

## THE DUALITY BETWEEN DIALECT MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT IN AN ALGERIAN CONTEXT: THE CASE OF TLEMCCEN SPEECH COMMUNITY

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### ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that the study of language and its variation has interested many linguists and sociolinguists starting from Labov and Trudgill (1972) to many others and that various field studies were tackled in order to determine the different kinds of variations resulting in language change. Language variation does not only occur between different countries or towns but it may be widely noticeable within the same speech community as well. This research paper seeks to discover more about patterns of linguistic variability and the duality between dialect maintenance and shift in an Algerian context mainly those occurring in Tlemcen speech community. In addition it tries to discover more patterns related to the dialects which co-exist within the same speech community, namely the urban dialect (Tlemcen Arabic) and the rural and the mixed one.

**KEYWORDS:** Lexical Variation, Dialect Shift, Dialect Levelling, Language Maintenance, Language Change

### INTRODUCTION

The linguistic profile of Algeria is very special; it is characterized by the coexistence of different languages including Arabic with its different varieties, French, and Berber. This knotty language situation made the country among the ones which are worth studying. As we are interested in studying the sociolinguistic situation in Tlemcen speech community, we try to shed some light on the motives which make Tlemcen native speakers abandon some features of their dialect which is Tlemcen Arabic, the urban variety, opting for newly widespread one, the rural variety.

Nowadays, the language situation in Tlemcen is witnessing significant variation at all linguistic levels, mainly at the lexical one; thus, considerable linguistic interferences began to emerge between the local and the external varieties. It is worth mentioning that Tlemcen speakers are so deeply characterized by the use of the glottal stop [ʔ], and its users are easily known anywhere in Algeria as Tlemcenians. Lexical variation in Algeria is the result of two overlapping linguistic phenomena: diglossia and bilingualism. Because of them, all the structural aspects of language including pronunciation, morphological patterns and lexis tend to change. The insertion of new vocabulary and the change in lexis spread quickly among language users. In diglossic societies such as Algeria, many words are taken from the H variety and introduced in the L one, noticing some variations either in form or use or sometimes in meaning between the two varieties. Here is below some examples that illustrate the proximity that exists between H and L vocabulary in Algeria:

**Table 1: Illustration of the Proximity between MSA an AA Vocabulary**

MSA	AA	Gloss
[kʔtʔb]	[kt★b]	'He wrote'
[lʔtʔs]	[lb★s]	'He wore'
[kʔrsi]	[kʔrsi]	'A chair'
[bʔntʔn]	[b★nt]	'a girl'

[wʕlɔdʔn]	[w★ld]	‘ a boy’
[kʕlɔ]	[klɔ]	‘ He ate’
[bʕbʔn]	[bʕ:b]	‘ a door’

What is noticeable is the similarity to some extent between the words of MSA and the ones of AA. Other examples concerning the borrowing from French words to AA are also illustrated in the below table:

**Table 2: Words Borrowed from French used in AA**

French	AA	Gloss
Tricot	[trʔku]	‘Sweater’
Stylo	[stʔlu]	‘Pen’
Téléphone	[telefʔn]	‘Phone’
Cartable	[kʕ:rtʕ:b]	‘School-bag’
Collège	[kʔʕ:ʕ:ʕ]	‘School’
Plombier	[ʕlʕmberʔ]	‘Plumber’

Algerian Arabic (also called colloquial Arabic) with French borrowings is omnipresent in the spoken varieties of Arabic. Some foreign languages, and due to the effect of globalization and technology, have also a great impact on the speech of the Algerian people. This mixture of foreign words that are then adapted and adopted is now a part of the daily spoken Arabic, its use depends on the level of education of the speaker. In this sense, Sayahi (2014:143-144) says the following:

The idea of variation in the usage of any of the available linguistic systems as a whole is reflected in variation in the lexical stock of the vernacular, as both native words and loanwords compete, depending on the level of education of the speaker.

In addition, the speaker’s level of education also plays a prominent role in the choice of the language or the variety used whether being stucked to the vernacular or shifting to other languages leading to heteroglossia and multilingualism.

Tlemcen has always attracted people from different places, but the coming of the Andalousians in the 14<sup>th</sup> century of a great impact on the inhabitants of Tlemcen since they brought with them all the ‘savoir faire’ of a great civilization known by its flourishing in all the domains more importantly the relationship between humans, the refined family milieu. The Andalousians were known by their specific clothing, their respected behaviour as well as their entire contribution in fields such as the literary and the religious ones, sciences, in addition to agriculture, music and craft. Because of the constant contact of the local variety (the urban variety) with the rural one, which is due to the internal migration from the rural areas towards the urban ones, Tlemcen native speakers, especially youngsters and more specifically males, avoid using Tlemcen Arabic since it has been stigmatized by non-native speakers.<sup>1</sup> It is important to mention that dialect contact plays a significant role in variation and change of the local variety.

As we are interested in lexical variation in Tlemcen speech community, it is of great importance before all to point out the difference between the urban and the rural dialects. While the former is generally related to the set of linguistic characteristics which belong to the dialects spoken in the cities, the latter refers to a group of linguistic features

<sup>1</sup> Tlemcen Arabic is used to refer to the dialect of Tlemcen including the use of the glottal stop.

that are most of the time quiet different from those of the urban one. Nowadays, Tlemcen city is witnessing a dialect contact (urban and rural) which is due on the one hand to the important rural exodus from the rural areas to the town and on the other hand, it is caused by the internal migration, in other words the rural exodus which concerns people coming from other towns of the country. As a result, significant changes are occurring at different levels in Tlemcen dialect including the phonological, morphological, and lexical ones.

