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**Who Said Women Talk Alike?**  
**Investigating Women's Language Variation within**  
**Tiaret Speech Community**

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a  
partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of Master in  
Gender Studies**

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## Dedication

*For my mom, my dad and my two best friends Warda and Fadwa,  
I dedicate this work.*

*Nour El Houda*

## Dedication

*To my dearest parents, I would not have done this without their love,  
support and patience.*

*To my siblings and family members who stood by my side and pushed me to  
do my very best, this humble work is dedicated to you.*

*Nasrine*

## Abstract

The present research work is an attempt to investigate women's speech in Tiaret speech community. The main purpose of this work is to describe the linguistic features of females and the main factors that influence language variation and change. This research consists of three chapters. The first one is an overview of sociolinguistics and gender studies; the significant theories and key concepts included in both fields. The second chapter is dedicated for the methodology and the tools used to conduct this research in the speech community. The third one is devoted for data collection and interpretations, as well as limitations of the study. In this chapter we try to show how speech features differ from one female speaker to another, relating these features to social variables such as the level of education, gender and age. We have collected data using the qualitative method. The results helped us understand that women's speech varies and changes depending on certain social and structural factors that affect the way they speak.

**Key Concepts:** linguistic features, language variation, innovation, social variables, social and structural factors.

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## **List of Acronyms and National Conventions**

- **CA** : Classical Arabic
- **Fr** : French Language
- **Eng** : English Language
- **AA** : Algerian Arabic
- **ADA** : Algerian Dialectal Arabic
- //, [ ], ( ) : are used to represent linguistic variables
- **MSA** : Modern Standard Arabic

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## List of Phonetic Symbols

[r] As in 'rat'

[t] As in 'to tell'

[ŋ] As in final -ing

[ʒ] As in 'rouge'

[dʒ] As in 'garage'

[ð] As in 'this'

[d] As in Algerian Dialect [dʁab] 'to beat'

[d] As in 'Do'

[θ] As in 'thing'

[ʔ] glottal closure

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction ---

Differences in the ways that men and women use *language* have long been of interest in many studies. A number of linguists (Lokoff, Tannen, among others) maintain that there are broad gender-based differences of communicative style in the discourse of men and women. One of the reasons of this is that males and females communicate differently because of their cultural differences. However, does this mean that we, females, talk alike? In other words, are there differences in language use between women? In fact, the differences are very limited, if to none, researches in this topic – language variation among women. This question was enough to motivate us to carry out a research about this subject. According to the stylistic theory, each individual has a unique way of using language, which is manifested by patterns of special word selection and grammar, or words, phrases, idioms, or pronunciations that nobody else uses.

Accordingly, the present research work aims, first, at studying women's speech and the different factors influencing their use of language. Taking women of Tiaret speech community as a case study, the problem of the present work could be structured in the form of the following questions:

- Are there differences in language use among women of Tiaret speech community?
- What are the possible factors that affect women's language in Tiaret speech community?

In order to find accurate answers to such questions, the following hypotheses have been formed:

- There are differences in the way women talk.
- Among the social-cultural and structural factors that may influence women's use of language: regional dialects, social upbringing and level of education.
- Women tend use more standard form when speaking, because they want to look more prestigious.

## **General Introduction** -----

In order to achieve the research goal and answer the main research problem, an interview and a participant observation are used as a research instruments. Regarding the structure, this work is structured in three chapters: The first one is dedicated for the review of literature, providing an overview about theories in language variation and theories related to language and gender since the topic is not just about language variation but also about gender studies. The second chapter deals with the methodology and the basic methods used to obtain data. As for the third chapter, it will present the data collected from Tiaret speech community by the use of ethnographic observation and interviews.

# **Chapter One:**

# **Literature Review**

**Introduction:**

This chapter will shed light on some of the main theories that dealt with language variation and change. As well as some studies that focused on gender as an interdisciplinary field; since gender constructs a large part of our lives in many ways through several periods of time. Also, we ought to demonstrate the diversity of ideas on language variation in women's speech and the main factors that influence their different ways of communication with others.

**1.1. Sociolinguistics as a Field of Research:**

For decades, scholars and linguists studied language from different perspectives and disciplines. Its important role in human communication made it a subject of research for major works. At first, linguists focused on the structure of language. After that, they concentrated on how language functions within society. Sociolinguistics as an area of study was introduced by William Labov (1963), where he focused on speech variation in society and the main factors that influence human communication. Later on, researchers considered this area significant to conduct research on it. This field studies speech variation and analyse the different linguistic and social variables like age, gender and social class that may influence the speaker's language.

Sociolinguists focus either on the language side or the societal side. In the language side, they focus on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of each individual. How they change the way they speak and vary according to their listener and situation. Language can provide amazing clues about a person's social life, background and education level. As for the societal side, they concentrate on the role of language in social processes. That is to say, language does not just reflect society; it actively shapes it.

By looking at the way people use language and picking up the small details; sociolinguists can actually figure out the nature of the social life of the speaker because it offers new perceptions on both communication and society. Ronald Wardhaugh distinguished several relations combine language with society. The first point is that social structure may influence or determine the linguistic structure and/or behaviour. The second is opposed to the first: linguistic structure and/or behaviour may either influence or determine social structure. The third is that there is no relationship between linguistic structure and social structure. And the last point: the influence is bi-directional:

language and society may influence each other (2006, p.10). This means that there are various aspects of possible relationships between language and society; which means language and society are interrelated. Labov (1966)'s work in New York City on the historical rhotic [r] was more ambitious and looked at a wider range of variables. He found that rhoticity is related to social status. However, his other study in Martha's Vineyard (1963) on the phonological variation in vowel sounds (diphthongs) established some basic methods for social dialect research.

Another sociolinguist who explored the phonological variables is Trudgill (1974) in Norwich, England. The work was much similar to that of Labov in New York. The variants were related to social class and level of formality or style. These major studies shed light on language variation, as well as observing social differences between speakers using different methods to collect data like tests, interviews and anonymous surveys.

### **1.2. Language Variation and Change:**

The study of variation is very significant because it helps understand society and individuals in a better way. According to (Wardhaugh, 2006, p.4) "The language we use in everyday living is remarkably varied". Speakers have different ways of choosing certain vocabularies and pronunciation. They are sometimes unaware of the changes they make and the way they use language differently. He also said that no one speaks the same way all the time; people constantly exploit the nuances of the language they speak for a wide variety of purposes.

Language changes in different situations due to the influence of certain factors as (Stockwell, 2007) explained that new words, new pronunciation, new grammar forms and structures and new meanings for words are always coming into existence. According to (Meyerhoff, 2011, p. 17) some of the factors are: Communication networks, distance, time, social structure and imagination are among the many factors that influence linguistic innovations. The focus is sometimes on individual speakers and other times on the behaviour of a group of speakers but both complement each other taking into consideration the factors.

