understanding of our own selves. Undoubtedly, the clarity in speech reflects clear thinking. Ur (1996) claimed that speaking is the most important skill among the four skills because people who use a certain language are called speakers of that language. In other words, being able to use the language in real life situation is considered to be more important than knowing about it and its rules. Scrivener (1994) stated that the ultimate aim of learning a language is putting it into practice. Without the ability of using and practicing the language, there is no point in learning it. Therefore, teachers must emphasize and focus on the students' oral proficiency in order to allow them to speak and express their ideas and thoughts by eliminating and minimizing all

obstacles and the threats that hinder their oral proficiency. As Willis suggested:" Learners need chances to say what they think or feel  and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened"**(**1996, p. 7).

**3. Components Underlying Speaking Effectively**

Communicative competence is the intuitive functional knowledge and control of the principles of language usage. As Hymes observed:

> A normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others (Hymes, 1972, p.277).

> Carrasquillo (1994, p, 65) claimed that language proficiency is not a construct having

only one dimension  but a very complex, multifaceted modality consisting of different levels of abilities and domains. Hymes (1971) assumed that the linguistic knowledge is not the only thing needed by second language learners to master the language, he suggested in his theory of communicative competence a set of components which are necessary for any language learner, these components are the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and probabilistic language components. Canale and Swain (1980) came up with their theory based on Hymes's one and included grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences.

**3.1. Grammatical Competence**

Gao (2001) assumed that the focus of the grammatical competence is on the command of language code, where rules of words and sentences formation, meaning, spelling, and pronunciation are included. The ultimate goal is knowledge, the use of that knowledge, and the correctness and accuracy of the language used, (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010; Gao, 2001). Second language production accuracy and fluency are promoted and fostered by the

grammatical competence possesssed by the language learner (Gao, 2001). Díaz-Rico & Weed (2010) assumed that the importance of the grammatical competence increases with the learners' advancement in their proficiency in using the language. Larsen-Freeman (2001) pointed out that a huge attention should be paid to the three dimensions of grammar: meaning, form, and use. They claimed that the teaching of grammar rules will not help student acquire the grammatical competence, and that learners' lack of the grammar competence will hinder their capacities and proficiency in language, especially their oral skills and communicative competence. Learners must know how proper grammar is important in communication, and its various benefits in enhancing their oral skills. First of all, it improves the skills of expressions. Grammar is a part of the language competence, hence, to obtain an effective communication skills, the learner should pay attention to the grammar he uses. Second, grammar is very important as it helps increase accuracy. It accustoms the learner to language accuracy, and slowly, to accuracy of thinking.

**3.2. Sociolinguistic Competence**

Sociolinguistic competence is one of the components of communicative competence alongside linguistic, discourse and strategic competences. Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of sociocultural rules of use, i.e. knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately. The appropriateness depends on the setting of the communication, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Moreover, being appropriate depends on knowing what the taboos of the other culture are, what politeness indices are used in each case, what the politically correct term would be for some notion, how a specific attitude (authority, friendliness, courtesy, irony, etc.) is expressed, (Elvira Koran, 2016).

In order to express oneself in a second or a foreign language in today's world of globalization is becoming a vital skill. Mizne (2007) assumed that being capable of using the language in a set of situational contexts, such as talking in formal settings, is a sign of the

speaker's fluency. However, no matter how long the learner is exposed to the target language, difficulties in expressing the language to a native speaker in different social settings are always faced. Grammar correctness is not enough for the speaker to convey his intended meaning without knowledge about the social meaning communicated in the target context. Kramsh (2014, p.13) stated:

> There has never been a greater tension between what is taught in the classroom and what the students will need in the real world once they have left the classroom. In the last decades, that world has changed to such an extent that language teachers are no longer sure of what they are supposed to teach nor what real world situations they are supposed to prepare their students for

Yu (2006) emphasized that learning a second or a foreign language is a very holistic process in which discourse, structural, and strategic competences are not enough for achieving language proficiency. Learners have to possess and internalize sociolinguistic rules which help them choose the appropriate forms when communicating with others in different social contexts.

**3.3. Discourse Competence**

Fairclough defined discourse as a particular view of language in use, as an element of social life, which is closely interconnected, with other elements. (2004, p. 3). He went to further to state that discourses are:

Ways of representing aspects of the world: processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world... Different discourses are different perspectives of the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people.... Discourses constitute part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another- keeping separate from one another, cooperating, competing, dominating and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another (2004, p.124).

Discourse competence can be understood as the ability to understand and produce the range of spoken, written and visual texts that are characteristics of a language. Basically, discourse competence is to know how to interpret the larger content and how to construct longer stretches of language, so that the parts together make up a whole coherent unit. Discourse competence differs from the norm. This term also refers to a speaker's knowledge of the rules governing a language.

### 3.4. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence refers to a speaker's ability to adapt their use of verbal and nonverbal language to compensate for communication problems caused by the speaker's lack of understanding of proper grammar use and/or insufficient knowledge of social behavioral and communication norms. Strategic competence, along with grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence constitute a framework for determining a language learner's proficiency in communication as posited by Canale and Swain (1980). A fourth component, discourse competence, was later added by Canale (1983). Together, these four competencies are considered mainstays of modern theory on second-language acquisition (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006).Essentially, any speaker using techniques intended to preserve communication, repair breakdowns in communication, or prevent miscommunication, can be considered to be

demonstrating strategic competence. Some examples of behaviors demonstrating strategic competence include using synonyms to substitute for words the speaker cannot recall or has not yet learned, resorting to physical gestures to convey meaning, asking for clarification from the listener, raising one's voice in order to be heard, and feigning comprehension in order to listen for context clues.

**4. Characteristics of Successful Speaking Tasks**

The term 'task' have many different definitions given by different researchers Bialystok (1983, p. 103) argued that the communication task must induce the communicative exchange, provide stimulant for the L2 speaker and fulfill all the requirements to be used for the goals of the experiment. To consider a speaking activity successful, many characteristics are required as it should satisfy criteria of learning. Ur (1988, p. 120) gave some criteria that are important for any speaking activity to be successful:

1.  Learners talk a lot: students talking time must be increased as much as possible to allow students to use the language.

2.  Participation equity: the classroom talk should not be dominated by a minority of talkative students. All students must be given the same chances to talk and express themselves.

3.  High motivated students: motivation plays an important role in pushing the learners to speak about the subject-matter being discussed.

4.  The language used is of an acceptable level: the learners' output should be relevant, comprehensible to theirs, and of an acceptable accuracy level.

Olshtain and Celce-Murica (2000, p. 176) suggested that a classroom activity has to provide learners with a real opportunity to get individual meanings across. Moreover, the learner should benefit from every area of that knowledge in second or foreign language.

Furthermore, learners should be motivated and encouraged to use the possessed knowledge flexibly, while sustaining the communicative goals addressed.

Thombury (2006, p. 90-91) claimed that speaking activities aiming at increasing learners' autonomy should be:

1. Productive: a good learners' language output should be a feature of a good activity. An activity in which the learners are being passive and non- productive can never be a good activity.

2 Purposeful: setting a clear purpose for the activity will increase the language productivity of learners because they are all working together to achieve the same purpose.

3. Interactive: students talking time should be equally divided on students fairly without any kind of domination of minorities in the classroom.

4. Challenging: one of the characteristics of a good activity is that it must increase the learners' motivation to use their language. In this case, the degree of the activity difficulty must be examined carefully and adjusted when necessary by teachers.

5. Safe: learners' self-confidence is highly recommended when performing tasks. Ie classroom conditions should help learners accomplish their activity by avoiding judgmental attitudes to errors on the part of the teacher.

6. Authentic: both variation of the speaking activities and the resemblance to real-life language use are required. The classroom activities which resemble real life situations will make students experience a kind of classroom communication that is the same as communicating outside.

**5. Problems Hindering the Proficiency Achievement**

During their learning of speaking, students are targets to several problems that hinder their proficiency achievement. Teachers are obliged to figure out those factors that influence their students' oral proficiency. Students' speaking performance is a very sensitive process

that can be affected by the performance conditions in which the learning of the language is taking place.

## 5.1. Performance Conditions

Nation and newton (2009) believed that student perform the speaking tasks under a variety of conditions. Their speaking performance is highly influenced by those conditions. Nation and Newton suggested four factors affecting the speaking performance: time pressure, planning, the standard of performance and the amount of support.

The amount of time given to the students to answer a question or to solve a given problem is very crucial. Being limited by time influences the learners' oral production, and limits their thinking and analyzing abilities.

## 5.2. Affective Factors

Traditional approaches to teaching did not give great importance to the affective variables, thought, they are cardinal factors for academic achievements. Recent theories of learning try to delve into the inner side of the learners, because ignoring their affective side is likely to result in their failure. Oxford (1990) claimed that the affective side of the learner is one of the most crucial factors determining the language learning success or failure. Krashen (1982) stated that the three variables (motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety) are deeply related to the learners' second language acquisition success.

### 5.2.1 Motivation

Jordan (2008) posited that if learners are energetic to learn, they will learn and perform successfully. The role of motivation and its importance has been and will always be stressed for successful learning to take place. It is also assumed that motivated students do outperform non-motivated ones in their learning achievements.

Through the history of research many definitions have been given to motivation. Brown (2000, p. 160) defined it as: ''quite the anticipation of reward''. Lee (2005, p.330) proposed another definition: "The source behind behavior and provides an explanation for why people do things". Thus, motivation is a fundamental factor that controls students' behaviors and affect their attitudes towards learning. Though there is little agreement among experts on the exact meaning of motivation, what most researchers seem to agree upon is that motivation is one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning. Basically, motivation refers to the force or stimuli, whether internal or external, that direct individuals and energize them to act.

Nunan (1999), with regard to the issue of motivation in learning, confirmed that students' motivation is the main key by which learners' readiness and willingness to learn and communicate are triggered. Babu (2010) argued that students' reluctance and hesitation to speak English can be caused by their lack of motivation. He announced that students' motivation have a direct impact on their learning, especially if they are not motivated and encouraged by their teachers to get involved and take risks. The teachers' role in motivating the students is of a significant importance as motivation itself. Teachers are asked to have passion, creativity and interest in their students.

Schumann (1986) claimed that motivation is the force that initiates learning and enhances it. Highly motivated learners are provoked to use and interact using the target language. Brown (2000) divided motivation into two separate categories intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the performance of a task or an activity simply because of the pleasure and satisfaction that accompany the action. The reason for learners, in this case, is linked to the individuals' positive feelings when learning. Extrinsic motivation is when learners study the language for an extrinsic reason like getting good marks, pleasing one's teacher or parents, or showing off. Extrinsically motivated learners, unlike those who

are intrinsically oriented, perform the behavior because of extrinsic stimuli and not because of an inherent interest. However, successful learning is highly influenced and affected by the degree of motivation an individual learner possesses, Gardner (1998).

**5.2.2 Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is the person's evaluation of his self or his attitude to the self. Beane, Lipka and Richard (1986, p. 6) define self-esteem as, "the evaluation one makes of the self-concept description, and more specifically, to the degree to which one is satisfied or dissatisfied with it, in whole or in part. Thus, values such as interests, beliefs, and attitudes are considered to be the basis of the person's self-esteem. It is the reflection of the individual's view of self-worth and self-appreciation. Oxford (1990, p. 141) defined self-esteem as: "a self-judgment of worth or value, based on a feeling of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one's own environment." Brown (2007, p. 154) defined self-esteem as:

> The most pervasive aspect of the human behavior, It could easily be claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself and self-efficacy belief in your own capacities to successfully perform that activity.

Learners' evaluation and their overall emotional view of their selves play for sure a crucial role and have a huge impact on their academic outcome. The learners' emotional states are very determinant especially when it comes to the students' in class interaction, participation, and oral production. Those who are confident and they have high self-esteem about themselves are more likely to outperform the ones who are not.

Brown (2007) divided self-esteem into three levels which are global, situational and task self-esteem. First of all, global self-esteem is defined as a constant attribute in adults that is unchangeable only if there is a wide treatment. It is the individuals' value across time and

various situations. Second, situational self-esteem is defined as the person's image about him/herself in the different life situations such as social interaction, education and home, or in other social traits like intelligence, athletic ability and so on. Third, task self-esteem has a relation with only one situation. It is a reflection of the individual's image concerning one subject-matter for instance: athletic situations or sport skills and the like.

The three mentioned levels of self-esteem have a positive correlation with foreign language oral production. Thus, the degree of the learners' self-esteem affects their oral production in the classroom. Brown (2007) mentioned that the students' oral proficiency and production has a strong mounting on global self-esteem.

**5.2.3 Anxiety**

Language anxiety is an affective variable which has been studied and investigated by researchers due to its importance in the process of language learning. Hortwitz et al (1986) claimed that language anxiety is different from other types of anxiety: ''it is a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process'' (p.128). This anxiety generally causes the mental blockage for students against learning or using that language, however, the same students might be very good in other skills. In many cases, classroom anxiety is the reason behind the avoidance of students to react, get involved, and use of the language successfully.

Ellis (2003) conducted a study about FL anxiety and its effects on the learners' oral skills and their performance as well as their achievements. Aiming for a full understanding of language anxiety, he focused on the importance of knowing how does foreign language anxiety affects learners and interferes in their learning stages namely, input, processing, and output. This interference of FL anxiety causes the learners' oral weakness and communicating difficulties when using the target language.

For a good and healthy learning environment, for learning to take place in the first place, teachers are asked to play a vital role in reducing their learners' speaking anxiety. Interventions should be made to help the anxious students have the same opportunities and chances to learn and flourish.

## 5.3 Listening Ability

Doff (1998) claimed that the speaking skill is deeply related to and affected by the learners' listening skills. Students are obliged to master the listening skill in order to be able to communicate successfully with others. Shumin (1997) supported Doff's idea by stating that a speaker must play both roles as speaker and a listener, i.e. the language speaker cannot participate and be part of a successful conversation without being a good listener and understanding what is said. The two language researchers emphasized the importance of the listening skill and its relation to the speaking one. Classroom management can be considered as the main factor that affects the learners' listening ability. The latter affects deeply their speaking ability. Teachers are asked to develop methods to manage and take control over their classes, attract their students' attention to the lesson, reduce the noise in the classroom, and involve every individual in the learning process. Providing such a healthy classroom environment will, surely, push student to make more efforts, facilitate the teaching /learning processes, and foster both listening and speaking abilities in the students.

## 5.4. Teachers' Feedback

Harmer (1991) asserted that feedback plays an important role in determining learners' attitudes towards learning in general and speaking specifically. Students generally expect their teachers to give their opinion after their performances. However, teachers' feedback must be varied depending on the situation like the stage of the lesson, the type of the activity, and the nature of the student who was performing. In some situations, teachers' feedback may cause demotivation to the learners and fear from speaking.

**5.5. Speaking Problems**

The learner's classroom talk faces many obstacles and problems. Those problems hinder his/her proficiency achievement and speaking performance (Ur, 1996). Some of These obstacles are: inhibition / restraint, lack of knowledge, and first language use/ interference.

When the learners try to communicate or speak using a foreign language in the classroom they are usually inhibited. Fear of making mistakes, fear of criticism and feedback, and shyness are all causes of the phenomenon of inhibition. Littlewood (2007) asserted that anxiety and inhibition can be created very easily in a foreign language classroom.

Rivers (1968) believed that the teacher' choice of the relevant topics that are interesting to all the students, and in which they have knowledge about and can express themselves very easily is very important in determining their speaking proficiency. Sometimes, it is very difficult for students to respond in a foreign language when they are asked to talk about a specific subject they lack knowledge about. They are generally confused about what to say and which correct vocabulary or grammar to use, Baker & Westrup (2003, p. 75).

First language use or interference is a common phenomenon in the FL classrooms. Students tend to use their mother tongue (MT) because they find that using the MT is much easier that using the target language. Besides, the native language use by the FL learners is a very natural thing to do. In addition, if the teachers are frequently using the native language this may encourage the learners to use it too (Harmer, 1991). Unfortunately, some teachers still rely on very traditional methods of teaching. They think that the GTM is the most effective one to teach English

**6. Activities to Promote Speaking**

Most, if not, all language teachers and linguists agree that 'interaction' is the key to successful language learning. Both communicative and collaborative language learning serves that aim. They are based on real-life situations that enable students to communicate using the

target language. The students' communicative competence and fluent interaction using the language is generally prompted and enhanced by authentic activities and tasks that promote their speaking proficiency. Those activities vary according to the nature of teachers, students, and the learning context.

**6.1 Discussions**

Generally, classroom discussions (CD) are held for various reasons. The aim can be for students to share an idea about an event, to arrive to a conclusion, or to find a solution to an unsolved problem. Setting a clear purpose of the discussions is of great importance and priority to both teachers and students. In this way, the discussion points will be relevant to the already designed objectives and students can be well involved in the agree/disagree type of discussions. In this type of discussion, groups are formed by the teacher, preferably 4 or 5 students per group. The teacher provides controversial sentences and each group works on his topic for a period of time before presenting it in front of their classmates. It is essential that the speaking time should be equally divided between the groups and the group members in order to allow student to speak and express himself. This type of activities fosters learners' critical thinking, rapid decision-taking, and the way students express themselves in a civilized and polite way while disagreeing with others. The number of student per group is very influential for efficient group discussions. Large groups are to be avoided in order to provide quite students who may avoid to contribute to participate and get involved in the discussion.

Finally, the aim of classrooms discussion may differ from one context to another, yet, encouraging the students to ask questions, share ideas, check for clarification and so on, is always the beating heart of this kind of activities due to its importance to and influence on their speaking proficiency.

## 6.2. Role Plays

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student: ''you are the prince, you are obliged to cross the lost jungle, fight the beast and get back the beautiful princess''.

## 6.3. Simulations

Harmer (1984) suggested that simulations increase the self-confidence of hesitant and shy students, because, in simulations and role plays activities, students play various roles and they do not have to speak for themselves. This way, students are stripped of the responsibility on their shoulders, and this makes them talk without hesitation or fear of making mistakes. Simulations and role plays may look the same, but what makes simulations different is that they are more elaborate. Students are allowed to bring items and tools to the classroom in order to create a more realistic environment, for instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she / he can bring a microphone to sing and so on. Another advantage of simulations and role plays is that they increase students' motivation to learn by providing an entertaining and healthy environment.

## 6.4. Brainstorming

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristic of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so they will be open to sharing new ideas.

**7. Classroom Interaction**

The term classroom interaction refers to the conversations between the teachers and their students or /and between students. Through these conversations which are part of the socio-cultural activities, knowledge and vital learning are constructed.

The Algerian English learner, generally, faces many difficulties when it comes to the oral production of the English language. This is due to many reasons including the lack of practice of the language. Classroom talk/conversations is considered to be the solution of that problem; it is a starting point from which they will have more opportunities to improve their oral proficiency.

**7.1. The Interaction Hypothesis**

Nowadays, there is a total acceptance that oral interaction is the key to successful language learning/teaching. Face to face interaction between individuals is highly valued in the case of classroom language acquisition. Allwright (1984, p. 156) defined interaction as: "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy… everything that happens in the classroom happens through the process of live person to person interaction". This means that classroom interaction is of a high importance to any learning process taking place in the class.

The interaction hypothesis posited many claims about SLA and SLL and the role of interaction in ensuring its success. The origin of the interaction hypothesis' claims goes back to the work of Krashen (1982) who claimed that the active use of the language is what ensures its acquisition.  He considered language as a result of the learners' participations in different face to face interactions where they construct the meaning and the language knowledge. He went further to emphasize the importance of the interaction among students and teachers for language learning and teaching. Long (1985) believed that what makes an input comprehensible is modified interaction, and negotiation of meaning. The interaction

hypothesis promotes conversation modifications such as comprehension checks and clarification requests that are made by students when interacting and communicating in the classroom. The comprehensible input created by the modified classroom conversations enhances the learners' second language acquisition through negotiation of meaning.

Classroom interaction, then, provides comprehensible input and feedback, and fosters the learners' linguistic output. This process of classroom interaction may allow students to discover their communicative weaknesses and gaps which they can, generally, correct during the communicative process.

## 7.2. Definition of Classroom Interaction

Enjoyable and healthy classroom environment based on friendly relationships between learners and teachers, and the excitation of the learners' oral proficiency are the two main embodiments that can be viewed in a functional classroom. Interaction is assumed to play an important and significant role in teaching/ learning a foreign language. Interaction was defined by Johnson (2008, p. 79) as ''a concept which involves both input and output''. Thus, the aim is for students to receive the knowledge (input) and try to transfer and deliver it in the form of a message (output). Thomas (1987, p. 7) gave another definition to this term: "interaction means acting reciprocally, acting upon each other". That is to say, interaction cannot be limited in terms of an action followed by a reaction but it includes acting alternately. Confirming the last point, Allwright and Bailey (1991) assumed that interaction is something that people cooperate to do i.e. collectively.

Hadfield and had field, in their book, Introduction to teaching English, declared that the word interaction is not just the formation of a message, but it involves responding to the other part, thus, the speaker has to be careful in his words choice when addressing the interlocutor. Nunan (1991) stated that "learning to speak in a second or foreign language will

be facilitated when learners actively engaged in attempting to communicate" (p. 51). Hence, language learning is linked to communication and language use, and this communication can be perfectly achieved, enhanced, and fostered by interaction using the target language.

Interaction is a ''reciprocal event that require at least two actions, interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another", (Wagner, 1994, p. 8). This means that interaction requires two sides influencing each other mutually, also, it consists of "sharing ideas and opinions, collaborating toward signal goal, or competing to achieve individual goals". (Pica et al, 1993, as cited in Nassaji, 2000, p. 245). That is, during the interaction, learners are able to notice things about themselves that are important in developing their communicative competence and language use.

## 7.3. Types of Classroom Interaction

Thurmond (2003) posited that there are four types of interaction that can be clearly viewed in any classroom context which are: 1- learners' course content interaction 2- learners-learner interaction 3- learner-teacher interaction 4- learner-technology interaction. In this section, the main focus will be on two main types: learner-learner interaction and teacher-learner interaction.

### 7.3.1. Teacher-Learner Interaction

Couthland (1977) mentioned that the teacher-learner interaction received a great deal of interest from teachers in a wide range of disciplines especially language teaching. This kind of interaction generally happens between the teacher and one or many of his students. The teacher is part of the interaction taking place. In this types of interaction the teachers negotiates with his/her students the lessons with it varied content, he/she uses their ideas, directs them, asks questions, makes criticisms or comments on their participation. Students,

on the other hand, will greatly benefit from their teachers' knowledge and will learn how to interact more effectively.

During the teacher-learner interaction, the teacher should pay attention to his way of interacting with his students due to its importance to language learning and teaching. Harmer (2009) posited that the focus should be on three areas when interacting with students. First, the kind of language used should be carefully chosen, i.e. teachers' output should be comprehensible and suits the level of all students. Second, the teacher's speech is a resource to his students; hence, his choice of what to say is highly important. This means that the teacher's the voice, tone, and intonation in which he speaks is crucial for a successful interaction.

### 7.3.2. Learner-Learner Interaction

Classroom interaction is not only exclusively limited to the interaction of the teacher and his/her students. Students usually interact with each other in various contexts during the lessons. This kind of interaction is very beneficial especially in the field of language learning. Learner-learner interaction can occurs either in groups or in pairs called pairs interaction. Both types aim to give students more opportunities to use and practice the target language and allow them to develop their communicative and oral skills in order to get feedback that will allow them to correct each other's mistakes or question each other when working in groups (Mackey, 2007, p. 30). Lynch (1996) also stated that "learners rarely pick up each other's errors; even in the short term … group work is more likely to lead to negotiation of meaning than interaction with the teacher" (p. 111). Hence, Lynch assumed that practice is more beneficial when it is designed with small groups or peers rather than with the teacher or in the whole classroom, since it (group work) allows students to receive feedback through

correcting each other's mistakes; beside, it gives the learners more space to speak and express theirselves freely.

## 7.4. The Role of Classroom Interaction

Hedge (2000, p. 13) considered interaction as an influential factor for the learners' oral output since it gives them the opportunity to practice their language in the classroom. Besides, it gives them the opportunity to receive feedback from the teacher or from other students. This eventually leads them to develop a certain language system that enables them to communicate and use the language more effectively. For Hedge (2000), classroom interaction plays the role of a cover which allows them to cope with their lack of knowledge. Repeating and clarifying ideas while interacting is regarded as negotiation of meaning that aims at the production of a comprehensible output.

Classroom interaction contributes to language development by providing target language practice with opportunities through designing classroom interaction activities that makes learners use the target language. In this sense, Littlewood (1981, p.16) advocated that there is a progression from "pre-communicative" to "communicative" activities which involves many forms of interactive language practice, this means that practicing such activities should progressively be related to the "real-life" language use.

## 7.5. Introvert vs. Extrovert Learners

Stem (1983, p, 110) supported the claim that the focus should be shifted from teaching methods to the learners themselves and their learning's processes. During the 1960s a concern aroused with regard to how learners engage in their learning of the second language. Exploring the similarities among learners was one direction of the research (e.g., Chomsky, 1959; Pinker, 1994). In the mid-1970s a further concern was given to the differences among

learners. (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco; 1978) in their research 'the good language learner' proved the importance of the learners' differences.

Extroversion and introversion are terms first used and developed by Carl Gustav Jung as a part of his type theories (Jung, 1974). After that, the terms E/I became largely used. The two concepts are central dimensions of the human personality. Being amiable, assertive and excitement-seeking are all characteristics of an extroverted person (also spelled extraverted). By contrast, introverts tend to be more reserved, less demonstrative. Also, introverts are usually known by their rich inner world.

The two concepts have been investigated broadly from two perspectives: biological and social. Wilson and Languis (1990) confirmed Eysenck's claim (1947, 1998) that introverts are over aroused, over-excited while extroverts are under aroused and less- excited in terms of their cerebral activities.

Many researches results have shown that extroverts are energized by their interaction with the outer world. They are active and outgoing. On the other hand, introverts are energized by focusing on the inner world, and they avoid risk taking the attitude of 'understand it, before live it' (Myers, 1998; Myers and Kirby, 1994; Myers, McMaulley, Quenk, and Hammer, 1998). Some other researchers investigated the relationship between oral proficiency and Extroversion/Introversion. One of the findings of these researches is that E /I have some effects on the learner's pronunciation accuracy, introverted students being less accurate in performance of using the English language than the extrovert ones (Hassan, 2001). Also a research was conducted by Busch (1982), in which statistical analysis showed that introverts outperformed extroverts in terms of pronunciation and oral interviews.

The findings of the studies concerning introversion and extroversion in correlation with learners' oral proficiency have been contradicting each other. Rossier (1976) found

positive correlation between E/I and the learners' oral performance, whereas, Daele (2005), Oya, Manalo, and Greenwood (2005) found that extraversion and introversion did not correlate positively with the learners' oral performance.

**Conclusion**

We have attempted, through this chapter, to shed some light on the speaking skill, which a very important productive language skill. In addition to defining the nature of speaking proficiency, the chapter evinced its importance in EFL learning, and it demonstrated its main characteristics and the activities that promote it. Moreover, the chapter discussed the communicative strategies that students can use to develop their speaking skill and to cope with the problems that are facing them during their communication and interaction with others. Also, the chapter had a flash of insight into some difficulties that students usually face when trying to speak in English. Finally, the chapter ended with learners' introversion and extroversion, which may play an essential role in fostering or hindering learners' oral proficiency.

# Chapter Three: The Effect of Teachers' Gender on Learners' Oral Proficiency

**Introduction**

Our Algerian classes are generally, if not always, formed of girls and boys sitting in a random way. Teachers in our high schools, as it is the case in other educational levels, are a blend of male and female teachers who are responsible for gender mixed classes regardless of whether their own gender is of any role in the learners' attainment or not. This chapter evinces some differences between male students and female students, which are very important for teachers to know. The chapter also discusses teachers' gender differences and its effects in the classroom.

**1. Gender Differences in the Classroom**

Highlighting gender differences in social terms can only yield misunderstanding (O'Neill & Gidengil, p. 219).Researchers in various fields such as the psychological and the Neurological ones have identified many areas of difference between boys and girls. These differences surpass the physical level, reaching the mental or the cognitive one.

Hurst (n.d.) declared that there are some established gender differences noted in a variety of contexts. Teachers must consider the various needs of their learners before they address them. Class lessons must be designed according to learners' learning styles to make sure that attainment will be reached. The differences among learners are also due to their gender since each gender has its own uniqueness and specificities some of which are clarified in the following points.

## 1.1. Physical Activity and Motor Skills

Within the realm of physical activity and motor skills, it is found that males tend to be more active than females. Males tend to experience impatience sitting still for long periods in the same place, and hence reject the type of activities characterized by little physical exercise like reading or painting (Ashford & LeCroy, p. 358).

Though in the pre-puberty period, boys and girls have a similar potential for physical and motor growth, after puberty, males have a biological advantage in physical activity awing to their superior height and muscular development (Ashford & LeCroy, p. 358). It may sound out of topic to discuss biological differences amongst genders, but it is highly important to understand the educational implications of gender differences between boys and girls. Curriculum should provide equal opportunities for boys and girls to maximize their physical well-being and athletic skills (Hurst, n.d).

## 1.2. Cognitive Abilities and Achèvement Motivation

Gender differences in cognitive abilities have been widely analyzed in the psychological and neuropsychological literature (Buffery & Gray, 1972). Three major differences in cognitive abilities between men and women have been identified: (1) higher verbal abilities, favouring women; (2) higher spatial abilities, favoring men; and, (3) higher arithmetical abilities, also favoring men. However, differences in calculation abilities have at times been interpreted as a result of men's superior spatial abilities (Benbow, 1988; Geary, 1996)

When taking standardized assessments, the ones related to reading and writing, boys and girls typically perform almost the same, but this is not the full story. Concerning the cognitive abilities, researchers have identified some gender differences. Girls have been

found to perform slightly higher in verbal ability exercises, while boys tend to outperform in visual-spatial exercises. It is important to keep in mind that these differences are relatively small and that odd cases exist (Hurst,n.d.).