- **At the Morphological Level:** It is generally assumed that language shift or more appropriately dialect shift occurs when members of a speech community referred to as the 'subordinate' group start dropping and avoiding features of their mother tongue. The point is that a language displacement is taking place in the speech community; in other words, most of the linguistic characteristics of that dialect start to be changed, replaced by new ones, and sometimes eventually removed from the dialect. Harmer and Blanc (2000:297) say that

**When the subordinate group's internal cohesion is affected, the dominant language spreads and gradually invades the domains, functions and forms of the subordinate language, or rather speakers of the latter gradually adopt the forms of the dominant language in more and more roles, functions and domains. When the family domain is invaded and parents cease to transmit their language to their children, and the latter are no longer motivated to learn it, language shift is almost complete.**

Tlemcenian families (natives of Tlemcen) play an important role in the preservation of TA since within the same family and in a Tlemcenian setting, almost all the members use the urban variety since the use of such dialect including the use of the glottal stop is never stigmatized in such context. Yet, in mixed-conversations and mixed-settings (urban-rural ones), we notice that native young people, more importantly males, start rolling away from using their native dialect and adopting the rural one which is considered as the suitable one in such settings. For example, a native young male speaker may say [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] or [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] meaning 'come here' within his family whereas, he will use [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] when addressing to people outside his family such as friends; He may also say [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] meaning 'take' with Tlemcenians and [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] with non-Tlemcenians.

- **At the Phonological Level:** The most salient feature of Tlemcen speech is 'El qalqala' which is specific to the Tlemcenians mainly the natives. This phonetic characteristic refers to the substitution of the Arabic sound /q/ by [ⵏ] called the glottal stop. In this vein, William Marçais (1902:17) asserts that: "...At last, it must be noted that a number of Tlemcenians seem reaching the impossibility of pronouncing the q, in their mouth, it sounds as that of the inhabitants of Cairo and Damascus, by a loud *hamza*..."<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the use of the glottal stop [ⵏ] is a significant feature of Tlemcen speech community. Another feature characterizes TA, it is the feminine mark {-ⵏ}, of the third person singular which is omitted in verbs when addressing to female speakers. The point is that there is no gender distinction. For example, a Tlemcenian native speaker may say [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] meaning 'eat' or [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] meaning 'go' (the imperative form) instead of [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] and [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] respectively. It may be useful to mention that the feminine mark [-ⵏ], of the third person singular does occur in the rural variety. Concerning the pronouns, native speakers may use [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] referring to 'they' instead of [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ] or [ⵏⵉⵎⵉⵏⵉ]

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<sup>2</sup> The original version:

« ...Enfin il faut noter que nombre de Tlemcenieniens semblent atteints de leur impossibilité de prononcer le ق q ; dans leur bouche, il se traduit comme dans celle des Cairotes et des Damasquins, par un fort *hamza*... »

meaning ‘you’ instead of its rural counterpart [■◆◆○]. Meanwhile, the use of the glottal stop [ʔ] is a significant feature of Tlemcen speech community and in this research paper we will try to check whether TA will be affected by the rural variety or it will be preserved and maintained as an typical reference of Tlemcen speech community.

Another important feature of Tlemcen Arabic (TA) is that most of Tlemcen native speakers, more importantly females, do use the sound /ʔ/ as it is used and pronounced in Classical Arabic (CA). In this vein, W. Marçais (idem: 15) also added that “the current pronunciation of ج in Tlemcenian dialect is j (English j): it is not a pure fricative, but a double letter (an affricate) comprising an initial dental element, and equivalent to the group dj pronounced in one emission of sounds”.<sup>3</sup>

Here are some examples:

**Table 3: Classical Arabic versus Tlemcen Arabic Pronunciation**

Classical Arabic	Tlemcen Arabic	Gloss
[الـمـسـجـد:○] [خ◆■]	[الـمـسـجـد:○] [خ◆■]	‘A mosque’
[الـمـسـجـد:○] [ج◆]	[الـمـسـجـد:○] [ج◆]	‘He came’
[الـمـسـجـد:○] [ج◆■]	[الـمـسـجـد:○] [ج◆■]	‘A neighbor’

- At the Lexical Level: Tlemcen dialect is considered as a rich recipient that contains an infinite amount of words, structures and expressions. Some words are typical to this town; here are some examples: the word [baʔtat] meaning ‘selfish’ is a common word used by Tlemcen native speakers. The expressions [ʔم◆◆◆◆] meaning ‘slowly’; [◆◆◆◆] meaning ‘I do’ are also other examples of Tlemcenian expressions.<sup>4</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The research methodology will investigate lexical variation and its impact on Tlemcen dialect (TA) among the native speakers of Tlemcen speech community. Our data is collected from a sample of 112 participants from the same speech community. 56 males and 56 females falling under four different age groups [11-18], [20-35], [40-60], [65-85]. Age and gender are taken into consideration as principal criteria of demarcation between the informants. The first instrument of research used in this study is a questionnaire with a group of informants by which some questions are asked in order to understand and measure the degree of influence of the rural variety on Tlemcen native speakers.

The following table illustrates the sampling and stratification of Tlemcen native speakers:

**Table 4: Sampling and Stratification of Tlemcen Native Speakers**

Age Group	Males (Native Speakers)	Females (Native Speakers)	Total
[11-18]	14	14	28
[20- 35]	14	14	28
[40- 60]	14	14	28
[65- 85]	14	14	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>112</b>

<sup>3</sup> The original version: “La prononciation courante du ج en Tlemcenien est j (j Anglais); ce n’est pas une sifflante pure, mais une lettre double comportant un élément dental initial, et équivalente au groupe dj prononcé en une seule émission de voix”.