Variation can show a powerful correlation with social variables like social class and social stratification of language; this refers to the presence of social groups that are ranked one above the other over the amount of power

and prestige and wealth. (Allen & Linn, 1986, p.47) explained that “variation is simply an aspect of an on-going linguistic change”. In addition, other studies that deal with women language show a consistent use of the standard form, pitch and voice quality more than men.

### **1.2.1. Stylistic Variation**

The formality of situation known as speech style is controlled by several factors. Style level changes according to the situation. For the formal style, speakers pay more attention to how they speak while in the informal style, they pay less attention. for example: ‘Mother’ is formal, while ‘Mom’ is informal. (Spolsky, 1998) argued “At times, we are more careful, and at times we are more relaxed in our speech or writing, just at time we are more careful or more relaxed in other kinds of behaviour ,like how we dress or eat “.

It depends on the situation people find themselves in they choose what to say carefully as if they are choosing what to eat or what to wear. From this the term style can be understood (Spolsky, 1998, p. 33) “style refers to differences in degree of formality”, from the less informal to the more formal speech. Stylistic variation refers to how individuals adapt their language use based on the situation, (Chambers, 2004, p. 82) explained that it indicates the linguistic change in progress and Labov’s New York City study of the variable [r] and refers to it as hypercorrection; speakers make strong attempts to signal their social status by using linguistic prestige features as postvocalic /r/.

### **1.2.2. Linguistic and Social Variables**

When Labov conducted his study in Martha’s Vineyard (1963), the concept of linguistic variable was coined. It helped linguists to contract people’s different use of variants which are the actual realisation of a variable. The words can have the same social meaning but different form like ‘car’ and ‘automobile’ at the lexical level, water and [waʔer] from the phonological level.

Labov (1972) identified three different linguistic variables that can be considered as indicators which may vary with social attributes of speakers but are not socially marked(without social importance), a marker correlate with

social features like class and styles of speaking (with social significance), or stereotype which is manipulated or avoided because it is stigmatized.

Social variables, on the other hand, have a relationship with the use of a certain linguistic variable and social factors that influence speakers' variation of language. Among the factors age, gender, social class, background and so on, for example the linguistic variables that were used by Labov (1966) are the pronunciation differences in [r] after vowels and the social variables are place of occupation and socio-economic status.

### **1.2.3. Labov's Theory on Social Stratification**

In New York City (1966), Labov examined language variation and studied a large-scale patterns of language use and change. He focused on features that vary in general known as linguistic variables. (Labov, 1964, p.24) argued "final and pre-consonantal /r/ as in *her* and *charm* is used more widely in the New York City area than seems to be reported in the literature", and he said that there are other forms of variation in the New York speech which have nothing to do with rhotic /r/.

The final sound [ɪŋ], which can be found in words like *sleeping* and *eating*, can be pronounced in two different ways: the vernacular form *sleepin'*[ɪŋ] and the standard form *sleeping*. This depends on the social background and the formality according to the situation. Labov designed an interview to elicit a range of 'styles' of speech from to informal. He found that in each social class, women produce more prestigious forms than men in the same class. Prestige variants occur in higher up social scale. (Talbot, 2010, p. 19). Though, the studies were conducted in English but there are similarities which can be produced in other languages.

### **1.2.4. Trudgill's Theory**

Peter Trudgill conducted a survey in Norwich (1974) modelled on Labov's survey in New York City. He taped the sociolinguistics interview of his informants to get different degrees of formality by asking them to read a passage, a list of words, ask them fairly formal interview-type questions, and other questions designed to make them feel more relaxed. He also asked them to self-evaluate where he found that women more often over-report (claimed to use standard forms when they actually did not).

These differences in language use are the result of social attitudes about the behaviour of men and women. According to him, women use the prestige variants more often because they are more status conscious (they are more likely to be judged on appearances and less secure socially). Also for the self-evaluation, women liked to think that they used more prestigious and standard form.

Feminists criticised these studies saying that people's speech is influenced by their interaction in the speech communities in which they live and work. Accordingly, (Talbot, 2010, p. 24) explained that some women are confined to the private sphere and in other communities women are with wider social contacts. When people are more relaxed in less formal settings they use the vernacular.

### **1.3. Language Varieties**

Every language is composed of many different styles or varieties, the linguistic differences are seen in the way people speak or write. Some are more formal than other varieties. Language variety is a specific form of language used by a particular community. Wardhaugh (2006, p 25) defines variety of language as "a set of linguistic items with similar distribution". All varieties have a large number of speakers. None speaks a single, uniform language or identity, because language changes according to the interlocutor and occasions.

#### **1.3.1. Language vs. Dialect**

Making a distinction between language and dialect is very important to understand variation. (Allen & Linn, 1986, p.47) explained "dialect differences are of course a matter of variation within a language, and dialectalization is an important aspect of the inter-relation of linguistic variation and change". Dialects are sub categories of a language and are different in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, while language is a group of linguistic norms used for communication. De Saussure noted that "Speech has both an individual and a social side, and we cannot conceive of one without the other." (Chambers, 2004, p.7) referring to *langue* and *parole* where the first is a social activity and the second is individual.

So language is considered as a social phenomenon and is something people use and recognize. In contrast, Trudgill (2004) defines dialects as "a substandard, low-status, often rustic form of language, generally associated with the peasantry, the working class, or other groups lacking in prestige". It

means that dialects do not have a standard form and lack prestige and power unlike language. Dialects have mainly three types: regional dialect, social dialect and individual dialect.

### **1.3.2. Standard Language and Non- Standard Language**

The standard language is usually associated with prestige in the society and used in official documents, governments, institutions, business and others. It follows grammar rules and pronunciation of the language. The Standard form is acquired through education and no particular accent is associated with it whereas the non-standard language is basically the form everyone uses elsewhere or the vernacular form, and it does not follow grammar and pronunciation rules, on top of that it is learned at home and informal contexts.

Corson (1997) explained that:

...there is a range of non-standard varieties that is used by closely knit social or ethnic groups. These varieties are brought into the work of the school in one way or another. Children coming from these backgrounds often possess two or more varieties which they use in their everyday language, perhaps one variety used in the home, another in the peer group, and a third in the school. Largely as a result of the school's influence, this last variety may come to be very close to the standard variety. (p. 99)

The non-standard form is used in everyday life while the standard one is used in professional occasions and educational policies play a role in the process.