Males, from another perspective, show greater variability in cognitive abilities. Girls, generally speaking, get better grades in school, and they are more concerned than boys about doing great in their school activities. They exhibit a higher engagement in classroom activities, and they are mainly interested more than boys in graduation. Females and boys select streams and courses that are remarkably distinct. Boys typically enroll in math and physical science classes, while girls typically choose language and literature-based courses (Helgeson, p. 108).

## 1.3. Interpersonal Behaviour and Relationships

Hurst (n.d.) identified some gender differences in the way boys and girls interact with their peers or seniors such as classmates and teachers. Males tend to be more physically aggressive than girls. They use bodily expressions, poke, nod, and even indulge in aggressive physical experiences with their surrounding especially in elementary and middle school years. Boys are more likely to engage in aggressive and bullying behaviors without even being provoked or stimulated.

Girls are identical to boys in aggressiveness, but they demonstrate their aggressiveness in nonphysical ways. They tend to spread rumors, give mean stares and why not gossip heavily. They hang out with members of other groups, get involve in physical play, group games and risk-taking. They enjoy competition as well. Girls engage in more cooperative plays, and they are more aware of other girls' mental and emotional states than

boys who may not even notice them, or they play the role of the fool (Cook & Hall, 2010, para. 5).

**1.4. Sense of the Self and Self-Esteem**

When talking about the sense of the self and self-esteem, boys typically hold a higher overall sense of self-worth than girl in upper elementary, middle school, and the secondary school. This could be due in part to boys' tendencies to overestimate their abilities and girls' tendencies to underestimate them. Boys have higher self-confidence and view themselves as being better athletes and problem solvers. Beginning at puberty, girls tend to hold a lower sense of self-worth and rate their physical appearance less favorably than boys. Both boys and girls rate themselves higher in academic areas that are stereotypical for their gender, such as math for boys and literature for girls (Hurst,n.d). Male and female students' self-perception is likely to have an effect on their academic achievement and their behaviors in the classroom.

**3. The Status of Male Teachers and Teachers as Role Models**

The lack of teachers has long been a huge problem in some geographic areas. Statistics prove that we are getting around the fact that the scarcity of males in teaching may reach a very small proportion in some schools if not all of them. It is well known that teachers have a great and singular impact on students' learning. Teachers are not only facilitators and disseminators of information, but they are also role models for their students. Today, too often, they are the students' sole role models. If we want students to grow and remain psychologically healthy to become productive citizens, and to be able to compete in the 21$^{st}$ century global economy and beyond, we must create an environment that is conductive to positive growth. And here lies the role of the teacher whether male or female.

The teacher as "role model" becomes a well-known term in academia. As Allen (1995, p. 125) argued, every teacher acts in the capacity of a 'role model' by providing his/her students 'an ethnical template for the exercise of adults responsibilities'. However, it is not guaranteed that all teachers will be regarded as inspirational figures. A teacher may think that he/she is showing a good 'role model', while students are having a completely different view. In here, teachers are asked to know the needs of their students and get closer to them.

A role model must be an inspiring and encouraging to strive for greatness, helps the students to reach their fullest potential and see the best in their selves. It is through a role model that we learn, realize our personal growth, and get advice and guidance.

Teachers, as role models, follow their students through each pivotal stage of development. Due to the time they spend with students, teachers are poised to become the most influential people in the students' life. What students learn from their teachers are not just lessons and a detailed content of a syllabus. Most learners learn very important life lessons through observing their teachers, and the role they are playing inside and outside the classroom. Schools should not be considered only as places where students get knowledge, but also as places of social learning. This is not the case only in the early years of schools, but all the way through their academic stream. Teachers are founts of experience. They have already been where their students are going. They have already undergone what their students will go through, and they are in a position to deliver lessons not only concerning their subject matter, but lessons on life as well.

It is well known that gender differences between teachers and their students may affect the given 'role model'. For instance, male teachers provide better 'role models' for male students, while female teachers provide a better role model to female students. Socially

speaking, a male student can neither learn nor know his societal role and his place in the society when his role model is a female teacher and vice versa. From the already given view, more importance should be given to the lack of male teachers in our schools, and the effects of this on male students.

**3. Gender Equity in Schools**

The exclusion of boys and the superficial focus on girls in education is considered as a violation of the concept of gender equity in schools. A comprehensive understanding of gender and gender equity is highly needed and required for the sake of our schools' development. Skelton as cited in Amott (2004) pointed that a gender-equity program should look at four key questions.

1. What perceptions of masculinity and femininity are children bringing to school, and what are they acting out in the classroom and the playground?

2. What are the dominant images of masculinity and feminity that the school conveys to them?

3..Is gender equality a concern in terms of what the school wants and expects of its teachers?

4. What initiatives, strategies, and projects, can the whole school undertake to develop a program for gender equality?

The current educational system, in general, consists of EFL classrooms that are supposed to be a communicative environment. The problem is that these classes are showing a clear imbalance of boy-girl attention, participation and gender discrepancy. The Algerian learning settings are noticing a total domination by one gender (females), whereas the other

gender hardly speaks or takes part in the learning process. The lack of the use of linguistic spaces among boys in ESL classrooms is urgently requiring EFL educators to go into exploring gender in classrooms.

In some other contexts, girls are suffering from the same gender-biased classrooms. They suffer from the lack of attention and participation. Their teachers sometimes favor male students; thus, they feel marginalized. These learning difficulties, which they face, have a great impact on their academic achievement. One of the most interesting research works on gender in the classroom is conducted by Clarricoates (1978) who came to the conclusion that teachers prefer teaching boys.

The necessity of making schools more gender equitable and challenging the current situation of our Algerian schools, which seem to favor female students and hinder   male students' progression in their academic stream, is of immense importance. Boys nowadays are becoming a symbol of failure in our schools. This failure can never be attributed to male students only. In fact, the whole educational system is also responsible for boys' underachievement. Hence, it should help them improve their level and succeed not only as students, but also as male citizens who will contribute to the development of the society.

**4. Teachers' Gender Differences**

The existing difference between male and female learners within one class is in need to find an environment of acceptance. A teacher who is aware and willing to work according to the learners' needs and diversity, is more likely to help his students develop and flourish more than a teacher who is ignorant or indifferent to his students' needs, their learning styles, and their psychological states.

In the classroom, students expect to be part of a safe environment and to have equal opportunities regardless of their gender. Teachers should get and keep in touch with their students to make sure that they are equally instructed and provided with unbiased treatment. Most teachers look to provide this type of environment for their students. All of them differ in the practices they display in the classroom based on influence of their literacy practices (Florackm, 2012, p .3).

There is some support for the assumption that male and female teachers treat boys and girls differently. Lee and Wolinsky (1973) summarized that male and female teachers have different ways of treating their students of the same class. Male teachers tend to initiate fewer activities than a female one may do, but it is evinced that male teachers give boys more leadership positions than girls. In terms of reinforcement and positive feedback, Etaugh, Collins, and Gerson (1975) made a comparative study between female and males teachers. They found that male teachers tended to give an equal reinforcement to female students' behavior as female teachers did. However, male teacher gave twice as many reinforcements for the masculine-preferred behaviors as female teachers did.

Dee (2006) also studied the impact of teacher gender on students' achievement. He concluded that girls have higher academic achievement when taught by women, and boys do better when taught by men. This gender effect may also be related to the subjects that male and female teachers are more likely to teach (Dee, 2006). Sadker and Zittleman (2005) reported that, historically, girls are more successful in demonstrating the qualities that are likely to attract teachers' positive attention. They stated that "girls are expected to be docile, conforming, and willing to work hard" (p. 28). Moreover, they are "more likely to be quiet in class and be praised for neatness" (p. 30). They also noted that girls experience learning helplessness more than boys and that their self-esteem decreases as they enter adolescence.

Concerning teachers' gender and their teaching styles' differences, studies showed that the two genders may implement different styles in their classes. In a study conducted by Eagly and Johnson (1990) about gender and leadership, it was demonstrated that women and men differ in their leadership styles. Men have a tendency to focus more on getting the job done on time, whereas women focus on the autonomy of the classroom experience. Women are perceived as friendlier, warmer, and more nurturing than male instructors are. Not only female students but also female teachers are victims of gender-based stereotypes in the classroom. Even though they might present themselves as authoritative in the classroom, gender stereotypes or students' misperceptions affect their evaluation of their professor. According to Eagly and Johnson (1990), women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than men did.

## 5. The Problem of Boys' Underachievement

Today' underachieving boy is tomorrow's unemployed youth. Thus, according to the society, he is the overwhelming burden number one. He will be in dire need to benefit in the world of global competition where governments want to get high taxes (Mahony, as cited in Dean, 1998).

Boys' underachievement is of paramount importance. Considerable attention had been given to gender inequality and its impact on boys' achievement and failure in schools. It is currently a universal phenomenon which should push educators to find ways to assuage the problem.

Social scientists reflect on the potential of males to become dropouts of the society, and subsequently, they create social illnesses such as being drug addicts, criminals and abusers in society. Economists reflect on capacity building whereby the society does indeed

need more males to keep what was once a male-dominated job such as engineering and other hard sciences which need rigor discipline and irregular times of work. Worries and concerns about the extinction of the male species in the educational landscapes have become hotly debated. There are even some people who, assertively, demanded to stop the process of education-feminization.

According to Raphael Reed (1998), focusing on male students 'underachievement' is not just a matter of debating whether this 'underachievement' exists or not. This is because 'its reality is a measure of its productivity in shaping educational policies and practices' (p. 60). Boys' underachievement has many logical and rational explanations. Some of them can be summarized in the following points.

## 5.1. The Changing Masculinities

Natural differences between males and females are proved to be innate. It is known that boys have poorer verbal reasoning skills; they mature later than girls, and their parents do not talk to them as much as they talk to their sisters (Arnold, 1997; Cohen, 1998). Raphael Reed (1998, p. 61) opined that these claims are attributed to some crude versions of cognitive psychology and have little basis in published research. The problem of boys' underachievement, or as it is called 'public burden number one', has resulted in an intense fear among male elites that males will lose more ground to women in the workforce ( Mahony, 1998, p. 42).

Due to some historical changes and the effects of globalization, there have been some changes in gender roles and gender identities in all the communities around the globe. Another explanation for our boys' failure in schools is the interplay between the demands of

the academic curriculum and the boys' need to manifest their masculinity in the context of schools

Boys, generally, refuse to work hard, to seek for better marks, and they resist learning in order to avoid being seen or described as girl. The common stereotype is that learning, working hard, and looking for success are feminine qualities that a real man should avoid in order to prove his manhood and assert his masculinity. As Epstein (1998) pointed out, 'the rejection of the perceived "femininity" of academic work is simultaneously a defence against the charge of being gay' (p. 97).

## 5.2. New Curriculum Design and New Academic Orientations

Education is the key to minimize the effects of one of the most urgent challenges facing the world today which is the exclusion of persons who have a meaningless participation in their communities. Such a society is neither efficient nor safe. As discussed before, boys are generally the victims of such exclusion due to their failure in schools.%µ$

One of the causes of boys' failure in schools is the curriculum. Murphy (1988) found that in several ways, gender bias is one important feature of the national curriculums. Lessons and activities included in nowadays curriculums are one-way oriented and suit, in most cases, the majority of girls. They ignore boys who might have different needs and orientation in learning. There is a very urgent need for a new curriculum that satisfies all students and does not favor a portion and neglects another.

Our current educational system which is, clearly, favoring females must make huge changes and adaptations in favor of male students to help them succeed in their educational career and life. Teachers are the first responsible ones for their students' failure, and thus, this revolutionary change must start with them, and their way of teaching. It is generally argued

that the current way of teaching, the kind of subjects, and, the classroom activities do not meet the needs of all learners; they might satisfy the needs of girls but not those boys. Taking for instance didactic teaching activities suit girls' preference for 'passive learning'. However meeting boys' need for efficient activities was held to require a greater level of understanding and efforts than most teachers and educators employ. Female teachers and educators are responsible for boys' underachievement due to their use of default teaching styles, rather than trying to seek for more comprehension of male students' psychology, needs, and appropriate learning styles. Teaching styles are believed to cause gender inequity in the classroom, because they favor female students. Thus, they result boys' underachievement.

The implication of a particular teaching style which suits girls is that girls as individuals or in groups have predictable reactions to particular teaching methods. And this is evident that female students do generally have a specific learning style. Boys are, generally, positioned as actively disadvantaged across the teaching process. Unfortunately, boys' poor performance and underachievement is often attributed to some factors which are beyond teachers' control. Teachers' and educators' philosophy of teaching tends to favor female learners. This results in the employment of teaching styles that teachers are persisting in using though they are inappropriate and unfair. In fact, teachers who ignore and marginalize male students might be seen as fully and completely irresponsible.

To avoid this gender discrimination against boys in school settings, teachers are asked to modify their ways of teaching, and take into account all the needs and requirements of their male students. The implication is that educators who fail to adapt their strategies can also be held accountable for the underachievement of male students in schools.

**6. Teachers' Gender and Learners' Oral Proficiency**

Reviews of literature concerning the role teacher gender may play in a student's oral proficiency development uncover the scarcity of scientifically carried out researches on this subject, and that was the bedrock our study launched from.

Appleby (2014) stated that patterns of gender are clearly an effective part of the educational construction, because gender was and is still being associated with language teaching and learning. She argued that the importance of gender lies in the knowledge that gender is connected directly with different opportunities and barriers which shape the formation of the language teachers, whether educational or societal ones.

Driessen (2006) suggested that teacher and student gender matching is unnecessary, because it does not really lead to effective teaching and a better academic performance. Success and failure in school are still determined by the teacher's competence and his/her individual abilities. Ehrenberg et al. (as cited in Ammermüller & Dolton, 2006) conducted a research work to investigate 8th grade students' performance, according to gender and ethnicity, in the subject matters of History, Reading, Mathematics, and Science. The study tried to examine the effects of teachers' and students' gender and ethnicity on classroom interaction and learners' performance. It was found that there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that same sex or same race teachers improve the test scores of their pupils. In addition to that, they found that test scores of white female students in Math and Science are the same whether they are taught by a white male or a white female teacher. Another significant finding is that white male and white female teachers evaluate their students the same way.

Along similar lines, Bettinger and Long (as cited in Ammermüller & Dolton, 2006) addressed the question of whether the gender of the instructor for early college courses

influences the subsequent choice of course subjects. There was evidence, in their investigation, that supported the role model theory which says that that having a same sex tutor induces a person to choose a particular subject and to show readiness to study it. They suggested that having a teacher of the same gender urges the student to choose a subject that is taught by that teacher. Although their focus on the choice of the subject rather than academic performance is not quite the same issue, it is likely that subject choice correlates well with prior performance, and this may be at the heart of the gender differences which were commented on by Larry Summers.

Loving a subject matter because of the gender of the teacher who teaches it might have a positive effect on the learner's learnability and his/her progress in that subject matter. For instance, if the learner likes English and its teacher, he/she is more likely to do his/her best to develop his/her oral skill.

A research work by Ammermüller and Dolton (1994) on the effect of the teacher's gender on learners' scores, in general, suggested that girls and boys in single sex schools have better scores and a more acceptable performance. It was found that the evidence of the presence of gender interaction effects between teachers and learners gets weaker and fades astonishingly when schools are of single gender pupils regardless of the teacher's gender. This implies that part of the gender interaction effect may be due to the greater effectiveness of single sex schools.

Dee (2005) carried out a survey of nearly 2500 students to investigate the possible affect played by the teacher's gender on learners' attainment. He examined test scores as well as self-reported comments by both teachers and learners. Dee, while conducting his research focusing mainly on the variable of teacher gender, ethnicity and race, did not assess academic gain scores, but he rather focused on differences in teachers' perceptions of students' behavior  Dee concluded that racial, ethnic and gender dynamics between students

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and teachers have consistently large effects on teachers' perceptions of students' behavior. Teachers in the survey were asked to judge whether individual students in the sample were seen as frequently disruptive, consistently inattentive or rarely handed in the homework. These characteristics were used as an assessment basis to compare between teachers and students of the same gender and race and those who are of different genders and races. Dee consistently found that students are more likely to be judged by the teacher to be disruptive, inattentive or rarely hand in the homework if they are of another gender or race than that of the teacher.

Dee found that a teacher's gender matters a lot in the learners' skill development and school success. Having a female teacher instead of a male teacher raised the achievement of girls and lowered that of boys in science, social studies and English. The study found switching up teachers actually could narrow achievement gaps between boys and girls, but one gender would gain at the expense of the other.

According to Dee, the teacher's gender does not only shape communication between teachers and students, but it is also an important factor in portraying the teacher as a 'gender-specific role model' (2006). He argued that students are more likely to actively engage in class, be on their best behavior and perform at a high standard when the gender of the teacher matches theirs; test scores seem to confirm this theory (2006).

Massoud (2008) conducted a study to compare between 20 male and 20 female University English majors' fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The study came to the following results. First, there is a higher fluency when students are taught by a female teacher and not by a male teacher. Second, there are no remarkable differences in complexity between male and female students regardless of the teacher's gender. Third, female students display higher accuracy whether they are taught by male or by female teachers. Fourth, there is an overall higher accuracy when students, of both genders, are taught by a male teacher.

Finally, there is a remarkable higher accuracy in female participants' speech addressed to the male teacher than in any other participant-teacher pair.

Julé's (2002) study on male's and female's talk in the classroom demonstrated that girls' amount of talk is less than that of boys. The reason, according to Julé's findings, is due to their teachers' negative comments and responses which made them keep silent.

Speaking is defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). A second language learner is for sure in need of a more competent teacher to play the role of a model, interactive guider, and knowledge constructor. Learning to speak and excelling in the oral proficiency is a kernel element in any second language learning. English oral proficiency development cannot in any way be separated from the teacher as its main pillar .Hitherto, teachers are in need to balance their teaching styles and gender uniqueness with those of their learners to reach a successful oral skills development.

**Conclusion**

Throughout the foregoing chapter, gender differences in educational outcomes are witnessed to be of a shallow investigation and concern by researchers and experts in the field. Most researchers adhere to the view that male and female teachers use different teaching styles when dealing with learners, whether boys or girls. Learners also, adapt and adopt learning styles differently and variously each according to his own needs and his/her gender. As far as the speaking skill is concerned, the teachers' gender and its uniqueness, when it comes to the employment of strategies and techniques, may not fit mixed classes of the two genders equally and satisfactorily. This, in fact, may result in an impaired oral proficiency development in one gender and be an advantageous factor for the other. It is beneficial for a classroom teacher to seize wisely awareness of his gender distinct characteristics so as to

balance his ways aptly to the addressed audience apart of any subjectiveness and disparagement. It is clear that the topic under investigation, teacher gender effect on learners' oral proficiency development, is of a shallow investigation among researchers. The practical part would serve as a phase of clarifying and investigating the former issue in a much more realistic and clear way.

# Chapter Four: The Field Work

## I. Learners' Questionnaire

### 1. Aim of the Questionnaire

In attempting to reach the aims of our study and to test the verity of our main hypothesis that teachers' gender affects students' oral proficiency, our study relied on questionnaire a means of research. The questionnaire is an effective research tool because it helps researchers gather factual, behavioral, and attitudinal data. In discussing the advantages of the questionnaires, Dorngei stated: "Because the essence of scientific research is trying to find answers to questions in a systematic manner, it is no wonder that questionnaires has become one of the most popular research instruments" (2010, p. 1).

### 2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to a total number of 100 students from three high schools. It begins with a very brief introduction that explains the aim of the questionnaire as well as the procedure of answering the questions. It is divided into two sections made of 24 questions. The questions are of three types: (6) yes/no questions, (11) multiple choices questions, and (7) questions that require a direct answer. The questionnaire was administered to the learners in their classrooms. They were given instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. They were also asked not to report their names on the questionnaires.

### 3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

**Section One: Background Knowledge**

**Q 01:** your level is…..

| Options | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| First year | 27 | 27 % |
| Second year | 30 | 30 % |
| Third year | 43 | 43 % |
| Total | 100 | 100 % |

**Table O1: Students' level**
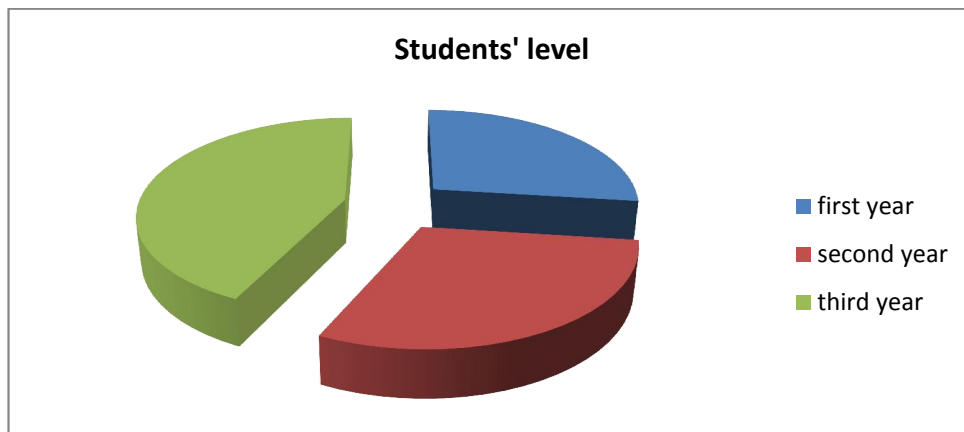


**Graph 01**

The aim of this question is to differentiate between students according to their school year. The table above displays that (27%) of the respondents are in their first year but 30% of the respondents are in their second year; however, 43% of them are terminal classes. We chose students from different level in order to investigate whether the level of the students have any effects on their learning.

**Q02:** are you a male or female student?

| Options | Number of students | Percentage |
|---------|--------------------|------------|
| Male | 50 | 50% |
| Female | 50 | 50% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table 02: Students' gender**
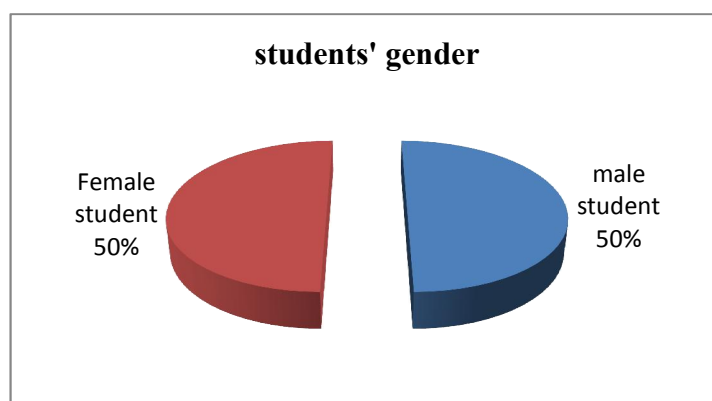


**Graph 02**

This question is asked to identify the SG. The table above shows that 50% of the target population are male students; whereas half of the respondents are female students. This distinction between the respondents according to their gender will help us investigate the subject-matter more deeply. Significantly, our sample consists of 50 male students and 50 female students.

**Q 03**: How long have you been studying English?

| Options | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 4 years | 0 | 0% |
| 5years | 23 | 23% |
| More than 5 years | 77 | 77% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table03: Period of studying English**
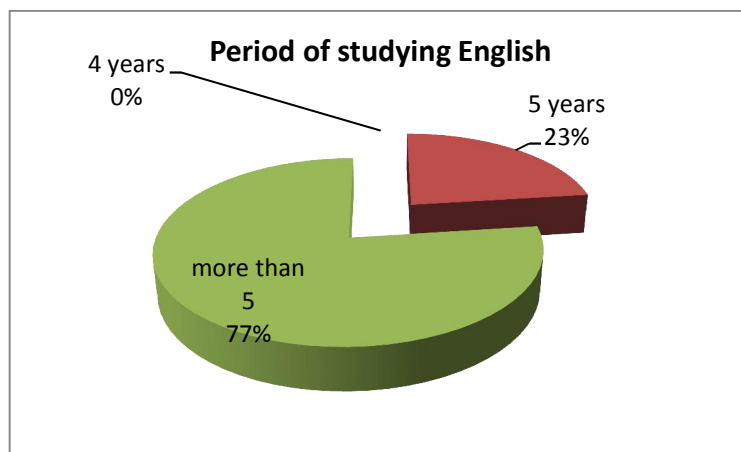


**Graph 03**

**Q 04:** What stream do you follow?

| Options | number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Scientific | 26 | 26% |
| Literary | 24 | 24% |
| Economy | 19 | 19% |
| Foreign languages | 31 | 31% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table04: Learners' stream**
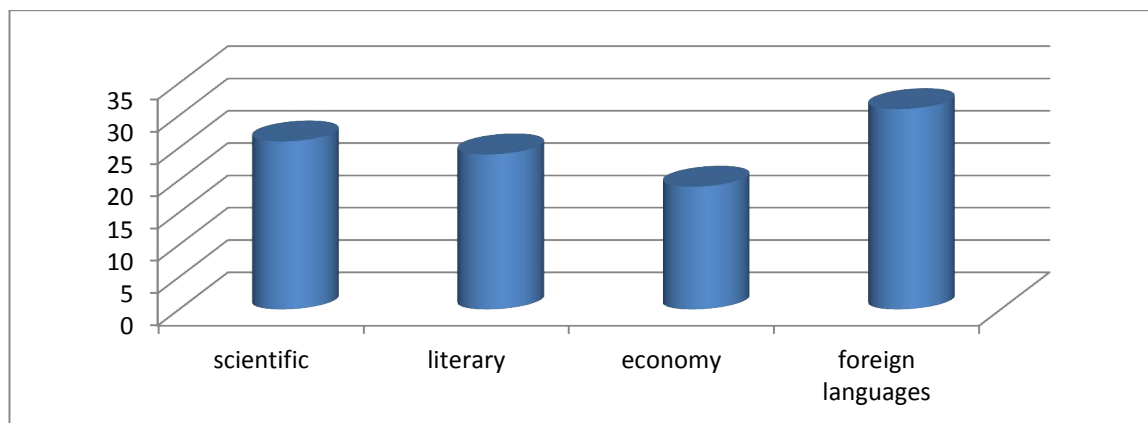
**Graph 04: Learners' stream**

The aim of the third and the fourth questions is to know the period of time the target population has been exposed to the English language and which stream these subjects are following (scientific, literary, economy or foreign languages).

Table 03 shows that the majority (67%) of the targeted population has been studying English for more than five years while (27%) of them have been studying it for five years. The results of this question indicate that students have some experience with of English, and they are supposed to have constructed certain attitudes towards teachers of both genders.

Table 04 shows that 31% of the respondents are following the foreign languages stream; 19% are following the economy stream; 26% are following the scientific stream while 24% are following the literary stream. We have chosen different streams in order to check whether students from different streams have the same attitudes towards English or no.

**Q 05:** Your teacher is a: a) male teacher b) female teacher.

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Male teacher | 50 | 50% |
| Female teacher | 50 | 50% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table 05: Teachers' gender**
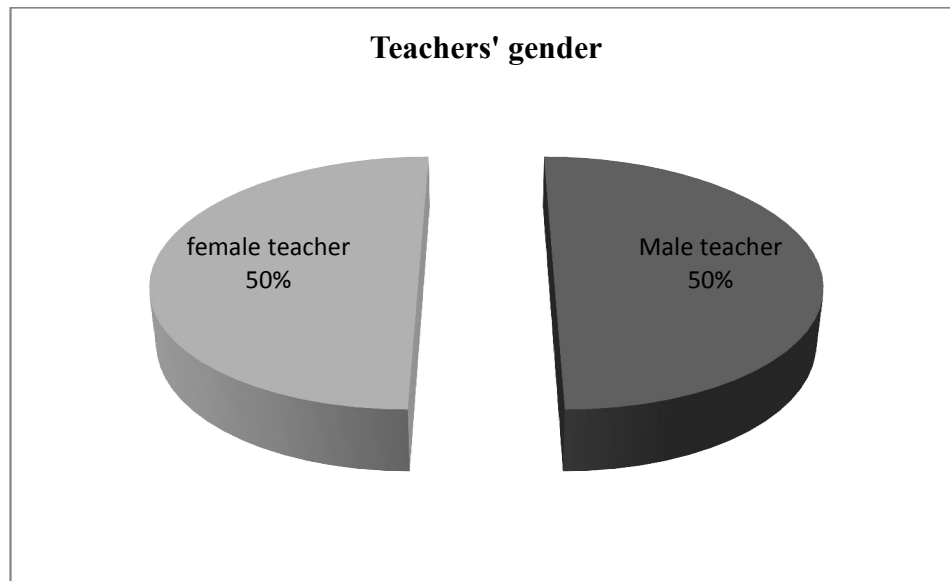


**Graph 05: Teachers' gender**

This question was posed to know the gender of teachers who are teaching the sample of our research work.

The table 5 above shows that the respondents are divided equally, 50% of our subjects are taught by male teachers and the other 50% are taught by female teachers. This division helps us avoid any kind of biased analysis of the data collected.