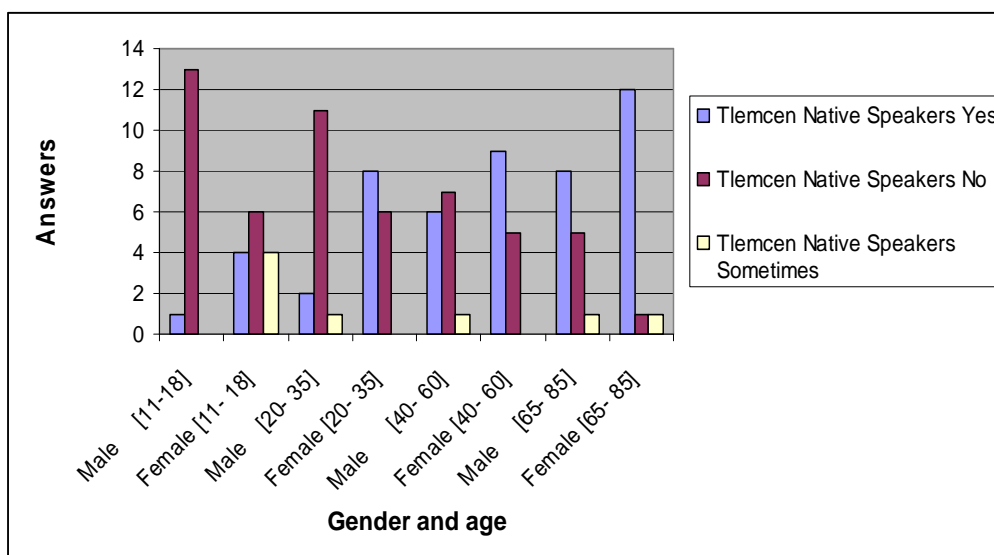
<sup>4</sup> Other expressions will be dealt with in the practical part.

It is worth mentioning that our study has been based on our personal experience and intuition. Being a member of Tlemcen speech community helped me a lot in understanding people’s attitudes and behaviors towards TA. In short, this method is useful only when the researcher is from the speech community under study, shares the same linguistic culture and speaks the same linguistic varieties of that speech community.

- **Question 1:** Do you use Tlemcen dialect when interacting in your town?<sup>5</sup>

**Table 5: The Degree of Tlemcen Dialect Use in Tlemcen Speech Community**

Answers Gender/ Age	Tlemcen Native Speakers		
	Yes	No	Sometimes
Male [11-18]	1	13	0
Female [11- 18]	4	6	4
Male [20- 35]	2	11	1
Female [20- 35]	8	6	0
Male [40- 60]	6	7	1
Female [40- 60]	9	5	0
Male [65- 85]	8	5	1
Female [65- 85]	12	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>8</b>



**Figure 1: The Degree of Tlemcen Dialect Use in Tlemcen Speech Community**

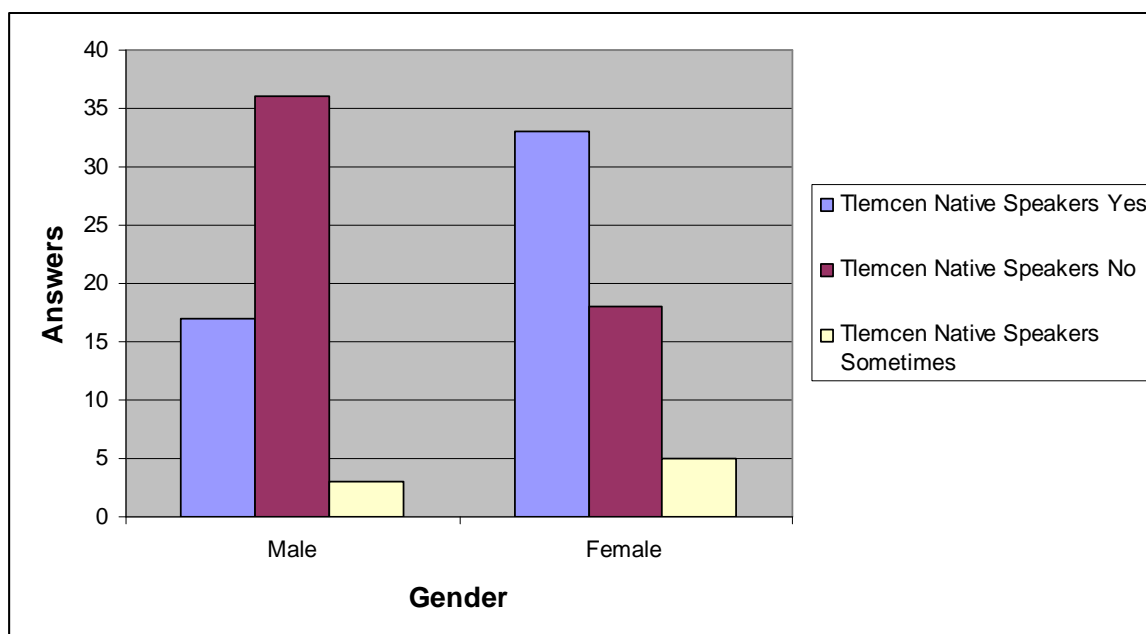
The above table reveals that most of the informants’ answers are negative (54/112 informants say ‘no’ whereas 50/112 say ‘yes’), this means that Tlemcen dialect is not widely used in Tlemcen speech community. It is worth mentioning that males between [11-18] i.e. during adolescence most of the time do not use the local variety (13 /14 informants do not use it), they tend to use the rural one including some new words and expressions such as innovations. Similarly, it is noticed that the number of females’ answers of the same age i.e. [11-18] is of 6/14. This proves that age plays an important role in language change. Yet, it is worth mentioning that a total of 8 informants (3 males and 5 females)

<sup>5</sup> In this part the informants are Tlemcen native speakers, their total number is 112.

who do use sometimes use Tlemcen dialect.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 6: Comparing Tlemcen Dialect Use among Males and Females**