### **1.4. Theories in Gender and Language**

The notion gender has an important significance in the study of language and society, because it is not something fixed but something that changes through time since people and language change. (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p.32) have argued that "gender does not simply unfold from individual biology, or from an individual predisposition to be a particular kind of person-it is not even an individual property. Gender is built into the social order".

Labov's principles were and still the guide for sociolinguists working on language and gender. Language reflects people's ideas and thoughts as well

as their identity. According to Eckert & McConnell (2003, p. 60) “a language is a highly structured system of signs, or combinations of form and meaning. Gender is embedded in these signs and in their use in communicative practice in a variety of ways. Gender can be the actual content of a linguistic sign”.

Women do not speak the same way as men. Women tend to be more prestigious when speaking and use more of the standard form than men, and both Labov and Trudgill’s studies showed that women have different pronunciation and style of speaking than men. Meyerhoff (2011, p. 213) says that gender is a social property, something acquired or constructed through having relationships with others and through an individual’s act to do what is required to certain cultural norms and prohibitions. The main theories in gender and language are:

### **1.4.1. The Deficit Theory**

The deficit theory focuses on the idea that women are conservative and unable to produce new terms and their vocabularies are limited, while men are able to invent words. (Jespersen, 1922, pp. 237-238) Noted that women use more adverbs of intensify due to the tendency of hyperbole, and they do not finish their sentences because they do not have enough thoughts and they do not have enough words. Men are innovators and coin new terms.

He also said that men’s language is the norm, and women are obliged to belong to men even when using language. This can be seen as an insult to women and their freedom to use language. As for Lakoff (1975), language was a particular feature and an abstract system (langue). In her book, she discussed two main ideas exploring the differences between men’s and women’s language. Men’s language is seen as the norm and women’s language is seen is as the subordinate one and this is still carrying a huge influence in gender studies.

### **1.4.2. The Dominance Theory**

While Lakoff’s *Language and Women’s Place* made a huge controversial in the United States, Dale Spender’s *Man Made Language* (1980) did the same in the United Kingdom. It was written from a feminist point of view, she wrote about sexism in the English language and gender differences when using language.

Spender claimed that in mixed-sex talk men dominate the conversation and women are silenced, also men interrupt their partners and bring up new topics effectively. This is known as the ‘male dominance’ approach.

I would reiterate that it has been the dominant group-in this case, males-who have created the world invented the categories, constructed sexism and its justification and developed a language trap which is their interest....males... have produced language, thought and reality. Historically it has been the structures, the categories and the meanings which have been invented by males – though not of course by all males-and they have been validated by reference to other males. In this process women have played little or no part. (Spender, 1980, p.142)

According to Sunderland (2006, p. 15), Spender also provides some linguistic evidence claiming that men are responsible for sexist language at least in grammar by citing some male grammarians in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century among them Wilson and Poole. The Dominance theory focused on power and position in the society. Lakoff also believed that the differences between men and women are due male dominance and she provides ten women’s speech features which will be discussed later.

### **1.4.3. The Difference Theory**

The difference theory discusses the idea that men and women’s conversations are different .Deborah Tannen contributed a lot in this theory by providing ‘six differences’ between the way males and females use language in 1992

<b>Status vs. Support</b>	Women use language to confirm and support their ideas, and they also like to be supported by others and show their emotions unlike men who see language as a means of dominance over women and to gain power and status.
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<b>Independence vs. Intimacy</b>	<p>Tannen (1990) provides an example about men being independent when making a decision and women's dependence. She said that men do not need their wives' permission to invite someone or to make certain choices because they were raised to be dominant, while women find themselves seeking for support from their husbands to make a clear decision about something.</p>
<b>Advice vs. Understanding</b>	<p>Women see language as a way for understanding and of empathy, because when they complain to their men they are indirectly waiting for support, but men see it as a problem that needs to be solved.</p>
<b>Information vs. Feelings</b>	<p>It is known for men that they provide information and are concerned with facts, unlike women who use their feelings and emotions to express themselves.</p>
<b>Orders vs. Proposals</b>	<p>Men give orders. They are direct and provide strong arguments using imperative form, while women use suggestions to avoid direct orders.</p>
<b>Conflict vs. Compromise</b>	<p>Usually women avoid conflicts and arguing, and always try to find a middle solution and show their agreement even if they do not agree on the subject. Men show their disagreement directly and argue even if it ended with a conflict.</p>

**Table1.4.3.1. Tannen's Speech Differences.**

### 1.5. Gender Styles in Communication

As mentioned before, men and women communicate, speak and think differently. Both see the purpose of having a conversation differently. Researches show that men use language to enhance their status and exert dominance while women use it as a tool of communication to enhance social connections and relations. For instance, Women are more polite and

expressive while men are more assertive. This indicates that their relationships with other people are also different in social contexts because men value their independence and women like to be social and interact with others.

Deborah Tannen explained that men use conversations to maintain status and dominance and women use it to create an intimate bond with others by talking about their problems and different topics they are facing. (Tannen, 1990, p.10). When it comes to communication styles between males and females; males from one hand are more likely to provide solutions to avoid unnecessary discussions, on the other hand females are more cooperative, like to talk and express themselves freely and they value communication. More researches show that women use more tag questions and intensifiers (Lakoff, 1975) and use more polite words and swear less when interacting with others while men are less attached in conversations.

Tannen's book in 1990, *You Just Don't Understand: Women And Men In Conversation* shed light on the gender differences in communication styles between males and females. She said that the differences start at a young age. Men's goal from having a conversation is to transmit information and offer advice, where women seek for understanding and sympathy from their listener. Tannen also points out that women have common goals and the purpose of their conversations is to preserve intimacy and closeness.

Merchant (2012, p. 22) says that the communication style is different depending on the person whom they are talking to and depending on the situation they find their selves into. Like for example when applying for a job that demands direct contact with the customers , women are more likely to be hired because of their communication style by nature unlike men who need to prove their skills for the position.

The study of how men and women speak is a major interest for sociolinguists. Lesley Milroy (1980, p.71) came up with a more specific explanation by observing men and women in their social groups, by saying that female linguistic behaviours are more tolerable, and they have more linguistic freedom and their style is standard compared to men's is not.

### **1.6. Women's Language:**

For many years, women have been noticed by their ways of speaking. They are different from men not just in the way they think, act, and behave but

## Chapter One Literature Review

also in the way they speak. Women's topics are usually about family, work and emotions so their dialogues reveal their inner lives and secrets unlike men who hide their feelings and act in a more reasonable manner.

Many researchers claimed that women's pronunciation is different as well as intonation. Their pronunciation is more correct and concise. They use adjectives and adverbs such as 'great' and 'excellent', this improves that they use prestigious forms to express their educational level or life style. Moreover, females use individual inclination when pronouncing words and have a great amount of emotional vocabularies.