**Q 06:** How many English sessions do you have per week?

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| 1 session | 17 | 17% |
| 2 sessions | 22 | 22% |
| 3 sessions | 38 | 38% |
| More than 3 sessions | 23 | 23% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table06: Number of sessions per week.**
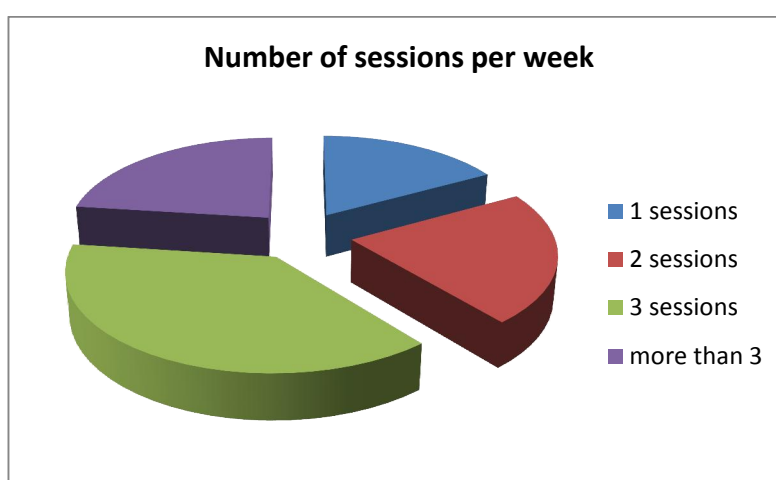


**Graph 06: Number of sessions per week**

The aim of this question is to know the frequency of students' exposure to the English language per week

The table above shows that the students' exposure frequency differs. We found that 17% of those students have one session per week, 22% of them have two sessions per week, while 38% of them have three sessions per week. However, 23% of those subjects have more than three sessions per week. This difference in the frequency of exposure is, generally, due to the difference in the stream followed by each one of the students.

**Q 07:** Do you consider English to be: - Important

-Not important

- Highly important.

| Options | Number of students | | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Female teachers** | **Male teachers** | |
| **Not important** | 12 | 10 | 22% |
| **Important** | 20 | 34 | 54% |
| **Highly important** | 8 | 16 | 24% |
| **Total** | 100 | | 100% |

<div align="center">

**Table 07: The importance of English**

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**Students' appreciation to English learning**

highly important 24%

not important 22%

important 54%

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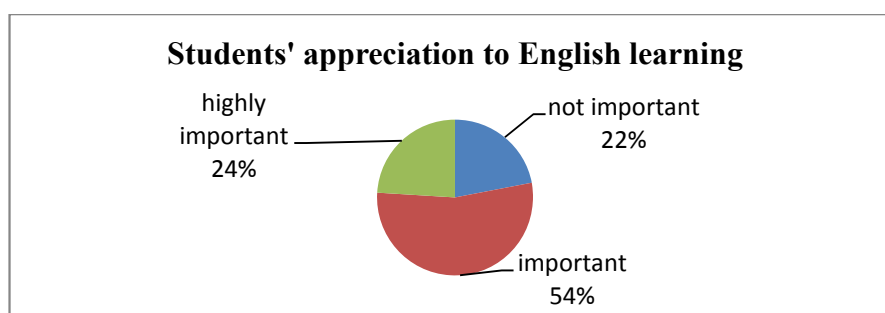
**Graph 07**

</div>

This questions aims at knowing whether students see studying English as an important subject or not. This last will help us determine their attitudes towards it and their motivation to learn it.

According to this table, the majority (54%; 34 taught by male teachers and 20 by female teachers) of the population consider English to be important and worth being studied, whereas 24% (12 taught by female teachers and 12 by male teachers) consider it highly important (generally, foreign languages students), the rest 22% of our subjects (4 students

taught by male teachers and 18 students taught by female teachers) showed no interest in studying English and considered it as a non-important subject.

The majority asserted that they like the language; accordingly, they may be enthusiastic to develop their speaking skills of the language. We also noticed that students who are taught by male teachers are more interested in studying English then those with female teachers. It is possible to think that male teachers use teaching methods and styles which are more stimulating and captivating than the ones used by female teachers. In fact, during the classroom observation, we noticed that male teachers were closer to students than female teachers though this contradicts the common view that men are abrasive and harsh while women are the soft gender and the repository of emotions and feelings.

**Q08:** Is English one of your favorite subjects?

| Options | Number of students | | Percentage % |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Male teachers** | **Female teachers** | |
| **Yes** | 39 | 30 | 69% |
| **No** | 11 | 20 | 31% |
| **Total** | 100 | | 100% |

**Table08: Learners'interest in English**



**Learners' interest in English**

no 31%

yes 69%
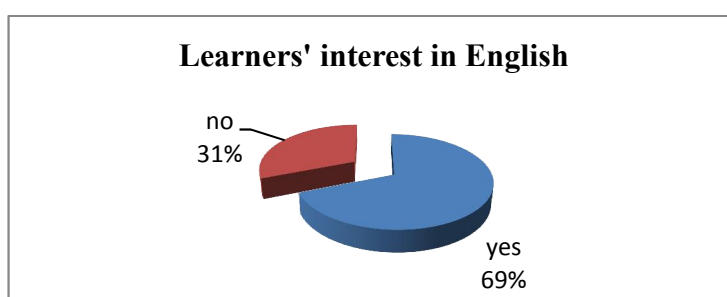
**Graph 08**

The aim of this question is know the learners' attitude towards English learning, that is to say whether they like studying it or not.

The table above demonstrates stated that the majority (69%; 39) students taught by male teachers and 31% by female ones of our sample like English. Interestingly, girls' attitude towards English is more positive than the one held by boys. This is probably because girls prefer literary subjects while boys favor the scientific ones. 31% of our respondents (11 taught by male teachers and 20 taught by female ones) asserted that they have no interest in studying English or they do not like it at all.

Though students who are taught by male teachers and who avow that English in one of their favorite subjects outnumber the ones who have the same attitude but taught by female teachers, the obtained results cannot be attributed only to the teachers' gender. The majority of the respondents who said that English is one of their favorite subjects were languages and literary students who are taught by male teachers.

**Section Two: Teachers' Gender and Classroom Interaction**

**Q 01:** Which of the following describes your level of speaking skill in English?

a- Advanced

b- Intermediate

c- Beginner

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Advanced | 4 | 4% |
| Intermediate | 30 | 30% |
| Beginner | 59 | 59% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table 09: Students' level in speaking English**
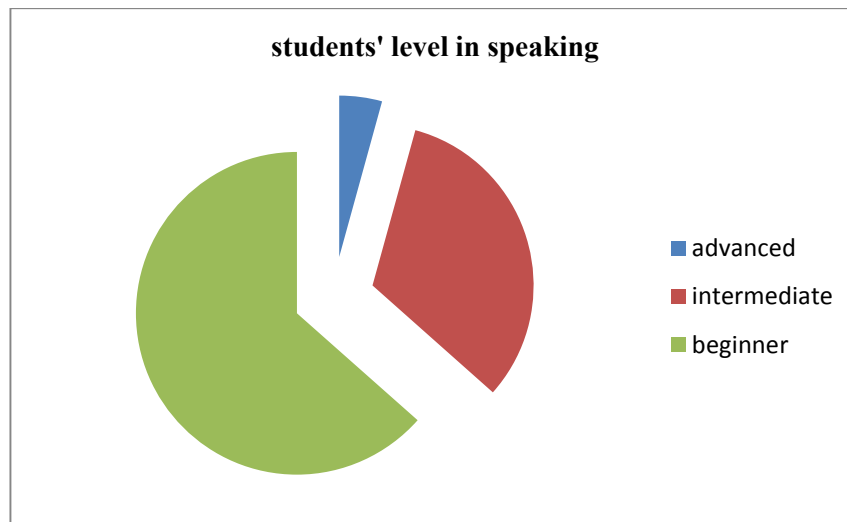
**Graph 09**

This question aims at knowing the students' assumptions about their oral proficiency level in English.

From the table above, we can assert that the majority (59%) of the respondents admitted that they are beginners in speaking English, 30% of the questioned students avowed that they are intermediate speakers of English, whereas only 4% of them declared that their level in speaking English is advanced. The results indicate that most of students, regardless of their gender and stream, are not proficient in the oral skill, we cannot say, at this stage, that the teachers' gender is the main reason because our sample have equal numbers of male and female teachers.

**Q 02: a-** During the session do you feel motivated to participate using the English language?

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 24 | 48% |
| No | 26 | 56% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 10: Learners' motivation to speak English**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 27 | 54% |
| No | 23 | 46% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table11: Learners' motivation to speak English**
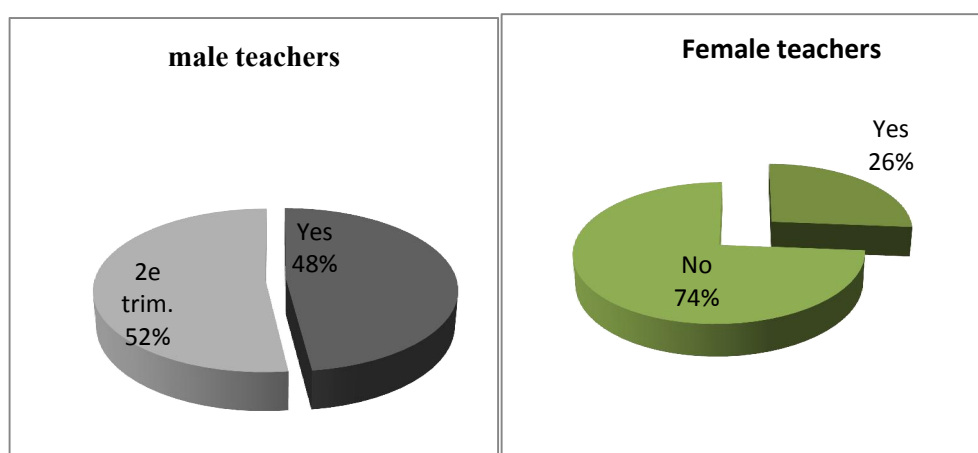


**Graphs 10, 11: Learners' motivation to speak English**

**b-**If yes, how often do you use it?

| Options | Number of students | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------|------------|
| Always | 5 | 9,80% |
| Often | 18 | 35,29% |
| Sometimes | 18 | 35,29% |
| Rarely | 10 | 19,60% |
| Total | 51 | 100% |

**Table 12:  Frequency of using English**
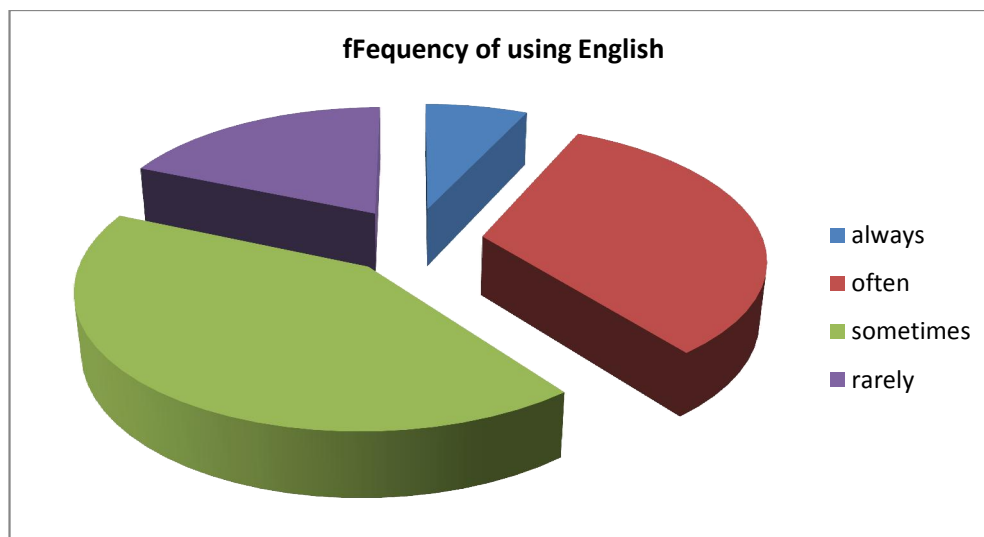
**Graph 12**

The question aims at knowing if the students are motivated to use the English language when participating or not, and to know the frequency of their use of it.

Tables 10 and 11 reveal that students' motivation to participate using English is not very high in both male and female teachers' classes. In case of male teachers, only 48% of the students expressed their motivation to participate using English while 52% said that they are not motivated to use it at all. In case of female teachers, the results were not different and close to the first case; 54% said that they are motivated to participate using English, while the remaining 46% expressed their demotivation. The results support Martin and Marsh's study which found that "motivation and engagement did not very substantially for boys and girls as a function of the teachers' gender" (2005, P. 332).

From table 12, we can say that the frequency of students' participation using English differs, 9,80 % of our subjects said that their participation is sustained during all sessions, 35,55%of the students admitted that they participate using it often but not always, 35,29% of the respondents declared that their participation using English is not sustained and that they participate occasionally; whereas, the rest of the students (19,60%) they participate using English rarely.

**d-** If no, what are the reasons?

| Options | Number of students | | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male T | Female T | |
| Shyness | 3 | 5 | 16,32% |
| Fear of mistakes | 10 | 9 | 38,77% |
| Hesitation | 4 | 6 | 20,40% |
| The teacher | 00 | 3 | 6,12% |
| All of them | 4 | 5 | 18,36% |
| Total | 49 | | 100% |

**Table 13: Students' reasons for not using English**
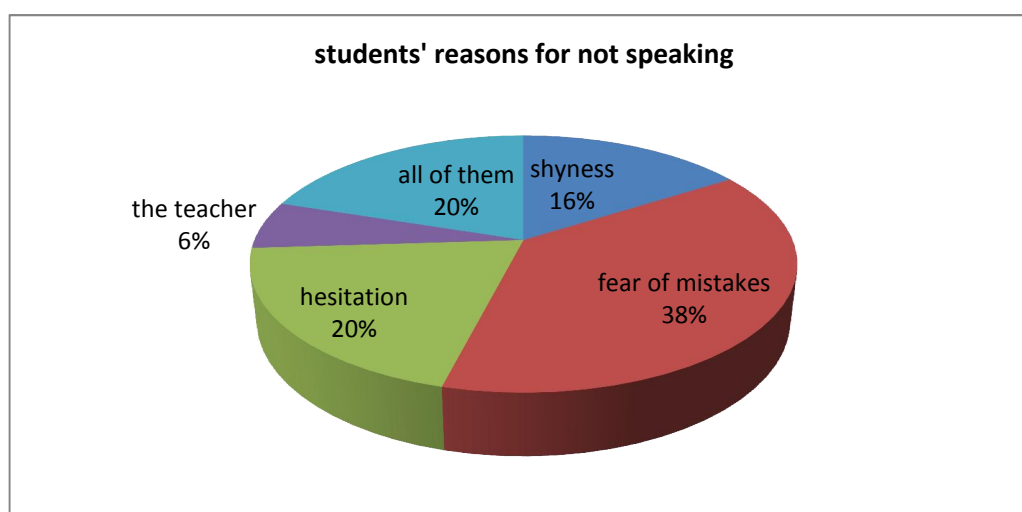


**Graph 13**

The students who have shown lack of motivation (49% of the students) were asked about the reasons behind that. We recorded 16,33% (5 with female teachers and 3 with male teachers) who related it to their innate shyness. This might be so because of the difference of gender or the nature of the teacher him/herself (openness and approachability), 38,77% of the sample (10 with female teachers and 9 students with male teachers) said that they are afraid of making mistakes. Students' fear of making mistakes can be attributed to teachers' reaction

and the quality of feedback they deliver to their students, 20,40% (4 students taught by male teachers whereas 6 are taught by female teachers) attributed the reason to their hesitation and lack of self-confidence. The results clearly show that students' hesitation is higher with female teachers than with male ones. If the results are the same in all the Algerian schools, this will probably have negative effects students' oral performance, because the teaching profession in Algeria is feminized. 6,12% of students said the reason is the teacher him/herself; whereas 18,36% related their demotivation to use English in classroom to all the already mentioned reasons.

We noticed that the students' fear of making mistakes is considered the first reason behind learners' demotivation and lack of English use inside the classroom. It is possible to think that these students who are afraid of making mistakes already had a bad experience with their teachers who might responded negatively to their answers, and this makes them afraid of being hurt again. So, it is important to take into consideration the psychology of these students who are adolescents, because at this age, they are hypersensitive and they need to be provided with doses of emotions and positive feedback.

We also noticed that female teachers face more resistance for their students when it comes to participation and language use in the classroom.

**Q 03:** What type of activities does your teacher use in class?

A-Discussions     b- role play    c-free speaking    d-dialogues

| Options | Number of students | | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male T | Female T | |
| Discussions | 32 | 38 | 70% |
| Role plays | 1 | 0 | 1% |
| Free speaking | 05 | 03 | 08% |
| Dialogues | 10 | 11 | 21% |
| Total | 100 | | 100% |

**Table 14: Speaking activities**
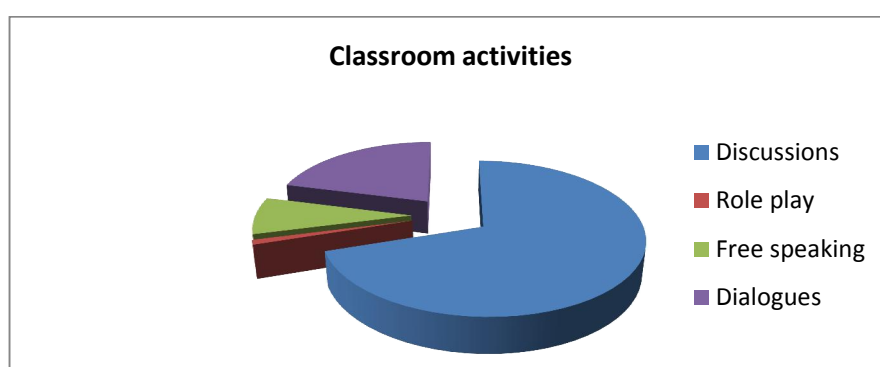


**Graph 14**

The question aims at identifying the speaking activities used in the classrooms.

The table above reveals that 70% of the teachers use discussions; 1% of the target population use role plays; 08% of them use free speaking; whereas 21% of the respondents use dialogues.

Here, teachers use discussions and dialogues as activities in which learners may develop their oral proficiency. We noticed that both male and female teachers use the same speaking classroom activities. Generally speaking, all teachers use CD.

**Q 04:** Is your teacher open and approachable?

| | Male teachers | | | Female teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Options** | **Number of students** | **Percentage%** | **options** | **Number of students** | **Percentage %** |
| **Yes** | 42 | **84%** | **Yes** | 46 | **92%** |
| **No** | 8 | **16%** | **No** | 4 | **8%** |
| **Total** | 50 | **100%** | **Total** | 50 | **100%** |

**Table15, 16: Teachers' openness and approachability**
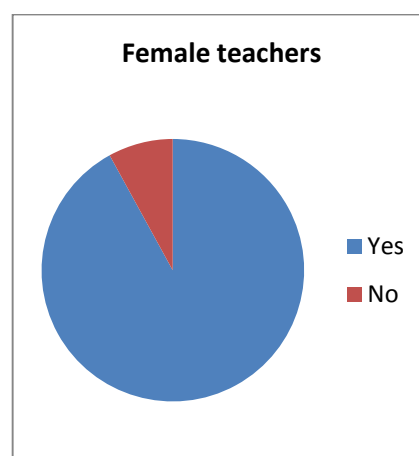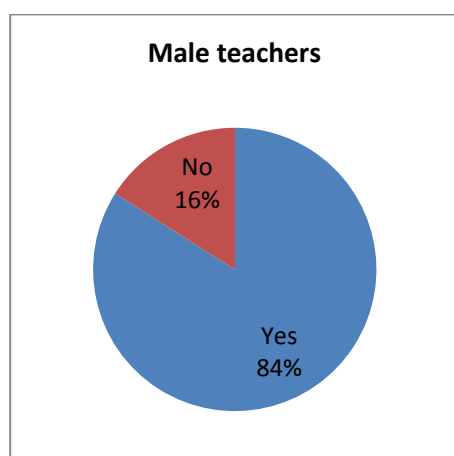


**Graphs 15, 16: Teachers' openness and approachability**

This aim behind this question is to know the learners' attitude toward their teachers' openness and approachability. It also seeks to find whether these qualities differ in accordance with the teachers' gender.

The table above shows that the majority of students (80% of them taught by male teachers; 92% of them taught by female teachers) have a positive attitude toward their teachers and they think that their teachers are affable and cordial; whereas, 16%( in the case of a male teacher) and 8% (in the case of a female teacher), which represents a minority of our population, have a negative attitude towards their teachers. This negative attitude is

probably related to age, gender, and personality differences between learners and their teachers. And this is the reasons why teachers prefer to keep a distance between them and their learners.

**Q 05:** Do you feel marginalized in the classroom?

## Male teachers

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 1 | 2% |
| No | 49 | 98% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 17: Students' integration in the classroom**

## Female teachers

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 2 | 4% |
| No | 48 | 96% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 18: Students' integration in the classroom**
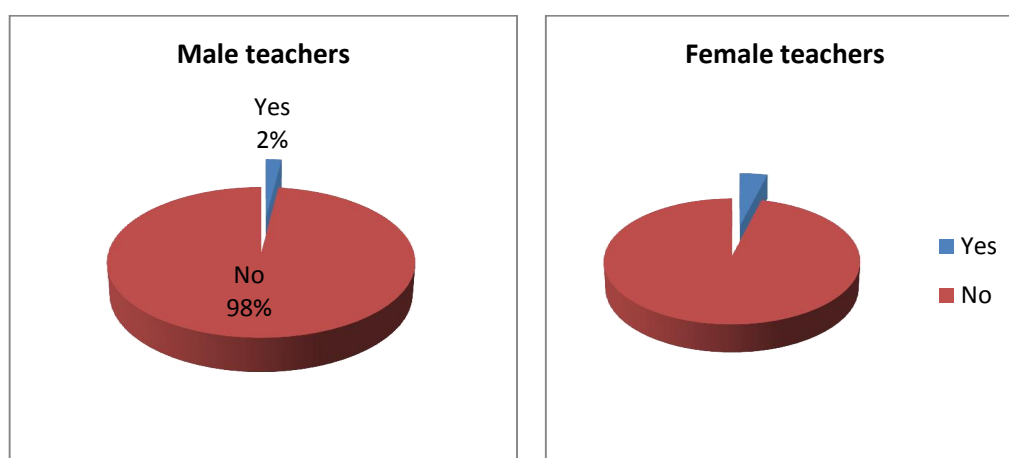


**Graphs 17, 18: Students' integration in the classroom**

The aim of this question is to know if there are any students who feel marginalized in the classroom.

Tables 17 and 18 above reveals that the majority of the respondents, 98% taught by male teachers and 96% taught by female teachers, do not feel marginalized in the classroom. However, 2% of our subjects, who are taught by male teachers and 4% taught by female teachers claimed that they are being marginalized and ignored during the English sessions.

**Q 06:** Does the teacher evaluate your outcome?

### Male teachers

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 44 | 88% |
| No | 6 | 12% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 19: Teachers' evaluation of students' outcome**

### Female teachers

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 46 | 92% |
| No | 4 | 8% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 20: Teachers' evaluation of students' outcome**
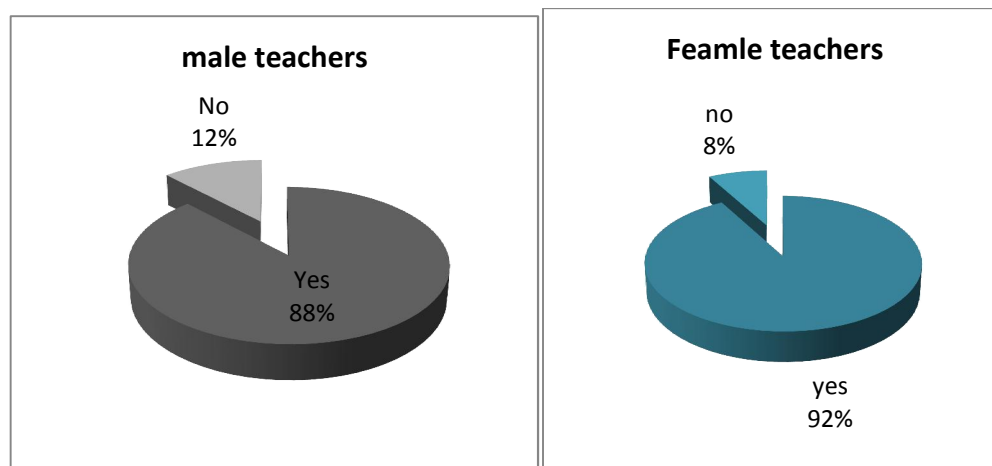
**Graphs 19, 20: Teachers' evaluation of students' outcome**

The aim of this question is to know whether the teachers (both males and females) correct learners' mistakes or no.

Table 19 shows that 88% of the learners said that their outcome is always evaluated by their male teachers, while only 12% of them said that their outcome is not evaluated. Table 20 reveals that over 92% of the respondents said that their female teachers always evaluate their outcome, while 8% claimed their teachers do not evaluate their outcome.

We can say that both male and female teachers do evaluate their learners' outcome. And give a great importance to their students' production. Concerning students whose responses were in the negative, it is probable that they are marginalized by their teachers, or they do not participate in the classroom.

**Q07:** How does your teacher correct mistakes?

a- Gently    b- harshly    c- sarcastically    d- wisely

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Gently | 27 | 54% |
| Harshly | 2 | 4% |
| Sarcastically | 6 | 12% |
| Wisely | 15 | 30% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 21: Teachers' attitudes towards learners' mistakes**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Gently | 28 | 56% |
| Harshly | 2 | 4% |
| Sarcastically | 2 | 4% |
| Wisely | 18 | 36% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

**Table 22: Teachers' attitudes towards learners' mistakes**
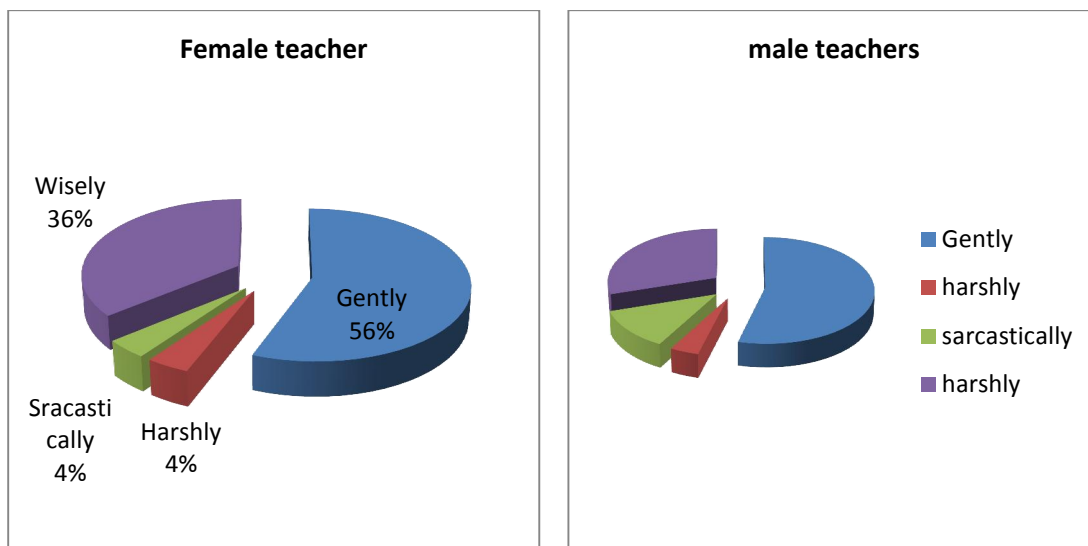
**Graphs 21, 22: Teachers' attitudes towards learners' mistakes**

The aim of this question is to know if there is any differences in the way male and female teachers correct their students' mistakes.

Table 21 evinces that the majority of the students are fully satisfied with their male teachers' attitudes towards their mistakes. 54 % of the students claimed that their teachers correct their mistakes in a gentle way; 30% of them said that their teachers do that wisely; however, 4% of the subjects claimed that their teachers correct their mistakes harshly. The remaining students (12%) said that they are corrected sarcastically.

table 22 reveals that the majority of the students display content with their male teachers' attitudes towards their mistakes, 56% of the students admitted that their teachers correct their mistakes in a gentle way; 36% of them said that their teachers do that wisely; however, 4% of the subjects claimed that their teachers correct their mistakes harshly; 4% of the respondents said that they are being corrected sarcastically.

We can presume that both teachers (males and females) correct their students' mistakes; they accord a cardinal importance to correcting students' output as well as on the way they respond to their mistakes.