Answers	Tlemcen Native Speakers		
	Yes	No	Sometimes
Male	17	36	3
Female	33	18	5
Total	50	54	8



**Figure 2: Comparing Tlemcen Dialect Use among Males and Females**

Considering gender with the above results we notice that Tlemcen dialect is not widely used in Tlemcen speech community, more importantly among males who, according to most of them (36 /56 informants i.e. 64.28 % of the total number of males), they do not use Tlemcen dialect most of the times. Similarly, It is observed that even an important number of females do not use TA when interacting in their hometown since 18 / 56 of them usually do not, this represents a percentage of 32.14% of the total number of females. In other words, there is a total of 54/112 informants of both genders who do not use TA when interacting in their town which represents 48.21 %. Meanwhile, a total of 50/112 Tlemcen native speakers who use TA, represents 44.64 %. It is worth mentioning that in using Tlemcen dialect, the number of females exceeds the one of males, this may explain the conservatism of Tlemcen females. Yet, the number of females is less important during adolescence [11-18], in other words, and according to the above table, the more a female is getting older, the more she uses the local variety.

- **Question 2:** If yes, with whom?<sup>7</sup>

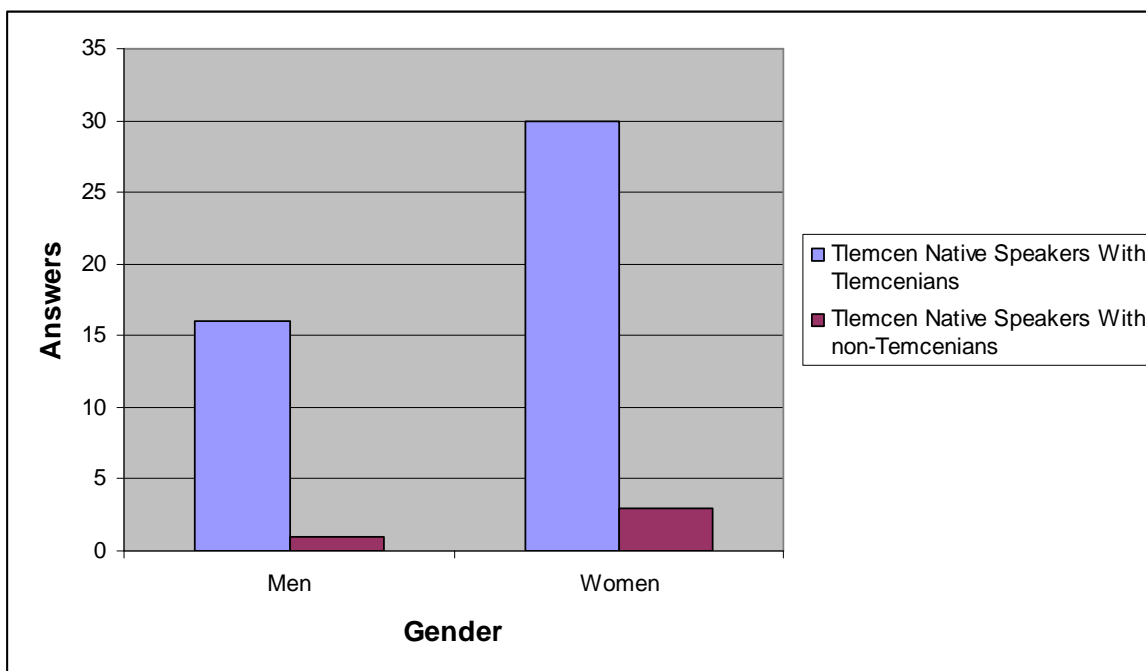
With Tlemcenians / with non-Temcenians

<sup>6</sup> The total number dealing with the alternative 'sometimes' is not taken into consideration since it represents only 7.14 % of the total percentage. In addition, this alternative may be positive or negative.

<sup>7</sup> This question is related to the previous one. In here, the Total number of males who gave positive answers (in the previous question) is 36, and the total number of women who gave positive answers is 56.

**Table 7: The Use of Tlemcen Dialect in Considering Gender**

Answers	Tlemcen Native Speakers	
	With Tlemcenians	With non-Temcenians
Men	16	1
Women	30	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>



**Figure 3: The Use of Tlemcen Dialect in Considering Gender**

As this question is closely related to the previous one, we are considering the answers of the former table which represents 50 ‘yes’ answers for TA use: 17 males and 33 females. The results of the above table reveal that Tlemcen dialect is widely used in Tlemcen speech community with Tlemcen native speakers; it is noticed that it is used in a large scale females. As a result, we can say that most Tlemcen native speakers 46 / 50 informants (92 %), among whom 30 (i.e. 60%) are females, stick using their dialect especially with Tlemcen native speakers, and only 4 informants representing 8% of the percentage of both genders among whom 1 male (2 %) and 3 females (6 %) do use it with non-native speakers. It is worth mentioning that in some cases, some of them roll away from using it when interacting with non-native speakers. To sum, Tlemcen dialect is mainly used in a very close and restricted area i.e. from native speakers to native speakers or in a urban-urban setting.

- **Question 3: Why?**

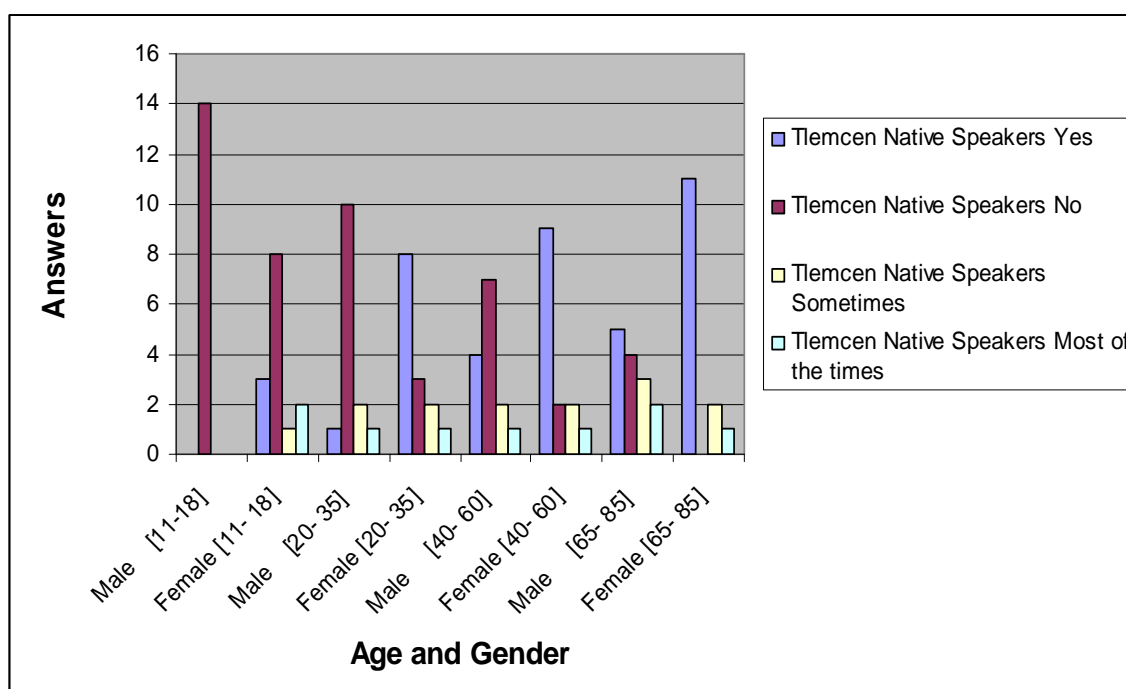
All the informants who have said that they use Tlemcen dialect with native speakers (46 / 50 informants) assert that they are proud of using this variety. They confirm that they were born within a ‘milieu’ where the dialect is omnipresent everywhere, at home, at school, with the family members, with friends... Those who use it with the non-native speakers (4 / 50) argue that the Tlemcenians are very conservative. In addition, they say that they cannot escape from using it; In other words, the use of the local variety is most of the time done unconsciously. Yet, those who do not use Tlemcen dialect (54/ 112) argue that they tend to avoid using Tlemcen dialect mainly outside the family sphere i.e. with friends, at school, at work since there is a constant contact with the non-native speakers and using the local variety,

especially the use of the glottal stop [ʔ] is stigmatized in the view of them.

- **Question 4:** Do you use TA when being outside your speech community (i.e. do you keep using it)?

**Table 8: The Use TA among TNS<sup>8</sup> when Being Outside their Speech Community**

Answers Gender/ Age	Tlemcen Native Speakers			
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Most of the times
Male [11-18]	0	14	0	0
Female [11- 18]	3	8	1	2
Male [20- 35]	1	10	2	1
Female [20- 35]	8	3	2	1
Male [40- 60]	4	7	2	1
Female [40- 60]	9	2	2	1
Male [65- 85]	5	4	3	2
Female [65- 85]	11	0	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>



**Figure 4: The Use TA among TNS when Being Outside their Speech Community**

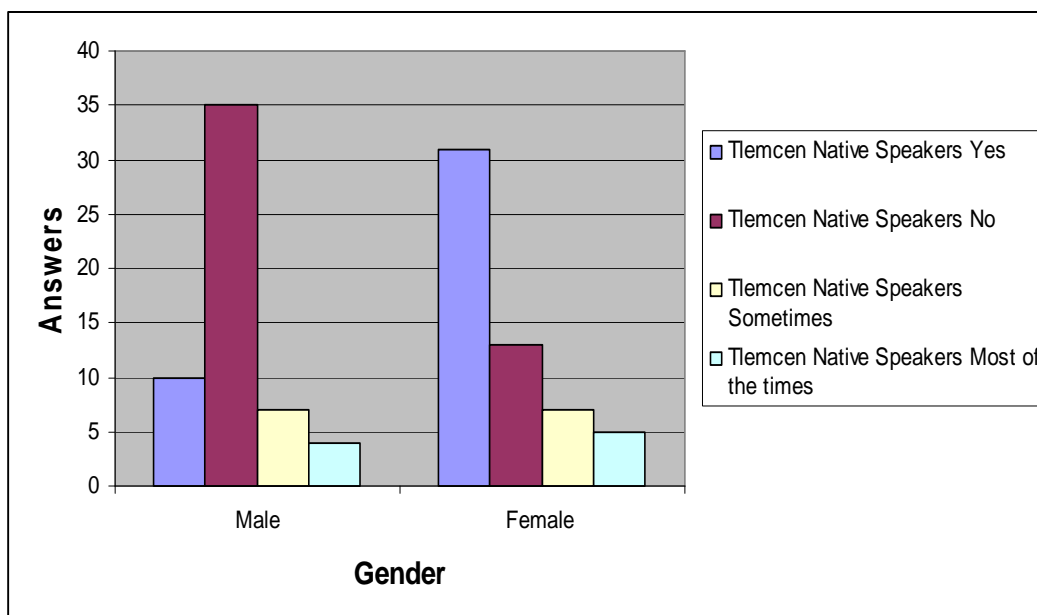
From the above table, it is noticeable that the negative answers are higher than the positive ones. In considering age and gender, most males of [11-18] years old do not use TA when being outside Tlemcen speech community. It is worth mentioning that according to males' answers, the more age increases the less of 'no' answers we have. In other words, we notice that the age cohort of [11-18] provides 14 negative answers; similarly, the one of [20-35], 10 negative answers, [40-60] with 7 ones, and finally the one of [65-85] with 4 ones for a total of 48 'no' answers. This means that the younger males are, the less they use TA outside their speech community and the older they are, the more they can keep using it outside Tlemcen speech community. As a result, we assert that TA is closely connected with age.

<sup>8</sup> TNS= Tlemcen Native Speakers.



**Table 9: The Use TA among TNS Considering Gender**

Gender	Tlemcen Native Speakers			
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Most of the Times
Male	10	35	7	4
Female	31	13	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>



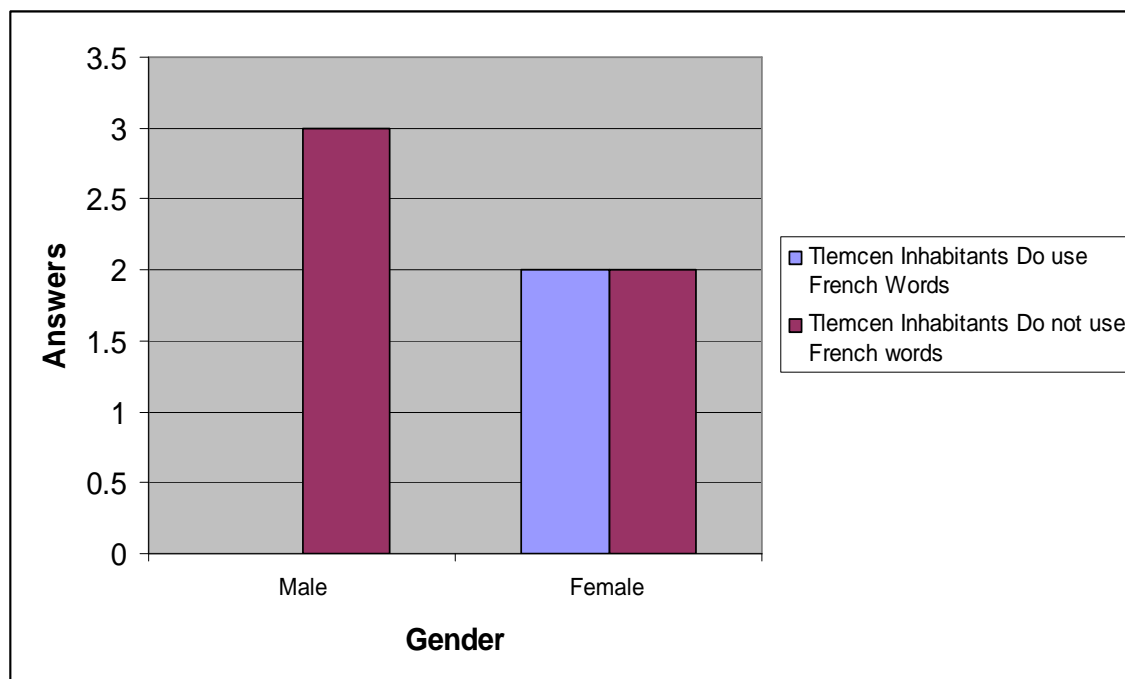
**Figure 5: The Use TA among TNS Considering Gender**

When analyzing the above results, we can notice that most of the answers are negative for men (48/112 i.e.42.85%), whereas the remaining are positive for women (41/112 i.e.36.60%). Yet, when the alternatives ‘most of the time’ and ‘sometimes’ are taken into consideration, the score changes, it becomes 21 ‘yes’ answers vs 35 ‘no’ ones for men, and 43 ‘yes’ answers vs 13 ‘no’ ones for women. The total score is of 64 positive answers (57.14) vs 48 (42.85%) for negative ones. This shows that outside Tlemcen speech community, most of men do not use TA but female native speakers do depending on the situations, perhaps they do use it when meeting native speakers outside Tlemcen speech community. The point is that in here again, the ‘milieu’ or the setting where the conversation takes place is very restricted (from native to native).

- **Question 5/1:** When communicating with non-native speakers do you use French words to avoid using the [⦿]?

**Table 10: The use of French among Native Speakers to Avoid Using the Glottal Stop when Addressing Non-Native Speakers**

Answers	Tlemcen Inhabitants	
	Do use French Words	Do Not Use French Words
Male	0	3
Female	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>



**Figure 6: The Use of French among Native Speakers to Avoid Using the Glottal Stop when Addressing Non-Native Speakers**

Considering the results of the above table and the current ones we notice that only 7 informants / 112 use TA with non-Tlemcenian people (3 men and 4 women) which represents 6.25 % of the total number of native speakers. Thus, the percentage is very low and is not really taken into consideration. Yet among these 7 informants, only 2 women / 4 do use French in order to avoid using the glottal stop with the non-native speakers.

- **Question 5/2: Why?**

According to the two women, they use French words to avoid using the [ʔ] just not to be a subject of mockery since this latter is stigmatized in the eye of non-native speakers.

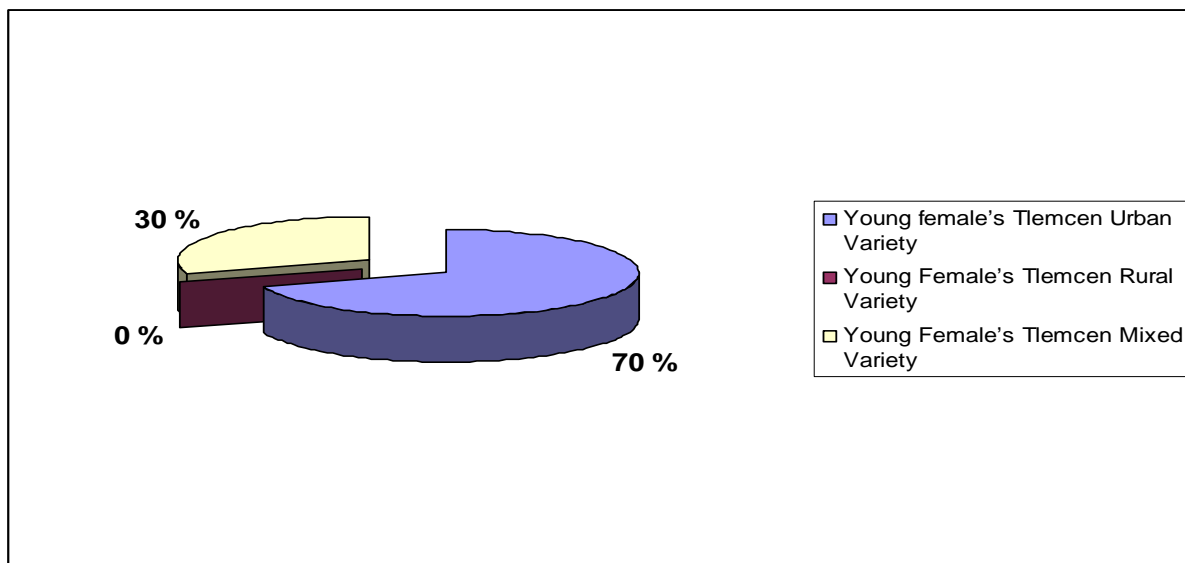
The second research tool consists of the matched-guise technique. This procedure aims at gathering more qualitative and quantitative data, it is worth remembering that this technique was firstly introduced and used in sociolinguistics by Lambert. It also aims at evaluating the judges' attitudes (in here, the judges are the older people of Tlemcen speech community, mainly the native speakers) towards the receding process of (TA) use more importantly among young girls. In order to measure their attitudes, we have asked them to fill in a table about the three language varieties that each guise-speaker used and on each of the three traits: urbanity, prestige, pleasantness. Since the procedure of our work aims at evaluating adults' attitudes towards young girls use of the rural variety, the test was carried by thirty adults (15 men and 15 women) aged between [35-70]. These people are native Tlemcenians living in Tlemcen city.

- **Urbanity**<sup>9</sup>

**Table 11: Which Variety do you think is more urban?**

Urban-----Rural

N = 30 Guises	1= 6pts	2= 5pts	3= 4pts	4= 3pts	5= 2pts	6= 1pts	7= 0pts
Young female's Tlemcen Urban Variety	14	12	4	0	0	0	0
Young Female's Tlemcen Rural Variety	0	0	0	0	5	11	14
Young Female's Tlemcen Mixed Variety	6	5	4	5	4	3	3



**Figure 7: Tlemcen Adults' Evaluation of Urbanity**

After analyzing the above scores, the results show that females' Tlemcen urban variety is perceived as the most urban and is ranked in the first position. The mixed variety is situated in the second one whereas the rural variety is the last one. Most of Tlemcen adults (native speakers) really appreciate TA<sup>10</sup> and consider it as the most urban variety. It is worth mentioning that the rural variety is not considered as urban at all. Yet, the mixed one does have some features of urbanity since it has reached a score of 30%.

- **Prestige**

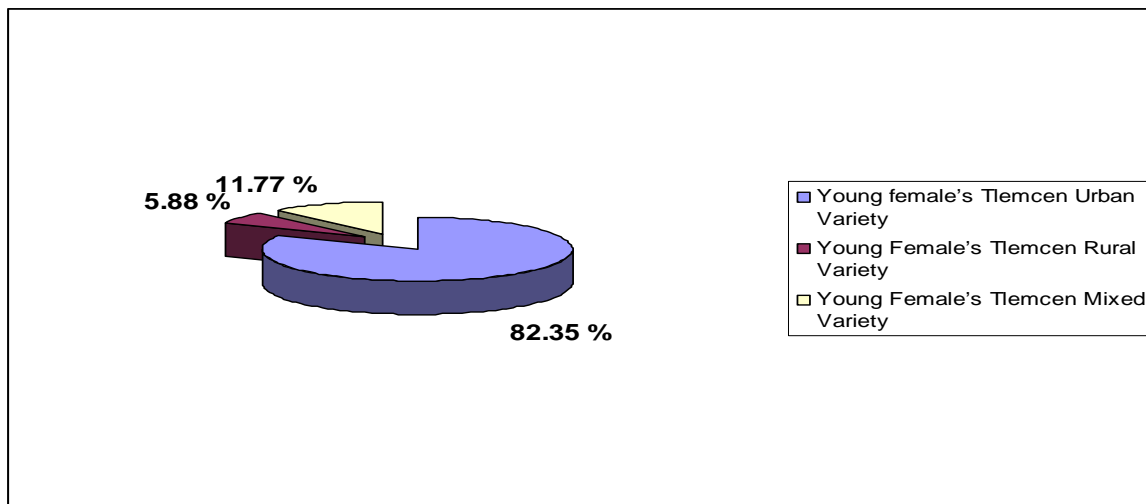
**Table 12: Which Variety do you think is more Prestigious?**

More prestigious-----Less prestigious

N = 30 Guises	1= 6pts	2= 5pts	3= 4pts	4= 3pts	5= 2pts	6= 1pts	7= 0pts
Young female's Tlemcen Urban Variety	14	12	4	0	0	0	0
Young Female's Tlemcen Rural Variety	1	0	0	2	5	9	13
Young Female's Tlemcen Mixed Variety	2	3	3	4	6	7	5

<sup>9</sup> The tables dealing with the percentages are found in the appendices (see appendix E).

<sup>10</sup> TA refer to the urban variety.



**Figure 8: Tlemcen Adults' Evaluation of Prestige**

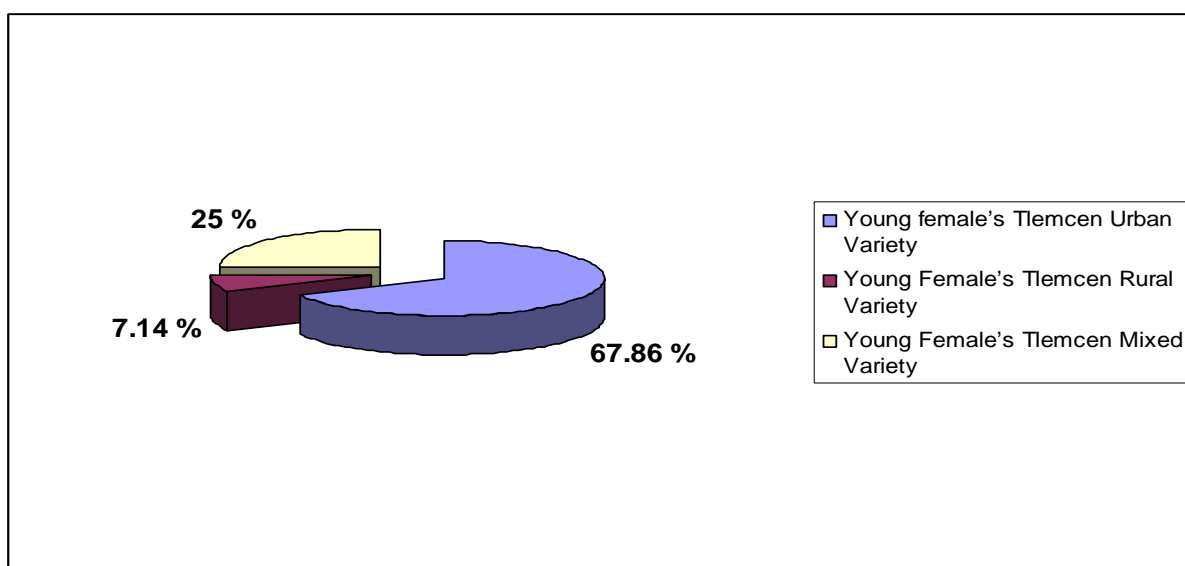
Out of the analysis of the above pie-chart, the results show that females' urban variety is seen as the most prestigious. In this question, the 'judges' do appreciate it, meanwhile, and comparing with urbanity, the mixed variety doesn't have a significant score. In addition, and surprisingly, the rural variety has reached 5.88% which means that this variety is gaining time after time some prestige in Tlemcen speech community.

- **Plesantness**

**Table 13: How Pleasant do you Find Each Variety?**

Pleasant-----Unpleasant

N = 30 Guises	1= 6pts	2= 5pts	3= 4pts	4= 3pts	5= 2pts	6= 1pts	7= 0pts
Young female's Tlemcen Urban Variety	19	5	4	2	0	0	0
Young Female's Tlemcen Rural Variety	2	1	1	6	7	8	5
Young Female's Tlemcen Mixed Variety	7	4	1	1	1	7	9



**Figure 9: Tlemcen Adults' Evaluation of Pleasantness**

The results reveal, here again, that TA is classified in the first position with a percentage of 67.86% while the mixed one is second with 25% and lastly, the rural variety. According to these findings, we assert that TA is perceived as the most pleasing in Tlemcen city. What is worth mentioning is that the rural variety has reached a score of 7.14% of the overall percentage. Thus, it is considered as pleasant to some extent.

## CONCLUSIONS

As already formulated at the outset of the study, the target of this research is to explore the patterns of lexical variation and its effect on dialect shift in Tlemcen speech community. We wanted to know whether Tlemcen dialect is still resisting to the drastic changes that are occurring in the society and its language or whether it will inevitably be substituted by the rural variety. In sum, this research work has exposed the problem of dialect shift in Tlemcen speech community which is mainly due to the stigmatization of the urban variety, including the use of the glottal stop [ʕ] and its gradual substitution by the rural and mixed varieties. It has also epitomizes the role of gender and age explaining that the maintenance or loss of Tlemcen dialect is closely dependent on these social variables.

Taking into consideration the results, we notice that even women's speech is sometimes affected by the rural dialect but to a lesser degree than men. As a result, we can assert that substituting the urban variety by the rural one is a step towards dialect convergence, and thus language convergence. In this sense, Crowley and Bower (2010:269) assert that "language convergence is a type of linguistic change in which languages come to structurally resemble one another as a result of prolonged language contact and mutual interference". The outcome may lead to the appearance of koinéization or dialect leveling. The difference between dialect leveling and Koinéization is that dialect leveling involves the eradication of linguistic variants due to language contact while koinéization involves the creation of new linguistic variety based on language contact. Milroy (2002)<sup>11</sup>. In addition, the results also show that Tlemcen dialect is widely used by females. Yet, 25.8 % of the total percentage of the informants questioned show that some females, more importantly youngsters ones, do recede from using the local variety. As a result, we assume that during adolescence, and since young people are influenced by a set of transitions such as the biological, the cognitive, the emotional, or the social changes, which affect their behaviour and their language, teenagers' speech is not stable. Consequently, we assert that age and gender are important factors which may lead young females roll away from the local variety. Concerning the results related with the matched-guise technique, the attitudinal procedure, and show that Tlemcen native speakers show negative attitudes towards the use of the rural variety.

Since, the phenomenon of dialect shift or more exactly dialect leveling is occurring in our city, we, as female native speakers, urge other females, especially mothers to preserve our native dialect even if it is stigmatized. This can be done only if we do pay attention to the way our children speak, especially our daughters. We have to ask them not to use the rural variety at home and if possible avoid using it even outside it since TA is part of our culture, our patrimony. We ought to explain to the future generations that we must be proud of our language, our dialect which shapes our personality and identity since TA not only makes Tlemcen different from the other cities but also makes it famous in Algeria.

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