Robin Lakoff's 'Language and Woman's place' first appeared in 1973, then in a form of a book in 1975, and it was very influential. She referred to language used by women and language used about them. She said that women use language in a distinctive way, so she proposed several features describing their habits in 'Middle America' as she calls it. Some features she mentioned which may weaken or strengthen the speech are explained in the following table:

<b>Features</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Vocabulary of women's work</b>	Words relating to women's activities and interest such as dart.
<b>Precise colour terms and Affective adjectives</b>	Beige, ecru  Adorable, charming as empty adjectives
<b>Super polite forms and the use of tag questions</b>	Avoid swear words and use euphemism.  Tag questions like haven't you, don't you.
<b>Hedges and intensifiers</b>	Sort of, well, so, very...
<b>Rising intonation</b>	Intonation rises at the final point of questions
<b>Hypercorrect grammar</b>	Women tend to use standard forms.
<b>Emphatic stress</b>	Using over-the-top emphasis: what a lovely day!

**Table.1.6.1. Distinct Features in women's Speech.**

The overall picture of women's language is seen as inferior and deficient in comparison to men's language which is considered superior and the correct norm. Lakoff claimed that women should learn men's language. But her work was criticised because sometimes it echoes Jespersen's complaints about 'empty' adjectives like 'divine' with his about 'improper use' of adverbs like awfully. As for tag questions, Janet Holmes distinguishes two basic kinds: referential and affective, but in general, women do use a lot of tag questions and the book was a landmark in the study of language and gender.

In general, (Coates, 1996, p. 62) mentioned that researchers like Freed and Greenwood found that there is no difference between males and females when using hedges; however, what they found suggests that regardless of gender, the use of these devices is sensitive to situations, and varies relative to the demands of the task. Coates also examined features of speech that were considered negative in women's speech and incoherent like tag questions and said that when looking at women's talk in isolation will help in getting a clear image of women's conversations with each other and with their friends.

Additionally, Trudgill's study in Norwich showed that women might be oriented to language as a marker of social status; they self-report errors to overt prestige norms. Later, the idea of women using more linguistic characters to show social status was discussed even more by Eckert (1989, 2000). She found that girls in high schools were more constrained by hierarchies of popularity, so they use broader linguistic repertoire as individuals and as groups. (Ehrlich, Meyerhoff & Holmes, 2014, p.90).

As for her work in suburban Detroit (2000) in the United States, Eckert found that some of the girls are more conservative, and others are more innovative. This notion was explained in one of Labov's papers, in 1990, who discussed the term Gender Paradox. In other words, two different patterns associated with women and language change; women's linguistic behaviour was both more conservative (standard like) and more innovative (less standard-like). (Eckert & McConnell, 2003, pp.300-302) explained that the innovation is related to the projection of social identity; working class women are the leaders of linguistic change; they show an image of being different by talking differently.

## **Chapter One**—————**Literature Review**

As for the Arabic –speaking world, studies shown that women are more cooperative with others, interact and speak politely because they are considered as role models for their children, and they are better conversationalists. Abs el Jawad (1987), Bakir (1986), Haeri (1987) argued that dialectal changes from below (unconscious changes that happen in the vernacular and applied by speakers systematically (Labov 1972)) allow women to use newer forms which vary from one country to another.

## **Conclusion**

It is now clear that studying gender is not as simple as it looks for some people. This term shifted from focusing on biological differences and sex discrimination to the way social roles of people change and shape language. This chapter aimed to define some important concepts in the field work such as language, dialect, linguistic and social variables, and focused on language variation as a research area for many linguists and scholars, as well as some of the factors that may influence such variation. Besides, it highlighted women's language and the most significant theories in gender studies. The following chapter will be devoted for the methodology and tools used to conduct this research and to investigate women's speech.

# **Chapter Two:**

# **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, we have explained some basic theories in both language variation and gender studies and spoke in much more details about women's speech and how it differ in many ways. In this chapter, we will focus on the qualitative research and its main instruments to collect data, which will be later on described and analysed.

### **2.1. Research Methodology and Design**

Doing research is important to gain knowledge in many domains. It requires specific techniques and methods in order to collect reliable data. Moral principles are necessary in the process of research. So before doing it, the researcher must take into consideration ethics, especially when collecting data from participants. (Creswell, 2014, p.12) argues that research designs “are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design”.

On one hand, the research methodology is something that must be followed to discover new facts because it is the framework that we use to explain the factors affecting the validity and reliability of our methods. On the other hand, the research design is the tool we use to explore the phenomenon, and it is either qualitative or quantitative. According to Leedy (1997, p. 195) the term research design is “a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data”. In this study, a descriptive design is used, depending on the qualitative method to collect and analyse data. The latter is obtained from interviews and observation.

### **2.2. Data collection methods**

In doing any research, several techniques are used to collect data from participants. The analysed data may confirm or refuse the hypotheses. The method we used in our research is the qualitative method and it will be explained in the next section.

#### **2.2.1. Qualitative method**

The qualitative method seeks to understand a given research problem from the perspective of the population. It examines relationships among entities (people, group of people, companies or government). According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005):

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring them. (p.5)

Though, it is not sufficient to rely on one method, but it helps getting specific information about opinions, behaviours and social contexts of a particular population, and provide textual descriptions of how this population experience a given research problem. The most common qualitative methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group. In this research, the tools used are semi-structured interview and ethnographic observation.

### **2.3. Research Instruments**

Each instrument used is suited for obtaining a specific type of data. In this study, ethnographic observation and interviews are used.

#### **2.3.1. Interviews**

One of the most popular techniques in conducting research is interviews. It is part of the qualitative design, because the researcher will be in direct contact with the participants. Interviews involve an interviewer to ask questions, an interviewee to answer them, and the answers will be recorded. (Edwards, 2013, p. 3) Noted that a structured interview as “a based on a questionnaire with a sequence of questions, asked in the same order and the same way of all subjects of research, with little flexibility available to the researcher”. It means that the structure of the interview can be design according to the levels of flexibility and specificity.

Even though, they help in collecting data with greater understanding, and they are more personal as compared to questionnaires because they allow a better control over the order and flow of questions they cannot be considered

as primary sources and some people may not like that you are recording them so there will be bias.

However, we used this method in order to obtain a naturalistic data from fifteen female students by contacting them face-to-face, each interview contains a set of different questions and we record their answers after having their permission. Having a flowing conversation with the participants will help us observe their speech.