**Q 08:** When corrected, do you…..?

a- feel motivated to speak          b- stop speaking

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Feel motivated to speak | 25 | 50% |
| Stop speaking | 25 | 50% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 23: Learners' reaction to teachers' feedback**

**Female teacher**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Feel motivated to speak | 29 | 58% |
| Stop speaking | 21 | 42% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 24: Learners' reaction to teachers' feedback**
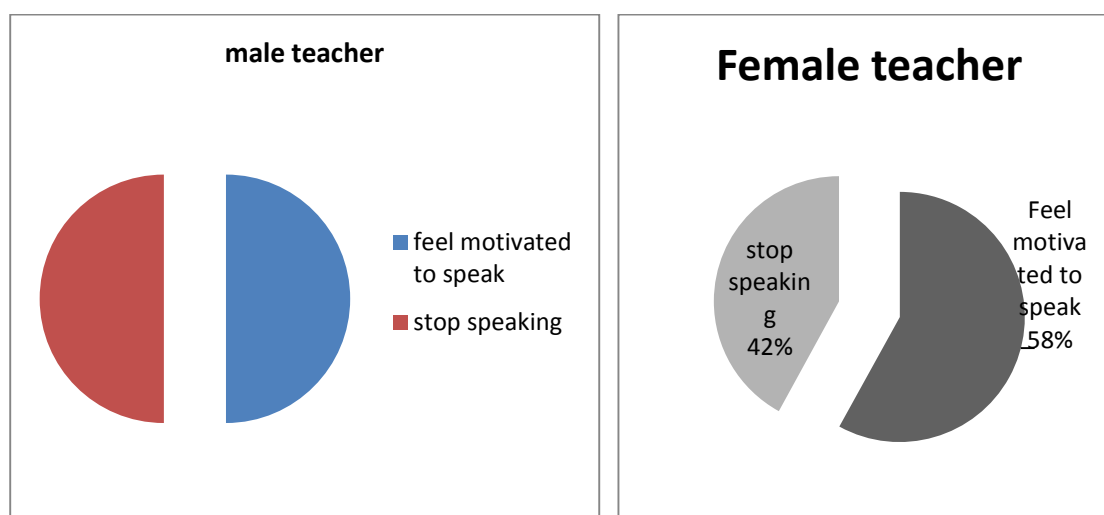


**Graphs 23, 24: Learners' reaction to teachers' feedback**

The aim of this question is to know learners do after being corrected by their teachers. Table 23 and 24 above show that half of the students (50% of students who are taught by male teachers, 42% of the students who are taught by female teachers) stop speaking after being corrected regardless of their TG. The results demonstrate that 50% of our subjects, who are taught by male teachers, and 58% who are taught by female teachers, cease to speak after being corrected by their teachers. It is reasonable to think that this is due t their teachers' way of correcting mistakes, which they do not appreciate. A positive way in which the teachers correct mistakes may be helpful and encouraging for students to speak. We can also assume that these learners feel embarrassed, and this makes them reluctant to speak even if they are corrected gently and wisely.

**Q09:** Does your teacher….?

a. Dominate the class discussion    b.Offer the chance to speak

**Male teacher**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| **Dominates classroom speaking** | 8 | 16% |
| **Offers  the chance to speak** | 42 | 84% |
| **Total** | 50 | 100% |

**Table 25 : Learners' talking time**

**Female teacher**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Dominates CD | 6 | 12% |
| Offers chance to speak | 44 | 88% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 26: Learners' talking time**
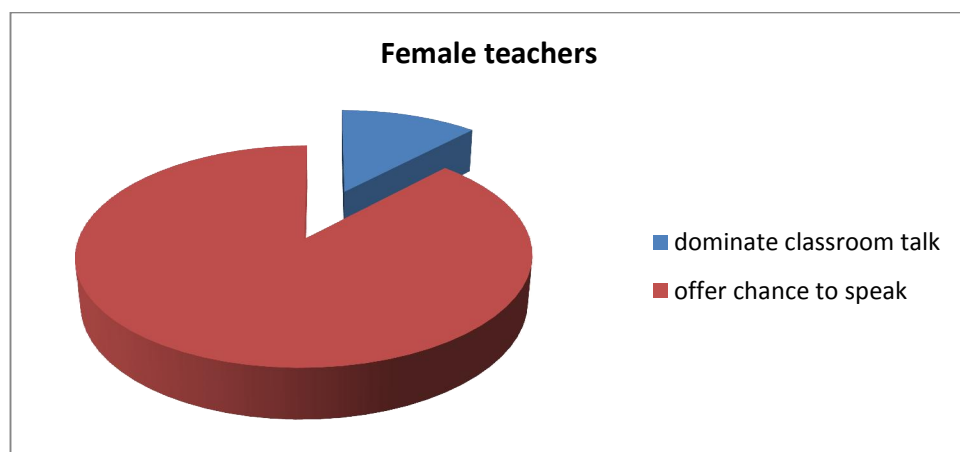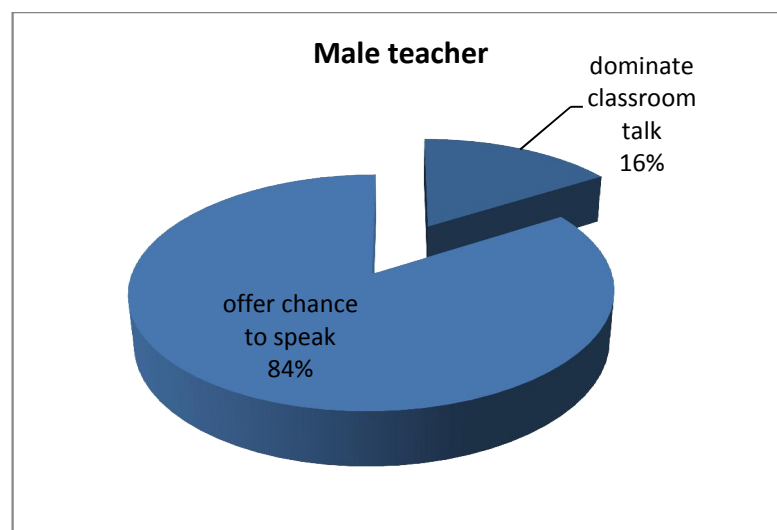




**Graphs 25, 26: Learners' talk**

Question 18 is meant to find out if both male and female teachers give students more opportunities to speak.

An examination of table 25 shows that 84% of the respondents' male teachers (84%) give learners opportunities to speak however 16% of the respondents' male teachers dominate the CD. Table 26 reveals that the overwhelming majority of female teachers (88%) give their students the opportunity to speak in the class; whereas, 12% of them dominate the CD.

The results indicate that both male and female teachers offer their students equal opportunities to speak.

**Q 10:** How often does your teacher call on you?

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Always | 7 | 14% |
| Often | 19 | 38% |
| Sometimes | 21 | 42% |
| Never | 3 | 6 |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 27: Frequency of Learners' involvement**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Always | 7 | 14% |
| Often | 15 | 30% |
| Sometimes | 25 | 50% |
| Never | 3 | 6% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 28: Frequency of Learners' involvement**
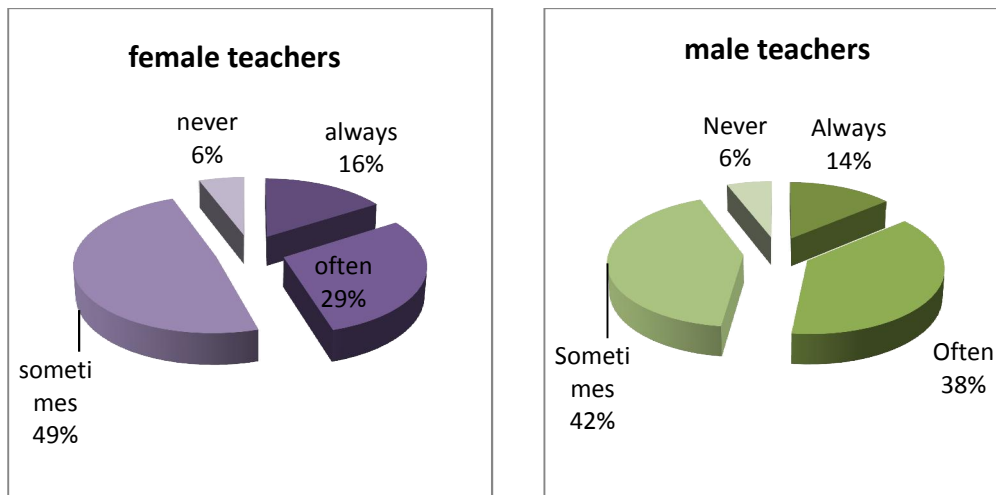
**Graphs 27, 28: Learners' involvement frequency**

The aim of this question is to know which gender tries to make his/her students more involved in CD.

With respect to our selected male teachers, table 27 reveals that 14% of their students are always called during the session. 38% of those students responded that their teachers often call them. These male teachers, according to 42% of their students, sometimes call on them. But few students (3%) denied that their male teachers call on them.

Table 28 evinces that the respondents' female teachers always involve and call always on 14% of their students; on 30% of these students said that their female teachers often call on them, while a considerable number of these students (50%) avow that they sometimes call on them. As the results indicate, both male and female teachers try to involve all the students and make them participate.

**Q 11:** If your teacher does call on you, does it happen when….?

  a- Only when you raise your hand

  b- Even if you do not raise your hand

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Option a | 31 | 62% |
| Option b | 19 | 38% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 29: Teachers' calls on students**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Option a | 37 | 74% |
| Option b | 13 | 26% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 30: Teachers' calls on students**
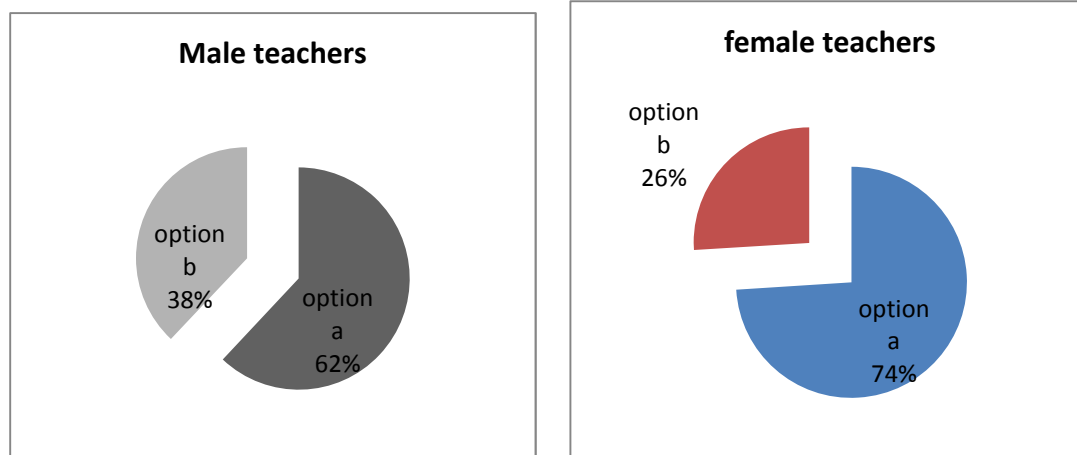


**Graphs 29, 30: Teachers' call on students**

The aim of this question is to know which of the two genders tries to involve more students in the classroom talk, even those who do not take the initiative.

Table 29 reveals that 62% of the male teachers' calls on their students take place only if the student him/herself raises his/her hand, whereas, 38% of the teachers' calls happen without the students' raising of their hands.

Table 30 shows that the female teachers in comparison to male teachers, make less attempts to involve all students equally in the CD. Over 74% of their calls on students happen only when the students raise their hands, however, the remaining of their calls happen even if the students would not raise their hands.

**Q 12:** Does your teacher interact more with …??

    a.  Male students    b. Female students

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Male students | 18 | 36% |
| Female students | 32 | 64% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 31: Teachers' interaction with male and female students**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---|---|---|
| Male students | 20 | 40% |
| Female students | 30 | 60% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 32: Teachers' interaction with male and female students**
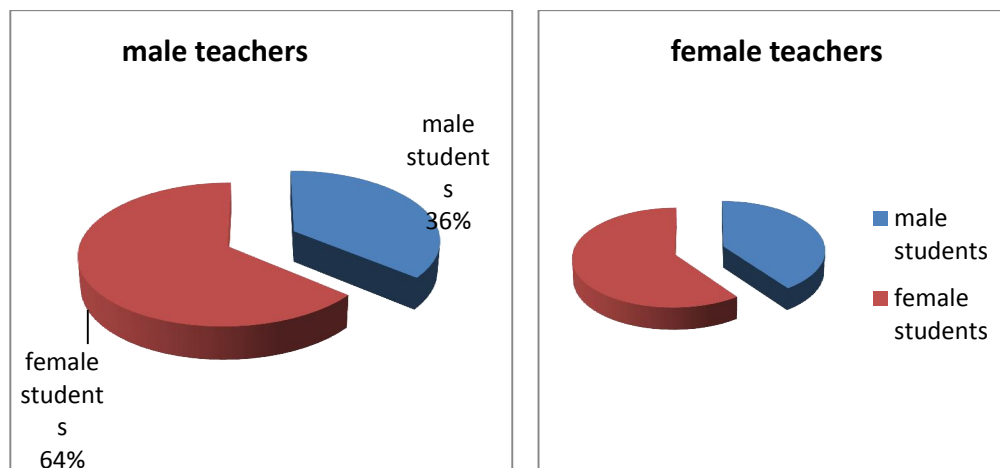
**Graphs 31, 32: Teachers' interaction with male and female students**

The aim of this question is to know if there is any gender bias among teachers when dealing with their students. Table 31 shows that male teachers interact more with female students (64% of their interactions are with female students). Only 36%of these male teachers' interactions are with male students.

Table 32 evinces that female teachers, also, interact more with female students. 60% of the teacher-students interactions happen with female students, while only 40% of these interactions happen with male students.

Regardless of the gender of the teachers, we can say that both genders interact more with female students, and this may give the female students more opportunities to enhance their oral proficiency. This also might explain the academic phenomenon of boys' underachievement

**Q 13:** Does your teacher treat boys and girls in the same way when they misbehave?

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 48 | 96% |
| No | 2 | 4% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 33: Teachers' treatment of their students' misbehavior**

**Female teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 46 | 92% |
| No | 3 | 6% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 34: Teachers' treatment of their students' misbehavior**
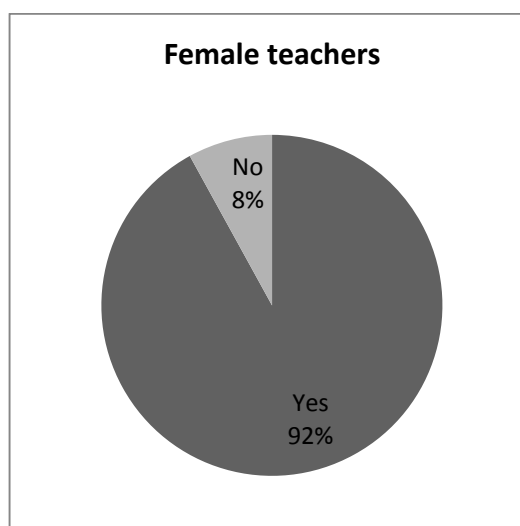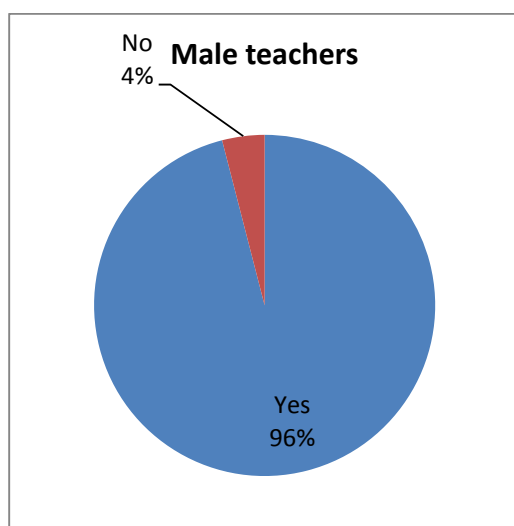


**Graphs 33, 34: teachers' treatment of their students' misbehavior**

This question aims at knowing whether teachers (males and females) treat in the same way their students when they misbehave. This may help us identify any gender bias in the classroom.

From tables 33 and 34, we can say in both cases, whether the teacher is a male or a female, the majority of the students (96% taught by male teachers and 92% taught by female teachers) responded that all students are treated equally when they misbehave. However, 4% of the respondents who are taught by male teachers and 8% of those who are taught by female teachers claimed that their teachers do not react the same way to male and female students' misbehavior.

**Q14:** Do you prefer to be taught by a…..?

a- Male teacher                    b- Female teachers

**Male teachers**

| Options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Male teacher | 50 | 100% |
| Female teacher | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Tables 35: Learners' choice of their teachers' gender**

**Female teachers**

| options | Number of students | Percentage% |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Male teacher | 4 | 8% |
| Female teacher | 46 | 92% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

**Table 36: Learners' choice of their teachers' gender**
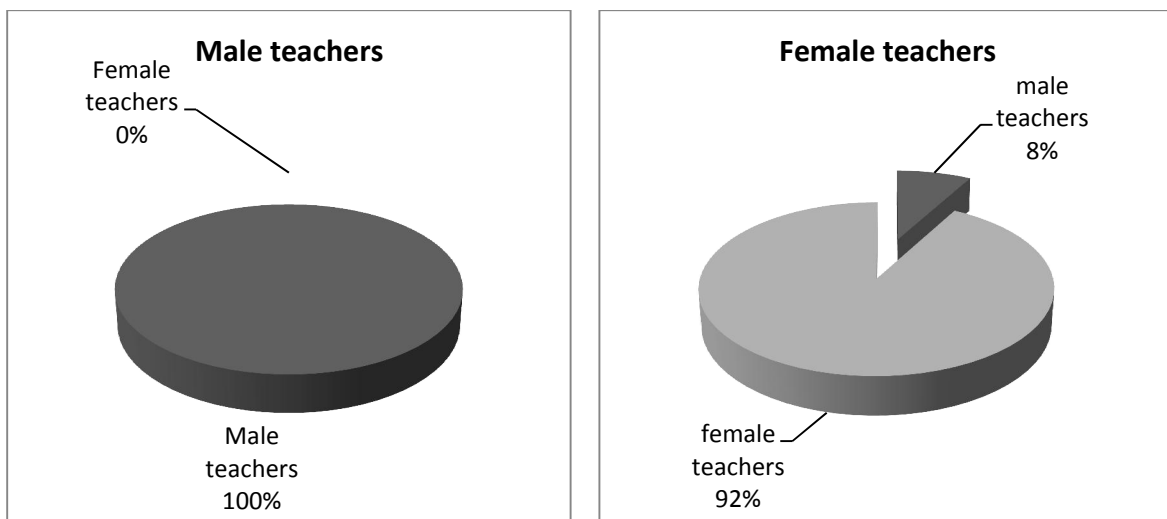
**Graphs 35, 36: Learners' choice of their teachers' gender**

This question aims at knowing whether the students prefer to be taught by a teacher of the same gender or of the opposite one.

Table 35 shows that all students (100%) taught by male teachers are fully satisfied and they have no problem at all with their TG. They prefer to be taught by a male teacher. Table 36 reveals that 92% of the students who are taught by female teachers are satisfied and they appreciate being taught by a female teachers (they prefer female teachers). However, a minority of those students (8% of the respondents) prefer to be taught by a male teacher

When we asked students about the reasons behind their choice of their TG, the students who are taught by a male teacher said that the male teacher is better at classroom management, he takes control of his classroom, and he ensures a healthy learning environment.

Students justified their preference of being taught by a female teacher by saying that they are tender, kind, and understanding. They added that female teachers provide a friendly learning environment.

**Conclusion**

The learners' questionnaire aims at investigating the effects of TG on enhancing the learners' oral proficiency. From this questionnaire, we obtained the following results:

In fact, there are 46 female teachers who constitute 92% of the total number of teachers of English in the high schools of Rouached, Redjass, Zeghaia, Ahmed rachdi, and Baynan. We noticed a considerable lack of male teachers; only 8% of high school teachers of English are males. That is to say, there are four male teachers out of 50 teachers of English in 10 different high schools.

Second, it seems that TG has no effects on the learners' oral proficiency. Both male and female teachers try their best to promote learners to speak through varied classroom activities and discussions, and by giving them more opportunities to speak without dominating classroom discussions. Another important point is that both male and female teachers adopt a positive attitude when dealing with students' mistakes, this likely to lower will lower their anxiety and push them to speak more in the classroom. However, another important point that we cannot ignore is that both genders interact more with female learners. This might be so because females have more desire and motivation to study. They tend to like to study and to speak inside the classroom more than male learners do. Whatever the reason, this tendency to interact more with female students is likely to hinder the enhancement of boys' oral proficiency.

Besides, when we asked the respondents about their favorite TG; we noticed that there is a relative tendency towards male teachers. This finding can be easily questioned because almost all the respondents chose their actual teacher's gender. Students taught by a male teacher chose male teachers over female ones and vice versa.

**II. Teachers' Questionnaire**

**1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire aims at finding teachers' views about oral proficiency learning and if they believe that gender may stand as an important factor in hindering or fostering the oral skill. The questionnaire also tries to investigate if male and female teachers' behaviors and practices vary according to their gender.

**2. Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire was administered to 20 teachers. Among them, there are 10 male teachers and 10 female teachers. The questionnaire begins with a very brief introduction that explains the aim of our questionnaire as well as the procedure of answering the various questions. It is divided into three sections made of 13 questions. These questions are of three types: yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions, and some questions that require a direct precise answer. Teachers were asked to answer the different questions by ticking the appropriate answer and stating their views when necessary.

**3. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

**Section one: Background knowledge**

**Q 01:** Your degree

This question aims at identifying teachers' educational degree and what educational background they have since it is of a very important role in the teaching profession.

| Option | Teachers' Degree | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| BA(License) | 7 | 6 | 70% | 60% |
| MA(Magister/Master) | 3 | 4 | 30% | 40% |
| Doctorate candidate | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
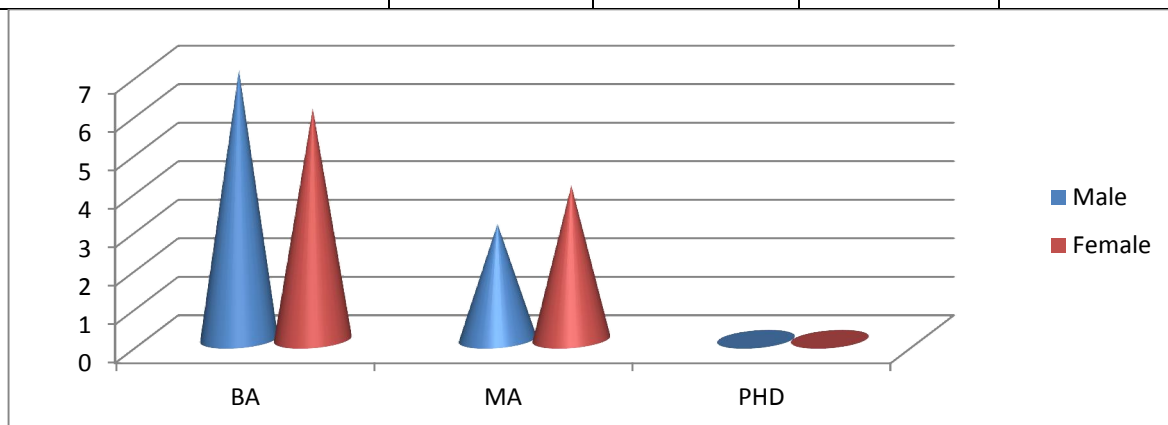


**Table 37: Teachers' degree**

Table 37 shows that 13 teachers out of 20 have a license university certificate which is mainly of no dedicated studies to address the teaching/learning situations as our investigation to three universities had shown. Out of these teachers, 70% are males while 60% are female teachers. The table above also shows that seven teachers studied either in some institutions that prepare its students for the future teacher profession (ENS), or they got their master certificate. These master' degree holders, as we have found, were taught psychopedagogy and didactics courses. Of these teachers, 30% are males and 40% are female teachers. Concerning the PhD candidates, none of the respondents is of such a level which can be attributed to the Algerian educational system's obstacles that make it hard if not possible for teachers to carry on their studies.

The data above implies that the majority of teachers who constitute the sample of our study have an educational background that does not mainly fit the educational profession

(13/20) they are indulged in. It is so since 65% of them studied to get their BA in which the modules taught are meant to build students' language competency and to reach some mastery of the four skills, but not to prepare them to face class situations and learners' different learning styles.

**Q 02:** Are you a male or a female teacher?

Since this research investigates TG and its effect on learners' oral proficiency development, this question is meant to identify the gender of the investigated sample, which is very necessary because gender is a key variable in our research work.

| Option | Teachers' Gender | Percentage |
|--------|------------------|------------|
| Male | 10 | 100% |
| Female | 10 | 100% |
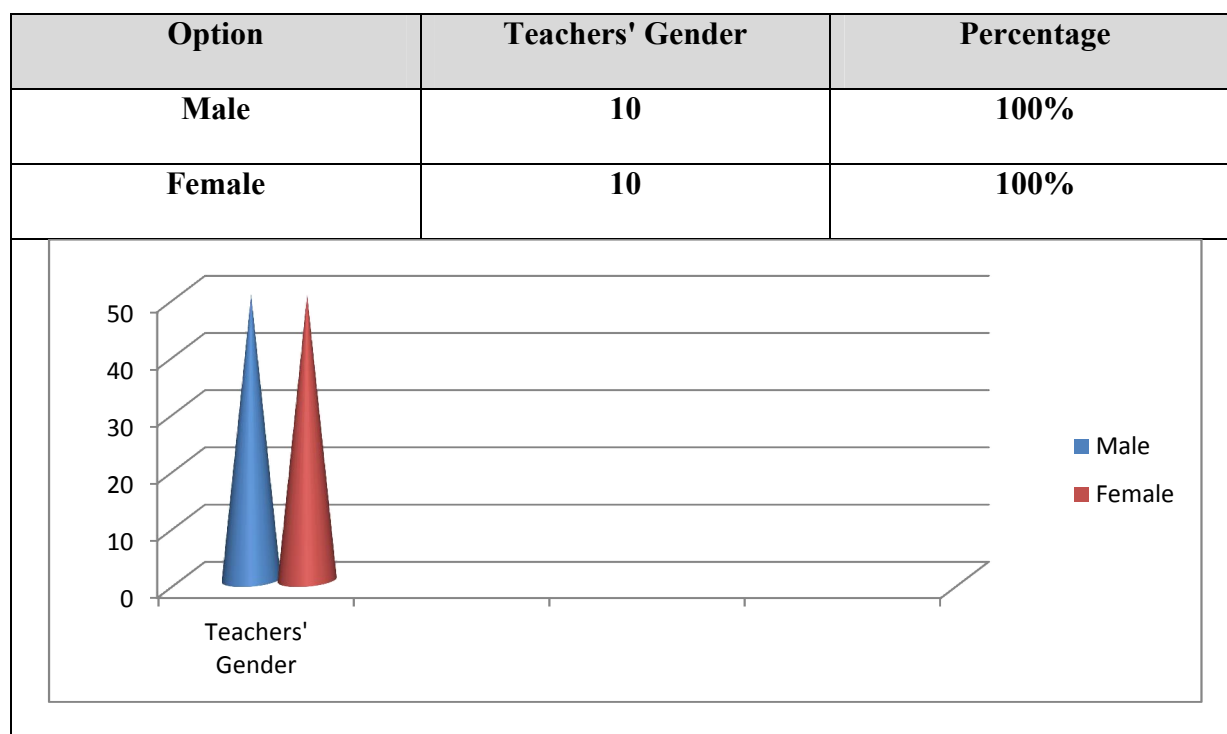


**Table 38: Teachers' gender**

Purposefully, we administered our questionnaire in two equal shares so as to give objectivity to the investigated issue through examining an equal number of teachers from both genders. Yet we have noticed that the number of female teachers exceeds that of male teachers in a screaming level the thing that urged us to examine 9 random high schools to see

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the in-field overpowering gender. We investigated the matter in four main regions of Mila, and we found the following results:

| High School | Number of English teachers | Female teachers | Male teachers |
|---|---|---|---|
| KamelAbd Allah Basha – Redjas | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Houari Bomedien-Redjas | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| BentabalSliman-Mila | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Brothers Belarima –Mila | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| 01 November 1954 –Rouashed | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 08 Mai 1945-Rouashed | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| ShouhadaSaraf-Tadjnanet | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Ali Jaafar –Tadjnenet | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| MouloudKassemNayatBelkassem – Tadjnenet | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 41 | 37 | 4 |
| Parentage | 100% | 90.24% | 9.76% |

**Table 39: Percentage of male and female teachers**

The table shows that 90.24% of the teachers 9 examined high schools are females, while just 9.76% of them are male teachers. This inharmonious number of teachers' gender distribution in these schools could be the result of the social perspectives and males' own view concerning teaching which is seen largely as a female task and an unrewarding job financially and morally.

**Q 03:** How long have you been teaching English?

Experience can produce a good teacher or at least can affect their teaching practices, this question seeks to investigate if the teachers' teaching experience in EFL classes can affect their teaching and the way they see the teachers' gender role in developing learners' oral proficiency.

| Option | Teachers' Experience | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 1 to 5 Years | 2 | 2 | 20% | 20% |
| +5 | 6 | 4 | 60% | 40% |
| +10 | 1 | 1 | 10% | 10% |
| +15 | 1 | 1 | 10% | 10% |
| 20> | 0 | 2 | 0% | 20% |
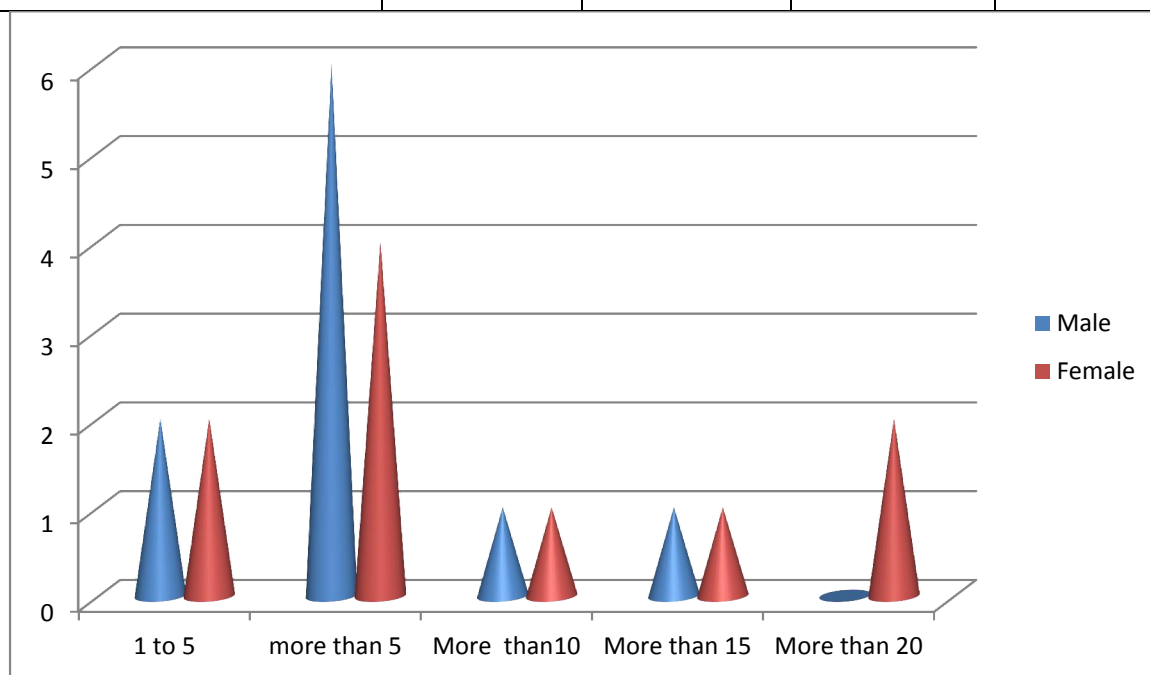


**Table 40: Teachers' experience in teaching**

The table above shows that Just 20% of these teachers, whether males or females, have less than five years of experience in the field. 60% of the questioned male teachers have an experience in teaching that exceeds five years which is 40% in case of the female ones. Some 10% of both genders have 10 years of experience in the field of English teaching at high school level, while 10% of the two genders are have experience that exceeds 15 years in the field. None of our male respondents has an experience of more than 20 years, while 20% of their female counterparts have 20 years of experience and even more. It is noticeable that

female teachers are much more experienced than the male ones in general, which could be justified by the nature of this profession at least in the Algerian context. It would not be a secret that teaching as well as teachers is not that much liked by its stuff nor by the society itself. In fact, being a teacher is a topic of mockery everywhere, owing to the marginalization the field is subject to. Moreover, to be a teacher in Algeria, as was seen in the questioned sample, is the last solution for those who can find no other solution else but teaching.

**Q 04:** What streams do you teach?

This question aims at knowing the streams our respondent deal with.

| Option | Streams | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| **Scientific + Literary** | 3 | 2 | 30% | 20% |
| **Literary + Economy** | 2 | 1 | 20% | 10% |
| **Foreign Languages + Scientific** | 2 | 3 | 20% | 30% |
| **Economy + Scientific** | 3 | 2 | 30% | 20% |
| **Literary + Scientific + Economy** | 0 | 2 | 00% | 20% |
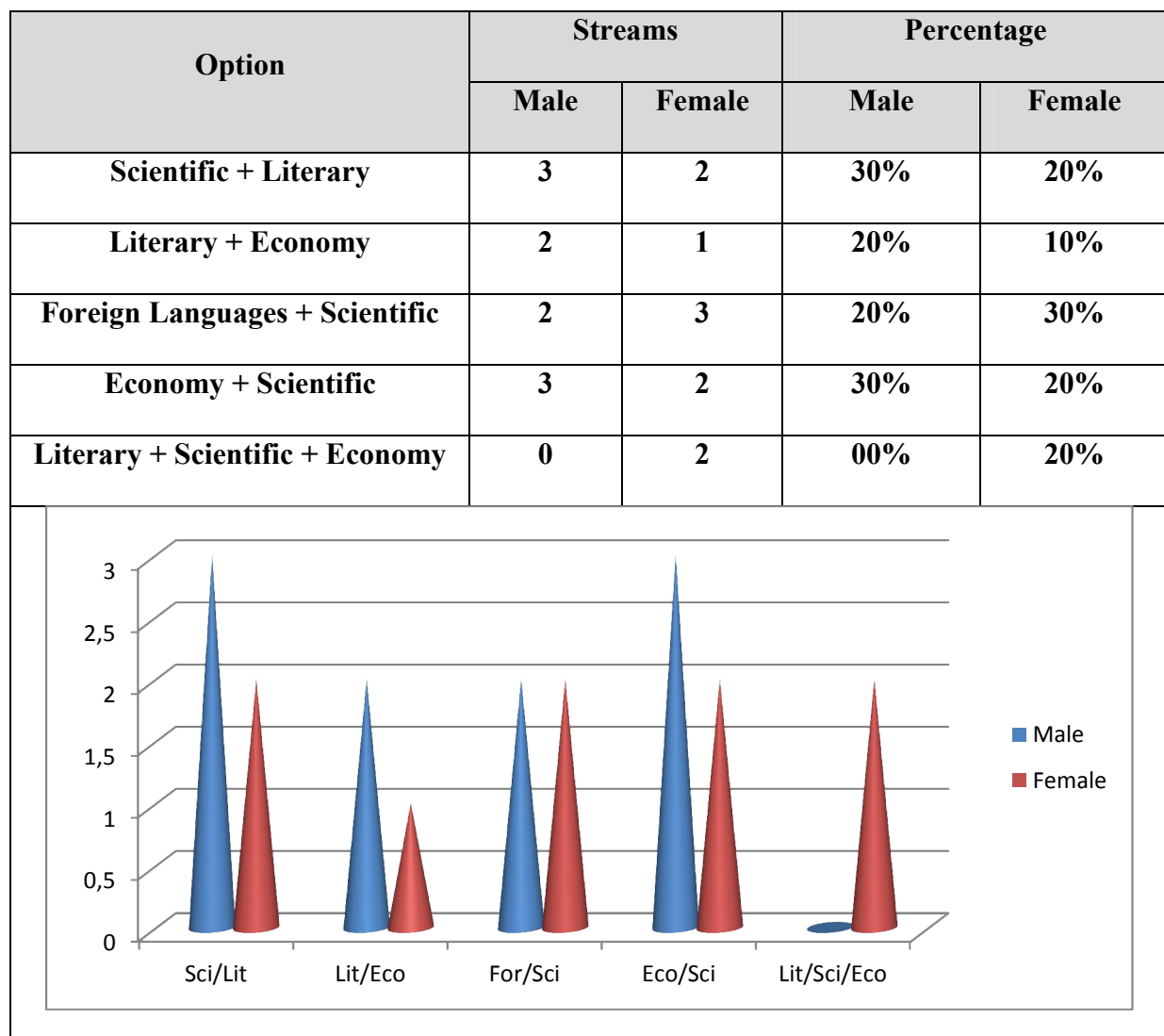


**Table 41: Streams taught by the teachers**

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The table above displays that teachers are never dealing with a mono stream. They have at least two streams to take care of, and some of them may have even three streams per year. It is noticed that the administration's strategy aims at giving each teacher two different steams, one scientific while the other is literary. We found out that 30% of the male teachers and 20% of the female ones deal with scientific and literary streams. Another 20% of the female teachers and 10 % of the males work with foreign languages and scientific streams, and another 30% of these male teachers and 20% of the female teachers are responsible for some economy and scientific streams. Some 20% of the female teachers we questioned said they deal with three streams in the same years which were an odd case because of the lack of teachers in some areas deal with Economy and Scientific streams; in this case the streams were Literary, Scientific, and Economy.

Some of the teachers from Bentabal Sliman High School-Mila replied that the diversity noticed in streams distribution is done willfully, according to the Algerian legislation. It is agreed upon that it is beyond the teacher's capacities to take care of more than two streams per-year, because this will negatively affect the teacher's performance.

It is noticed that male teachers of the sample were dealing with scientific streams much more than female teachers do. On the other part, female teachers deal with literary streams much more than male teachers do.

**Q 05:** What level are your classes?

Question 5 inquires about the levels our sample of teachers is teaching, whether they deal with first, second, or third year students.

| Option | Class level | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| First year | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Second year | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Third year | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| First year + Second Year | 2 | 3 | 20% | 30% |
| First year + Third year | 4 | 5 | 40% | 50% |
| Second year + Third year | 4 | 2 | 40% | 20% |
| First + second + Third year | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
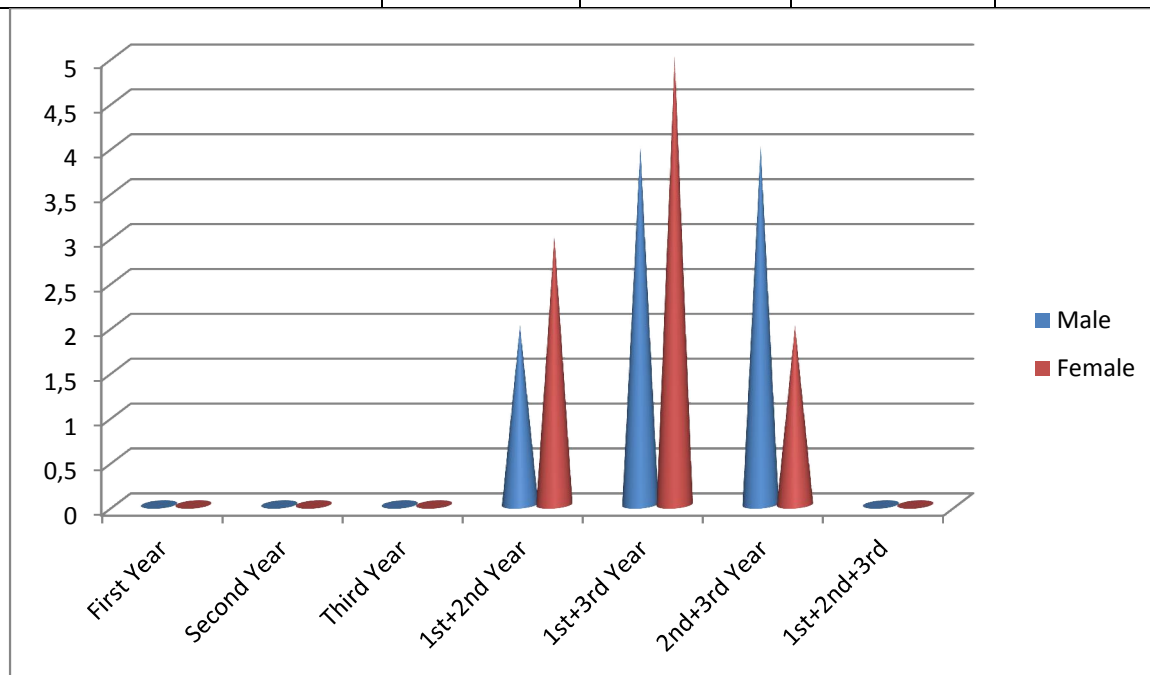


**Table 42: levels taught by the teachers**

These results show that, globally, secondary school English teachers deal with no more yet no less than two levels each year. This is, in fact, goes hand in hand with the ministerial recommendations. 20% of our male respondents and 30% of the female teachers are in charge of first year and second year levels. Some 40% of the questioned male teachers and 50% of the female teachers are responsible of a blend of first year and third year levels,

while just 40% of the male respondents and 20% of the female ones work with second and third year students in their high schools. Such a distribution is justified by the hierarchy of learners since fresh students are the majority in every high school which requires more teachers to take care of them. None of our respondents is responsible of just one level and none of them is responsible of more than two levels per-year, which could be beyond their abilities and a transgression of the Algerian educational laws.

**Section Two: Teachers' in-class Objectives and Teaching Strategies**

**Q 01:** Is teaching English your own desire?

This question is of a great importance since a love toward something would melt whatever obstacle in the way to achieve it, and the absence of desire in whatever field would create hardships even if none exist. Teachers' attitudes toward the task they are entrusted with really matters a lot, because it has an influence on their teaching styles and practices.

| Option | Is teaching English your desire? | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 2 | 6 | 20% | 60% |
| No | 8 | 4 | 80% | 40% |
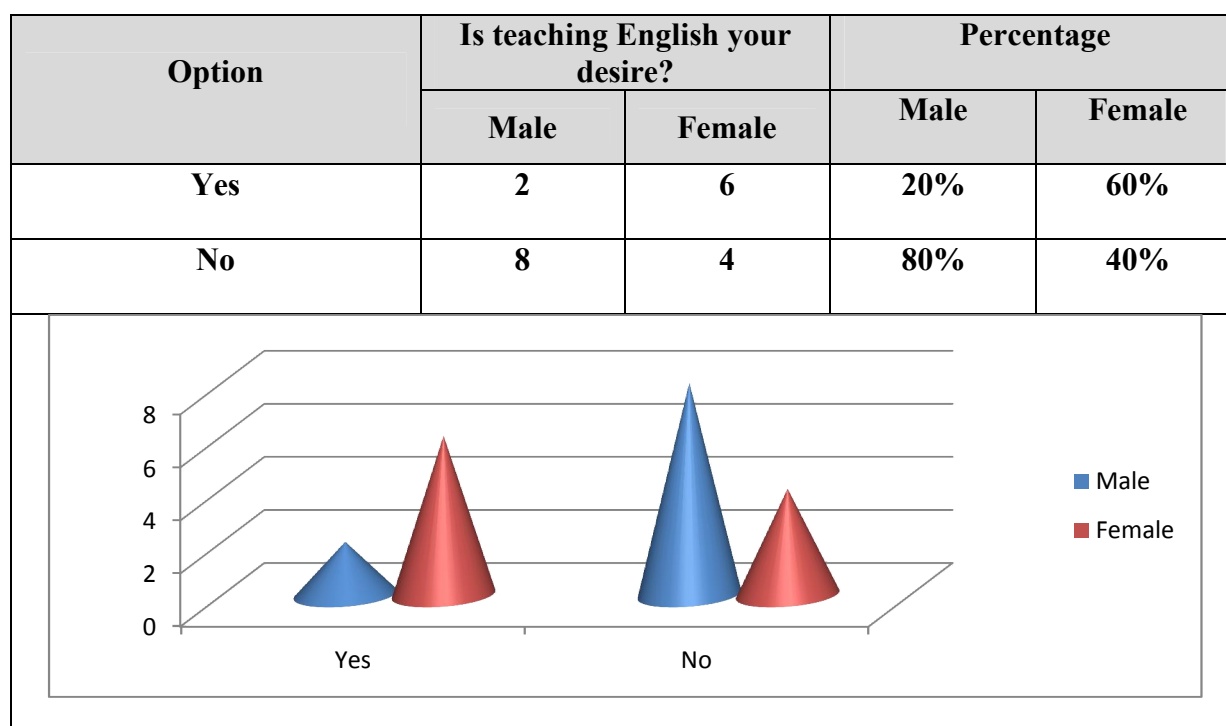


**Table 43: Teachers' choice of their profession**

The table above shows that the majority of the questioned teachers (80% of males and 40% of the female teachers) are responsible for an important and noble profession that they have no desire in. Just 20% of our male respondents and 60% of the female teachers we questioned said that teaching, as a profession, was their ultimate desire. Lack of interest means lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and this can have devastating effects on both sides of the teaching process, teachers and learners as well (Paul, 2013, para.3).

When asked to justify why they chose a profession they do not even like, most of them replied that the main urge was "Money". Teaching, according to them, is the only option in a country that is impoverished in term of opportunities. Some female teachers noted down that they were obliged to choose this job because it is the only option in a country whose customs and traditions still perpetuate gender discrimination and stereotypes.

As for male teachers, only two avowed that teaching English was their dream. Yet one of them wrote a note saying that he daily regrets choosing such a field and if the chance poped back, undoubtedly, he would choose whatever except teaching.

**Q02:** Which of the following is your main objective in teaching?

This question was asked in order to examine why these teachers teach English for their learners and what objectives they target in their daily sessions.

| Option | Main Objective in Teaching | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **To enhance students' oral proficiency** | 2 | 4 | 20% | 40% |
| **To help students read/write effectively** | 3 | 3 | 30% | 30% |
| **To finish the syllabus in due time** | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |

| To enable students get better exam marks | 5 | 3 | 50% | 30% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
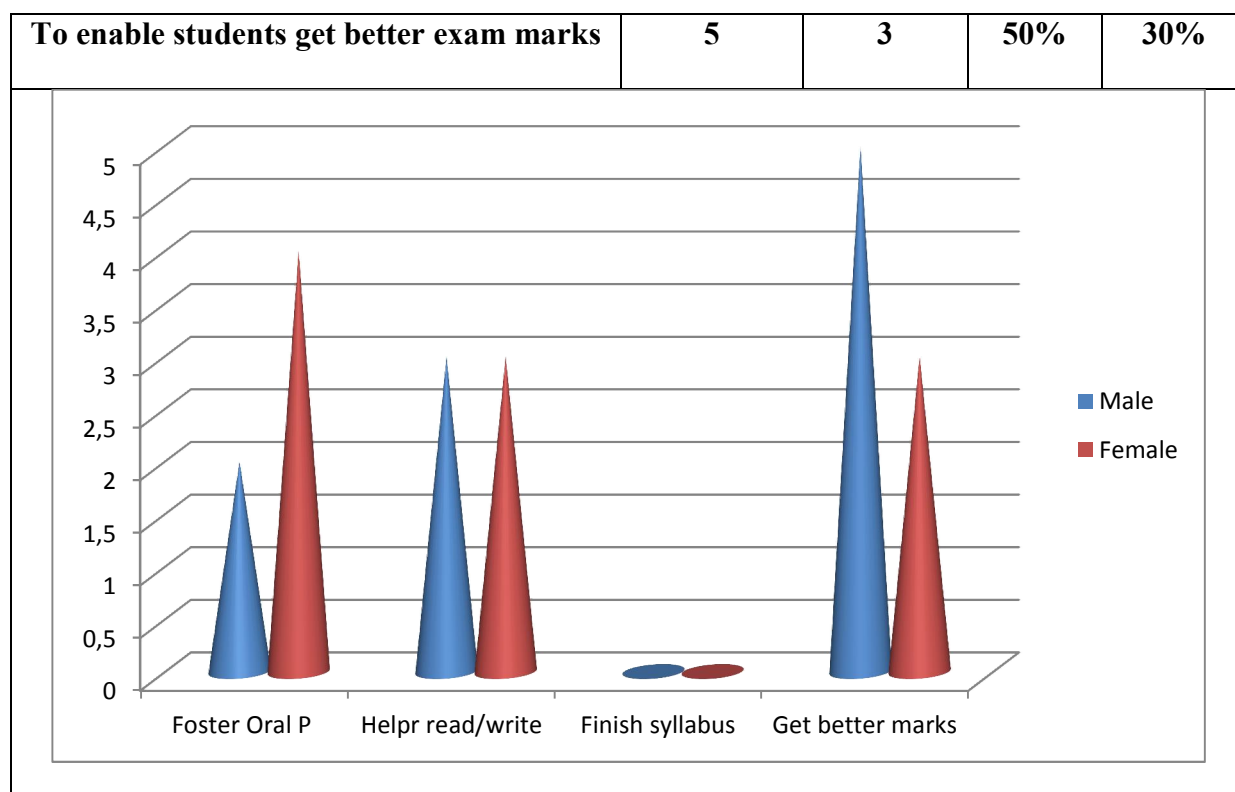


**Table 44: Teachers' main objective in teaching**

The table's results display that the majority of the respondents, (50% males and 30% females), are concerned with the pass marks because speaking is never tested in exams such as the Baccalaureate one, and marks are all that matter in this educational system, regardless of the way one gets it or even his/her level in the subject tested. 20% of the male teachers and 40% of the female teachers said that enhancing student's oral proficiency is a targeted objective in their class lessons. Another 30% of both female and male teachers marked reading as the main target of the in-class objectives, which goes hand in hand with the nature of the formal examination. It is worth mentioning here that almost all the respondents ticked at least two choices and as shown above "better exam marks" was the bed rock they work for. None of our questioned teachers ticked finishing the syllabus as a main objective, which could be justified by the will to form a competent learner and not to fill a logbook only. In terms of gender preferences, males were more concerned with building language skills,

including oral competency, than females do. The latter sound more interested in building learners' reading/writing skills than male respondents.

**Q03:** Do you use Arabic to help your students understand your lessons?

It is agreed upon now that teaching a foreign language must launch from highlighting the use of the language to be learnt. This question targets the understanding of whether our professional teachers walk the talk of experts in the field in using the target language when teaching and to what extent they refer to MT when teaching.

| Option | Using Arabic to explain | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 7 | 9 | 70% | 90% |
| No | 3 | 1 | 30% | 10% |
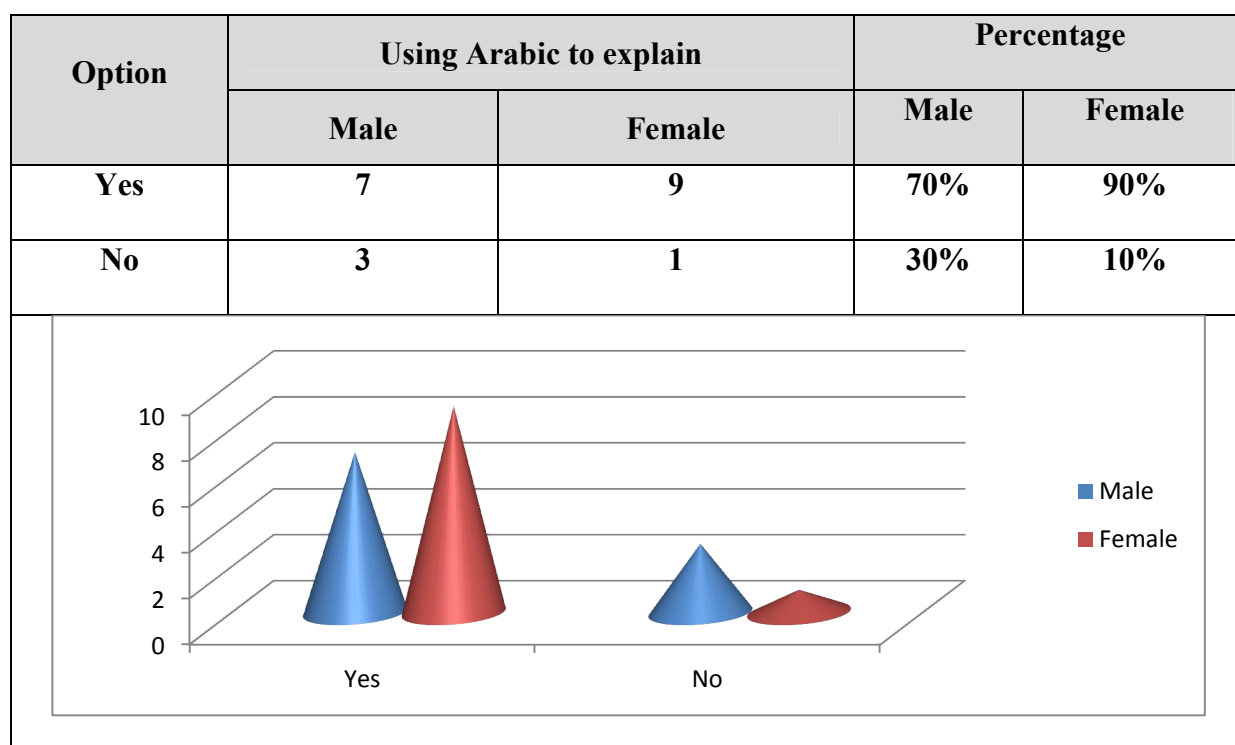


**Table 45/A: Teachers' use of Arabic language in the classroom**

90% of the female respondents and 70% of the male sample answered that they use Arabic, or the MT, when teaching to help their students understand the introduced lessons though it goes against the competency based approach (CBA), which is currently applied in the Algerian educational system. Just 30% of the male teachers and 10% of the female ones said that they do not refer to MT when addressing their students; they simply explain their

lessons in the target language (English) in order to set a much more challenging atmosphere for learners to progress and mold their language skills.

For sure, language shifting and translation can be used as a strategy from time to time to explain or pave the way for a better understanding as pedagogue may suggest, but it must be done wisely in a right proportion; otherwise, learners will turn into a spoon fed subjects.

Female teachers were the most of our respondents to tick the use Arabic in class; males were less than females in confirming their use of Arabic in their classes. Such a great percentage of Arabic use in class could be justified by learners' weak level, teachers' unwillingness, and the absence of reward and punishment in our schools. The use Arabic in the English class is likely to impede the enhancement of students' oral proficiency because the classroom is, generally, the only place in which students are exposed to the target language.

Those who opted for Yes were asked to tick how often they refer to MT (mother tongue) in their classes. This enabled us to know the nature of reference whether remedial or not. The following results had been generated:

| Option | Reference to Arabic in class | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Always | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Often | 2 | 2 | 20% | 20% |
| Sometimes | 6 | 5 | 60% | 50% |
| Rarely | 2 | 3 | 20% | 30% |
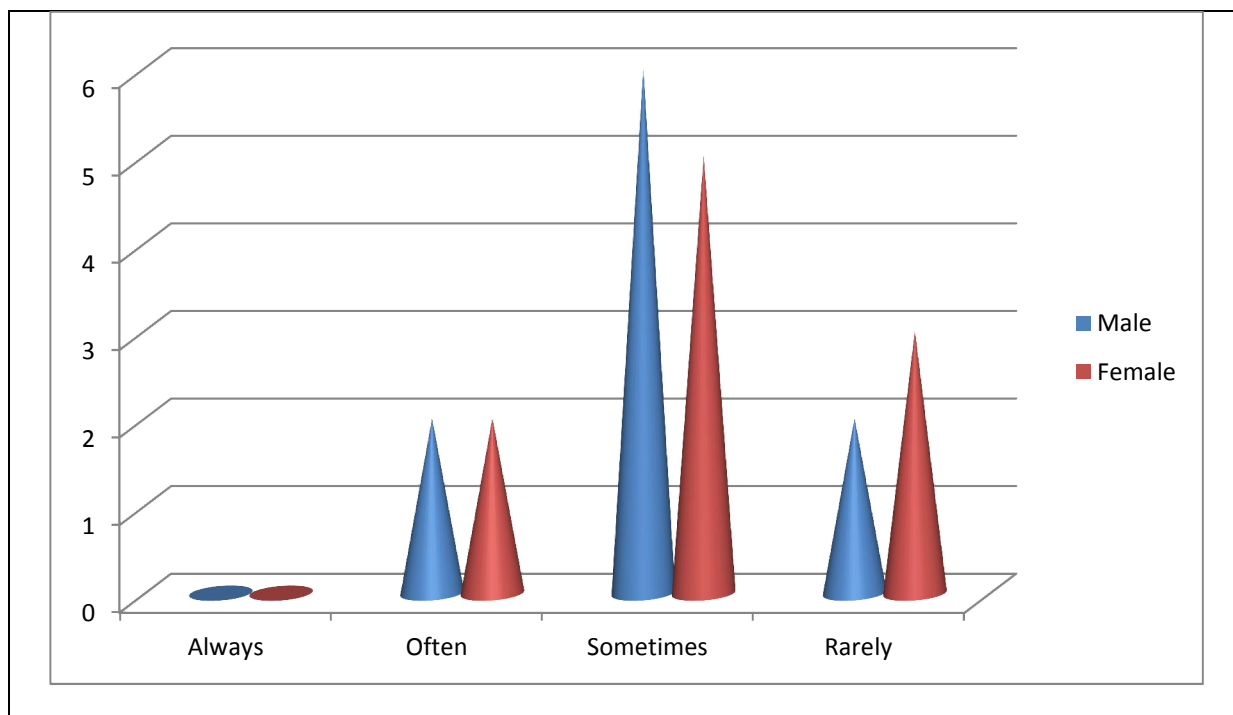
**Table 45/B: Frequency of using Arabic**

The above results show that teachers' use of MTs in their classes is to some extent extensive since 20% of them (males and females) said they often use it, while another 60% of the questioned females and 50% of the male teachers admitted that they count on it sometimes. 20% of male teachers and 30% of their female counterparts avowed that they rarely use Arabic. It is noticed that Always option was not ticked at all by any respondent. 'Often' and 'sometimes' are frequency adverbs that exceed the level of 50%, which sounds too much in an English class that is meant to teach and put in practice the English language. We may attribute such a colossal presence of the MT in the Algerian EFL classes to the already stated reason, which is learners' weak level due to a low languages coefficient in the middle and the high school period. Our educational system is based on paper achievement at least in languages which are mainly oral/ aural, and the total absence of reward from the side of government to both teachers and learners. It is also reasonable to think that the profuse use of Arabic in the English classes due to the teachers' use of archaic methods of teaching. Despite learners' low level in English, teachers can be innovative and find ways and methods

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that familiarize students with the language and help them understand without resorting to translation into Arabic.