### **2.3.1.1. Description of the interview**

Participants accepted to do the interview and to be recorded by giving us their permission. We have relied on eleven semi-structured questions. Eight open-ended questions were about personal and social information. Three questions emerged from the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. The participants found the questions easy to answer because they were asked in Algerian Arabic. The interview took place in both classroom and department of English. In the first question, we asked our interviewees about personal information like their age and major.

The second question was about the situation in general where they live. The third and fourth questions were about their accomplishments and ambitions. In questions five and six, the interviewees were expected to speak about daily words and phrases they use in daily conversations and in different contexts. In questions seven and eight, we tried to test their views towards the different ways women use language, the possible factors that may affect their speech, and if women speak differently from men and how. The other three questions were added in the middle of the interview in order to make the participants speak more.

### **2.3.2. Ethnographic observation**

Another tool for collecting qualitative data in both sociolinguistics and social sciences is observation. Observation is a method in which researchers observe within a specific research field. Ethnography is a qualitative research method that seeks to understand a phenomenon that reflects the knowledge and meanings that guide the life of cultural groups within their own environment. (Jerolmack & Khan, 2018, p.11) define ethnography as “a method of social science inquiry in which the researcher embeds herself in the on-going

interactions of a particular social setting or set of relations in order to understand and explain members' lived experience”.

### **2.3.2.2. Description of Ethnographic Observation**

In other terms, ethnographic observation is the study of people in their environment, through the use of methods such as participant observation and face to face interviews. In this research paper, first year female master students, in the department of foreign languages, English section were observed, and the focus was on the way they speak with others.

### **2.4. Context of Study and Sample Population**

Levey and Lemeshow (2008) define a sample as:

a study involving a subset (or sample) of individuals selected from larger population. Variables or characteristics of interest are observed or measured on each of the sampled individuals. These measurements are then aggregated over all individuals in the sample to obtain summary statistics (e.g. means, proportions, and totals) for the sample.

Accordingly, they define the population as “The entire set of individuals to which findings of the survey are to be extrapolated”. In order to examine the research hypotheses, fifteen female students who responded to the interview were chosen among the total number of first year master students' population (357) at the University of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret. We chose master students because they have sufficient knowledge about different topics.

The female participants were selected randomly, from both specialties: didactics and linguistics. Their age range is between 21 and 29 years old, and they were from different communes in Tiaret. The data were collected inside the department, in a relaxed context so that the participants feel free to speak and answer the interview questions. The data collected will be later organized, analysed and synthesized.

Number of participants	Age	specialty	commune
01	21	Linguistics	Ain edhab
02	21	Didactics	Dahmouni
03	22	Linguistics	Dahmouni
04	21	Linguistics	Dahmouni
05	21	Didactics	Tiaret
06	29	Linguistics	Tiaret
07	22	Didactics	Tiaret
08	22	Linguistics	Tiaret
09	28	Linguistics	Ksar echelala
10	21	Linguistics	Tiaret
11	22	Linguistics	Tiaret
12	22	Didactics	Tiaret
13	24	Didactics	Tiaret
14	24	Didactics	Sougeur
15	22	Didactics	Hamadia

**Table 2.4. Sample Population Representation**

### **Conclusion**

This chapter was predominantly devoted for the main points in research methodology including: research design and techniques for data collection. We talked about the instruments we used in this research, value of research and ethical consideration, as well as the selected sample population we selected based on the variables. The third chapter will be concerned with data analysis and interpretation of the findings.

# **Chapter Three:**

# **Data Analysis and**

# **Interpretations**

## **Chapter Three** \_\_\_\_\_ **Data Analysis and Interpretations**

### **Introduction**

The previous two chapters were dedicated for the literatures and the methodology frame that helped conducting this study. The following chapter will be devoted for data collection and interpretation of the findings, in addition to the limitation of the study for future researches.

### **3.1. Analysis of the Interview**

#### **Question 1- Would you please tell me a little bit about yourself?**

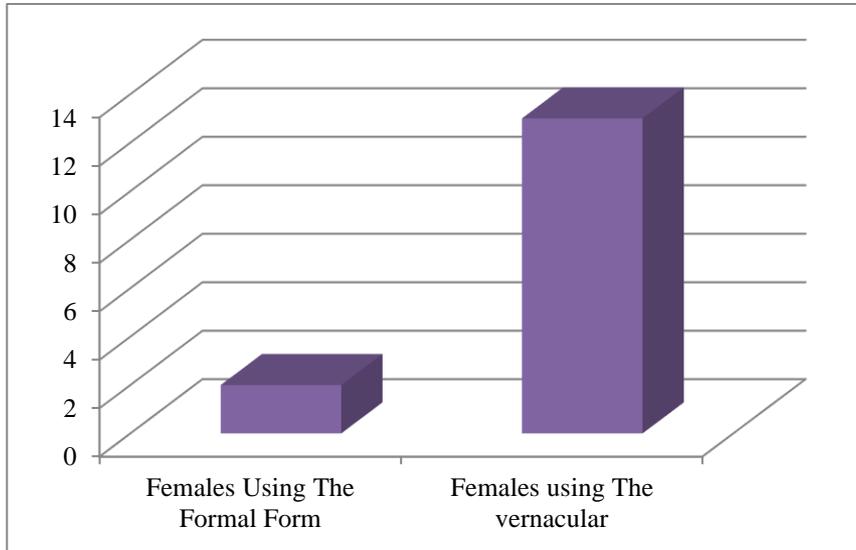
In the first question, the interviewees begin presenting themselves by giving their names, age, their education level and where they are from. Through the presentation, two 02 participants move from utilizing the vernacular discourse of AA (Algerian Arabic) to the formal one Standard Arabic, while the rest of them thirteen 13 participants mixed French words with Algerian Arabic. For example:

-بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم انا ب ليندة طالبة لغة انجليزية ماستر 1 ديداكتيك عندي 21 عام و انا تيارتية  
و اصلي من المغرب

-.السلام عليكم انا طالبة لغة انجليزية عمري 29 و اسمي ع نورة

l'université master 1 linguistiques de  
Tiaret ville. -انا يسموني ب اسمهان j'ai 22 ans, نقرا في

The shift between the formal and the casual frame of word choice show that females are attempting to look more polite and presentable within the way they speak. Since they knew they are being recorded, the discourse is by one means or another monitored. Very few utilize natural speech, others modify their conversation because they know they are being observed, this is usually known as the observer's paradox.



**Figure 3.1.1: Females Using the Vernacular and the Standard Form.**

**Question 2- What is it like to live in (the region)?**

This question emerged during the conversation to know whether the geographical localisation affect the informants' speech. Most of the interviewees are from the city of Tiaret (eight informants) and its communes like Ain deheb, Ksar chellala, Dahmouni (seven informants). The participants use a lot of loan words from French, English and even other dialects. They change their speech according to whom they are talking to, whether they are companions or family members. Going back to those who live in small towns, they are bit conservative in the way they speak and behave.