**Q 04:** Which of the following describes your students' level in the speaking skill?

Identifying the level of learners in the respondents' classes could yield a lot of clarifications. We asked this question to see how good these learners are when it comes to oral proficiency.

| Option | Students' Speaking skill level | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Advanced** | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| **Intermediate** | 1 | 4 | 10% | 40% |
| **Novice** | 9 | 6 | 90% | 60% |
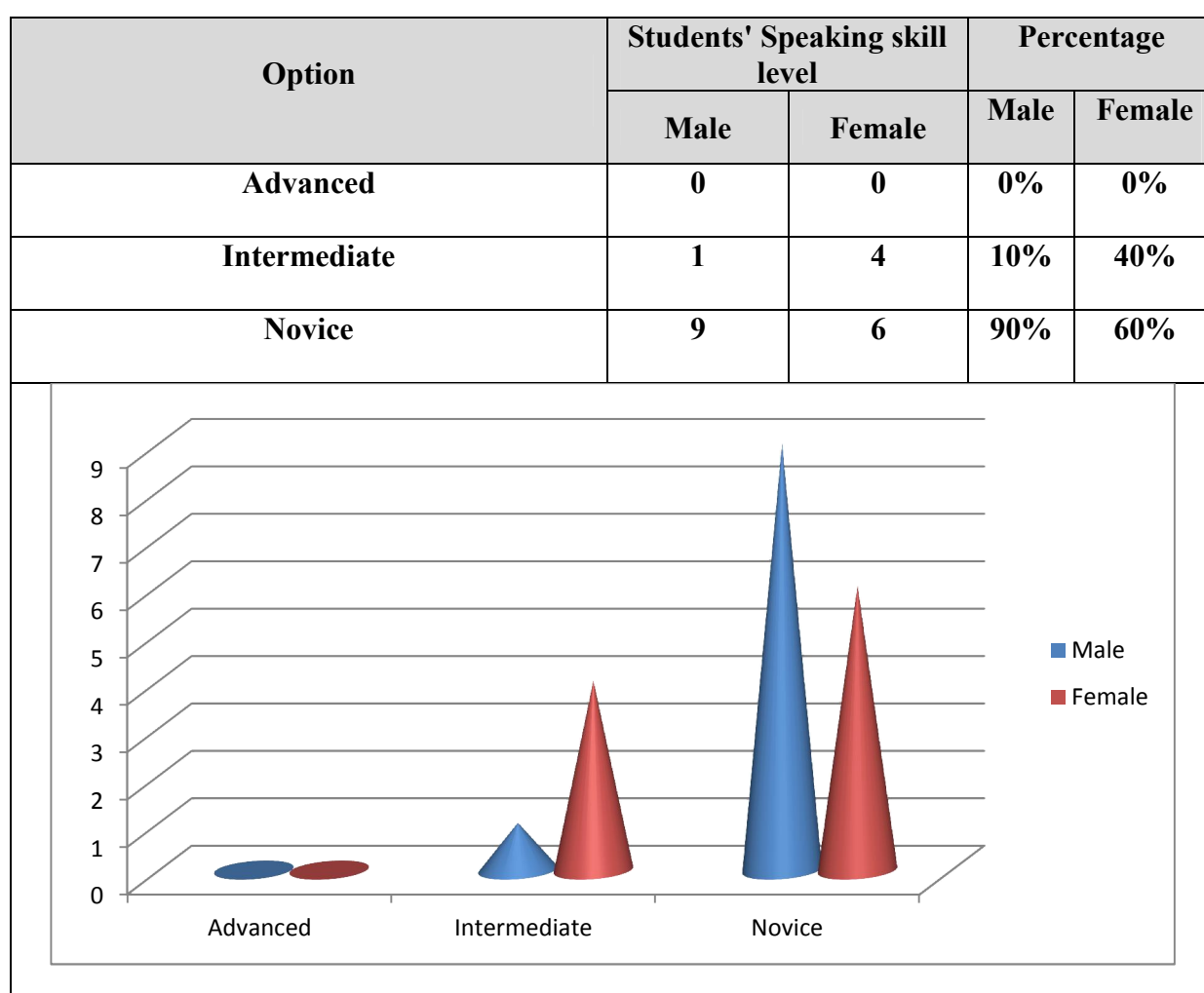


**Table 46: Teachers' evaluation of students' level in speaking**

The table reveals that, according to our respondents, our high school learners are suffering from a great problem in oral proficiency. None (0% ) of the respondents ticked the "advanced level" though some worked with Languages stream which is devoted to language

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skillful students. 90% of our male respondents and 60% of the female ones described their learners in general as novice ones. Such a percentage equalizes 28 of 35 students in an average Algeria class. By novice, we mean that they are still beginners and probably cannot even introduce themselves orally in a language they studied at least for 5 years. The finding entices us to pose a meaty question which is how and why all these five years have been fruitless and sterile. One possible explanation is the sorrowful reality of the push-policy of the Algerian educational system which is more interested in quantities then in qualities. Just 10% of the male respondents and 40% of the female teachers said that their learners' level is intermediate in terms of oral proficiency which could represent some 7 students in an average Algerian class of 35 students. Concerning male teachers, we noticed that just one of them was among those who described their learners as intermediate. This means that the majority of male teachers see their students as merely novice ones at least with regard to oral proficiency.

**Q 05:** What type of activities do you use in class?

The noticed low level could be the result of a plenty of factors, one of which is the type of activities used to foster learners' oral skills. Via this question we aim at identifying the types of activities used and whether there are gender differences in teachers' choice of these activities.

| Option | Types of activities | |
|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female |
| Discussion | 10 | 6 |
| Role play | 1 | 3 |
| Free speaking | 3 | 1 |
| Dialogues | 5 | 5 |
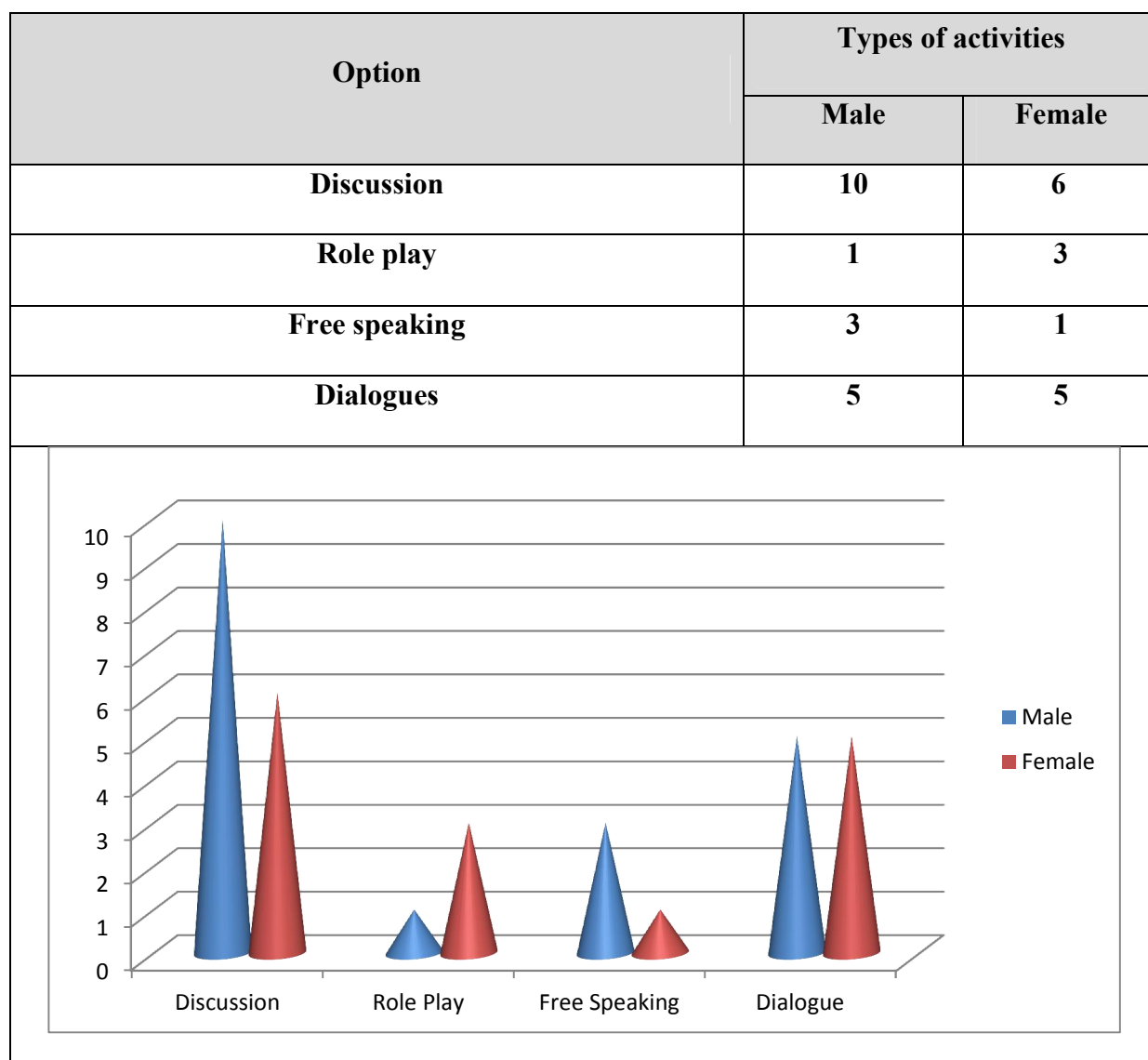


**Table 47: Types of activities teachers use in class**

Table 47 shows that 10 of our male teachers and 6 of the female ones use discussions as a way to enhance their learners' oral proficiency. Just 1 male teacher uses role play, the activity that was ticked by female teachers 3 times. In terms of free speaking, 3 male teachers ticked it as an in-class teaching activity and none but 1 female teacher confirmed using it. Dialogues in class were ticked equally by 5 female teachers and 5 male teachers. We should mention that our respondents ticked minimally two to three choices, the thing that reveals the diversity of tasks, which gives consideration for students' learning styles.

In their answers, it was apparent that most males prefer using discussion in their classes as an activity while females prefer using both of discussions and dialogues.

**Q 06:** Do you evaluate your students' oral production?

Evaluation is a kernel part in a learners' objective attainment and needs checking. The main aim of this question is to see whether learners are evaluated so as to be aware of their lacks and weaknesses for future remedy and compensation.

| Option | Do you evaluate? | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 7 | 9 | 70% | 90% |
| No | 3 | 1 | 30% | 10% |
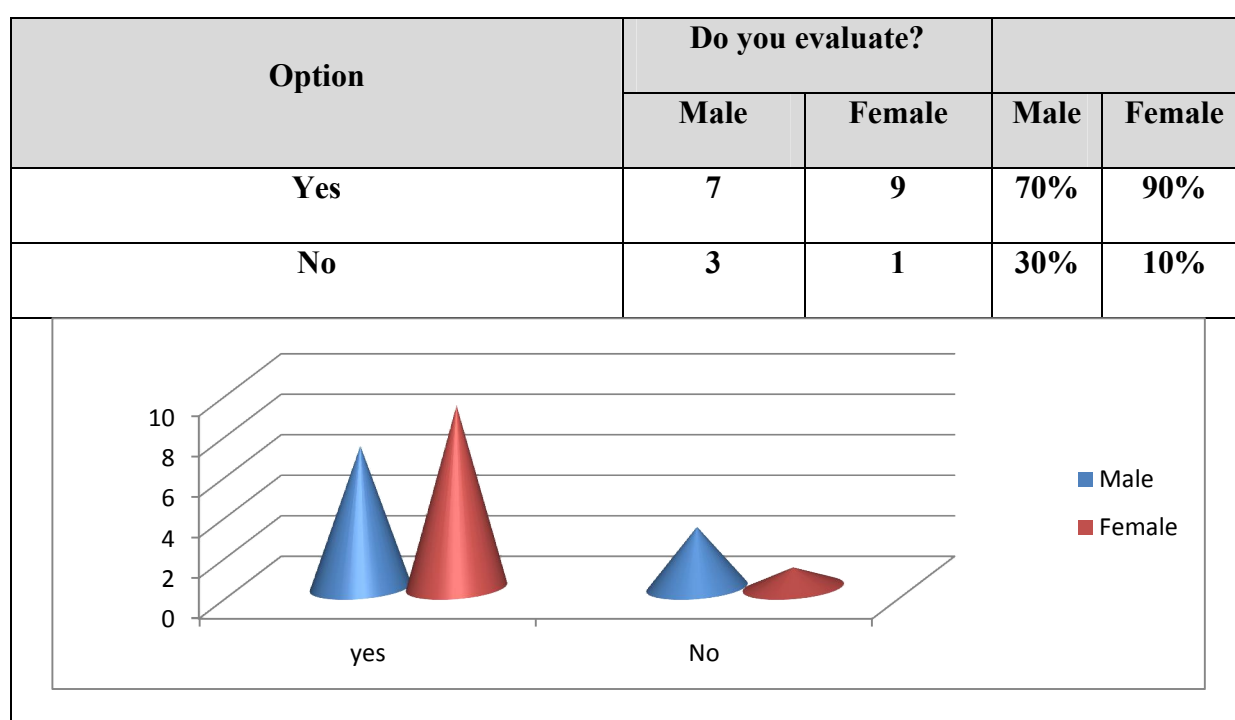


**Table 48/A: Teachers' evaluation of students' oral production**

The above table shows that the majority of our respondents (70% of male teachers and 90% of female teachers) evaluate their learners, while just 30% of male teachers and 10% of the female ones admitted that the do not evaluate their learners' oral production. Evaluation is an influential step in teaching as it enables teachers to know how learners did and what the need. Most of those who said that they do not evaluate students' oral performance were females, yet the absence of oral evaluation could lay its weigh on the syllabus that cares much about writing and reading then about speaking and listening. It is also possible to think that

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this is due to the fact that teaching was not the first choice of most teachers. Thus, some of them are unlikely to be honest in their work.

We asked our respondents to mention the preferred way of evaluation which they use in classes, and the table below summarizes their answers:

| Option | Evaluation technique | | Percentage | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Self-evaluation | 3 | 5 | 30% | 50% |
| Peer-evaluation | 1 | 3 | 10% | 30% |
| Both | 2 | 2 | 20% | 20% |
| Left blank | 4 | 0 | 40% | 0% |
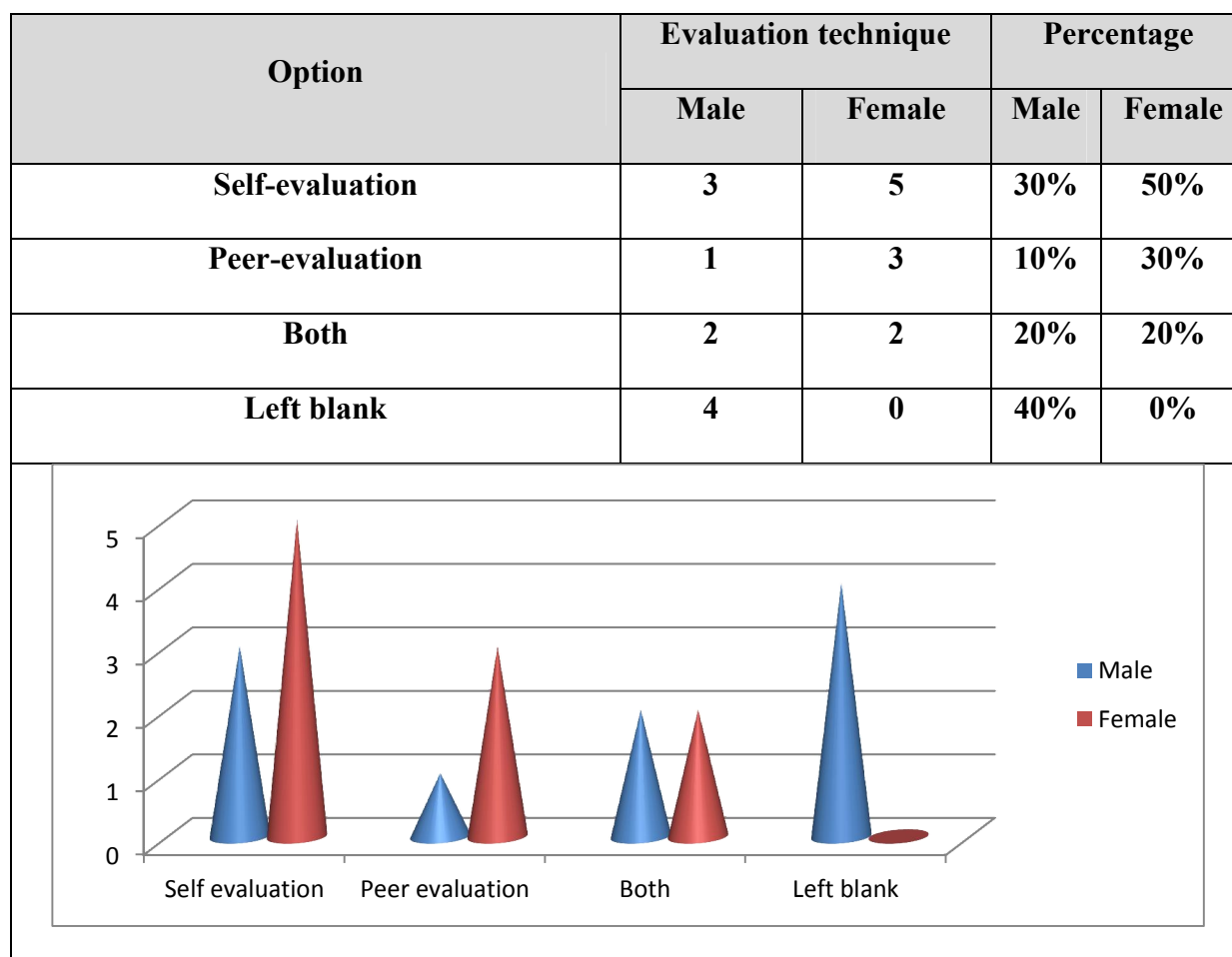


**Table 48/B: Methods of evaluating learners' oral proficiency**

30% of our male sample and 50% of the female respondents trust self-evaluation as the optimum way for a learner to see his own advancement. 10% of the male respondents and 30% of the female teachers replied that they use some peer evaluation, letting learners to correct and spot each other's mistakes. 20% of both male and female teachers said they use both peer and self-evaluation according to the situation. 40% of the male respondents left the choices unmarked, which could mean their use of other unmentioned techniques. It is also

possible to think that teachers use exclusively teacher evaluation because, at this level, students are not competent enough to evaluate themselves or to be evaluated by other peers.

Of those who chose Self-evaluation, we noticed that females ticked it more than males did. Females' reliance on self-evaluation might not very helpful for students to improve their level, because as we said before, students are in need of teachers' evaluation at this stage.

**Q 07:** Do you administer any remedial work to foster pupil's oral proficiency?

Remedial works are of a great benefit in patching learners' weaknesses and filling the gaps. Working without repairing what learners did not attain adequately in terms of their speaking skill development, could harm their future success. This question was asked to figure out if teachers set any extra tasks to help their learners catch up and fix what they missed. In this respect, differences between male and female teachers are always a key point in this questionnaire.

| Option | Remedial works | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Yes** | 10 | 10 | 100% | 100% |
| **No** | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
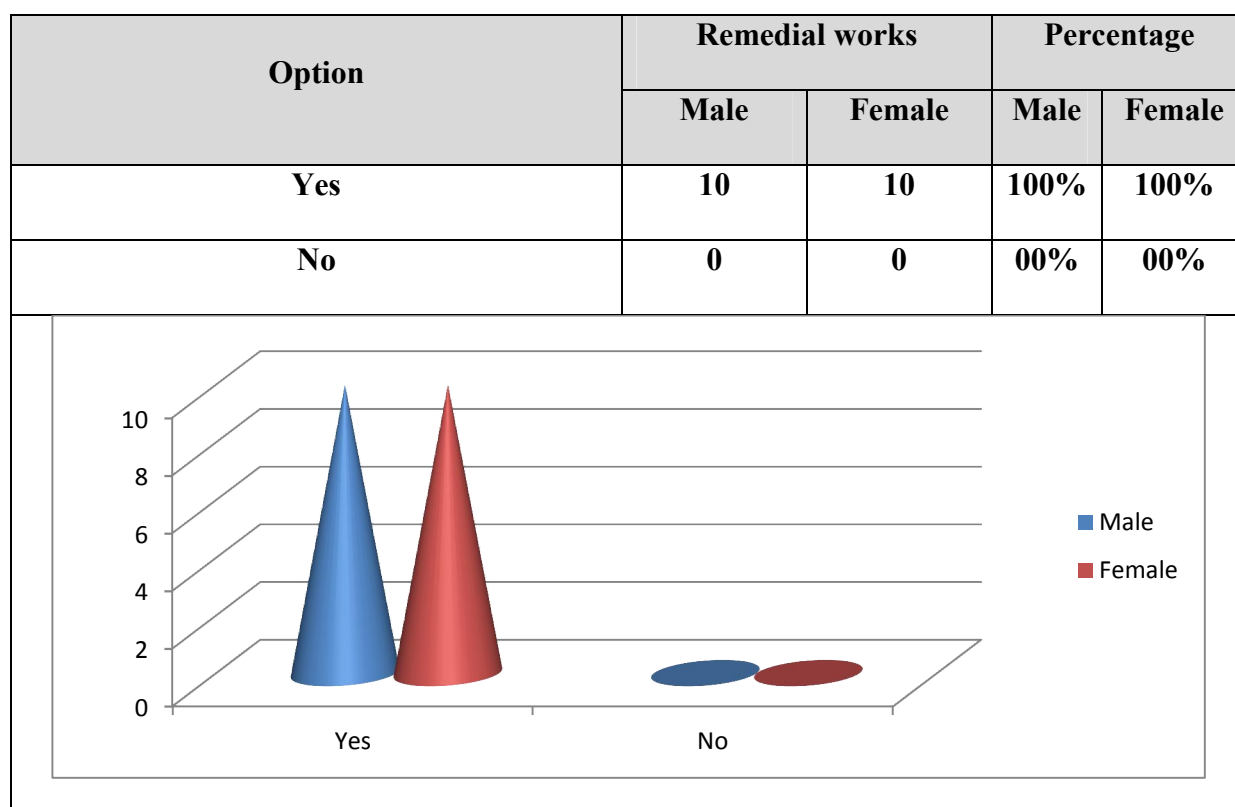
**Table 49:  Methods of fostering learners' oral proficiency**

All of our twenty respondents replied they set extra remedial work to foster and help learners' enhance their oral proficiency. When we asked them to mention some strategies they use to overcome learners' oral underachievement, they mentioned the use of games, debates, authentic native speakers' materials, presenting some works orally. Others even mentioned using songs in class as a vivid use of language.

**Section Three: The Effect of Teachers' and Learners' Gender in Class**

**Q 01:** Which gender performs better orally?

Since our main interest in this research is to see if gender plays any role in class we asked the first question to reveal if learner' gender is of a different achievement level in the EFL classes.

| Option | Learners' oral performance in class | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Female students | 10 | 10 | 100% | 100% |
| Male students | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
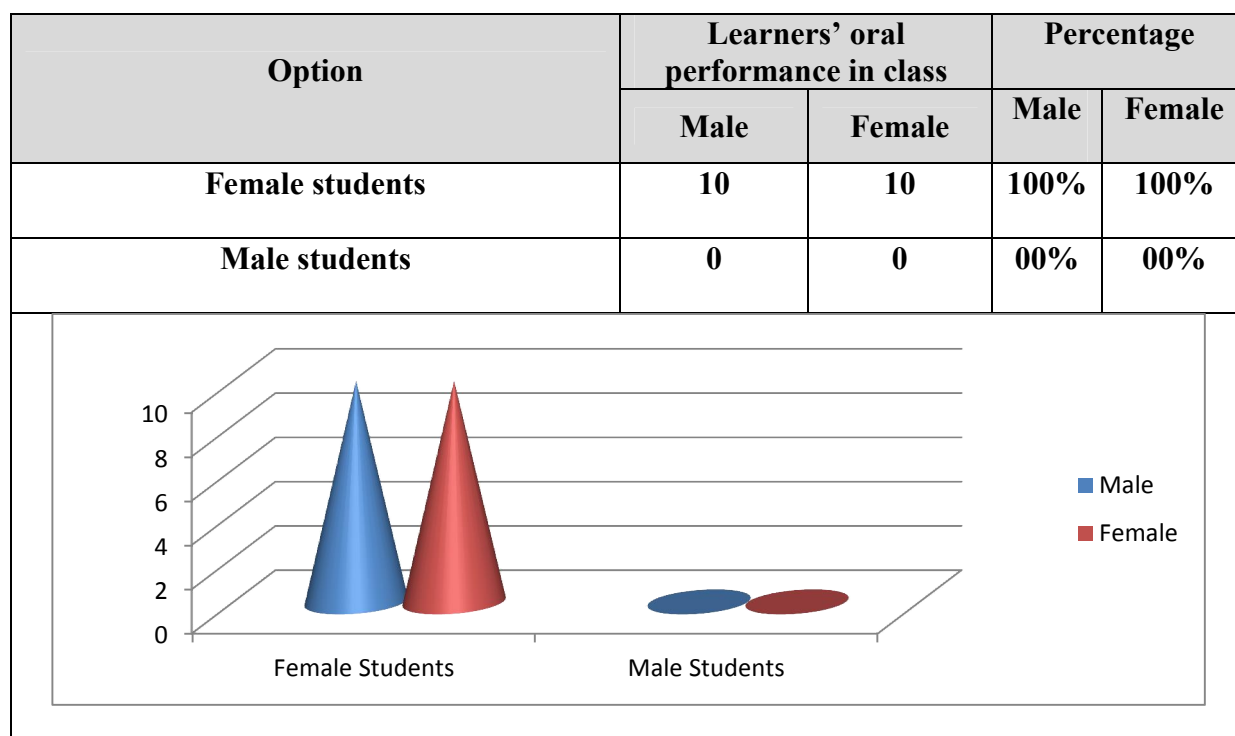


**Table 50/A: Male and female students' oral performance**

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It is crystal clear that our respondents have a clear cut answer when it comes to the oral performance of both genders in. The whole sample (100%) of teachers ticked the female choice, 100%, without even one tick in the male one. Females are better oral performers. They express themselves orally better than males do, and that was noticed in the observational phase clearly.

To uncover the reason behind males' passivity, we asked our respondents to tick the reasons thy think is the one behind students' underachievement.

| Option | What are the reasons? | |
|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female |
| Shyness | 8 | 4 |
| The Fear of making mistakes | 2 | 2 |
| Hesitation | 4 | 6 |
| The teacher her/himself | 3 | 1 |
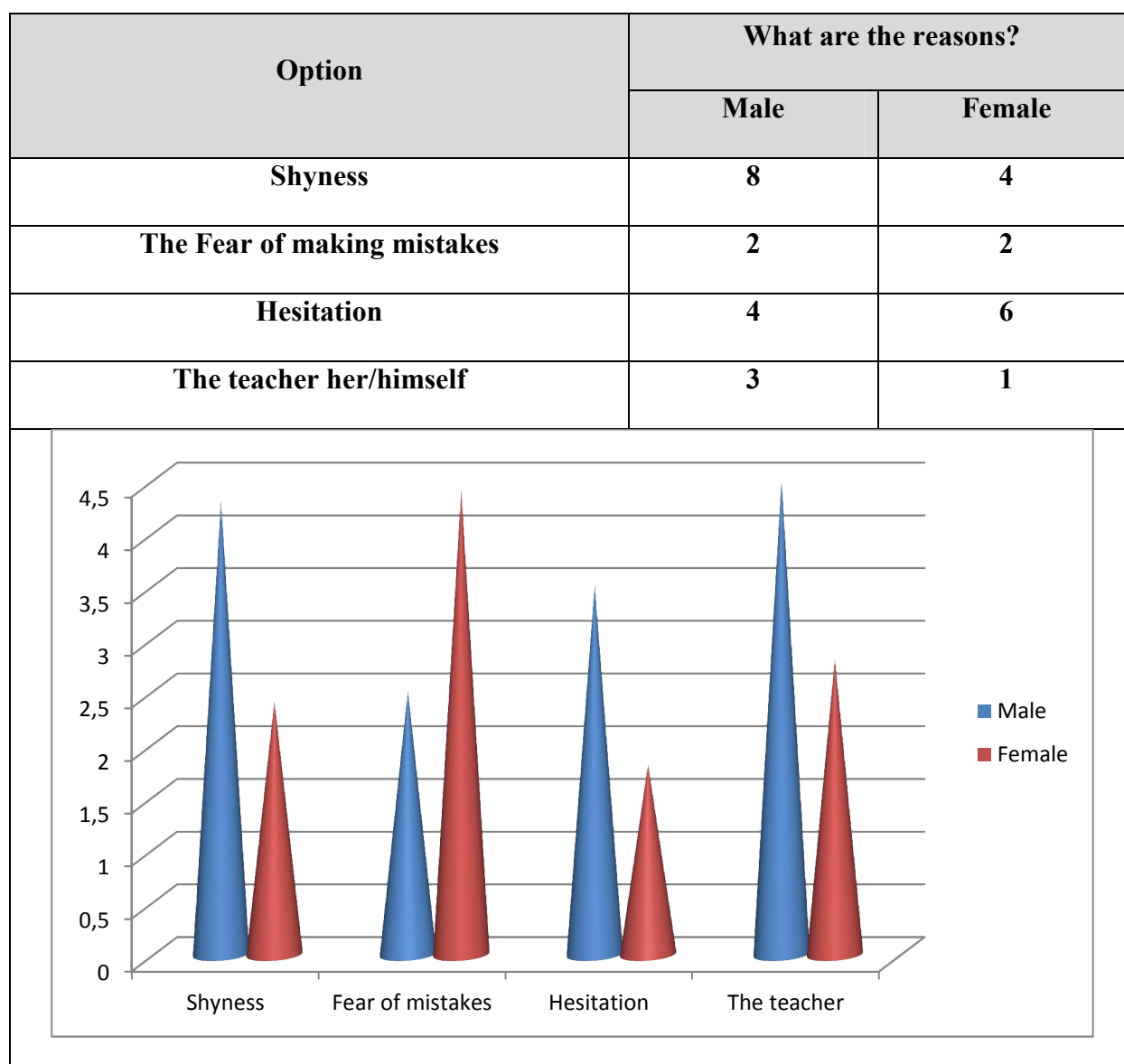


**Table 50/B: Reasons behind boys' underachievement**

The main reason behind male students' unacceptable performance is shyness, this according to12 teachers of our sample who replied that it is the main reason. Hesitation was ticked 10 times, which rank it the second main reason behind learners' passivity. Fear of making mistakes and the teacher him/herself come both as the third reason and each was ticked 4 times by our respondents.

The teacher can negatively affect learners' (mainly males') performance because of his/ her level, gender, strategies and many other factors. For that, we asked our respondents to mention any other reasons they think are of any role in that. They claimed that male learners display a lack of courage, and the added that they lack language competency, and they are not interested in studying in general.

**Q 02:** What do you suggest to raise the performance of the gender that achieves less?

Since teachers are the ones in the field, and they are they are the ones who are more aware of their students' needs, we asked them to make suggestions to improve boys' level of oral performance because it is lower than that of female students.

Most of our respondents suggested sessions that are meant for none but practice as an objective, others opined that motivation must be planted in these learners and that cannot be done because of the current situation of the educational field. A respondent did stress that nepotism did make its way deep in our Algerian classes and the professional field as well, thus, it will not take a long time that the other gender will join males in their passivity. Some male respondents mentioned that what pushes females to be studious is the Algerian customs. He explained that if a female fails in her studies, the house will be her lifelong abode. This interpretation does not seem reasonable. In fact, it reflects the male teachers' stereotypes which view women as objects who are devoid of intellectual abilities.

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It is worth mentioning here that of those who left this question unanswered males take the lion share.

**Q 03:** Do you interact with male and female students equally?

We asked our respondents if they interact in a harmonious way with both genders aiming to see if there is any discrimination or marginalization in their practices.

| Option | Interaction | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Yes** | 10 | 10 | 100% | 100% |
| **No** | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
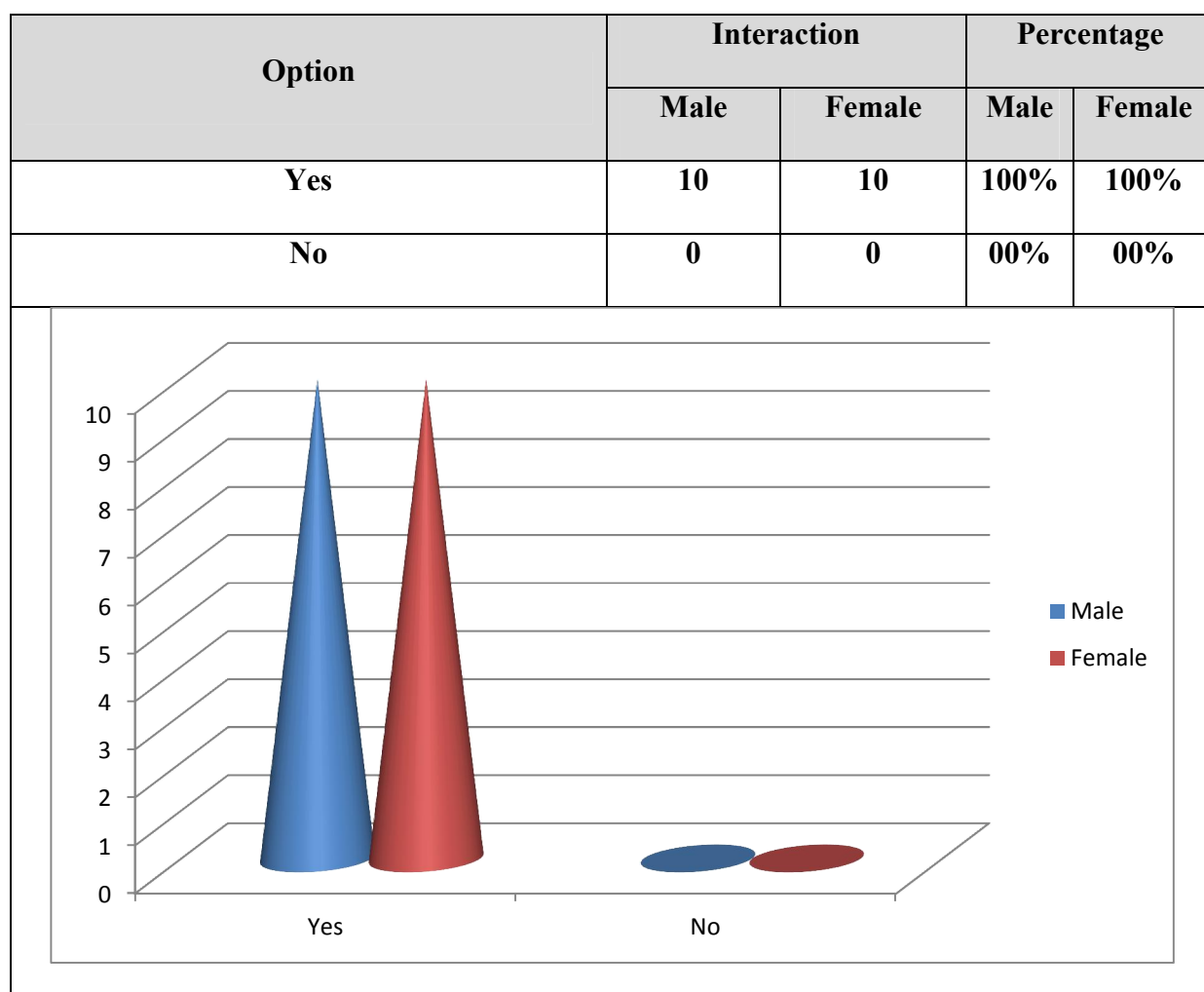


**Table 51: Teachers' interaction with male and female students**

100% of teachers ticked yes in response to this question. It seems that both female and male teachers respond in a fair way to their students regardless of their gender. Apparently, gender equity is achieved in these teachers' classes. Regardless of the learners level, and whether he/ she is active or passive, teachers should deal with their learners equally to evade

any gender discrimination in their classes and to create a healthy learning atmosphere for both male and female students.

**Q 04: Do you respond to female and male students' answers the same way?**

This question is meant to see if male and female teachers react to their learners' answers in the same way, giving them both a fair concern.

| Option | Responding | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male T** | **Female T** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Yes** | 10 | 10 | 100% | 100% |
| **No** | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
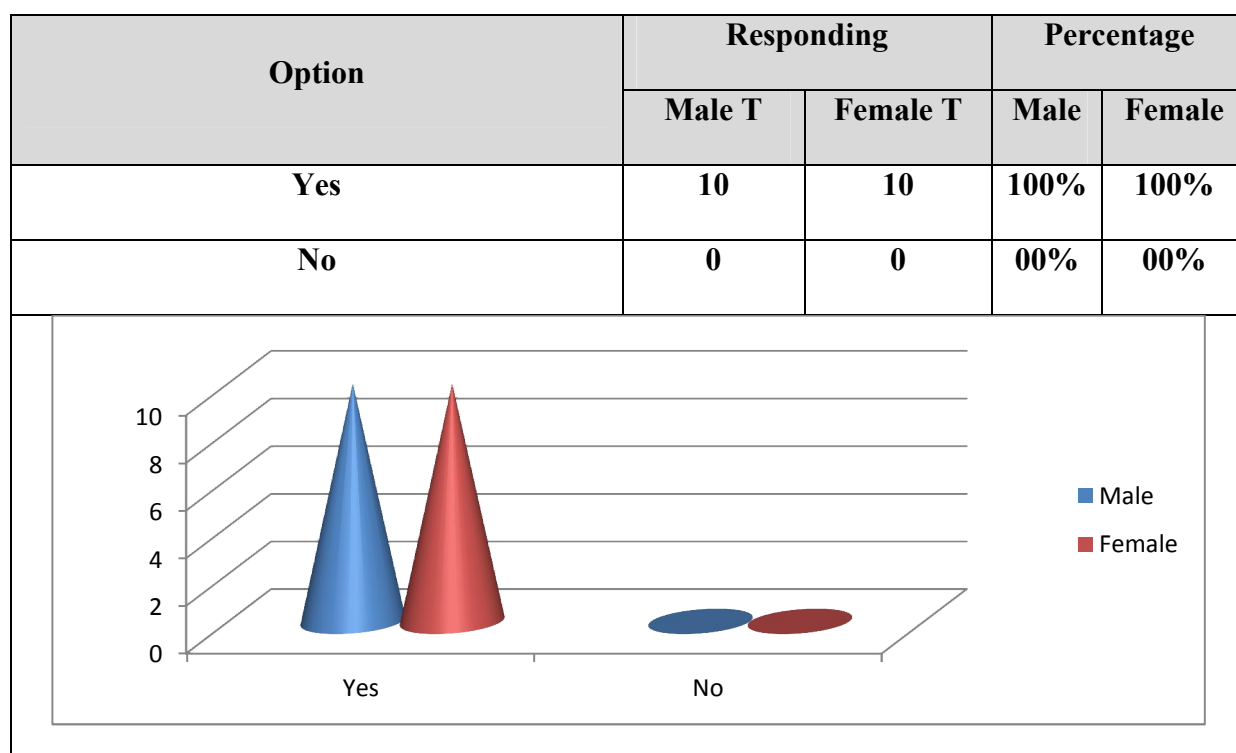


**Table 52: Teachers' responses to males' and females' answers**

All of the teachers that took the questionnaire ticked the "yes" choice, revealing their fairness in addressing both genders. Even though all ticked the "yes" square, a male teacher added a note below saying that he sometimes do not respond equally. He justified: "I am interested in females more than I am in males since they show much more interest in the subject matter and show much respect through their hard work and keen character to study and excel." Though our sample is small, it is possible to think that this male teacher is not an odd case, what is remarkable in real classroom settings is that some male and female teachers

give more attention and value to female students' answers because they are more active than boys.

**Q 05:** Do you find that the topics discussed are interesting to both male and female students?

The syllabus could be biased; it could be oriented even unintentionally to one gender at the expense of the other. We asked this question trying to see whether there is gender equity in terms of the materials taught and the units and sequences that are dealt with.

| Option | Topic interestingness | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 6 | 3 | 60% | 30% |
| No | 4 | 7 | 40% | 70% |
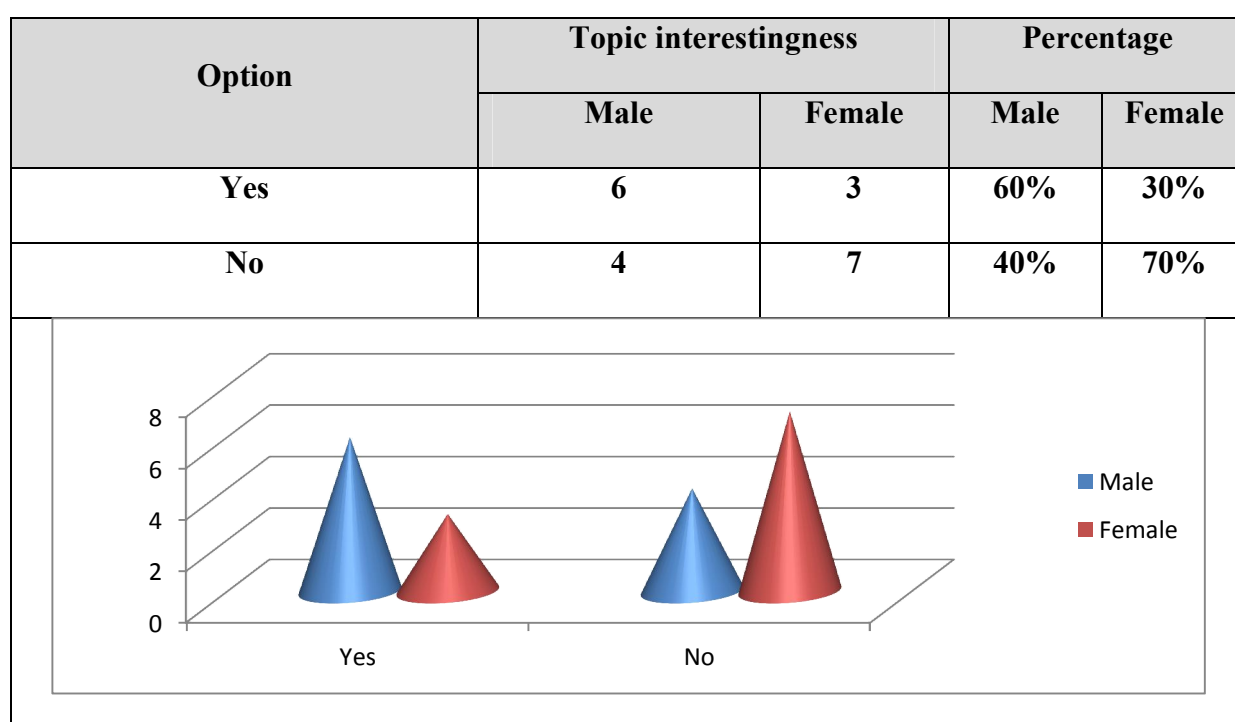


**Table 53: Male and female students' interest in the discussed topics**

The answers show that 60% of the asked male teachers and 30% of the female respondents consider the syllabus to be interesting for the two genders, whereas 40% of these male teachers and 70% of the female teachers believe it to be not of the same interest for male and female learners. We noticed that male teachers who think that topics are not equally interesting for both genders outnumber those who think that they are, but most of teachers (males and females) agree that our syllabus topic are not adequate for both female and male teachers, or at least they are not satisfied with the content in terms of gender equity. Probably

there are items that hinder the oral development of some gender, and they are in need to be adapted, changed, or edited.

**Q 06:** Some teaching strategies are effective only with one gender

For sure the adopted strategies by teachers may pave the learning experience or stand as obstacles in learners' development. However, what if these strategies, in general, suit only one gender on the expense of the other?

| Option | Teaching strategies | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male T | Female T | Male | Female |
| Yes | 7 | 5 | 70% | 50% |
| No | 3 | 5 | 30% | 50% |
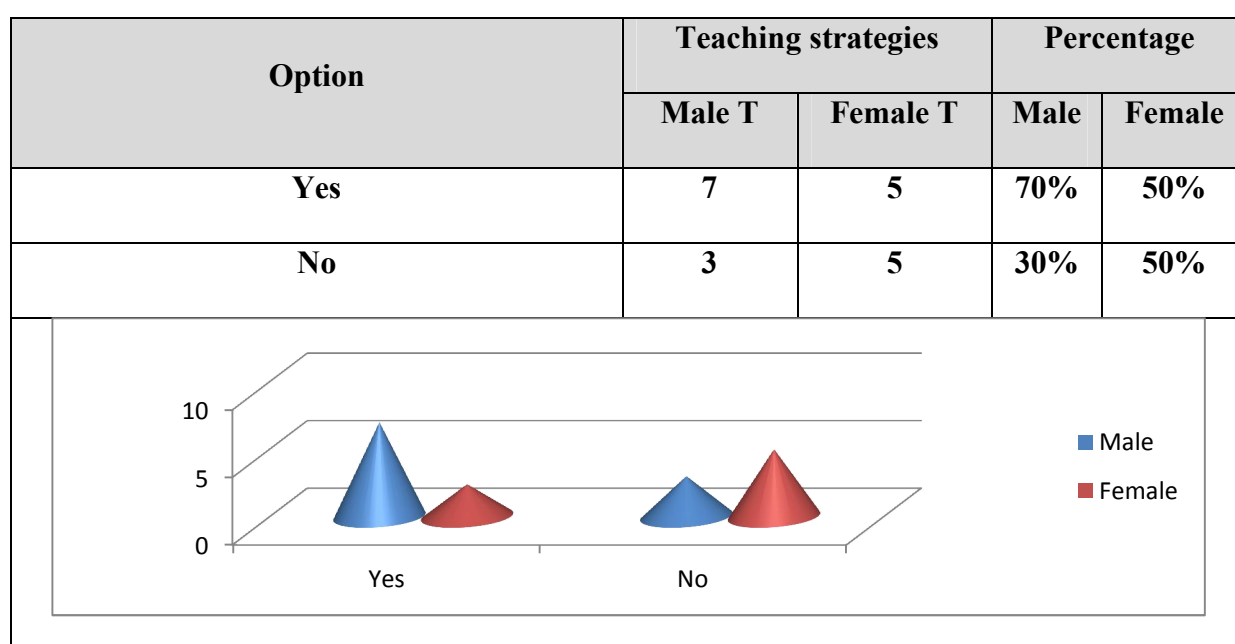


**Table 54: Effectiveness of the teaching strategies for both genders**

70% of our male respondents and 50% of the female ones believe that strategies used to teach and develop the speaking skill cannot be of a unique dimension. They believe them to be more adequate to one gender than the other. Another 30% of our questioned male teachers and 50% of the female sample think that the teaching strategies are the same in effectiveness with whatever gender we apply them with. It sounds from the findings above; male teachers are to a great extent with the idea that strategies cannot fit the two student genders equally and in the same way.

**Q 07:** Do you face any challenges when teaching students of the opposite gender?

The aim of this question is to identify any gender related challenges that could blockade the right route of teaching and learning. It is also tries to see if these challenges are serious ones.

| Option | Are there challenges? | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 2 | 7 | 20% | 70% |
| No | 8 | 3 | 80% | 30% |
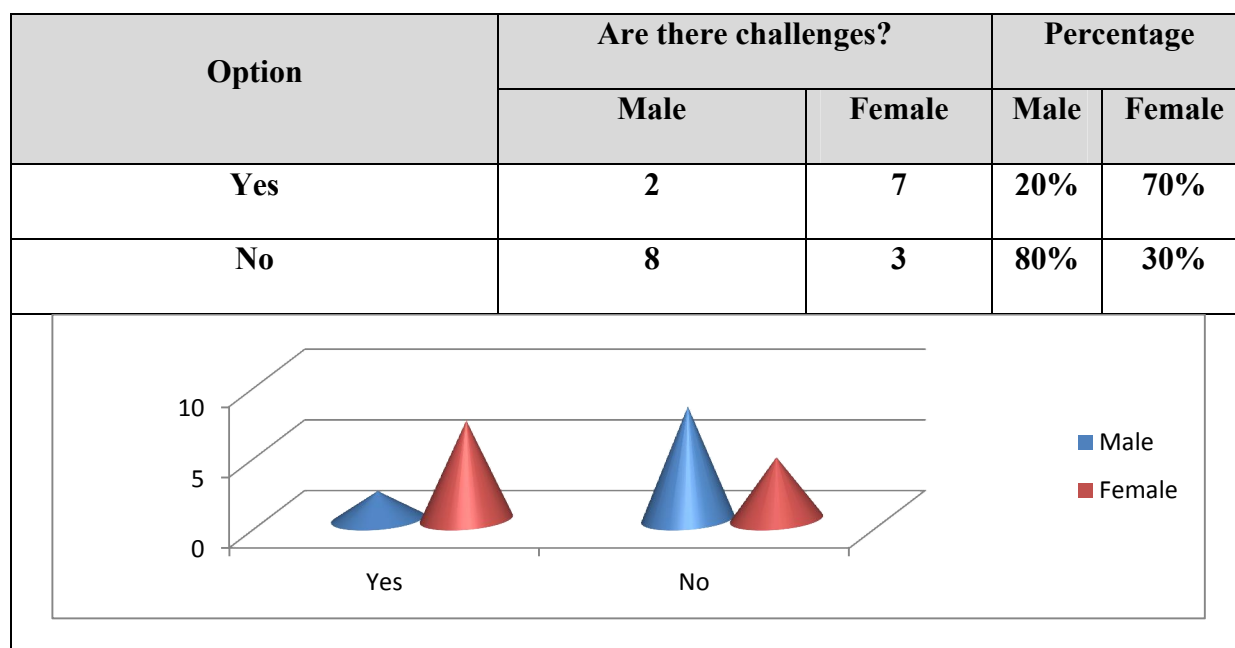


**Table 55: challenges faced when teaching students of the opposite gender**

Some 80% of our male respondents and 30% of their female counterparts answered that they have no problem dealing with the opposite gender. Yet 20% of the male respondents and 70% of the female sample stated that they face obstacles dealing with the opposite gender. It is observed that females make the maximum number of the respondents that avowed having faced or facing challenges dealing with the opposite gender. This is probably due to the women's nature of being kind and emotional, in contrast with men who are taught to be harsh and severe

The main problems stated by these teachers are aggressive behavior and shyness. Their shyness which is a rare quality among boys is perhaps due to the fact that they are the minority in a female-dominated classroom. As for their aggressive behaviors, they may be

attributed to boys' nature, which tends to be violent. However, this violence may be appeased by means of classroom management. If most female teachers in Algeria face this problem of misbehavior, this is likely to threaten the flow of students' performance

Female teachers were asked to state some of the major problems they have faced when teaching the opposite gender. Few female teachers (20%) admitted that they have problems with female students. These problems are mainly shyness and talking out of turn which interrupts the smooth flow of the lessons

**Q 08:** Have your learners ever expressed their unease with a teacher of the opposite gender?

| Option | Learners unease with opposite gender teacher | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Yes | 2 | 3 | 20% | 30% |
| No | 8 | 7 | 80% | 70% |
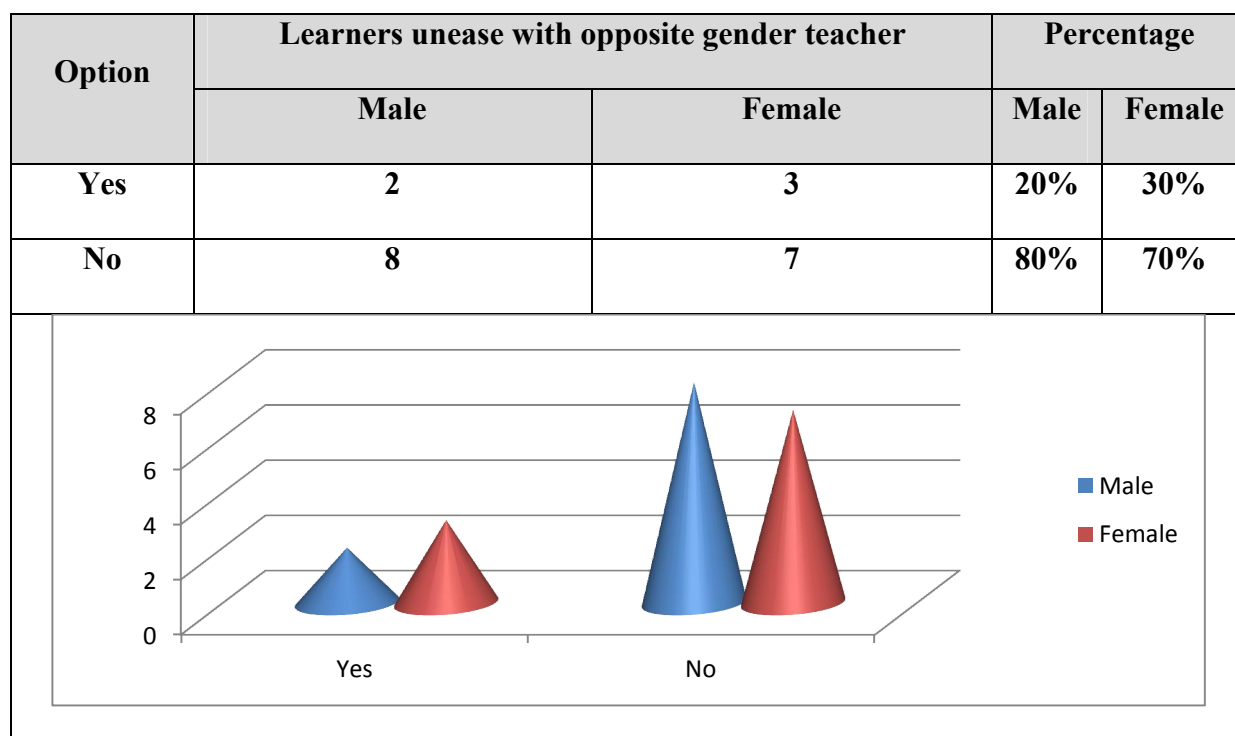


**Table 56: Learners' attitude towards teachers of the opposite gender**

The aim of this question is to know if there are students learners who have ever expressed their unsatisfactoriness with teachers of the opposite gender. Most of the teachers (80% males and 70% females) replied no. That is, they never heard that from any student before, and this could be because of the boundaries between the teacher and his/ her learners.

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20% of our male subjects and 30% of the female ones said that they experienced that. Some teachers added notes about their students' overt expression of this feeling towards teachers of other subject matters, and they often come across it in social media.

**Q 09:** Do you believe that the teacher's gender may affect learners' oral proficiency?

A teacher's attitude can weigh a lot in his career success and his learners' learnability. We asked this question to find out if teachers believe that gender has an effect on the development of students' oral proficiency.

| Option | Teacher's gender effects | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male T | Female T | Male | Female |
| Yes | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
| No | 10 | 10 | 100% | 100% |
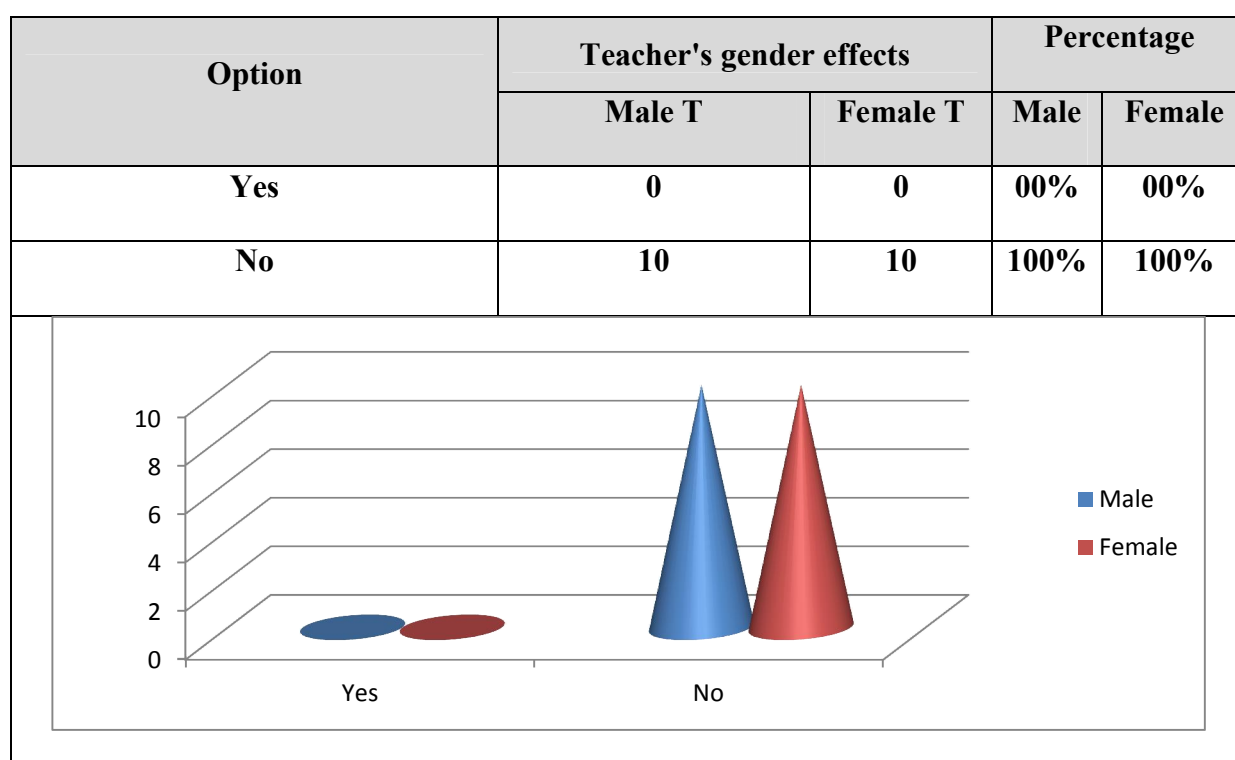


**Table 57: Teachers' view of gender effects on the oral skill**

All of our respondents (100%) answered "No". They believe that teachers' gender is ineffective when it comes to oral proficiency development. None of our subjects ticked the "Yes" option. In their justification, most of them related oral proficiency development to teachers' professional skills and the learners' readiness to learn. Other teachers explained that oral proficiency development is influenced by other factors that have nothing to do with the

teacher/ learner binary. These factors include the society's expectations, the schools' poor equipment, and involving politics in students' scores. Though all the justification offered are reasonable, one cannot be assured that teachers' gender does not play any role in students' oral proficiency. Even if teachers' gender influences their teaching practices, most of them cannot be self-critical.