It is noticed that each speech community has its own dialects, and the slight contrasts can be seen in some sociolinguistic variables. Six of the subjects said that people in Tiaret do not overstate their speech and use ordinary forms. Contrastingly, nine of the participants said individuals in Tiaret stigmatize many linguistic variables like [ʒ] and [dʒ], [d] and [ð]. For example: words like [To laugh], [number three], [oh my god!] , are pronounced differently : نضحك/ نضحك, ثلاثة/ ثلاثة, حوجي/ حوجي . These variables are pronounced differently from one society to another.

The accentuation can be noticed in some daily conversations through the use of high pitch, raised intonation and stressing words like: [too much] بزالف!! [awesome] كي غاية!! , c'est pas vrai! [it's unbelievable]. It implies that

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social values like social status and social characters affect the way individuals talk.

### Question 3- What achievements are you most proud of?

The aim behind this question is to know how they use language to express their feelings and ideas when doing something they are mostly proud of . When talking about their achievements, the participants said that they are glad of the accomplishments they have made on the educational, social and personal levels. The interviewees show excitement when talking about what they love to do. They used a lot of intensifiers and hedges in Algerian Arabic to express their thoughts, which will be clarified within the following figure.

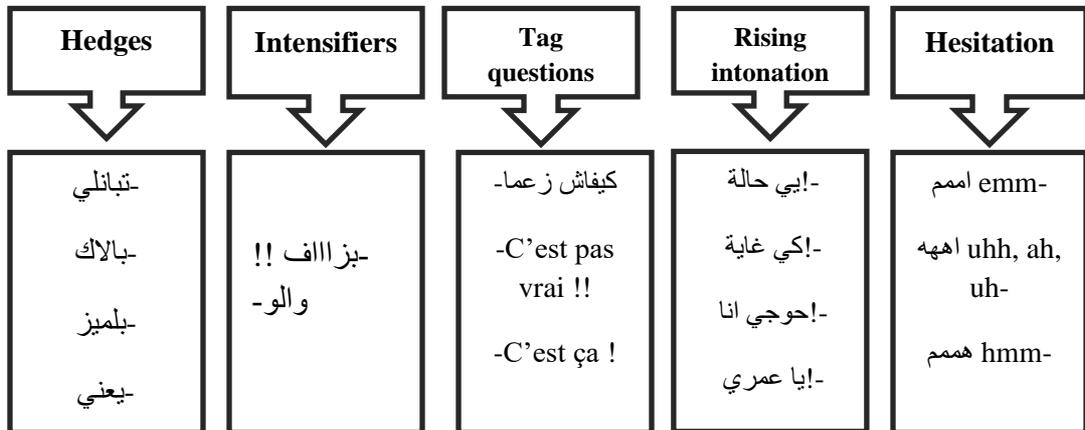


Figure 3.1.3: Speech Features Used by Participants.

Such use of tags and hedges is a sign of probability and precaution by the female informants. They moreover clarified that the target language, in this case English, is their greatest challenge. So being able to learn it more closely could be an object to reach. That is why they use it now and then in daily life to look more intellectual.

### Question 4- What do you like about being a university student?

The female participants said that being students in university helped them become more perceptive unlike years ago when they were too nervous and timid to talk in public sphere. Three of them now are members of

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university clubs like 'limitless' and 'Innovation', so it helped them become more creative, adventurous and talkative by embracing their social strengths.

	Females Expressions	Meaning
<b>Responses of The interviewees in AA, Fr, and Eng.</b>	Ambitieuse	[ambitious]
	Independente	[independent]
	عدا القراية ما حققت والو	[study]
	النضوج و الوعي	[maturity]
	الشهادة و الدراسة	[degree]
	الطموح العالي	[Ambition]
	تباني بلي جامعية	[being a university student]
	Expose to the world	[to engage oneself to different activities and social events]
	الاعتماد على النفس	[ self-reliance ]
	تزوشي بلي تقراي فالجاميعة	[to show off]
	التحرر	[free to do anything]
	وعيت لحوايج	[conscious]
متفتحة	[open- minded]	

**Table3.1.4: Main Answers for Question 4**

Most of the informants' answers were spontaneous, and said everything that came to their minds. Others were a bit apprehensive, not knowing what to say precisely yet they thought about their answers very carefully. This shows that females' choice of particular words can be deliberate. The grammatical

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forms when they give details about a certain subject, and the different pronunciations of the same word are signs of speech variation.

### Question 5- Why did you choose to study Linguistics/Didactics?

The participants choose their specialty because they did not have other choices. Those who study linguistics find didactics incomprehensible and boring. Meanwhile, those who study didactics describe linguistics as hard to acquire and challenging. When answering this question, there was no hesitation by the respondents and they felt more confident to say what they believe to be true without too much planning. Here are some examples used by the participants:

Specialty	Number of interviewees	Examples
Linguistics	08	ماهيش مفهومة, صامطة .
Didactics	07	تعبي, واعرة, صعبية

Table3.1.5: Both Specialty and Number of Interviewees

### Question 6- What is the one thing you are really good at?

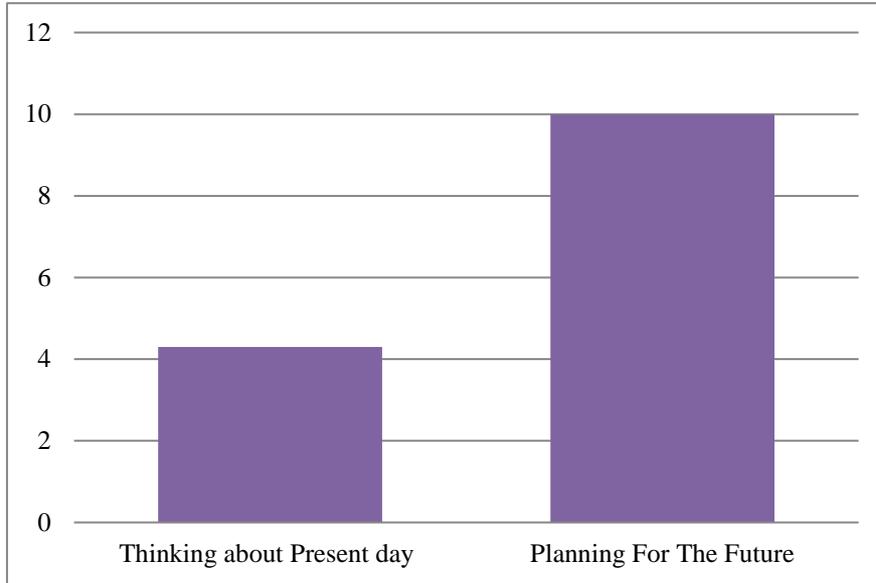
The point behind this question is to keep the discussion going. Asking individuals about themselves gives them the opportunity to talk more. In this case, the answers were basically about their hobbies and skills. They listed cooking, reading, singing, driving and painting. When talking about something they are really good at, they switch into a prestigious way of talking and loan words from French. They use a lot of adjectives and hyperbole, and they even use their body language to show excitement and make the listener understand their ideas. For instance: j'aime beaucoup cuisiner [i love cooking], ça depend [it depends], نموت عالكتب, [i love books].

### Question 7- How do you see your future?

Such question required time to reply appropriately. While five 05 of interviewees said that the one thing they are thinking about at the moment is to graduate, and the future to them is something ambiguous. The majority that represents ten interviewees were thinking about pursuing their dreams, having a decent job or get married and raise children. The use of low pitch and

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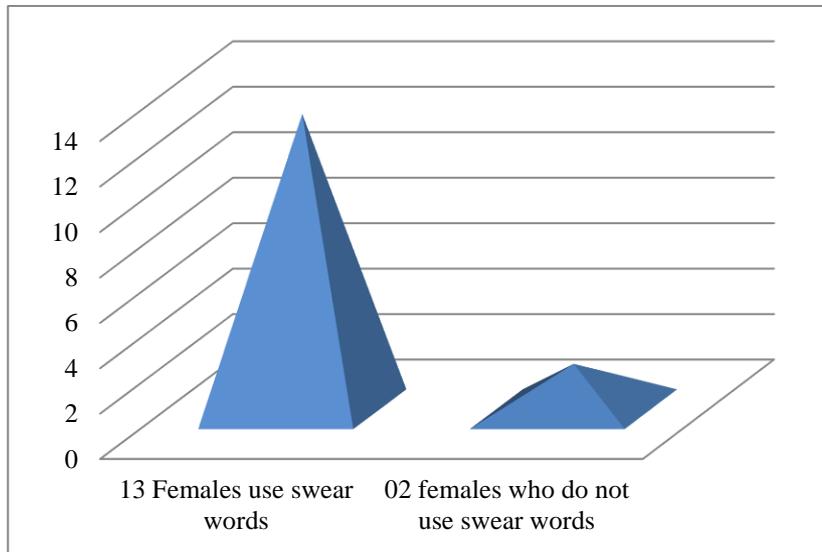
hesitation before responding can be noticed through their answers. Among their responses: نتزوج, نخدم, نتخرج, الله اعلم, انا نشوف المستقبل تاعي مجهول.



**Graph 3.1.7: Females visions for the future.**

### **Question 8- What are the different terms you use when you are annoyed, sad, angry or happy?**

The total number of the interviewees is fifteen. Ten of the informants said that their body language reflects their feelings and ideas. Their reactions differ according to the context and situation. For example, when they are happy, their facial expressions show excitement and joy, and when they are angry or sad they just remain silent or fight with people. Thirteen of them said that they use a lot of swear words when they are angry, and sometimes swear unconsciously. Some of the words they say are inappropriate, four of the participants said that they swear deliberately in English or French because it cannot be understood by many. They also use long sentences and adjectives more frequently depending on the situation. Some of their expressions when they are happy are: يا عمري , يي حالة , حوجي انا , اكي غاية

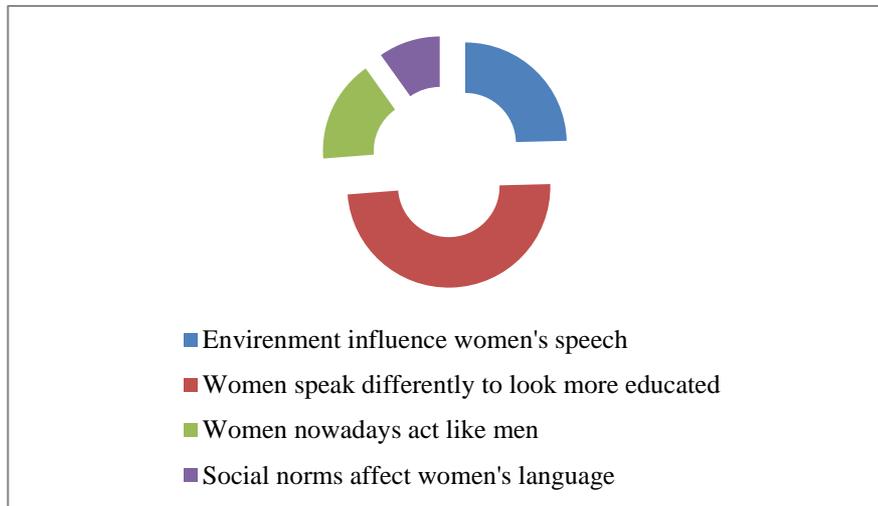


**Figure3.1.8: Women’s use of swear words.**

**Question 09- Why women speak differently from men and from other women?**

There are many differences between men and women since both have diverse perspectives and attitudes .Three female participants argued that the social environment affect the way they speak. For instance men are more certain and say anything that comes to their minds without being judged by others unlike women. They claimed that women are spontaneous and different from men by nature. That is why their sentiments influence their judgments and discourse. Six participants said that women speak in a stylized way to look educated and feminine.

Two of them said that females nowadays act like men and speak and behave like them too. Four of the informants affirmed that social norms endorse that men are different from women biologically and psychologically; that is to say the physiological changes that occur at certain age shape their behaviour and personal views afterwards.



**Figure3.1.9: Reasons why women speak differently from men suggested by the interviewees.**

**Question 10- In your opinion, what are the factors that affect women’s speech?**

Social variables such as age, gender, power, solidarity and level of education control language change. The participants agreed that social factors lead to language variation. For example: mixed marriages, moving from one region to another and religion. These factors lead to the contact between languages and dialects. Another thing is the role of women in present day; women preoccupy different positions in all domains of life. That is why they speak in an ornate way. Two females said that their parents use French at home, consequently they start using it since French is prestigious and classy, and when they use with others they show their educational level.

**Question 11- Is there anything you want to add concerning the factors or women’s speech?**

In this question, it was wanted from the female participants to provide extra information concerning women’s speech. Those who added additional comments said that females influence each other in the way they dress, behave, think and talk through daily contact whether at school, home, work or University. And the way they use the standard form is an attempt to show

## **Chapter Three** \_\_\_\_\_ **Data Analysis and Interpretations**

modernity. The Observer's Paradox again is biasing the data since the informants are aware that their speech will be recorded.

### **3.2. Interpretation of the Findings:**

The findings are summarized through the interpretation of data taken from the interview and observation. Among the findings, females' speech variation is noticed in the shift from the vernacular to formal style, and the mix between different repertoires in their conversations. For example: the use of French words like *j'aime beaucoup*, *c'est ça*.

When it comes to pronunciation, slight differences are seen due to the dialectal diversity in Tiaret speech community. Regional dialects in Tiaret are mutually intelligible, though there are certain vocabularies and phrases that are pronounced differently, and have different meaning (linguistic variables such as words, sounds and sentences exist in all areas). The daily contact between individuals from different communes leads to social and linguistic variation (university students, merchants, events create this contact between regional dialects and the Arabic language). This is among the factors that make women's language changes.

The level of education, social upbringing, religion, and population mobility are other factors that influence language use and change. Various actions and attitudes affect women, so they change the way they speak deliberately, and sometimes unconsciously. Appearances as well impress their ideas and perspectives.

The results have also shown that speech features like tag questions, hedges, intensifiers and others are used by the participants more frequently, the use of swear words pushed by factors like anger, frustration and mood, was also observed. Females seek to attract attention from people around them. This leads them to accommodate with changes and circumstances easily, consequently, their speech style is differ from people around them.

The results of the interview cannot be generalized to all females. Consequently the observation helped to collect a more naturally occurring data. Observing women's attitudes, behaviours, perspectives on different

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subjects, and to be part of their social context made the interpretation a bit easy.

### **3.3. Limitations of the Study**

The present research paper has its limitations due to a number of reasons. Among the limitations is the sample size. The study was conducted with only fifteen female participants, considering that Master 1 students population, both specialties linguistics and didactics, 357 students with varies profiles. So the results cannot be generalized to all females.

Another point to talk about is data collection. Females' speech cannot be traced because the observer's paradox happens when participants knew they were being recorded. Both tools used to collect data [ethnographic observation and interviews] did not include all the students in the department of foreign languages-English language.

## **Chapter Three**—————**Data Analysis and Interpretations**

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, we tried to prove women's language variation in Tiaret Speech Community, and the different factors that influence their language use and change. We relied on the qualitative method using both semi-structured interview and ethnographic observation to collect many kinds of data (audio recordings and notes). The sample population, though it is small (fifteen female participants), but combining data collected from both research tools helped analysing females' views towards different subjects and towards language itself.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

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The overall findings of this work reveal that language variation among women is linked to social and structural norms that control it. Many factors influence the use of language by females. Results show that Tiaret speech community is a diverse society, and females are getting more innovative when it comes to language use. This is seen through daily conversations and loan words and expressions from French.

Women's language is a reflection to their values and attitudes towards people around them and towards the speech community in which the language is used. It appears that women shift back and forth from the standard form of the Arabic to the vernacular form depending on different contexts and situations.

The variation in the /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ is stable; females from other communes in Tiaret are more likely to pronounce both sounds but not more frequently. Those who use the standard form are few. They memorize the holy Quran, the latter is written in classical Arabic, so they are restricted to use the standard Arabic in some situations. As for other variables, the /ð/ sound is sometimes pronounced /d/ for example: دروك/ ضروك, [now], while the variable / θ / are sometimes pronounced /t/ like: ثما/تما [there], and this can be noticed in some words used by females in Tiaret. They also use hedges, intensifiers, tag questions, adjectives and other speech features which Lakoff spoke and tested once.

Findings demonstrate that the younger generation is more likely to change the use of language due to the technological development nowadays. Young females spent a long time on social media and this influence their behaviour and the language variety they use in schools or universities they affect and be affected by the environment and surroundings, so they are more likely to lead the linguistic change.

One can say that factors such as social upbringing, religion, regional dialects, education, culture, population and politics. are all motives for language variation and change. These factors are led by social variables such age, gender, class and ethnicity. And the choice of pronouncing certain linguistic variables rather than others is up to individuals and their personal attitudes towards the language and society.

Females' position in the society is determined by cultural and linguistic norms. More research should be conducted concerning females' speech

## **General Conclusion**

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variation, and their attitudes towards society and the use of language. Tiaret speech community provides a good example of a linguistically and culturally diverse society. So the question that can be raised is: will there be any linguistic changes in females' speech in the future, will females of Tiaret speech community be affected by other factors that lead them to more linguistic variation?

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# **APPENDIX**

## **Interview**

**Question 1- Would you please tell me a little bit about yourself?**

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.....

**Question 2- What is it like to live in (the region)?**

.....  
.....

**Question 3- What achievements are you most proud of?**

.....  
.....

**Question 4- What do you like about being a university student?**

.....  
.....

**Question 5- Why did you choose to study Linguistics/Didactics?**

.....  
.....

**Question 6- What is the one thing you are really good at?**

.....  
.....

**Question 7- How do you see your future?**

.....  
.....

**Question 8- What are the different terms you use when you are annoyed, sad, angry or happy?**

.....  
.....

**Question 09- Why women speak differently from men and from other women?**

.....  
.....

**Question 10- In your opinion, what are the factors that affect women's speech?**

.....  
.....

**Question 11- Is there anything you want to add concerning the factors or women's speech?**

.....  
.....

**Thank You**

## المخلص

البحث الحالي هو عبارة عن محاولة لتحليل كلام المرأة في مجتمع تيارت الكلامي. الغرض الرئيسي من هذا العمل هو وصف السمات اللغوية للإناث و العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على اختلاف اللغة و تغيرها. يتكون هذا البحث من ثلاثة فصول؛ الاول هو نظرة عامة على اللغويات الاجتماعية و دراسات النوع الاجتماعي و النظريات الرئيسية المدرجة في كلا المجالين. الفصل الثاني مخصص للمنهجية و الادوات المستخدمة لإجراء هذا البحث في مجتمع الكلام. و الثالث مخصص لجمع البيانات و تفسيرها بالإضافة الى قيود الدراسة. في هذا الفصل نحاول اظهار كيف تختلف ميزات الكلام من متحدثة الى اخرى و ربط هذه الميزات بالمتغيرات الاجتماعية مثل: مستوى التعليم, الجنس و العمر. لقد قمنا بجمع البيانات باستخدام الطريقة النوعية. ساعدتنا النتائج على فهم ان لغة المرأة تختلف و تتغير اعتمادا على عوامل اجتماعية و هيكلية معينة تؤثر على التي تتحدث بها و تقودها الى الابتكار اللغوي.

**المفاهيم الرئيسية:** السمات اللغوية, الابتكار, المتغير الاجتماعي, العوامل الاجتماعية و الهيكلية.