**Q 10:** What gender do you prefer to teach?

This question was asked to assess teachers' preferences in terms of SG and which gender is the most preferred by them. It is worthy of attention that our selected sample of teachers consists of 10 male teachers and 10 female teachers.

| Option | Preferred Gender | | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male T | Female T | Male | Female |
| **Males** | 0 | 0 | 00% | 00% |
| **Females** | 7 | 6 | 70% | 60% |
| **Mixed classes** | 3 | 4 | 30% | 40% |
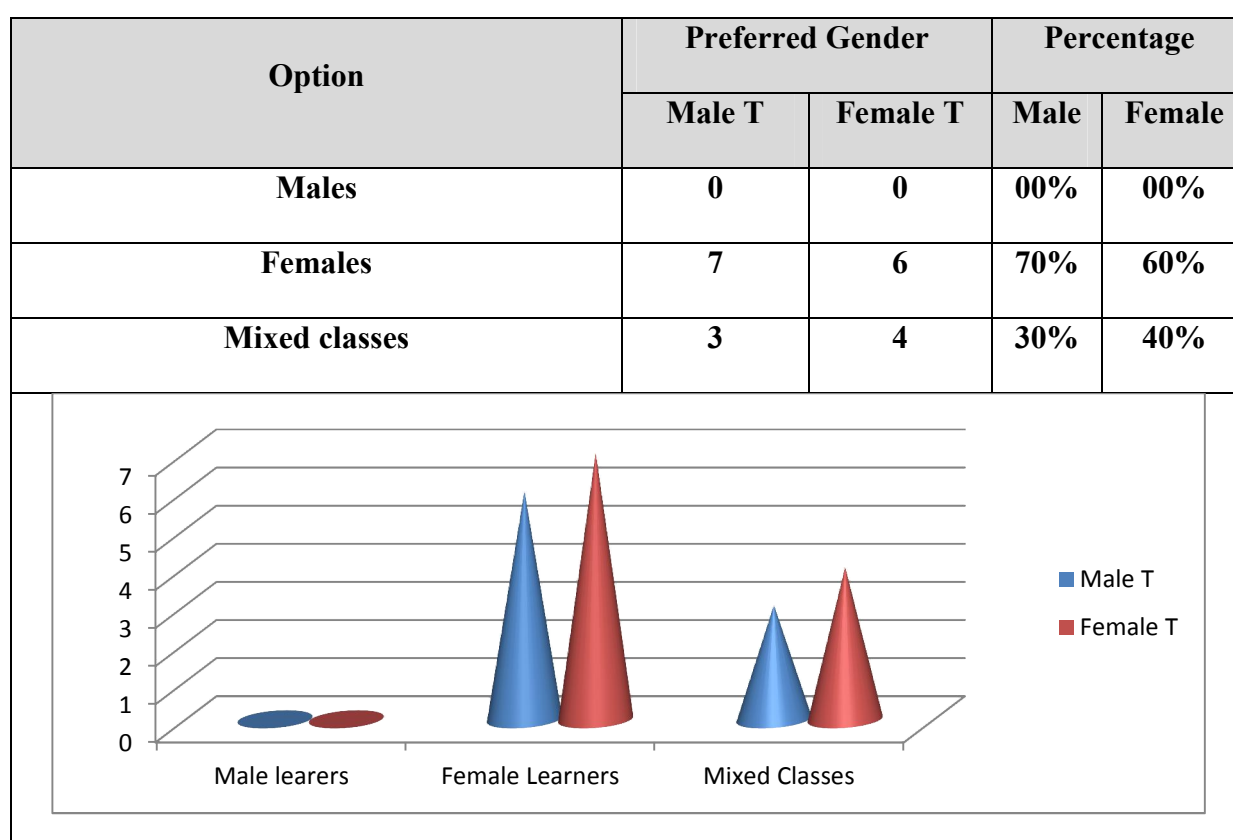


**Table 58: Teachers' choice of their students' gender**

None of our respondents chose males as a preferred gender to teach. 70% of the male respondents and 60% of the female ones chose female students as the preferred students to

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teach. This is probably due to female students' readiness, hard work and seriousness at least as was observed during the observation phase we had conducted. It is also reasonable to think that the majority of female teachers prefer working with female students because they feel at ease when dealing with students with of the same gender. Another possible reason is that boys are, generally, troublemakers and some female teachers may not be successful in the classroom management. Whatever the reason, teachers' preference of female students may affect their teaching practices negatively, because attitudes determine one's behavior. Teachers might interact more with female students and marginalize boys. And this will result the latter's underachievement. Mixed classes come second in terms of teachers' preference (30% of male teachers and 40% of females ones chose it). Mixed classes' atmosphere would raise a challenge and establish a healthier atmosphere for both genders such as the real life one. Seemingly, these teachers who opt for mixed classes do not imbibe any gender stereotypes.

**Q 11:** Do you have any comments on the effect of teachers' gender on learners' oral proficiency?

We ended our teacher questionnaire with an open request to teachers to share any comments concerning the issue of TG role in learners' oral proficiency development.

Some of our teachers stated that gender cannot cause any problem in teaching/learning situations. They carried out saying that if there are any problems in learners' oral deficiency; we should dig deep in their negative attitudes and the lack of even the language basics which hinders his progress.

Another teacher referred to our decision makers' negative roles. He said that they destroyed horribly the dignified picture of the teacher which in part led to a destruction of the learner himself since the teacher who is supposed to be a model is disgraced and humiliated.

A female teacher responded that she loved English since her middle school experience thanks to a male teacher who was strict, kind, and competent. She added that the same image traveled with her to high school and university studies, and the male teachers she had in both levels were well mannered, of a sense of duty, serious, and integer. She concluded by saying that she hates English now thanks to her female classmates in general since all they care about is when to be paid and how to get read of working hours.

## Conclusion

The teacher questionnaire intends to investigate the effect of TG on learners' oral proficiency development. It aims as well at clarifying teachers' perspective toward gender in the classroom and to what extent the teacher gender can stand as an issue if not a problem.

First, the overwhelming majority of high school English teachers are women, while there is an undoubted scarcity in the number of male teachers. Female students   also outnumber male students beyond any expectation.

Second, in terms of level and exhibited readiness for school and learning, female students are in the lead which justifies their scores and success in studies and all that is related to formal education in general. Male students, though we have exceptions, are not even beating by the bush. They are far away from what any parent and educational system would hope. Males are suffering from underachievement in a horrible way and they are a stereotype of unwilling male students.

Furthermore, it seems clear from the questionnaire results that TG does not really affect learners' speaking skill because both male and female teachers promote learners to speak through varied classroom activities such as discussions and free talking. Teachers tend to give learners equal opportunities to develop and build their oral skills as they vary strategies and techniques to fit their learning styles. In terms of teachers' attitudes toward learners' mistakes, it is apparent that both female and male teachers are positive and supportive too.

Moreover, though teachers' gender sounds playing almost no role in learners' oral proficiency development as this questionnaire uncovers, there are differences between male and female teachers. From the part of female teachers, it seems that they are the most to express facing problems with the opposite gender compared to male teachers. In fact the finding is important because having problems with boys is likely to hinder the learning process. Male teachers do not seem to care about evaluating their learners' oral mistakes which may cause fossilization and hinders learners' development in terms of speaking. As for the desire to be a teacher, male teachers are there simply because they must be there out of financial need, while female teachers opt for this profession of their personal conviction. In fact, the inmost of teaching really matters a lot in the teachers' efficiency and productivity.

### III Classroom Observation

#### 1. Aim of the Observation Grid

In order to have a concrete idea of the effects of TG on the students' oral proficiency in EFL classrooms and to test the theoretical information stated in the previous chapters, it was necessary to make an observation in a real classroom setting by dint of an OG. In their discussion of the advantages of classroom observation, Waxman, Tharp, and Hilberg (2004, P, 3) stated that they "permit researchers to study the process of education in naturalistic settings, provide more detailed and precise evidence that other data sources". Our observation was guided by an observation grid to specify both the effects and the behaviors that were to be observed. We tried to focus on teachers' behaviors, the oral performance of students and the latter's interaction with teachers' of different genders. The observation grid also, aims at verifying the data gathered by means of teachers' and students' questionnaires.

#### 2. Description of the Observation

The observation has been carried out in three different secondary schools: Brothers Belarima and Bentalab Sliman in Mila, and 1 november 1954 in Rouached, Mila. Before getting inside the classrooms, we got the permission of the three schools' directors to conduct our case study on the effects of teachers' gender on students' oral proficiency.

The target population of this study consists approximately of 160 students. They are taught by three male and three female teachers. Each classroom was visited twice, and the teachers were unaware of the purpose of the observation which adds more authenticity to the data collected.

The grid consists of two sections. The first, entitled background information, contains five questions that try to give an overall picture of the classroom. The second one, entitled during the lesson, contains twelve questions. It attempts to evince if TG may affect students'

oral proficiency. It also shows how teachers of different genders present their lessons and how they manage their classrooms.

**3. The Analysis of the Observation Grid**

**1. Background Information**

The first part of this observation is designed to get some background information about the observed classes and their learning environments. The results gathered from our visits to six classes; three classes with male teachers and three with female teachers, show that all the classes together contain only 54 male students. The remaining 126 students are all females. The visited classes contain absolutely no equipment to be mentioned. During all the visited sessions (12 sessions), students were arranged in form of rows; generally, females sit in the front whereas boy in the back of the class. The way the students were sitting can be attributed to the psychological differences between boys and girls. Girls sit in the front of the classroom because they like to be closer to the teacher, to get more attention, or simply to avoid the noisy students at the back. Boys sit in the back because they generally avoid being at the center of interest, they like to be independent, or simply because some of them are not interested in studying at all.

**2. During the Lessons**

**2.1 Teachers' initiation of the interaction**

The results gathered from the observation of the six targeted classes show that both male and female teachers ask girls to answer the questions, and they interact with them more than with boys. This may be so because of the lack of the number of male students in schools. Logically speaking, this means that unlike male students, female students have more opportunities to use the language and develop their oral proficiency. The teachers claimed

that the only cause of this differentiation is that girls are more interested in learning than boys, thus, the best ones in speaking are usually girls.

Another point concerning classroom interaction that was noticed in all the visited classes is that classroom talk is neither equally shared between students (boys and girls) nor between teachers and their students. Although teachers manipulate CD, they tend to involve their students from time to time. In fact, one might say that the pedagogy of the so-called learner-centered approach in only preached on theoretical altar, but it is not put into practice. Teacher-centeredness is likely to hinder the students' oral proficiency because the most recent approaches to teaching are based on John Dewey's theory of learning by doing.

2.2 **Learners' responses to the teachers' questions**

The second investigated aspect of our OG is concerned with learner's responses. During our observation of the six classes, we have noticed that in the cases of both male and female teachers, girls speak more than boys do. Girls, generally, are more responsive to teachers' questions and more active when it comes to classroom interaction and discussions. However, in one male-teacher classroom, boys were active and responsive to their teacher's questions although they were outnumbered by girls. In that classroom, the teacher was circulating between the rows and getting closer to male students. We noticed that boys were attracted to the subject discussed more than girls.

3.3 **Teachers' calls on their male/ female students**

The third investigated aspect in our observation is the teachers' calls on their students, and if there is any difference between male and female teachers in treating boys and girls. During our observation, we noticed that among the three visited male teachers, there was one who was calling on boys and girls equally; that is to say, both male and female students were involved and called on by the teacher either to answer question or to give an opinion. During

the other two sessions, we noticed that both male teachers call on boys girls more often than boys, and this is an evidence of classroom inequity. Almost all their calls were on female students. However, the case of female teachers was not different. Two of the female teachers were calling almost only on girls. Boys were sitting in the back totally unaware of what is taking place in the classroom (as observers, we were sitting in the back near the male students). However, during the sessions attended with the third female teacher, things were a bit different. Boys were called upon; questions were divided between boys and girls equally. In this case, boys were talkative and active. In a female-dominated classroom, one might imagine how a boy feels, especially when taught by a female teacher. It might be a feeling of disempowerment and otherness which might amount to a sense of objectification if the boy is never called by the teacher. Boys are likely to get involved in classroom interactions if they feel important and get the impression that they are cynosures of their teachers' eyes.

## 3.4 Frequency of asking questions

During the observation, we noticed that both male and female teachers were following the CBA method (competency-based approach) which requires them to ask lot of questions. In all the attended sessions, all teachers ask females to answer the asked questions. Male students were almost totally ignored unless they raise their hands. Another noticed phenomenon is those male teachers, when interacting or asking questions tend to walk between the rows and approach the students while female teachers do not. This can be attributed to the psychology of male teachers. Males, generally, prefer to take lead and take control of the surrounding environment, and this what enables to outperform  females in classroom management.

## 3.5. Students' Participation and Teachers' Feedback

During the observation, we noticed that classroom participation was dominated by female students. In both cases, whether the teacher is a male or a female, girls participate

more than boys do. Generally, female students raise their hands voluntarily, while it was rare to see a male student raising his hand. This difference in the ratio of students in classroom participation gives more opportunities to girls to speak and enhance their speaking skill and; thus, they outperform boys.

During the observation, also, we noticed that all teachers give feedback to their students. In the case of male teachers, one of them encourages the students (males or females) who answered in cases, and he made jokes in others. Another male teacher gave his male students a kind of positive feedback, while he encouraged his female students. However, in the case of female teachers, one of them gave all her students, who participated during the session, positive feedback. During another session with another female teacher, we noticed that only girls received feedback. Boys were sitting in the back solving some math exercises. This behavior indicates boys' utter lack of interest in English as a subject-matter. Teachers' favoritism of girls makes them encumbered by a profound feeling of exclusion. Thus, they engage in math activities to overstep their bitter feeling of being intellectually disadvantaged and neglected. Despite their poor level in speaking proficiency, boys are more likely to make huge efforts to advance their level if their teacher fosters their motivation and shows them her interest in hearing their responses and views because, from a psychological perspective, speaking is a means of self-assertion, a universal symbol of presence. Men, generally, assume an authoritative role in the public sphere, and like to perform the same role in the classroom setting. Hence, when they are desprived of the opportunity to speak and assert their intellectual existence in a classroom that is females-dominated, they will develop negative attitudes towards the subject matter, and this makes it impossible for them to bump up their oral skill level. The difference in the amount and quality of feedback given to students may have some huge effects on their learning in general and their oral skill in particular. Boys'

readiness and willingness to learn and to participate will, eventually, be lowered which means that the process of learning will be interrupted for boys.

**3.6 Classroom Management**

Another crucial item in our work that was worth- investigating is teachers' classroom management. During the observation, we noticed that all of the three male teachers were successful, with varying degrees, in managing their classrooms. Whereas, in the case of female teachers, two were successful in classroom management, while we noticed that the classroom of the third female teacher was chaotic and not successfully managed. Some students were having collateral conversations; others were solving some math exercises.

Classroom management is highly important for classroom learning in general, and for improving the speaking skill in particular. Successful classroom management will help voluntary students, who are willing and ready to learn, to develop themselves and flourish.

The findings concerning teachers' classroom management lack authenticity. We noticed that both teachers and students were not acting in ordinary way. Students were acting in weird way and gave a picture that is totally different from the one we all know about the Algerian classes in general, and the English language classes in particular. It was like the whole class was performing and pretending to be something they are not, and hiding the truth that might be seen clearly in our absence.

**Conclusion**

The classroom observation we have conducted tried to investigate the impact of teachers' gender on students' level of performance, particularly, their oral proficiency. One important finding is that both male and female teachers interact more with girls, and this may be one of the reasons of boys' underachievement in the oral skill. Though teachers of both

genders try to involve their students in the classroom talk, teachers' talk is more than the one of students. In the classes of all the teachers, girls take more turns to talk than boys. One result of this gender inequity is boys' withdrawal from classroom interaction, which negatively affects their oral proficiency. This is evident in the case of one male teacher who shows that when boys are called upon, they become more talkative, active, and interactive.

From the difference between male and female teachers in their teaching styles, their ways of managing the classroom, and the way they interact with their students we can deduce that there is a sort of effect TG on their students' oral proficiency.

However, we came to discover that the environments in which the OG took place lack authenticity; thus not all the findings can be trusted. Our presence as observers had a huge impact on the behavior of both teachers and students, we felt like the way lessons were given and explained was not a reflection of what is really happening in the other ordinary sessions.

**Limitations of the Study**

Our research work is not devoid of limitations. First, using the questionnaire as a tool of data collection cannot ensure the truthfulness of the respondents' answers. Some of them, either students or even teachers, may not take it seriously. Learners, in particular, are teenagers who might not be interested in what we are doing. Thus, their answers might lack reliability.

In addition, when a researcher designs a questionnaire, he might be subjective and ask about things that he thinks are important and worth asking, and he may ignore some items which are really relevant and important to the subject being investigated.

Also, during our observation, we felt that the way the classrooms were managed and lessons were given and explained was not a reflection of what is really taking place in the

other ordinary sessions away from our observing eye. Our presence as observers had a huge impact on the behaviour of both students and teachers.

Another limitation of our study is that we were unable to use the quantitative method because of the lack of time. We could not also attend more than two sessions with these six teachers because we were short of time.

## Recommendations and Suggestions

Developing the students' speaking skill can be said to be a fundamental aspect in foreign language teaching. Acquiring an oral competence, in whatever language, is compulsory for any language learner. Teachers, for sure and especially in a context like the Algerian one, play a pivotal role in helping and fostering learners' oral development. On the basis of our research findings, the following points are recommended and suggested:

\*        One issue that should be seriously considered is the problem of gender inequity in classroom interactions. Teachers of both genders interact more with boys than they do with girls, and this is unfair. Though they constitute a minority in the Algerian classrooms, and despite the fact that their oral proficiency fall below that of girls, teachers have to treat them the same way the deal with girls, because marginalizing them is a kind of academic oppression.

 \*        Boys' underachievement is  and silence in the classroom is a really a subject that is worth investigating in the future.

\*        Male teachers, especially those who opt for teaching under financial pressures, should evaluate and provide feedback on their students' oral outcome. They should be honest and convince themselves that teaching is not just a job but a joy.

*       More consideration and value should be given to the speaking skill in foreign language teaching classes by teachers and authority makers. Learners really suffer from a great oral handicap. What makes things worse is the fact that they are often tested in reading and writing but not in speaking.

*       Teachers of English should accustom themselves to teach the language and not to develop a routine of teaching about the language. They ought to vary teaching strategies and oral activities as much as possible. They also need to use audio and audio-visual means and carefully select the topics for discussion. And all these must and all must be done harmoniously with their learners' learning styles and their gender.

*       More studies must be conducted intensively and thoroughly to investigate the role teachers' and learners gender' can play in the three educational levels (primary, middle, and high schools).

 *       Teachers  must convince their students that speaking a foreign language is compulsory for academic achievement. Thus, students should do their best to acquire a high oral competence.

 *       Teaching should be focused on language authenticity. By use of language authentic activities, the teacher can create a learning environment which familiarizes learners with the English language as it is spoken by its native speakers.

 *       Teachers need to teach learners to listen then to speak. We need to be good listeners before being good speakers. What hinders listening in the Algerian classrooms is noise, and here comes the role of the teacher who should manage the classroom successfully. He needs to know the personality of both genders because this helps a lot in dealing with misbehaviors and in attracting learners' attention. Teachers should create a civilized classroom environment

in which students and teachers, regardless of their gender, listen to each other and respect each other's views.

*      Teachers of both genders need to minimize the use of Arabic as much as possible.

*      In fact, failure in the oral skill is not just a matter of gender. The Ministry of Education and decision makers must open their eyes wide to the undoubted certainty of the vitality of teaching and learning as no development can be attained without these already mentioned pillars.

*      We would like to suggest the design and implementation of a curriculum that will take into account teachers' and students' gender.

*      Finally, we might be a little bit ambitious if we suggest using an experimental method to test the verity of our hypothesis.

## General Conclusion

It is crystal clear that learners are of no identical nature. For each, there are some personality traits that make every subject unique. They do fail differently as they succeed divergently when trying to produce and develop their oral skills. This may lead axiomatically to differences in the way they receive and analyze the received datum. It is a scientific research dogma that differences of the latter must have their reasons and urges since none is never built on the vain notion of nothingness.

Teaching oral proficiency is a complex process that entails a series of difficulties. These difficulties might be related to the subject matter itself, learners' divergences, or even to the classroom atmosphere. Teaching learners to produce orally in an accurate way is something that students in different academic settings have failed to achieve or even to get close to. Though many secondary school learners show their interest in English which they

have been studying for a period of time enough for at least forming an upper intermediate level, they have utterly failed to become proficient speakers of that language

The present study aims at investigating the teacher's gender and its possible role in enhancing or hindering learners' oral proficiency development in secondary school settings. According to their gender, teachers might have different teaching styles. Female teachers prefer what a male teacher would reject and the vice versa is true. These teachers are the molders of a mixed class of learners, and their own preferences and sense of what is better and what is the best is of a possible effect on their learners' own preferences.

Our research work aspires to serve as an opening salvo for others' consideration of the issue of teacher gender and its effects on the oral skill in the Algerian context. It is by means of class observation and two questionnaires that some finding had been reached. The findings gathered revealed insightful information on the effect of TG on learners' oral skill development. First of all, our study has shown that learners, regardless of their gender, prefer to be taught by their current teacher regardless of his/ her gender. However, they slightly prefer male teachers due to their class strict control. The teachers' questionnaire revealed that teachers, with almost no exception, prefer the female students, thanks to females' hard work and discipline. Female teachers prefer dealing with girls, and they face more problems than males with the opposite gender. Seemingly, male students suffer from gender inequity, and it is found that they outperform female students. It was also astonishing to find that male teachers dislike the teaching profession which might have an impact on their teaching practices.

Furthermore, to spice it objectively, we indulged in a naked eye observation that confirmed some of the questionnaires' findings and added some more. We may summarize the observation findings in three points. First, students and teachers were found to display an

acceptable willingness to learn and flourish, and teachers' as class mentors and oral proficiency models were seen as unsatisfying objects since no advancement in students' outcome was achieved. Second, male students in the oral skill, were noticed unspeakably out of shape, especially if compared to females' gorgeous played role as active, creative, and lovers of self-expression. Last, yet of an utmost importance, male learners' oral interaction was better with male teachers but girls were the best with both genders. If we compare this results to the findings of the questionnaires which evince that male teachers are better than female ones in appeasing boys' misbehaviors, our ministry of education should consider the possibility of assigning male students to male teachers.

All in all, a teachers' gender is of a slight or neutral role when it comes to students' level of achievement in the oral skill. Students' oral proficiency is probably determined by the teacher's competence and his mastery of the subject matter. When a teacher, regardless of his/her gender, lacks the teaching kernel parts, willingness and mastery, he/she is unlikely to enhance his/ her students' oral proficiency.

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# APPENDICES

# Appendix I: Students' Questionnaire

**Dear students,**

**This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work that aims to investigate the effect of teacher gender on learners' oral proficiency development. We would be thankful if you could collaborate with us by answering the questions below. Your answers are very important, because they will help understand the investigated subject better. Please, be assured that your identity as well as your answers will be kept strictly confidential, and they will be used only for the purpose of this study.**

**Please, tick to choose your answer. Thank you very much in advance.**

## <u>Section One</u>:   Background knowledge

1. **Your level is: a. First year** ☐          **b. Second year** ☐          **c. Third year** ☐

2. **Are you?     Male student** ☐          **Female student** ☐

3. **How long have you been studying English?**

   **4 years** ☐   **5 years** ☐   **More than 5years** ☐

4. **What streams do you follow?**

   **Scientific** ☐   **Literary** ☐     **Foreign languages** ☐     **Economy** ☐

5. **Your teacher is a…**

   **Male teacher** ☐          **Female teacher** ☐

6. **How many English sessions do you have per week?**

   **1** ☐          **2** ☐          **3** ☐     **more than 3** ☐

7. **Do you consider studying English to be**

   **Not important** ☐

   **Important** ☐

   **Highly important** ☐

8. **Is English one of your favorite subjects?**

   **Yes** ☐          **No** ☐

## **Section Two:  Teachers' Gender and Students' Oral Proficiency**

**1. Which of the followings describes your level of speaking skill in English?**

b. Advanced ☐

c. Intermediate ☐

d. Beginner ☐

**2. During the session, do you feel motivated to participate using English?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, how often do you use it?**

Always ☐          Often ☐          Sometimes ☐          Rarely ☐

**If no, what are the reasons?**

a. Shyness ☐

b. Fear of Making Mistakes ☐

c. Hesitation ☐

d. The Teacher him/herself ☐

e. All of them ☐

**3. What type of activities does your teacher use in class?**

Discussions ☐          role play ☐          Free speaking ☐          Dialogues ☐

**4. Is your teacher open and approachable?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**5. Do you feel marginalized in the English class?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, give some reasons please:**

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………….

..………………………………………………………………………………………

**6. Does the teacher evaluate your outcome in the oral skill?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**7. How does your teacher correct mistakes?**

a. Gently ☐     b. Harshly ☐     c. Sarcastically ☐     d. Wisely ☐

**8. When corrected, do you …?**

    a. feel motivated to speak ☐    b. Stop speaking ☐

**09. Does your teachers…?**

    a. Dominate the class discussion ☐    b. Offer the chance to speak ☐

**10. How often does your teacher call on you?**

    always ☐    often ☐    sometimes ☐    never ☐

**11. If your teacher does call on you, does it happen:**

    a. Only when you raise your hand ☐

    b. Even if you do not raise your hand ☐

**12. Does your teacher interact more with … ?**

    a. Male learners ☐    b. Female learners ☐

**13. Does your teacher treat girls and boys in the same way when they misbehave?**

    Yes ☐    No ☐

**If no, could you, please, explain?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………….

**14. In your case, do you prefer to be taught by a ..?**

    a. Female teacher ☐    b- Male teacher ☐

**Why is that?**

………………………………………………………………………………...…

…………………………………………………………………………………..

**Thank a lot for your time and your efforts.**

# Appendix II: Teachers' Questionnaire

**Dear teachers,**

**This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a research work on learners' oral proficiency development. We would be thankful if you could share your experience with us by answering the questions below. Your answers are of utmost importance as they will help understand the investigated subject better. We assure you that your answers will be kept strictly confidential and that no one will have access to them.**

**Please, tick to choose your answer. Thank you very much in advance.**

## Section one: Background Knowledge

1. **Your degree**:

      **a. BA (License)** ☐

      **b. MA (Magister/Master)** ☐

      **c. doctoral candidate** ☐

2. **Are you?**

      **Male teacher** ☐      **Female teacher** ☐

3. **How long have you been teaching English?**

    **1 to 5** ☐   **+5** ☐   **+10** ☐   **+15** ☐   **More than 20** ☐

4. **What streams do you teach?**

    **Scientific** ☐   **Literary** ☐     **Foreign languages** ☐     **Economy** ☐

5. **What level are your classes?**    **1$^{ST}$** ☐   **2$^{nd}$** ☐     **3$^{rd}$** ☐

## Section Two: Teachers' in-class Objectives and Teaching Strategies

1. **Is it your own desire to teach English?**     **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

    **If no, why have you chosen a profession that is none of your ambitions?**

    ………………………………………………………………………………..…………

    ………………………………………………………………………………..………....

2. **Which of the followings is your main objective?**

    **To enhance students' oral communication** ☐

    **To help students read and write more effectively** ☐

**To finish the syllabus in due time** ☐

**To enable students get better marks in exams.** ☐

3.  **Do you use Arabic to help your students understand your lessons better?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, how often do you use it?**

**Always** ☐

**Sometimes** ☐

**Often** ☐

**Rarely** ☐

4.  **Which of the following describes your students' level in the speaking skill?**

**b. Advanced** ☐

**c. Intermediate** ☐

**d. Novice** ☐

5.  **What type of activities do you use in class:**

Discussions ☐        role play ☐        Free speaking ☐        Dialogues ☐

6. **Do you evaluate your students' oral production?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, do you prefer?**

**a. Self-evaluation** ☐

**b. Peer-evaluation** ☐

**c. Both** ☐

7. **Do you administer any remedial work to foster pupils' oral proficiency?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, mention two strategies briefly**

a. [                                                                      ]

b. [                                                                      ]

## Section Three: The Effect of Teachers' and Learners' Gender in Class

1. **Which gender performs better orally**        Females ☐ Males ☐

**In either case, what are the reasons?**

Shyness ☐  The fear of making mistakes ☐  Hesitation ☐ The teacher her/himself ☐

**Other   reasons**

………………………………………………………………………………………......

**2. What do you suggest to raise the performance level of the gender that achieves less?**

……………………………………………………………………………...………….

…………………………………………………………………………….………...

**3. Do you interact with male and female students equally?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**4. Do you respond to male and female students' answers in the same way?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If no, could you, please, explain?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

**5. Do you find that the subjects discussed are interesting for both male and female students?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**6. Some teaching strategies/activities are effective only with one gender.**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**7. Do you face any challenge when teaching students of the opposite gender?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**If yes, please, explain**

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

**8. Has any of your learners ever expressed their unease to study with a teacher of the opposite gender of theirs?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**9. Do you believe that the teacher's gender may affect learners' oral proficiency?**

Yes ☐          No ☐

**Would you justify any way**

………………………………………………......................................................

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

**10. What gender do you prefer to teach?**

Males ☐          Females ☐          Mixed gender class ☐

**11**. **Do you have any comments on the effect of teachers' gender on learners' oral proficiency?**

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

**We are honored to have you as a participant in our research questionnaire. Thank you**

# Appendix III: The Observation Grid

Date:……………………………     Hour:…………     Level:………………...……
Teacher's gender……….………...     Stream …………     School:………………...……

| Background Info | |
|---|---|
| How many students are there in the class? | Males…………..          Females………. |
| Student arrangement | U shape:……… \| Rows:………. \| Groups:………. \| Randomly:..…… |
| Front /Back seats | …………………………………………………………………….. |
| Class equipments | …………………………………………………………………… |
| Are there any learning unhealthy conditions? | …………………………………………………………………… |

| During the lesson | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The teacher initiates interaction with | Male student(s) | Female student(s) | The whole group |
| Who dominates the classroom talk | students<br>Males……. \| Females……. | The teachers…………………. | |
| Which gender is more responsive to the teachers' questions? | Males | Females | Both |
| How many times does the teacher call on male and female students? | Males | Females | |
| How many questions does the teacher ask? | ……………………………………………………………………………….<br>…………………………………………………………………………… | | |
| How many learners raise hands their hands? | Number:<br>………… | Males<br>……….. | Females<br>………….. |
| Who receives more feedback? | Male students | Female students | No feedback for both |
| Nature of feedback | Male students<br>………………… | Female students<br>………………… | |
| Are the learners participating voluntarily? | Males | Females | Both |
| Which gender does the teacher interrupt? | Males | Females | None |
| Classroom management | Successful | Unsuccessful | |
| Teacher's response to students' misbehaviors | Males | Females | |

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |