

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION
AMONG KURDISH BILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS IN TURKEY**

Ph.D Thesis
Suleyman KASAP

Department Of English Language and Literature
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Ph.D Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Dr. Turkay BULUT

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30/12/2015

T.C.
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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
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	Unvan- Ad-Soyad	İmza
Danışman	DOÇ. DR. TÜRKAY BULUT	
Üye (TİK)	YRD. DOÇ. DR. FİLİZ ÇELE	
Üye (TİK)	YRD. DOÇ. DR. AYŞE BETÜL TOPLU	
Üye	PROF. DR. BİRSEN TÜTÜNİŞ	
Üye	YRD. DOÇ. DR. TUNCER CAN	

Tezin Savunulduğu Tarih :30/12/2015

Sosyal Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yönetim Kurulu'nun tarih ve sayılı kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

Prof. Dr. Zafer UTLU

Enstitü Müdürü



THE DECLARATION OF AUTHOR

I hereby declare on my on honor that, throughout the preparation process the study from the project phase to the end, PhD Thesis entitled "THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG KURDISH BILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS IN TURKEY " was carried out without having any aid that can be incongruous with the scientific ethics and traditions, and declaring that the resources used in the study were composed of those in the references section. (30 / 12 / 2015)

Candidate / Signature
Suleyman KASAP



To My Mother, Spouse and Children



FOREWORD

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ABBREVIATIONS

L1	: First language, mother tongue
L2	: Second language
L3	: Third language
PLAQ-B	: Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilinguals
SOV	: Subject Object Verb
PREP	: Preposition
FA	: Factor Analysis
TLA	: Third Language Acquisition
F	: Female
M	: Male
I	: Interviewer
P	: Participant



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THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG KURDISH BILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS IN TURKEY

ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the relationship between attitude and first language attrition, defined as the non-pathological decrease in a language that had previously been acquired by an individual (Köpke & Schmid, 2004). The studies on L2 acquisition have shown the strong impact of attitudes, motivations and other affective factors on linguistic learning. This dissertation, therefore, hypothesizes that attitude has a decisive influence on language attrition and maintenance. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been employed during the process of data-gathering. We used Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilinguals (PLAQ-B) developed by our research team to assess the attitudes of 134 adolescents towards their first language. PLAQ-B, as the basis for our diagnostic tool, was interpreted in four sub-dimensions determined by Factor Analysis (Factor 1st: Language maintenance and Motivation, Factor 2nd: The second Self-efficacy, Factor 3rd: prestige of the language and Factor 4th: Affective Domain). In order to measure the participants' first language attrition level, three picture naming tasks and two writing tasks were also used. Finally, Think Aloud Protocol was applied to randomly selected 14 volunteer participants to learn more about the reasons of attrition and to validate all the information obtained from the questionnaire and the tasks.

The results have shown that there is not only a significant correlation between attitude and such variables as language maintenance, language choice and the frequency of language use, but also a strong correlation between attitude and the performance of the participants in the picture naming tasks and the writing tasks.

Keywords: First language attrition, attitude and language maintenance.



TÜRKİYE'DE ÇİFT DİLLİ KÜRT ERGENLERDE TUTUMUN ANA DİL BOZUMU ÜZERİNDEKİ ROLÜ

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, birey tarafından edinilen bir dilde patolojik olmayan azalma (Köpke & Schmid, 2004b) olarak tanımlanan dil bozumu ve tutum arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmalar tutum, motivasyon ve diğer duygusal faktörlerin ikinci dil öğreniminde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu tez tutumun aynı zamanda dil bozumu ve dil sürdürümü üzerinde belirleyici bir etkiye sahip olduğunu varsaymaktadır. Bu çalışmanın veri toplama sürecinde, nicel ve nitel araştırmalar kullanılmıştır. 134 ergen katılımcının ana dillerine yönelik tutumlarını değerlendirmek için araştırma ekibimiz tarafından geliştirilen İki Dilliler İçin Kişisel Dil Tutum Ölçeği (PLAQ-B) kullanıldı ve temel tanı aracı olarak kullanılan PLAQ-B Faktör Analizi tarafından belirlenen dört alt boyutta yorumlandı (Faktör 1: Dil Sürdürümü ve Motivasyon; Faktör 2: Öz Yeterlik; Faktör 3: Dil Prestiji; Faktör 4: Duyuşsal Alan). Katılımcıların ana dil bozum seviyesini ölçmek için, üç farklı resim adlandırma testi, kendini 100 kelimeyle anlatma ve 150 kelimeyle resme uygun hikaye yazma testleri kullanıldı. Son olarak, bozum nedenleri hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek ve tutum ölçeği yoluyla elde edilen bilgileri doğrulamak için rastgele seçilmiş 14 gönüllü katılımcıya Sesli Düşünme Tekniği (Think-aloud Protokol) uygulandı.

Sonuçlar, ana dile yönelik tutum ile dil sürdürümü, dil tercihi ve dil kullanım sıklığı gibi değişkenler arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, tutum ile katılımcıların resim adlandırma testi ve yazılı test performansları arasında güçlü bir korelasyon olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ana dil bozumu, Tutum, Dil sürdürümü ve Dil tercihi.



CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

For some linguists, languages are like living organisms who are born, grow, reach their peak, begin to decay and finally may disappear. However, unlike organisms, languages do not have an internally programmed life cycle, and their development can be readily affected by various social factors, such as minority status and immigration. Thus, a language that has been maintained for many centuries can be subject to transformations (Merma, 2007).

When two different language systems occur in the same place, they naturally affect each other in either a positive or negative way. Consequently, those who speak the language are also affected, as they depend on the linguistic systems in use in the context of sociolinguistic conditions. In such a situation, these sociolinguistic conditions mean it is necessary for the people living in such a place to acquire two different language systems, and it could be said that such people are coexisting in an environment where there is a state of competition between the two different language systems (Seliger and Vago, 1991).

First language is typically acquired without effort, simply by exposure to it in early life. Individuals can also learn and master a second language to which they are exposed in a family or environmental context with as much ease as their first language. However, there are circumstances in which where an individual's exposure to their first language drastically decreases. For example, imagine an individual who is stranded in a deserted place, and who has had no contact with his/her mother tongue for many years. In this situation, would this individual forget his/her mother tongue completely? Or, would this person simply have difficulty in accessing certain elements or lexical items in the language? And if either of these outcomes were to occur, what causes this attrition? These questions could be baffling ones to be

answered, since such a situation is hypothetical one; however, two or more languages' coming into contact is real and an observable common phenomenon and the results of this contact can be explored and understood.

One way to understand such language attrition is to understand language as a sign of cultural and national identity; thus, when different languages come into contact with each other in a shared environment, this might give rise to conflict between the different identities. In such a situation, the number of people speaking the language of the dominant group tends to increase; either as a result of direct pressure, or as a result of the greater prestige afforded to the dominant language, owing to it being the language of the most powerful group in that environment. Accordingly, use of the weaker language may gradually decrease as more of those speaking it become bilingual. Eventually, those speaking the weaker language may come to think of their mother tongue as the inferior language, and thus use it less and less. To put another way, the substitution of a language occurs when those speaking it are affected by the status of communicating with the less prestigious language, as well as power-related factors, such as economics and politics in the society they live in.

When individuals immerse themselves in a foreign language, driven by the need to learn the second language efficiently, the words of their mother tongue escape from their memory and become unreachable, and at that point the lexicon of the first language (L1) becomes obstructed. When this occurs, bilinguals experience "linguistic convergence", which refers to the development of a set of parallel processes and modifications between contact languages that depend on the frequency of L1 use. It is thought that this interaction may generate some changes in the formation of the lexical, phonetic, phonological and morphosyntactic characters of languages by various methods of transfer. Therefore, the contact between two or more languages can lead to language change. In this phase, different levels of the grammar of a language may be affected, and this may involve aspects such as the pronominal system, marking cases, the use of prepositions, different types of grammatical agreement, the use of articles, the marking of gender, and word order (Reinhart, 2006).

A key focus of this dissertation is the role of the attitude of the individual in first language attrition, which may directly or indirectly be a cause for decreased or increased L1 maintenance. Kopke and Schmid (2004a, p. 12) state that attitude

appears to be a decisive factor in the decay of language, although this factor is much more difficult to measure than others. Research on L2 acquisition has shown that attitude has a strong impact upon learning, in line with other factors such as motivation. The particular attitude an individual adopts towards learning or retaining a language is largely related to social issues, such as identity, and it is a crucial factor in determining whether the outcome of language contact is beneficial or detrimental to the language capability of bilinguals (Schmid and Bot 2004). The acquisition of a second language may have detrimental effects on the maintenance of the L1 and can trigger the attrition process. If this occurs, the attitude of an individual will play an important role in retaining a language in a society where the individual's second language is the dominant one. As Schmid (2011) states, an immigrant who has a strong determination to harmonise with the host society will experience more attrition than someone who is not willing to integrate into the new language environment.

In the case of the Kurdish¹ language in Turkey, the extensive contact with the Turkish language, the language of the majority, has led to the attrition of the Kurdish language to some extent. This occurrence was unsurprising because, as has been previously noted, if two or more languages come into contact in one place, one will influence the other(s), and generally it is the major language that impacts upon the minor language(s).

Such situations can be seen in many countries around the world (UNESCO, 2008). Approximately 97% of the world's population speak only 4% of languages. This means the remaining 96% of languages are spoken by just 3% of the population (Bernard 1996,p. 142). Therefore, it can be said that the diversity of world languages are maintained by a very small percentage of its population, and that being so, the majority of world languages are under threat from the major languages in of the world. It is estimated that in most world regions about 90% of languages might be substituted for dominant languages by the end of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2003). As the languages of minority communities are acquired less by their children, younger generations are on the edge of risk to forget their native languages due to the aforementioned exposure to the dominant language in speech in their community. This process ultimately leads to the attrition of minor languages.

¹ The term Kurdish refers to the Kurmanji variant of this language group throughout the thesis.

Language attrition can be described as the total or partial loss of a first or second language, due to speaking one language more frequently than the other language(s). The knowledge of the dominant language may interfere with the lexical items, or the grammatical or phonological features of the first language. The speaker begins to use the dominant language's structures or sounds more, while using those of their mother language less. Until now, studies in this field have focused on the effect of the first language upon the second, and the ones related to first language attrition are few and relatively recent. However, several have been made, including the studies of first language attrition by Lambert R. D. & B. Freed (1982), who concluded that we have very little knowledge about why the language skills we once knew very well are forgotten. Yet recently, it is possible to see many more studies emerging from researchers around the world.

This is the first study in which L1 Kurdish and L2 Turkish have been studied together in terms of attrition, and it is for this reason that this dissertation will contribute to attrition studies in the field of linguistics, both in Turkey and globally, as few studies exist on Kurdish language attrition. In this dissertation, L1 attrition has been identified in terms of the erosion of vocabulary and semantic variations, and the reduced ability to use the first language. The loss of a first language may occur in places where that language is seldom used by its native speakers, which can be seen in minority groups like the Kurdish and Zaza communities in Turkey, or among immigrants living in a predominantly second language environment.

There are several factors that affect L1 skills communities that cannot use their first language on a regular basis and are frequently in contact with a dominant second language. One factor in particular, is that the members of these communities are likely to have to use their second language as the primary means of communication at work, in education, whilst shopping and so forth. There are several examples of studies on immigrant communities by researchers in the field of bilingualism that show a language shift across generations, owing to the dominant nature of the language of the host country. One of the most commonly reported phenomena related to minority-majority language contact situations is that of language shift. This is a type of language use in which the relatively dominant language causes some changes in the less dominant language across time and generations (Gutiérrez, 1999). In this context, language attrition has been observed in many of the world's

immigrant communities such as in the case of Turkish immigrants in The Netherlands (Boeschoten, 1992), and the same is observable in Russia in the case of the Turkic languages. The Bashkir language, which has been in contact with the Russian language since the 16th century, has been reported as being under the heavy influence of Russian for more than a century by those who speak it. (Yagmur, de Bot & Korzilius, 1999).

One important language attrition case has been experienced in Turkey, however there are hardly any studies on this occurrence and our study aims to explore this language attrition in terms of attitude factor, which is considered to be one the most significant causes for first language attrition (Schmid, 2002) and this attitude is influenced by a number of factors. We classified these factors into four main sub-dimensions which cover the participants' degree of language maintenance and motivation, the participants' self-efficacy in their first language, the participants' attitude towards the prestige of their language and the affective domain regarding the emotions of the participants concerning their first language.

1.2 Overview of This Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into six chapters: Chapter I presents the introduction and for the study. Chapter II presents relevant aspects of theories of language attrition and bilingualism. Here we elucidated the relevant literature on first language attrition the causes and indications of first language attrition, as well as emphasising on attitudinal factors from different aspects. Chapter III covers Pilot Study and including the factor analysis of PLAQ-B. Chapter IV presents the overall design of Main study and the methods used in data collection process. Chapter V covers the results and discussion of data gathered from PLAQ-B, Picture naming tasks, writing tasks and Think-aloud Protocols. This chapter provides a summary of the main findings related to the research questions for study. Finally, Chapter VI presents a conclusion of the study.

1.3 The Research Questions of the Study

Language attrition, though a relatively recent field of linguistics, has important implications and provides new insights into the vulnerable aspects of a language.

Whenever a language, whether an L1 or an L2, occurs in the same place as another more dominant language, it faces the possibility of change; and linguistics tries to understand the reasons for and the extent of this change by observing the language and the speech community. The research into attrition has raised some significant questions, the attempts to answer which not only give an insight into the nature of linguistic attrition, but also throw light on another cause of attrition, the attitudinal position of the owner of that language towards their language.

It is believed that attrition cannot be explained simply by the presence of a second language. The perceptions, motivation and attitude of individuals should also be taken into account when exploring the phenomenon of attrition. Another reason why attitudinal factors may play a significant role in the attrition of the first language is because of the manner in which they affect the individual's reaction to the level of prestige that is afforded to their language in the second language environment determining whether that individual chooses to maintain their language or not in such an environment. The social distance between two communities can also contribute to this situation and ultimately the language choice made by the individual. In one of the rarer studies conducted by Schmid (2004), she concluded that a group who had been subject to anti-Semitism before leaving their original country of Germany was more likely to possess a negative attitude towards the German language; and that this in turn may have become a significant factor in any subsequent lack of L1 maintenance. However, we need more studies to determine the role of attitude on first language attrition, making this study very significant for the field of language attrition.

As this study on the attrition of the Kurdish language in Turkey was completed relatively recently, we hope that its findings will be an important step forward in the field of first language attrition. We investigated the relationship between attitude and first language attrition, with the idea that the attitude of individuals affects the level of language attrition they experience, and also the level of effort they make towards maintaining their first language. Specifically, the study asks whether the extent of attitude correlate positively or negatively with L1 attrition. The present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the attitude of the bilingual affect the first language attrition process?
2. Is there a relationship between attitude and language choice with other individual?

3. Does this choice in turn affect language attrition?
4. Does the attitude of individuals affect the frequency of language use?
5. What causes attrition among adolescents whose first language is Kurdish?
6. Is motivation a factor that influences the retention of Kurdish?
7. Is gender a factor that affects L1 attrition?



CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Bilingualism

Our world is home to over six billion people who collectively speak somewhere between 6000 and 7000 different languages; some of which are spoken by hundreds of millions of people, like English and Chinese, while others are spoken by only a few thousand people, or even a handful of speakers. Surprisingly, over 90 percent of the world's languages are spoken by only about 5 per cent of the population in the world. Most of the world's languages are spoken in Southeast Asia, India, Africa and South America. Some people may think that a monolingual life is normal, but between half and two-thirds of the world's population is to some degree bilingual, and a significant number are multilingual. In fact, multilingualism is much more common than monolingualism in the world. More and more children are multilingual, and it is claimed that in this sense they are part of a majority in the world (Genesee, 2009). Linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as biodiversity, is increasingly seen as something positive and beautiful in itself. Each language has its own way of seeing the world and is the product of its own specific history. Each language has its own identity and its own value, and all are equally adequate as a means of expression for the people who use them. Language is a random system of sounds and symbols that a group of people are using for many reasons, mainly to communicate with each other, but also to express cultural identity, to feel socially connected, and simply as a source of joy. Languages differ from each other in terms of sound, grammar, vocabulary and conversation patterns, and all languages are very complex systems. There are large variations between different languages in terms of the number of vowel and consonant sounds, from less than a dozen to over a hundred. When it comes to grammar, each language has many different ways to form words and to create sentences. Each language has a huge vocabulary that meets every

need of its users. This huge system sometimes comes across another language system, and those two systems have to live together, and sometimes the dominant language challenges the weaker language and causes it to change, and this is an inevitable consequence of bilingualism. As stated by Schmid (2011), as soon as a speaker becomes bilingual there will be some degree of traffic between the L2 and the L1, and recent observations indicate that many bilingual people do not have one normal language. That is to say, bilingual language users process language in a slightly different way from monolingual language users.

To define bilingualism is not an easy task, not least because when we look at the relevant literature we can see that there is no agreement on the definition of this term. This disagreement among linguists is due to bilingualism's relationship to many different fields beyond linguistics, such as psychology, sociology and pedagogy. Psychology deals with the mental processes of bilingualism, sociology relates bilingualism with culture and society, and pedagogy is concerned with bilingualism in terms of schooling and lesson planning. Within linguistic considerations, for some, an active, completely equal mastery of two or more languages can be regarded as bilingualism. However, complete, equally good command of two languages is a rare occurrence, and Hoffmann (1991) has pointed out that this quality of bilingualism is nearly impossible, and true 'ambilingual' (perfect bilingualism) speakers are very rare creatures.

In some situations, two different languages from two different linguistic communities are spoken. Although these language communities live in the same area, each community is predominantly monolingual. Examples of countries with such language communities are Belgium, Finland or Switzerland. These countries are officially bilingual or multilingual nations; however, different language communities mainly use their own languages. In fact, the individual speakers themselves may use their own language as much as a monolingual. The mother tongue of each different language community occupies an official status. For this reason, the speakers are not dependent on the acquisition of another language. Thus, since the speaker does not forcibly but willingly learn another language, the second language poses no threat to the L1. However, bilingualism or multilingualism affects both individual and society. People live in a society in which they communicate with other people, and they must express their feelings and thoughts. The language and the individual, and beyond

this, the individual and society, are inseparable.

Bilingualism is a phenomenon that affects more than half the world's population, as a result of multilingual countries, intermarriage, migration, and so on. These situations usually have some effect on an individual's use of languages, and one of the first consequences for people living in new countries, or environments where the second-language is dominant, is that they need to acquire the new language to continue their lives as a normal citizen. In addition to this, because of the restrictions placed on their first language, they can face the phenomenon of attrition, which as we now know is the non-pathological decline of language skills in the first language of a bilingual speaker (Schmid et al., 2004).

Initially, bilingualism was considered an isolated phenomenon within a community. As Hammarberg (2001) states, presently most of the world's population speaks more than one language, namely, most of the people in world are bilingual, and due to globalization bilingualism is steadily increasing. According to Hammarberg, it is difficult to document the term bilingualism accurately, and it is often used interchangeably with the term multilingualism. Both terms refer to the presence of a second language, which can be defined as any language learner that has gained an additional language after infancy (*ibid*), or acquired an L2 after the acquisition of L1. Hammarberg also states (*ibid*) that on a chronological basis the L2 is not necessarily the second language, but could be the third, fourth or beyond. The term multilingualism seems more appropriate when there are in more languages in the game.

2.1.1 Bilingualism and Language Change

Bilingualism is a condition in which one can experience language attrition, because, as has been stated before, attrition is caused by the contact of two or more languages. The speakers use their bilingual abilities only with those speakers who can also operate in this code. If the bilingual cannot use both language adequately, the weaker one of which might experience change because of competing subsystems accommodated in the same speech setting. This process occurs when a speaker of one language comes into contact with a second language, and is then forced to learn the second language, as previously explained. Since the language of the majority group is superior to that of the minority group, it is considered to have a higher

status, and is used in important public contexts and by people with power. This situation too can cause the first language to be changed or attrited. Attrition is something that can be expected in all bilingual language users to some extent. Therefore, it is possible that in the acquisition of a second language, no matter in what stage of life this happens, fundamental and irreversible changes in the first language may occur (Cook, 2003).

This inevitable interaction between two languages, or the influence of one language on the other, can be called cross linguistic influence. One negative effect of bilingualism is that the first language may be practiced rarely and used much less than the second language, and this in turn can cause the first language to experience a reduction in the amount of input it receives (Schmid ,2011). As it is discussed in following chapters, Michel Paradis (1994) presented a hypothesis concerning the activation threshold hypothesis, which states that attrition is the result of a prolonged lack of linguistic stimuli in the language undergoing attrition. The more an individual uses a language, the easier doing so becomes. Conversely, the less a language is used, the harder it is to retrieve it. The dominant language enjoys a certain position of power and prestige, because it is only through the use of this language that education and economic resources are accessed. The minority language, however, usually has a low status, because it only has importance amongst family and friends. The linguistic situation of Kurds is similar to that of Turks in Germany because German is spoken formally, for example in schools and by authorities, and Turkish is spoken only at informal occasions, such as in the family and among friends. Additionally, the status of a language will affect the attitude of the people who use it or who are exposed to it. The language that possesses official status can dominate the other minor languages in the community. Therefore, both the Kurdish in Turkey and the Turkish in Germany are experiencing language attrition.

Language change is a process in which an individual or a group replaces their language with another that is used in the surrounding area. The process arises when a language is used in a society where it has somehow gained a subordinate position in relation to another language, and where there is pressure within the environment to adapt to the standards of the majority, which can include the use of a particular language. The language replacement process occurs in several stages and these usually extend over several generations. Language change results in modifications in

the first language because of rare use of it, leading to gradual erosion of abilities in the language. This process usually occurs across generations and is progressive in nature. Each new generation experiences the language change or attrition more than the previous generations. Researches on language change show that there is cross-generational language shift in many communities (Anderson, 1999; Fillmore, 1991; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). As we expressed before the sociolinguistic imbalance brings about an attitudinal reflex within the community towards the more prestigious language, which consequently finishes in a reduction in input and output of the native language.

Yet bilingualism itself is not the cause of language shift, only a consequence of the language situation. To prevent a change of language, or to preserve the first language, means in practice to maintain bilingualism, since the ability to simply survive on the first language and avoid the use of others is somewhat unfeasible in the situations hereto described. However, bilingualism only develops in the subordinate group, as the dominant group does not have the same language-based needs, or stand to profit from learning the minority language. In this way, the process of language change exposes any power relationships that may exist between the groups involved.

Why and how language change occurs or does not occur depends on the interactions of several factors at various levels. To illustrate, the factors of language shift can be divided into community, group and individual. The individual's own choice is in itself one of the factors that controls whether a language is preserved or replaced, which is one of our study's main focus, but the options for this choice are limited due to external circumstances in society and within their own group. The societal factors determine the legislation and organization of the different groups and individuals of society namely, it can be said that language change is considered as a result of communication need through which the speakers can get by in second-language oriented society, and in turn they experience language change.

The situation, in which two languages are used side by side with the result that language shift occurs, ensures that the maintenance of the minority language can be difficult. Even so, maintenance of a language can be achieved, but doing so depends on many different factors. All of these factors are interrelated, so changes made at one level has implications on other levels. In this situation, other factors must also be taken into account, such as demographical factors, geographical factors, social

factors, institutions and attitudes. Other variables include those that can lead to a change of language in some members of the minority group, but in others not, such as educational levels, the size of the minority group, the degree of cultural similarity with the majority group and the state's stance towards the group, which may either oppress or encourage the flourishing of the minority language. There are a large number of languages that do not have official status in any country, but that are still spoken by groups within a country or within an area that extends over several national borders. These minority groups have a tougher situation in some ways because language preservation is not easy to do, and without the support of the speakers a change of language may mean language death, a phenomenon that occurs when nobody speaks that language anymore (Crystal, 2000). Indeed, it is the individuals of a community who themselves differ greatly in social status and the place they inhabit within that community and that determine the overall status of a language, and thus its capacity to dominate other languages. Hyltenstam & Stroud argue that a society in which the minority community have undergone a change of language, is always preceded by an imbalance of power to the disadvantage of the minority (1991). The linguistic minority may have certain rights, such as the ability to use their language in schools and in contact with authorities, but the degree to which this is used depends on how the individuals themselves act, and on the factors influencing their behaviour.

To preserve a language means to bring it to the next generation, making children and schools a critical issue for the minority group. The school is also the place where language is developed into its advanced form. Therefore, school and education can be very important for language preservation. Also, schools can be places of significant exposure for the first language to the second language, as same teaching models generally exist for both bilingual and monolingual children, and they likely present all subjects through the medium of the majority language, and teach the language itself comprehensively. Turkish for instance, is a compulsory lesson from primary school to university. Since all teaching occurs through the majority language, children must learn the second language as soon as possible to compete with the monolingual students. This model of the monolingual class with instruction in the majority language is the most common model. This means that minority students are taught together with students in the majority. The model is considered to

lead to assimilation and to ‘subtractive bilingualism’, which means that the second language is learned and developed at the expense of the first language, and is quite different from ‘additive bilingualism’, in which the second language is learned alongside continued use of the first language (Tuomela, 2001).

To summarise, in our study bilingualism should be considered as an ongoing process for individuals, and having a higher proficiency of language in one language than the other is a matter of preference, and of the attitudes of both the speakers and non-speakers of the language. Bilingualism and dual-cultural identity are interwoven; the preferred language for study depends largely on the status of the languages involved. In this case, our aim is to determine what the status of the dominant language might be in order to see how knowledge of this can be utilized.

2.1.2 Psycholinguistic Aspects of Bilingualism

Psycholinguistics is a science that deals with the relationship between psychology and linguistics, and its object of study is the intersection between the areas of language processing and acquisition, and the cognitive mechanisms. The scope of psycholinguistics is broad, as this science investigates any process related to human communication through the use of language. In other words, it investigates the relationship between the structure of the human brain and language skills, with a special focus on language acquisition and language disorders, especially those caused by brain damage.

In psycholinguistics it is assumed that language learning begins at birth. Some psycholinguists even believe that children perceive the spoken language while they are in the womb (Aldridge, Stillman and Bawer, 2001; Byers-Heinlein, Burns, Werker, 2010; Polka, 2011). For example, a study with four-day-old children showed that they reacted with more intense sucking when a tape was played in their native language; however, they did not react in the same way towards tapes in other languages (Kegel, 2000). Individuals and languages have a close connection from birth to death, and this connection will affect them in various ways. When individuals start to learn another language besides their own native language, the new language and their own language will interact, and this will affect the psycholinguistic aspects of themselves.

The acquisition of a second language is fundamentally different from that of the first

language. When children learn their mother tongues, they acquire a new way of communicating, and the acquisition of a second language after a certain age will be constructed on existing contexts, rules and language structures originating from the first language. The semantic evolution that occurs during the acquisition of another language happens much faster than the first language, and this is because only words that correspond to those in the former language have to be learned (Oksaar, 2003). Therefore, it is not difficult to see the close relationship between the mother tongue and the second language, or how both languages interact in bilingual individuals.

It is generally accepted that the different language skills of a second language cannot be learned as well as those in the first language. Furthermore, being bilingual can be an disadvantage according to some studies in second language acquisition research, which emphasise the linguistic inferiority of bilinguals compared to monolinguals. The linguistic resources of bilinguals appear to be lower than those of their monolingual counterparts, and there seems to be ample evidence of interaction between the two linguistic systems. Therefore, it should be emphasized that bilinguals are evaluated according to the same criteria as monolinguals, and in this sense appear to be at a great disadvantage, both linguistically and in cognitive terms (Herdina and Jessner, 2002).

Nevertheless, other studies state that bilingualism seems to accelerate the linguistic and metalinguistic development of children. For example, one study on six-year-old monolingual and bilingual children showed that bilingual children were more successful at seeing ambiguous images than monolinguals were (Bialystok, 2005). Therefore, there is no agreement between linguists as to whether being bilingual is something of value or not. Yet, as scientists discover new things about the neurological mysteries of the bilingual brain, we learn more about the quirks of this state. For instance, bilinguals demonstrate a lot more activity in the right hemisphere of the brain than monolingual speakers; and one recent study (Sohn, 2013) showed that being bilingual might help slow the loss of cognitive agility resulting from aging.

2.1.3 Sociolinguistic Aspects of Bilingualism

Individuals who belong to any socially organized community have the resources and methods for the communicative processes. They make use of several significant tools

to facilitate this process, and they use these resources for the interaction. Undoubtedly, language is a tool which is used mostly by communities for this purpose. As can be easily seen, language is a capable instrument to transmit and represent all social, cultural and religious situations. In other words, language reflects community life everywhere. If we consider the different stages of growth, such as childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age, we can see that each stage has its own characteristics and specificities. Despite these idiosyncrasies, language is used to interact with each group, thereby facilitating the most important process of interaction in society. Language has an important role in a number of unique facets of civilisation, such as building ideologies, constructing identities, aiding in adjustments to socio-economic conditions, to name but a number of things; and of course, it has a large role in social interaction (Wildgen, 2000).

Accordingly, sociolinguistics is an area that studies language in practice, and it considers the relationship between linguistic structures and social and cultural aspects of linguistic production. It thinks of language as a social institution, and therefore it does not study language as an autonomous structure which is independent from a situational context, culture and history of the people who use it as a means of communication (Cezario and Votre, 2009). According to Saussure, language is a social product and a set of necessary conventions adopted by the social body to allow the exercise of communication among individuals, and if considered at large, language is multifarious and belongs to the domain of social areas (1967).

Languages sometimes run across each other, and when this occurs, they interact. Language contact is associated with the movement and social interactions of different populations (Finger, 2002). The settings that impact upon the language and character of a contact group are important determinants for the outcome of the contact process, which is one of the more significant studies of sociolinguistics, since it focuses on social interactions in social groups and the assessment processes of these social interactions. For example, the linguistic divergence or convergence in language contact can be explained by processes of language contact in sociolinguistics. Therefore, bilingualism, from a social point of view, is a part of most of societies or speech communities; in that sense, a bilingual community has two languages spoken and naturally these two languages will interact just as do the people in that community.

2.2 First Language Attrition

The study of language attrition has the interest of the scientific community for three decades. The first attrition-based studies started to appear in the 1980s under the field of Applied Linguistics. The concepts of 'first language', 'second language' and 'bilingualism' are three factors that should be taken into account when discussing language attrition. The first language can be explained as the native language, the language first acquired during infancy; the second language is the language acquired after the first language; and finally, bilingualism can be defined as the ability to use two languages (Paradis, 2004).

The comprehensive and successful studies, in particular those by Schmid and Köpke (2009), state that first language attrition is a phenomenon that occurs in bilingual speakers whose linguistic system is affected by the acquisition and use of a second language. According to Schmid and Köpke (2009), there are several linguistic areas where the phenomenon of attrition is expressed, the phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic areas. This manifests as a deficiency in L1 through uncertainty, hesitation and self-correction during the act of speech.

To experience this phenomenon, the individual must be in a different linguistic environment, which can happen because of emigration or due to having to live in an environment where the second-language is the dominant language. As a result of the language contact between the speakers of L1 and L2, individuals begin to undergo the process of L1 attrition. As far as Schmid (2010) is concerned, the phenomenon of first language attrition can be seen in environments where speakers often use more than one language, and where L2 begins to play a key role in everyday life. According to Schmid (2011), when we talk about attrition, we mean the total or partial forgetting of language by a once competent speaker. Gürel (2002a) adds that emigrants who lose contact with their own L1 due to a change of country are particularly vulnerable to language attrition because they are under the direct influence of L2. Furthermore, Gürel states (2004a) that L1 attrition is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be studied from various points of view not only from a linguistic perspective, but also from a psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and neurolinguistic perspective.

First language attrition can be seen anywhere an L2 is spoken widely and more

frequently than the L1. As stated by Köpke (2009), while learning or using an L2 a change occurs in the linguistic system of the L1. Köpke defines language attrition as the non-pathological loss of language in bilinguals (Köpke 2004). According to Köpke, this phenomenon is characterized by the loss of language in a bilingual individual, and the modification of their language system that follows this according to their new needs.

Adaptation to one's environment plays a key role in this phenomenon to be occurred. And we can say that there are several types of language attrition that differ according to the specific environment. An example of such is the emigration to a different linguistic environment, wherein the bilingual individuals must use the second language to meet their needs, and this in turn causes the individual to use their first language less frequently owing to the fact that they desire to adapt to this new environment in most areas of daily life (Schmid and Köpke 2009).

L1 attrition can manifest through skills such as reading, writing, listening and comprehension becoming progressively weaker, or altering somehow. There are some terms used to describe these changes, and these include 'code switching' or 'code mixing', 'borrowing', 'restructuring' and 'convergence'. The most notable effects can be seen through the idea of 'borrowing', in which the items of the L2 lexicon may become incorporated with those of the L1, phonologically or morphologically. This is one of the most commonly observed phenomena amongst Kurdish-Turkish bilinguals, as will be discussed in the following chapters. Another result of language attrition is 'restructuring', in which the facets of L1 and L2 are incorporated, resulting in some changes, simplifications or substitutions in the first language. The other outcome of language attrition is 'convergence', in which the speakers happen to create a system that is neither like L1 nor like L2 (Schmid, 2011).

Language attrition is a very common phenomenon that occurs across every corner of the earth, in both young and old generations alike. Yet despite its widespread nature, it is only very recently that both scholars, and nations themselves, are beginning examine and deal with the topic. The phenomenon can be related to various disciplines, such as linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. As a result of this, as stated by Hansen in her book *Second Language Attrition in Japanese Contexts* (1999), several terms have been used by researchers to refer to the disappearance of language, such as 'language attrition', 'language regression',

‘language loss’, ‘language shift’, ‘code-switching’ or ‘code mixing’, and ‘language death’. Language attrition has also been studied within the wider fields of sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and psycholinguistics; and all try to understand the phenomenon from different perspectives.

A key area of the discussion of language loss throughout the different fields is bilingualism people who speak two languages are generally under the influence of a more dominant language, and that domineering language can cause the weaker of the two languages to be forgotten for a short period, or for even longer periods of time. According to Yukawa, language attrition may manifest itself through regression in a participant’s first language linguistic performance or competence at various linguistic levels, for example phonologically, morphologically and in syntax. Language attrition reduces the performance level of linguistic skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing (1997). In accordance with this, the participants of our own study were observed to have experienced changes in their lexical abilities due to their immersion in an environment where their L2 is far more dominant than their L1, which, as noted, is a key factor in the attrition of language. Prolonged exposure to an L2 is widely accepted as one of the main reasons for L1 attrition. It has been observed that continued exposure to a second language, accompanied by long-term disuse of a first language, might induce a restructuring or change in the syntactic facet of the L1 grammar, albeit slowly and selectively (Gürel, 2002b).

2.2.1 The Causes and Indications of L1 Attrition

It is a common assumption that an L1 will remain the dominant language throughout life. However, there are circumstances in which exposure to the L1 drastically reduces. Again, we may consider the hypothetical example of a man castaway on a desert island who has had no contact in any form with his L1 for many years. It is likely that this person will lose some of the basic skills required to use his first language. Though we do not have an example of such a castaway in modern times, we can find examples of a castaway of a different kind, those living away from their first languages as a result of migration or as a result of living in a society where their first language is not the official or important tool for mode of communication. In most cases, this isolation of L1 coincides with learning L2 in the context of immigration, or in the situation of a dominant second language. Speakers begin to have difficulty accessing certain element, and lexical items in their mother tongue.

Through lack of use, the L1 can become eroded and may become less accessible for speakers of that language. Nevertheless, complete attrition of L1 may not occur in all individuals of that community; thus they may not lose their L1 completely because it is almost always the case that there is a place where such people can be exposed to their L1. Small as this exposure may be, it can still contribute to the preservation of the language. So far, studies in adult immigrants have not shown that the L1 can be completely lost, even if accessibility to the language becomes more difficult for these subjects in comparison to native speakers of the L1 who are able to use it daily (Köpke, 1999).

Why attrition occurs is one of the first and foremost questions that researchers explore. Some researchers have attributed it to external factors, such as age, level of education, amount of contact with the L1 and emigration length (Yagmur, 1997; Hutz, 2004; Köpke, 1999). While others have tried to explain attrition as a process related to internal factors like emotion, attitude and motivation (Köpke, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002; Schmid, 2004).

During attrition, the structure of a language is affected by the interference of another language(s), and studies have tried to ascertain which features of language are more susceptible to attrition than others. These features can often be quite specific. The essential purpose of such studies is to show that the relationship between the L1 and the L2 can change from one linguistic feature to another. For example, an L2 speaker may show an interconnectedness of vocabulary yet may still be able to totally differentiate between lexical items (Cook, 2003).

Phonology can also be susceptible to attrition, with changes in sound having been observed due to the influence of a second language. In a study on two Mandarin children living in California, it was observed that [n], which is alveolo-palatal sound, changed into [ɲ], which is alveopalatal. The change in sound was attributed to the influence of English phonology, and appeared to be a complete replacement of Mandarin alveolo-palatal with English alveolo-palatal (Young, 2007). However, according to scholars, grammar and phonology are less prone to interference than lexical words (Paradis, 2004). In addition, this side of language attrition is underresearched, and according to Schmid (2007) phonetics and phonology are the least interesting topics for the researchers in the study of language attrition when comparing to the range of studies available on the lexical and the grammatical

system.

The lexicon is also affected by attrition, and it is thought that this could be due to the expanded cognitive load that comes as a result of overseeing two semantic frameworks simultaneously (Schmid, Jarvis 2014). In this situation, bilinguals tend to use the more dominant lexicon whilst speaking, and as stated by Paradis (2007), lexical deterioration will decrease accordingly in relation to the frequency of L1 use. Decreased use of the first language and regular use of a second linguistic system leads to crosslinguistic interference (Schmid & Köpke, 2007), and the lexicon of the L1 will deteriorate because of this influence. The same idea is also explained in Michel Paradis' 'Activation Threshold Hypothesis' (2004). According to this theory, less commonly used lexical items, and lexical items that have not been used for a long time become harder to access. These items will naturally be forgotten and replaced by lexical items those of the second-language.

As for morphology, the grammatical morphemes of the first language may be affected both positively and negatively by the predominant use of the second language, and thus attrition can occur. This particularly applies in cases where grammatical distinctions between languages are shared.

There are both internal and external factors of language attrition. The external factors are generally defined as crosslinguistic effects, and are related to L2 transfer, borrowing, convergence, and so on. The internal factors are related to motivation and attitude towards the language. An individual's attitude and motivation has been noted to be one of the most critical factors for success or failure within language acquisition. This study proposes that an individual's attitude towards a language will affect the level of attrition within that language. Unfortunately, as of this point there have been very few studies outlining this significant connection, something Schmid also expresses when she states: "Another as yet unresolved question is what it is in the environment, habits, attitudes or personality of a speaker which causes attrition (2008, p11)."

The reorganization of the L1 system under the influence of that of the L2 seems to be the most likely candidate for explaining the phenomena of the loss of the L1 (Smith, 1983). L1 attrition may take place when individuals start to make adjustments to their mother tongue according to the rules of the second language, and thus their first language starts to give way to the second language. This fact is shown by various

studies, such as those by Yağmur (1997), Schmid (2004), Skaaden (2005), Gürel (2004a), Köpke (2007), Dostert (2009), Schmid and Dusseldorp (2010), Schmid and Beers Fägersten (2010). Most of these studies associate attrition in bilinguals with the interference of the L2, which is generally the case for migrants in different countries; several examples of which will be given in the following paragraphs.

In one such study, researchers observed a German migrant living in the USA (Hutz, 2004) and discovered that attrition occurs in morphological structures as well as causing syntactical change due to the L2 dominant environment. The study shows that in particular, the morphological items of the L1, such as plural marking and gender morphemes, are affected by the influence of the L2.

A study conducted in Jordan on language shift among Armenians (Mahmoud, 2001) demonstrated that Armenians living in Jordan are experiencing attrition to a significant extent because of the interference of Arabic, the second language in this area. A different study conducted in Jordan investigated the level of language shift among Kurds living in Jordan, and it shows evidence that Kurds here are experiencing a gradual shift towards Arabic that may lead to language loss due to the influence of Arabic, which is the official language of Jordan (Al-Khatib and Al-Ali, 2010). Research on the language of the Saudi Hausa also presents findings showing attrition as a consequence of the interference of the Arabic language. The study concludes that there has been a rapid shift among Saudi Hausa towards Arabic, and researchers attributed this shift to socio-economic, religious, and negative attitudinal factors (Tawalbeh, Dagamseh, A. Matrafi, 2013).

In terms of the manifestations of attrition, the study by Schmid and Dusseldorp (2010) is a significant one, focusing on the L1 attrition of German bilinguals in Canada and the Netherlands. To conduct the research they used the C-test, two semantic verbal fluency (VF) tasks, a grammaticality judgment task, and a film retelling task; and the results show that the attrition level of bilinguals was different from the control groups in all language skills apart from the grammatical judgment task.

Finally, a study on disfluencies due to L1 attrition (Schmid and Beers Fägersten, 2010) demonstrated that experienced more pauses, repetition and hesitation, and spoke with less fluency than the control group.

The studies on L1 attrition have demonstrated that in bilingual individuals the features of the dominant L2 that differ from the L1 can affect various aspects of the L1 (Gurel, 2002a, 2004b; Kopke, 2002; Schmid, 2002). The other study on dominant language influence in acquisition and attrition was performed on Korean bilinguals, and the conclusions reached demonstrated that Korean attriters were not so different from the controls. However, incomplete learners and late second language learners of the Korean language were different from controls, because they used binding features differently (Silvina and Yoon, 2009). There is converging evidence suggesting that an L1 system can indeed be eroded to quite a dramatic degree if the attrition process sets in well before puberty (Schmitt, 2010). A longitudinal study of two Chinese speaking children, who moved into an English speaking environment before the age of three, investigated the development of code-switching in relation to the children's lexical and grammatical development. The study found that early second language acquisition played an important role in the earliest instances of code-switching in children's speech, and thus the formulaic sequences could be seen as the first sign of L1 attrition (Wei, Hua, 2006). As can be seen from the studies inferred in this section, the researchers mainly focus on two main factors that trigger the phenomenon of linguistic attrition, the first of which lack of use of L1 and second one is the influence of L2. The researchers try to find out how and why L1 and its linguistic elements are affected and what happens when attriters try to speak their mother tongue under the influence of their L2.

2.2.2 Categories in L1 Attrition

The dominant language may constitute a particularly notable danger to the L1 in terms of attrition in situations where the mother tongue occupies no fixed and certain functions L1, which can be put down as first language attrition. When the speakers of a language have ceased to use or rarely use their L1 in their everyday lives, it starts to erode; when the speaker wants to speak, or when it becomes necessary to use the language, the speaker has to rely on his/her second language to replace the attrited words or structures in his/her L1. In addition to typical symptoms, such as word-finding difficulties and language delay, due to rare use of the language, individuals are exposed to the interference of the L2 throughout much of the articulation of their first Language. To be able to continue communication, attriters have no choice but to rely on their L2 through borrowing, restructuring and convergence.

2.2.2.1 Lexical Borrowing

Schmid (2011) defines the process of lexical borrowing as the most overt type of crosslinguistic influence (CLI). In this process, speakers use an item from the L2 in place of that from the L1, often in such a way that it is integrated phonologically or morphologically. For example, German forms the past participle from borrowed verbs by means of the circumfix ‘ge-*verb*-t’, leading to bizarre forms such as ‘gedownloadet’ (Schmid, 2013). Similarly, since the attriters cannot find the right items in their native language as a result of attrition, they use L2 elements which are morphologically and phonologically integrated into the L1 system (Schmid and Köpke 2009). These items can be used only occasionally or can become permanent and reflect a very common phenomenon among migrants. It is also reported that the lexical borrowing process is more visible in the lexicon, and it is often regarded as a symptom of L1 attrition (Pavlenko, 2004); however, we cannot regard all kinds of lexical borrowing as language attrition, because if the speaker knows the equivalent of the borrowed item but simply does not prefer to use it, this cannot be defined as language attrition. The loan can be considered evidence of attrition only when there is an equivalent item in the L1 of the speaker and he /she cannot reproduce it or inherently understand it.

In addition to this, a language might include some words for which there may not be any equivalent or similar words in another language. Such words could be related to objects, or social, political and cultural concepts; and these concepts may not be formed into words in a different language. For example, the English language has borrowed words for political concepts such as ‘perestroika’, ‘glasnost’ and ‘apartheid’, but this cannot be regarded as attrition because of the fact that it is a general incident that one language borrows items from the language of another culture; which are commonly terms or cultural phrases expressing technological, social or cultural innovations (Baker and Jones, 1998). Similarly, Pavlenko argued that lexical borrowing should not be taken as sign of L1 attrition without a close examination of the type of borrowing and the reasons for which particular lexical items have been borrowed (2010).

2.2.2.2 Lexical Restructuring

Attrition gradually affects different aspects of language, especially the lexical knowledge, which is regarded as the most vulnerable aspect of a language exposed to attrition involving syntactic restructuring. According to Köpke (2004), the level of competence can determine the severity of attrition involving the restructuring of the L1, according to the rules of L1. The existing L1 elements are analyzed and interpreted according to the semantic scope of the corresponding L2 items. Namely, while the item itself remains part of the language, its meaning is changed (Schmid and Köpke, 2009). This is different from borrowing in that we cannot see the direct usage of L2 items in this process. The items already exist within the language but a change occurs in their meaning. Schmid (2011) states that it is possible to observe this phenomenon in the lexicon of a bilingual. The meaning of some words widen (semantic extension) whilst others become more restricted (narrow semantic) to coincide with the scope of the meaning in the other language. Lexical restructuring is often thought of as a less common phenomenon compared to borrowing. Restructuring can generally be observed in situations where the L1 and L2 are similar. Morphosyntactic restructuring has been documented in the areas of case, gender, word order and preposition choice (Jarvis 2003; Schmid, 2002). This can be explained by the lack of use of the L1.

The effect of language contact can vary in terms of lexical restructuring. Boeschoten and Johanson (2006) states that though there is no systematic research on the effect of contact with Turkish on Kurdish language as yet, it can be observed from the course of speech collection that the arrangement of words and morphosyntax of Kurdish is under the influence of Turkish. They maintain that Turkish is entirely a nominative-accusative language, whereas Kurdish is an ergative absolute language, which can be affected by dominant Turkish language severely. Cook (2000) states that the influence of L1 on L2 may influence L1 either positively or negatively. It is therefore possible to conclude that it seems clear that the influence of L2 can affect the lexicon of L1 and the meaning of the lexicon of L1. Therefore, metaphorically speaking gaining an L2 is more than simply adding rooms to your house by building an extension; it is in fact more comparable to rebuilding all whole structure (*ibid*). Since attriters are not competent in their mother tongue, they resort to their L2 to make up their insufficiency.

2.2.2.3 Convergence

Language convergence with a bias towards the L2 may also be taken as a process of L1 attrition. This is a situation in which the L1 is influenced by the dominant L2, to the effect that the rules of the L2 gradually replace the rules of the L1 by means of the process of 'transfer'. This type of attrition generally happens when the structural similarity between two languages is more obvious. It is commonly the result of the transfer process, but can also be the result of pre-existing trends that are internally motivated and accelerated by contact. However, as noted by Schmid and De Bot (2004), it is difficult to distinguish between exact changes to a language, due to them occurring from both the influence of the other language and from changes within the system of the original language itself.

Convergence is also defined by Schmid and Köpcke (2009) as a merging of L1 and L2 concepts, creating one single form different from both the L1 and L2. This process occurs when both languages are syntactically similar. The restructuring involved in this type of convergence is different from the former, because in the latter case the items are of the same form but express different content. However, for this restructuring process to occur the content of the items must be the same, as the form can be completely different (Schmid, 2011). There is little instance of convergence between Kurdish and Turkish as both languages have quite different typological linguistic systems (Dorleijn, 1996)

2.3 Hypotheses related to L1 Attrition

As stated by Lambert and Freed (1982), we know a fair amount about how people learn languages but we know remarkably little about how language skills, once learned, are forgotten. Whilst learning a second language it is quite natural that learners transfer the features of their first language into the second language. They very likely apply some of their first language's grammatical and phonological rules to the new language, which is known as cross linguistic affect. Simply put, they will use their own language schema during the learning process.

Since learners are unfamiliar with the second language grammar schemata they are prone to use that of their own language schemata. Many such phenomena are the outcome of the fact that the first or native language (L1) exerts some degree of

influence on the L2 (Schmid, 2011).

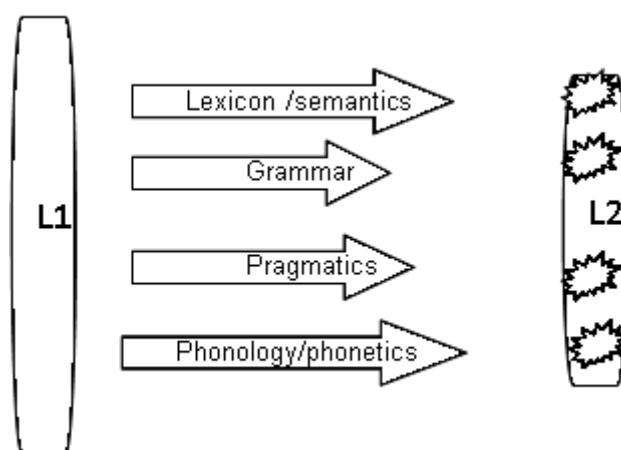


Figure 2.1: L1 influence on L2 in second language acquisition (Schmid and Kopke, 2007, p.4).

Yet the same effect can also be witnessed upon the L1 as a result of the influence of the L2. Furthermore, if the power and effect of the L2 is stronger, as is very likely in such aforementioned cases of immigration or possessing a minority language then on top of accelerated lexical traffic from the second language to the first, language attrition may also be observed. In this process, the first language can be influenced by borrowing, restructuring, convergence and language shift, as previously mentioned (Pavlenko, 2004).

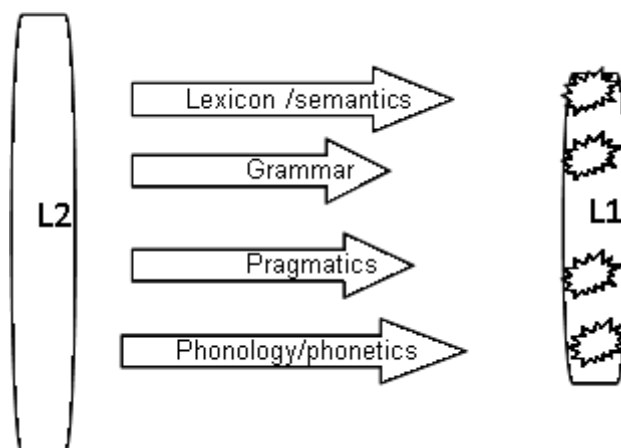


Figure 2.2: L2 influence on L1 in L1 attrition (Schmid and Kopke, 2007, p.5).

Attrition can be studied in nearly any linguistic field, varying from lexical analysis, to syntax, to pragmatics. The purpose of attrition research is to undertake formal linguistic analysis, and additionally, to test language performance in these conditions, thereby determining the extent to which attriters display the loss of their L1. There

are several hypotheses about the nature of attrition, the most significant of which are the “Cross-linguistic Influence Hypothesis”, the “Regression Hypothesis”, the “Activation Threshold Hypothesis”, “the Interface Hypothesis” and “the Dynamic Systems Theory”.

2.3.1 The Cross-Linguistic Influence Hypothesis

The cross-linguistic influence hypothesis proposes that the linguistic systems an individual has can influence any other linguistic systems they might learn later (Sharwood-Smith, 1989). This hypothesis proffers transfer as the main mechanism in the phenomenon of language attrition. Within this theory, such an occurrence is an automatic, uncontrolled and subconscious use of the past linguistic behaviors of the learner, in an attempt to produce new responses (Arabski, 2007). When the transfer occurs between two contact languages, the language elements or structures of one language are transported to the other.

This transfer of the elements from the L2 to the L1 is further affected by any similarity between languages (Hammarberg, 2001). It can be said that the more similar the languages are, the stronger the possible influence, and the more likely it is that an element of one language is transferred to the other (Köpke, 2001a). In the case of this hypothesis, transfer is classified into either “positive transfer” or “negative transfer”.

Positive transfer refers to a beneficial form of transfer. This occurs in several ways. In terms of vocabulary, any similarity of vocabulary between languages actually reduces the time required to develop good levels of understanding of the new lexicon. Furthermore, a high degree of similarity between the vowel systems of two languages allows for easier identification of vowel sounds. In the practice of writing, any similarity between words is an advantage for those who read or write. Grammatically, a higher degree of similarity between the syntactic systems of L1 and L2 aids a better understanding of the grammar of the new language. In contrast to these advantages, any difference between the rules of the L1 and L2 that thus results in error and difficulty in acquiring the new language is defined as negative transfer (Arabski, 2007).

According to this hypothesis, the phenomenon of attrition seems to be more strongly linked to external causes. In the case of the bilingual, there is a bidirectional process

from the L1 to the L2, or from the L2 to the L1 (Schmid, 2011). As stated by Schmid and Bot (2004), there is something of an invasion of one language by the other; and, as explained, when high levels of proficiency are reached in an L2 an individual will then begin to show deficiencies in their L1 due to the frequent use of their L2, and they will thus start to fill the lost items of their L1 by using elements of their L2.

As will be discussed further later, linguistic attrition manifests itself in various forms, yet, in a conversation led by a bilingual “Lexical traffic from one language to the other is a common phenomenon.” (Schmid, 2011, p.12). This trafficking can lead to a loss of some aspects of the L1. Therefore, it is possible to observe bilinguals ‘switching codes’ whilst speaking; that is, utilizing aspects of two or more different languages, a strategy that allows them to make the communicative act easier and clearer (Ferrari, 2010). Some forms of such alternation are the result of a reduced proficiency or difficulty in recovering the linguistic elements temporarily unavailable in bilingual memory, and this phenomenon can be labelled as ‘language corruption’ (Matras 2009). However, some scholars such as Pavlenko (2004) consider that the presence of L2 elements in the L1 should not be considered as a case of attrition. For Pavlenko, this phenomenon highlights the ability of a bilingual to master both languages, with the speaker choosing between the components of each language to find the most suitable in order to better represent what it is they want to convey.

2.3.2 The Regression Hypothesis

Another model of language attrition, the Regression Hypothesis (hereafter RP), puts forward that attrition is actually the reverse of the acquisition process. According to this theory, the items that were acquired last in a language tend to be lost first. The hypothesis was founded by Jakobson in 1940, and his ideas were based on aphasia-related attrition; which can be defined as an impairment of language affecting the production or comprehension of speech, and the ability to read or write. Aphasia generally occurs due to an injury to the brain, such as through head trauma, brain tumours or infections; and is frequently the result of a stroke, particularly in older people (The National Aphasia Association, 2014). However, this occurrence can be applied to non-pathological processes as well.

A person acquires the linguistic features of his or her language progressively according to universal patterns and sequences. According to RP, during attrition the

reverse happens; the impairment causes the knowledge of the language to recede piece by piece, starting from the last piece of information learnt and progressing gradually to the first. RP holds that the path of attrition is the mirror image of the path of acquisition.

Studies by Keijzer (2007) support the regression hypothesis; however, the findings from our study contradict his theory as the first-language is lost while the second-language becomes dominant. The hypothesis outlines that what is least vulnerable to language loss is not what is learned first, but what is learned best; with frequency of reinforcement being an important factor of retention (Berko-Gleason, 1982).

In summary, RP holds that attrition is the mirror image of the process of acquisition. The items which are acquired earlier are expected to be maintained longer, and those acquired later are in danger of rapid attrition, also known as ‘first in, last out’.

2.3.3 The Activation Threshold Hypothesis

The Activation Threshold Hypothesis (Paradis, 2004) puts forward a neurolinguistic approach to bilingualism and language attrition. According to this hypothesis, languages that are used more commonly by their speakers are activated; whereas those used infrequently are inhibited. The inhibition level of a language or ‘form’ relates to its activation threshold; that is, the higher the level of inhibition, the higher and the activation threshold. Languages with a higher activation threshold are harder to restore to an ‘active’ state. In compliance with the activation threshold hypothesis, of two languages or forms, the language which is used less frequently will be more susceptible to attrition (ibid). Decreased use of a first language and regular use of a second linguistic system will probably lead to L1 attrition when following this hypothesis. Current prevalence and frequency of use are important factors that can influence the permanence of a language (Paradis, 2004). The Activation Threshold hypothesis covers some of the factors that cause language loss, such as language disuse, wherein the most frequently used elements of L2 will replace their lesser used counterparts of L1 (Paradis, 1985). Similarly, Köpke (1999) explains the disruption of the L1 by the L2 which she observed in immigrants with the Activation Threshold Hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, the activation thresholds for items of a language that are rarely used will be higher than those used frequently. As well as lack of use, the thresholds of some items are high due to competition from other

similar items; for instance, a word in L1 can be inhibited by the usage of the word in L2. Therefore, linguistic changes observed in some adult immigrants are attributable to the activation or inhibition of items in their language according to the frequency of their use.

In summary, if a first language is disused, an attempt to use it may result in poor performance, and this is often caused by the interference of an L2 and especially affects lexical access and sometimes morphosyntax and phonology. This poor performance can be explained by competition for cognitive resources between the two languages, or the activation and inhibition of the sub-systems of the two languages, resulting in a deterioration of language skills.

2.3.4 The Interface Hypothesis

According to the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, 2006; Sorace, 2011), interfaces which can be defined as the points where two systems, subjects, organisations, etc. meet and interact. According to this theory, interfaces are especially vulnerable in language acquisition. The hypothesis claims that these different interfaces encounter various difficulties in second language acquisition. The basic principle of the Interface Hypothesis is that these difficulties emerge when information is integrated across different linguistic modules, and/or between the language faculty and other areas of cognition.

This hypothesis uses Universal Grammar and the Generative Approach (Chomsky, 1995) to explain language acquisition. These theories outline a linguistic system that is thought to be a kind of mental language system, which is biologically endowed within us with a universal set of rules. These rules can be observed in all languages. There are various features of language that are in agreement with this approach, such as syntactic, semantic and/or phonological information, and modules including syntax, semantics, phonology, and so on. These modules are not dependent on each other, however, at times they can interact with each other, and these points of interaction are called interfaces. To describe further, these are areas of overlap between two or more modules, or between a module and cognition (the 'extralinguistic' area). Interfaces can thus be defined as the areas of the grammatical system where two or more modules, or the cognitive system, interact. For example, consider the case of pronoun-dropping where null subject pronoun usage in

languages such as Italian, Greek and Turkish, was studied by Gürel (2004b). The study showed that attrition occurred particularly in how subject pronouns could be used, which supports the Interface Hypothesis.

2.3.5 The Dynamic Systems Theory (DST)

Linguistic and extralinguistic elements influence language development at points where they contact, where they interact with each other in various ways. Thus, we cannot understand the process of language change as a one-dimensional phenomenon. Studies exist that have focused mainly on linguistic variables and sociolinguistic factors; however, these do not give a wholly satisfying explanation of the process of attrition. As a result of this, the ‘dynamic systems’ approach was put forward as another way to explore the complex and confusing systems of language attrition. According to Herdina and Jessner (2002), this theory can be regarded as a promising approach to the field since it explores language development in multilingual contexts.

When people are exposed to a new language because of immigration, or living in an environment where a different language dominates, they begin to acquire the language of the dominant society to varying degrees. The level to which they acquire this language is determined by their communicative requirements, their general use of the language in their cultural, social or political environment, and their motivation and attitude towards the language and culture of the majority. Whether they decide to be a part of this new culture, or society which requires the use of dominant language can be an important factor for the destiny of both languages. In this situation, the second-language can be more of an important focus for people due to socio-economic need; and if this happens, their first language skills are also under the influence of these new psychosocial and environmental circumstances, which can cause the maintenance of the first-language to deteriorate. Therefore, almost all language users continuously undergo stages of growth and decline in their languages, as their first and foreign language systems are ceaselessly changing due to internal adjustments and input from a dominant speech community (De Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2007). According to the same researchers: “Language attrition is not just the loss of single elements or patterns; when elements are lost, the system may reorganize itself to find a new attractor state.” (2007, p. 60). If some items from a language are lost, such as grammatical or phonological ones, the language system

tries to find new items from the very environment of the second-language which encompasses every aspect of life.

2.4 Variables in Language Attrition

2.4.1 Attitudinal Factors

Attitude is generally defined as a set of beliefs towards something developed over time in a particular society or cultural environment. Attitude is known to have a positive or a negative effect on the learning process depending on which stance is taken. However, its impact on language attrition has rarely been studied, and it is for this reason that this study is especially valuable, as it explores this little studied field further.

Language learning is affected by attitude and motivation. The bilingual's attitude towards the use of the two languages is also a very important area of study (Grosjean, 1998). It is generally accepted that if the learner is reluctant to learn, or he/she does not have a positive attitude towards learning, then he/she cannot produce any results in the field. The same case may be valid for language attrition. If the speaker is reluctant to speak his or her own language, then this language tends to attrite more than it otherwise would if the speaker of the language had a positive attitude towards his/her native language.

This claim implies that there is a language choice made between languages by the speaker. Language choice allows bilinguals to choose from two languages. The question is do they have the same feelings for both of them, or do they prefer speaking language A over language B? This choice can be restricted by the person hearing the speech's choice as well, because if the hearer is monolingual or chooses to speak only via a particular language, then the bilingual has to comply by using the shared language. Therefore, the language choice depends on social behaviour as much as it does the social environment to which a bilingual person is exposed.

Researchers such as Dewaele (2002), Pavlenko (2004) and Schmid (2002) provide evidence for the influence of affective and attitudinal factors in the process of attrition. Similarly, Kopke and Schmid (2004a) maintain that even though attitude is much more difficult to measure, it appears to be a much more decisive factor than time. The research done on L2 acquisition has shown the strong impact that attitude,

motivation, and other affective factors have on linguistic learning. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to assume that they can also influence attrition. This assumption is backed by Schmid and De Bot (2004), and they believe that attitude is a crucial factor in whether the acquisition process is an beneficial or detrimental to bilingualism. In the case of the former, it is an enriching experience that adds to an L2 without taking away from the L1. In the latter case, the acquisition has harmful effects on the L1, and can trigger the process of attrition in that language.

Schmid and Bot also make the claim (*ibid*) that attitude and motivation are based on individual perceptions of the situation, and the way in which the minority language and the majority language perceive each other. Therefore, we can propose that these factors are related to social issues such as identity. An important study concerned with attitudinal effect on language attrition was performed on Jewish-Germans, who emigrated from Germany to English-speaking countries on account of Nazi persecution and oppression. As far as we can learn from the study (Schimid, 2004), the suffering and fear Jewish-Germans experienced can be noted as an important factor in the high loss of the German language within this community. This study allows for the possibility to focus on the connection between language and power, language and emotion and language and trauma. The group in question emigrated in 1938 or thereafter from Germany as a result of what was happening in the country. Their experience was incredibly traumatic, and they thus had little desire to continue their use of German language. The study elucidates that this community wanted to forget everything related to Germany, including the language, and thus, within this community the language easily became attrited. Language attrition can be worsened by fear, shame or guilt related to that language.

Attitude can also be defined as something that is learned through a socialization process which begins in early childhood (O'Rourke, 2011). Individuals develop strategies involving the use or non-use of language depending on the advantage that the speaker may gain from the situation (Bourdieu, 1991). So, an individual can value or devalue a language in terms of what they can gain from it. If they think they may gain something financially, or improve their status, they will be enthusiastic to learn or to maintain that language. Bourdieu calls this phenomenon "linguistic capital", which can be defined as the profit received from the use of a language. The motives to use a language may be purely economic or monetary, or they may also

have a symbolic worth, for example through prestige or honour. English is often thought of as an international and prestigious language and is learnt by many people since it offers monetary value for them, and this is an important motive for many individuals to learn it. We might ask same the question of the Kurdish language.

Attitudinal and motivational variables are important enough to have been studied by Gardner since 1979. Researchers have believed for a long time (Clement, Smythe & Gardner, 1975) that an individual's attitude towards learning a language is a significant factor, and that without motivation and a positive attitudinal approach, learners cannot complete the learning process. This study proposes that attitude have either a significant or a limited impact on L1 attrition depending on three factors: the cognitive (an individual's belief system, knowledge and perceptions), affective (their emotional reactions and feelings) and 'behavioural' (their behavioural intentions and interests) factors (Lambert et al., 2010). A dominant culture and language can have an overwhelming effect on small communities, and this in turn can cause the people of these communities to avoid using their languages and to have increased motivation to communicate with the language of the dominant society. The attitude of an individual toward learning this new language, combined with his/her desire to integrate into the host community, give a strong indication as to whether the individual will experience any future language loss (Schmid, 2004).

An official second language, or one that is more dominant, will inherently hold more prestige than the first language it opposes, and this can create a distance between speakers of that first language and their language. As a result of this, the speakers of that native language can develop a tendency to not maintain it. In this sense, a negatively formed attitude towards the L1 on account of sociolinguistic reasons, or personal reasons, can cause a first language to become totally defenseless against the influence of the L2.

A study concerning the rate of L1 attrition in migrant Jews confirms this strong correlation between attitude and L1 attrition (Schmid, 2002). This highly significant study was conducted by Schmid on Holocaust survivors, who had left their homeland whilst fleeing from persecution. Schmid used audio-recordings to test the extent of their attrition. Beyond exemplifying a link between attitude and attrition, the participants in this study were also possible examples of attriters who may have held a negative attitude towards their first language. Schmid formed three groups of

people from the participants and measured various factors that either cause attrition or promote the maintenance of the L1, including motivation and attitude. Schmid's hypothesis was that Holocaust survivors would have a negative attitude towards the German language, because of any anti-Semitic treatments they may have been exposed to before leaving their country, perhaps leading to a rejection of their L1. Schmid supported her hypothesis with the thoughts and feelings of some of her participants, who, in line with her hypothesis, stated that they did not want to speak German any longer due to a negative attitude felt towards the language, and because of what German reminded them of. In addition to this, they also felt conscious of appearing as strangers in their new second language environment. As a result of the study, Schmid discovered a statistical correlation between attitude and degree of attrition. Thus it can be said that a person's negative attitude towards a language might well play an important role in the degree of attrition within that language, and could thus lead to a person to feel unwilling and hesitant to maintain that language.

According to Fishman (1991), to maintain a language in a second language dominant environment there should be various situations where language maintenance can be provided, such as language schools, libraries, print and broadcast media, religious congregations, social clubs and ethnic restaurants and shops. The status of a language can affect the attitude held towards that language. In terms of sociolinguistics, the status of a language can be regarded as the respect held for a language or dialect, and sometimes because of social reasons one particular language or dialect can be thought of as more prestigious compared to the other languages or dialects in a community. In general, the languages or dialects of the upper classes are held in high regard, while those of the lower classes or minorities are thought of negatively. The concept of prestige is also closely tied to the idea of the standard or official language. A first language may well experience attrition if a more prestigious language is adopted by a society and its members forgo their indigenous tongue, or are forced to do so. This process happens gradually in phases, with a society adopting more and more features from the more prestigious language until it and the first language are hardly distinguishable from each other.

If attitude and motivation are important factors in learning an L2, as is suggested by Gardner & Lambert (1972), we can pose that attitude and motivation are equally important factors in attrition as well. This may provide a negative or positive

motivation for the maintenance of the L1. A study conducted by Köpke (1999) supports this hypothesis. The study tried to discern the effect of attitude and motivation on language attrition, and it compared the performance of two linguistic groups of late bilinguals who had the same first language of German, but two different second languages of English and French. The results show that the two bilingual groups had some difficulties with the use of their L1 (including the use of the lexicon), although their competence, especially in grammar, was good. But the study also showed some differences - both quantitative and qualitative - between the two groups of immigrants, and this was because they had different attitudes towards their immigration status and towards the maintenance of their L1. The study concludes that attitudes and linguistic motivations play an important role in the maintenance of L1.

2.4.2 Motivation and Language Attrition

Motivation refers to the reasons behind behaviour (Guay et al., 2010). From the term motivation we understand that there is an internal drive in humans, which enables them to start to be active for doing any operations in a situation and completing tasks that are normally slow and arduous. Motivation, consciously or subconsciously, influences the activities and attitudes of individuals. Consequently, motivation plays a huge role in learning or maintaining a language. Success in learning or maintaining a language largely depends on the motives students hold. On this basis, it can be argued that motivation is a system consisting of different psychological factors that can determine the behaviour and activities of human beings.

The issue of motivation affects all disciplines because it is such an important factor in the success of individuals. It can enable people in all contexts to achieve their goals, or in the case of its absence, to give up pursuing this. In the case of language, if individuals have enough motivation whilst developing their language skills, they can come to see that language plays a very important role in their character at large; as language affects values, the concept of self, the relationships and cognitions of the individual (Chen and Bond, 2010). For better performance, humans need to be motivated, and motivation itself can be internal or external.

Internal motivation can be related to the needs, views, habits, desires, likes, dislikes and hobbies of an individual. External motives can be related to social prestige,

success, failure, rewards and punishments. If an individual is internally motivated this means that the individual is interested in something because of an inner source, perhaps simply because they enjoy it, without any of the aforementioned external incentives. This kind of motivation comes from internal factors, and relates to an individual's nature, their interests and their tastes. In this type of motivation, there is no need for a discernible reward, as the task itself is the main concern this motivation is constant, since it depends solely on the subject and not on external factors. Therefore, we can see that intrinsic motivation is related to happiness and personal fulfilment (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

On the other hand, if a person is externally motivated, they will participate in an activity to achieve a result that cannot be realized within them. Whatever the source, motivation is clearly an important element of learning, and has a significant influence on the student through both its internal and external facets. Both sources interact with each other and the learning process. The role of motivation in the process of learning is to provide individuals with a natural desire to learn. However, motivation is not always positive, and it can be the factor that directs us towards a detrimental act as well (Broussard and Garrison, 2004).

Motivation can also be defined as a part of metacognition, which itself can be defined as thinking about thinking, or as defined by Martinez (2006), it is the monitoring and control of thought. Metacognition consists of two components, metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge is related to knowledge about individuals themselves as learners, and about factors that could have an effect on performance, or it can be defined as knowledge about strategies, and when and why to use these.

Thinking about motivation from the perspective of language attrition, the motivation of individuals can be an influence in the protection and maintenance of a language. If people are not motivated to learn or maintain a language, they may forget that language, even if it is their first language. Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that motivation plays an important role in the process of language acquisition through emotional and attitudinal variables such as self-esteem and anxiety.

According to the English Proficiency Index (EPI), Turkey's EPI score is considered to be very low with the range of 47.80 competency and it ranks 47 out of 63 countries in total (2014). Similarly, Social Research Foundation (SETA) states that

the current situation of foreign language education in Turkey shows that despite years of learning English in primary school, middle school and high school students still do not have the sufficient faculties to speak (2014). The foundation maintains that despite many improvements, the language cannot be learned or taught and thereby emphasising the importance of motivation in teaching foreign language. The involvement of emotions and attitudes not only play a role in motivation in language learning but are probably just as important in attrition. The study previously discussed by Schmid (2002) on L1 attrition among German Jews clearly shows the impact of trauma can have in leading to the total rejection of the L1 in adults. Motivation is directly linked with emotions, which themselves can affect our desire or aversion towards an activity, and thus, our desire or aversion towards maintaining a language. Our emotions can affect nearly all internal motives and thereby triggering any action we may take related to our language.

Emotions can then, be seen to have either positive or negative effects upon motivation. Positive motivation accumulates positive emotions, and when these feelings intensify individuals have the desire to learn or to gain something. In contrast, negative motivation usually occurs in the same way, with the difference being that an individual has a feeling of discontent towards an activity, or relates negative images with the activity, and thus do not want to perform it and eventually could not be made to. This feeling can occur as a result of an individual's environment. Exposure to shame from one's environment may promote the development of 'shame-proneness' (Mills, 2005). This condition includes feelings of failure, and worry of frequent ridicule from friends and colleagues with respect to pronunciation, etc. These emotional states can be a strong source of aversion to learning or maintaining a native language. Foreign language anxiety is common among foreign language learners (Young, 1991), though maintaining a language in the environment of a dominant second language may also cause anxiety.

2.4.3 Age and First Language Attrition

There is a widespread thought that the younger an individual is the easier the acquisition of language is. Without having to exert much effort, children, until early adolescence, generally have a natural aptitude for learning second languages. In this sense, children differ from adults, for whom the acquisition of a second language demands more effort to control certain aspects of the language, such as vocabulary,

grammar or phonology. A period in which one is especially receptive to language stimuli, is called a 'critical period', and it is believed to exist in children who have not yet reached puberty. During this period, rapid and involuntary learning occurs due to the instability of synaptic connections. At this stage, the nervous system is more 'plastic' or malleable, and it is much easier to acquire a language. After this critical period, language learning starts to stabilise, and this naturally leads to learning a new language to become more difficult.

Studies that explore the factor of age and its relation to language attrition are rare; however, the question as to what extent age affects attrition has been asked by some researchers, including Schmid and Köpke (2004a). When we look at the effects of age in the field of language acquisition, one of the most important topics in the debate has been the idea of the critical period. Lenneberg (1967), a supporter of the Critical Period Hypothesis, suggested that there is a process of time in which individuals have a high sensitivity for language acquisition, and that this phase spans from infancy to the onset of puberty at approximately age 12. For Lenneberg, learning a language depends on the biological maturation of the individual. He proposed the Critical Period Hypothesis to outline this, as according to this theory at a certain level of maturity the neuropsychological facet of the brain hinders further language learning due to a loss of plasticity, or, reorganization capacity. This process provides an explanation for the differences of attrition observed in children and adults.

However, the nervous system related to the languages acquisition in children who have not yet reached puberty is very malleable, and is therefore too unstable to retain language skills in circumstances where exposure to a language is not common. In these cases, the capacity to use language is lost, or undergoes major restructuring from the interference of another language. In children, following the hypothesis of the critical period as it is related to language acquisition, the period in which learning is facilitated via cerebral plasticity has already been raised to bring about the forgetting. Because they are more open to influence of a second language and they are ready to acquire the new items whilst forgetting the lexical items of their mother tongue due to lack use. The research related to this issue shows that L1 attrition is much more severe in children than in adults (Köpke and Schmid 2004b, p. 9-20).

Schmid (2002) claims that in the hypothetical case of a child who emigrates at the

age of six and who is not given the chance to speak his/her first language from that point onwards, the linguistic abilities of a six-year-old child would have to be the base-line for comparison in a study of language attrition. It would, she maintains, be foolish to compare her with an attriter who had reached adulthood before emigration. When comparing children to adults, after taking research done in this field into account, we can say that the younger an individual is the more he/she will experience attrition. This point reinforced by Köpke, who puts forward that the younger a child is when the language of his/her environment changes, the more rapidly and severely they will attrite (2004).

Additionally, according to other studies related to the Critical Period Hypothesis, which itself states that the first years of an individual's life are the vital time to acquire a first language, individuals cannot use language efficiently if this critical period is missed or not used efficiently. So whilst it appears that younger children are much better L2 learners due to this critical period, we can conclude that they may forget their L1 more quickly than adults.

Contrary to this however, there are studies which show that the effect of attrition may not be quite this acute in young individuals. One such study (Ammerlaan, 1996) investigated lexical access through recall and recognition in eighty-eight Dutch immigrants in Australia, who had little use of their L1. Some of these subjects had emigrated during childhood. In those subjects who had emigrated in adulthood, it was found that most of the stimuli were recalled correctly. Small lexical access problems in such individuals are considered a temporary access problem, not as a permanent loss of L1 vocabulary. These results can also be interpreted that the lexicon of recognition might remain unaffected, despite being exposed to L2 overwhelmingly.

The importance of maturational processes is also emphasized by Schmid, and she believes that there is a strong indication that an L1 can be extremely vulnerable to attrition if exposure to the language ceases before puberty (2010). However, since there are so few studies conducted on the relationship between age and first language attrition, we cannot put forward a scientifically proven result to illustrate this directly. Even so, observations of the process of attrition and the previous research on first-language acquisition give us the implication that there is a strong connection between the maturational process and first-language attrition.

In summary, we can conclude from studies conducted in this field that adult immigrants exhibit a different nature of attrition than children. The speed and the severity of the process of attrition appear significantly larger in children than in adults, even in adults who have lived in an L2 environment for many years. Children who ‘forget’ language, be it L1 or L2, show a rapid decline within a few months (Nicoladis & Grabis, 2002; Isurin, 2000). Language attrition in children usually affects more areas of language than in adults, and to a greater extent. However, studies demonstrating attrition or changes in the L1 are often limited to a linguistic field. And that are thought of as significant within that field, so many studies trying to explain language acquisition are from a different field of linguistics and they are not directly related to attrition in children, and thus are hard to compare with the studies that directly related to attrition in the children.

Consequently, as stated by most scholars, including Köpcke and Schmid (2004b), the age of the speaker has an important role in attrition. Flores (2010) states that several psycholinguistic studies have shown that attrition is much more evident during pre-adolescence, in contrast to the results obtained in studies done with adults. Yet, the linguistic domains are not all equally affected by age. In actuality, critical linguistic aspects concerning syntax, morphology and phonology are more vulnerable than the lexical and semantic areas.

2.4.4 First Language Usage and First Language Attrition

The idea that the use of the L1 could lead to the maintenance of the L1 was to some extent put forward by Paradis (2004). If bilinguals speak their mother tongue at home or with friends more frequently, they can lessen the level of their L1 attrition, more so than those who use their L1 infrequently. Just as revising information can aid in memorising that information, the mother tongue can also be maintained to a significant extent with practice. Disuse of a language system affects the accessibility of lexical items immediately, and will eventually also impact upon grammatical knowledge (*ibid*).

Following the Activation Threshold Hypothesis, we can say that language disuse can result in language attrition, and in the frequently used elements of the second language taking the place of the lesser used items of first language. The idea that the using the L1 in everyday situations can lessen attrition was researched further

(Zaretsky and Bar-Shalom, 2009), and the study showed that there is a close relationship between the process of attrition and the length of time spent outside of exposure to the L1, and the use of it in everyday situations for social and educational purposes. The researchers found that the children who used their L1 socially and for educational purposes, i.e. those who took group lessons in their language, who learnt to read in their L1, and who observed a strict rule of using only the L1 in the home, made significantly less case errors in their narratives and used less code-switching. In line with this then, we can assume that the relation between first language use and attrition can be attributed to the amount of L1 use. The more frequent that amount of time is the less attrition is expected to occur in the language.

However, the infrequent use of L1 cannot be the only explanation or reason for language attrition, so frequent language use may not necessarily guarantee L1 maintenance. For example, in one study (Köpke, 2001b), it becomes clear that simply using the L1 frequently is not enough to protect it. The participants of the study used their L1 quite frequently in their daily lives; however they felt awkward using it throughout all linguistic levels. Researchers interested in second language learning and its relation to the attrition of the first language still wonder about the other aspects of language that may be affected by late acquisition of a language, or lack of use. Suggestions for cognitive processing of language and the nature of its representation in a bilingual, as well as its organization, remain controversial. However, Schmid's study (2007) showed that the role of L1 use in L1 attrition should be taken into consideration, since the study concludes that L1 attrition is the result of considerable L1 inhibition coupled with an increasing lack of practice.

In a different study, Köpke (2001b) examined the attrition of German subjects residing in France (N = 30) and Canada (N = 30), with different second languages in French and English, and with variable exposure to their L1. The emigration of the subjects had occurred after the age of fourteen, and the minimum age of emigration was seven years old. Three tasks were used to assess attrition and the influence of L2 on L1, and the performance of the immigrants in these tests were compared to those of monolingual native Germans. The first task involved image description and was included to enable assessment of the various language levels. The second task consisted of sentence construction with a time constraint for the morphosyntactic evaluation. The third test was a grammaticality judgment task using L1 phrases.

In the first task of this study, the two subject groups consisting of immigrants produced significantly more errors than the monolingual subjects. The type of errors made were classified into categories (lexical, syntactic, grammatical, expression, prepositions, code-switching and phonological), and it transpired that lexical errors were the most common type of errors amongst the immigrants, while syntax errors were more common in the monolingual subjects. In the sentence construction task the morphology processing difficulties were found in both groups of immigrants, as opposed to the monolingual group. All three groups were producing many lexical and grammatical errors, but the subjects who had immigrated to Canada had a significantly higher number of code-switching errors. In the third test, the judgment of grammaticality, immigrants again were found to have more difficulty in the task than the control group; however, the errors observed in this latter task are not attributable to L2, and may instead be due to the infrequent use of L1. As we can see from this study, the bilinguals speaking their mother tongue at home or with friends more frequently and thus being exposed to L1 more can diminish the level of their L1 attrition.

2.4.5 First Language Language Maintenance

It is generally agreed that the survival of a language depends on the degree to which it is used by the members of the community who speak it (Fishman, 1991). Contact with the language itself is one of the most influential factors in first language maintenance. The maintenance of the L1 can be supported by the speakers of the L1 simply by speaking the language whenever it is possible.

Even so, it is difficult to maintain a first language because doing so is linked to two important factors: opportunity and option (Schmid and Bot, 2004). To further explain these terms, people living abroad can maintain a high level of contact with their mother tongue if they are able to find people sharing the same L1 as them, which can be regarded as *opportunity*; but, they themselves may decide whether to use or not to use their L1, which can be regarded as *option*. Bilinguals may come across people in the same situation as themselves and still not use their L1. Therefore, it is not always possible to monitor and measure the contact level, because the speaker rarely has control of it. Furthermore, according to Schmid and Bot (*ibid*), it is virtually impossible to establish the required amount of contact for an individual to maintain their L1, because it is not possible to quantify the use that they will make

of it.

The types of L1 use into are divided into three categories (Schmid, 2011). The first of these is the ‘interactive language’, that is, spoken and written communication with others. In this category, the L1 is used for both the input and output of language. The second classification is ‘non-interactive exposure’ which refers to reading or watching media. In this category, people use their L1 only in the form of input. The third category is ‘inner language’, examples for which can be thought, dreams, writing in a diary, counting and mental arithmetic, etc. In this case, the L1 is used only as output.

According to Schmid (2011), whilst the first two categories can benefit the maintenance of language through input, the third is only an indicator of the attrition process. If a reduction occurs in the use of the L1 in the inner language, such as in thoughts or dreams, this only expresses the presence of L1 attrition. It is an accepted phenomenon that an individual will show higher levels of attrition when compared to others if they have no contact with their own L1 (Köpke, 2001b). The contact with other speakers of L1 can help increase the input of L1. Although, if this input is lower than the necessary amount to protect the language, then speakers will still start to experience attrition.

That input is psycholinguistically important to learn a second language was first suggested by Romeo (2000). The role of input in second language acquisition (SLA) is as important as that of output, by which we are able to judge a student’s progress and adapt future learning materials to their needs. According to some theoretical approaches, such as the mentalist theories, *input* is needed for learning any language on account that our brains are equipped to learn any language with congenital knowledge, and language input is regarded as a trigger that activates this internal mechanism (Ellis, 2008). Thus, without enough input of L1, a speaker can be profoundly affected by L2, and the retention and capacity for continued use of their mother tongue can be jeopardized. According to one study (Fillmore, 1991), the data collected from Spanish families from various parts of England demonstrated that when immigrant children acquired their second language of English, some properties of the their first language started to change when used at home, and if they were younger when they first began to learn English, the effect was more dramatic. This study concludes that the children were exposed to first language attrition whilst they

learnt a second language because of a lack of input and output in their native language.

The concept of a loss of language or of difficulty in accessing a language, is linked to the activation threshold hypothesis formulated by Paradis in 1985, as stated in the previous pages. Initially, the study covered cases of aphasia in multilingual individuals, but was successively adapted to the non-pathological loss of language. As reported by Gürel (2004b), this assumption is based on the relationship between the frequency of use of a linguistic element and its activation, or the ability to access it. As explained previously, according to Paradis (2004) each linguistic element has thresholds that change according to frequency of use and current prevalence. Thus, a lower threshold corresponds to faster and easier access of an element, whereas a higher threshold refers to the opposite of this. In other words, the frequent and common use of an element keeps its threshold low and when an item is not used its threshold rises, and this in turn makes an element more susceptible to loss of access. An item with a high threshold then, requires more effort to be maintained (Paradis, 2004). Bilingualism can accelerate this process because a new linguistic system raises the threshold of the elements of the first linguistic system. Therefore, a first language can be recovered and maintained by means of increased effort on the part of the bilingual.

Another factor which plays a significant role in language attrition is an individual's education level. According to Kopke (2004), literacy is closely related to age, and could contribute to the cognitive reorganization of language that can cause L1 attrition when combined with other factors, such as the effect of age. Therefore, children who did not receive a good education in their L1 are more susceptible to attrition.

As for the choice of language in multilingual communication, a speaker normally has the choice between two options. The first choice is the speaker has is to choose his /her own language or he /she may use the second language. Adaptation to the new society may occur, or the speaker may want to distance themselves from their first language for one reason or another, and thus the second language may then be chosen, and making this choice will have repercussions for the preservation of their first language. If a speaker wants to maintain their first language then they should of course use it. However, in a bilingual society it is obvious that minority language

communities have to learn the official language in order to communicate within their environment, at work and school, and so on. This means that maintenance depends on a much higher level of effort from the bilinguals living in a second language dominant environment. Thus, the acquisition of the language of the dominant group may not necessarily mean a direct transition towards assimilation.

2.5 Some remarks on Kurdish and Turkish Syntax and Morphology

The Kurdish language belongs to Indo branch of the Indo-European language family, which is further divided into different subgroups. The Kurdish element belongs to the subgroup of Iranian languages; whereas, Turkish, Kazakh or Mongolian belongs to the Ural-Altai languages. Kurdish belongs to the inflectional (stem-changing) languages; however, Turkish belongs to the agglutinative languages, meaning that the stem of verbs and nouns are not changed. Person, time, active and passive, singular and plural, etc. are marked by suffixes. The structure of Turkish differs significantly from the that of Indo-European languages.

Kurdish is divided into a large number of different dialects that are classifiable to different groups (Bruinessen, 1989). The speakers of the different dialects agree only partially with each other about the form the language should take, since different dialects have different lexical, phonological and grammatical structures. There are three different dialect groups, the north, south and the south-east group (Zaradachet, 1982). The participants of this study speak the Kurmanci dialect, which is mainly seen in Turkey, Syria and North Iraq.

In many countries, different languages live more or less in competition with one another. The same situation can be seen in Turkey; however the more prestigious language of Turkish is the official, dominant language and is used all over the country. If a language manifests itself in fewer areas of society, it may be subject to attrition. The superiority of the dominant language can sometimes be regarded as the symbolic denial of minority languages. Since many Kurdish people speak Kurdish rarely in society attrition is inevitable, particularly among the younger generations. However, as of the 3rd of October 2005, owing to the political and social reforms required as part of joining the European Union the maintenance of the Kurdish language has eased somewhat. Owing to this process, the state itself founded a Kurdish television channel, which has brought the Kurdish language into the living

room of many Kurdish families. Although some of the programs featured rely on the Turkish language, there are plenty of discussions, the political and social problems in the Kurdish language and amongst Kurdish people (Wikipedia, 2015).

Since the official language is used in many areas of society, such as in education and the media, and owing to a lack of books printed in Kurdish (Malmisanij, 2006), mainstream use of Kurdish is rare, and the dominant language is causing a shift in the functions and use of Kurdish. As mentioned before, language shift is due largely to the preferred use of a language in the community, which in turn influences the subordinate languages. Today we can say that the overwhelming majority of the Kurdish population in Turkey are bilinguals. Since the Kurdish people have scant opportunity to develop their mother tongue, owing to the fact that their mother tongue is limited to use in traditional fields, such as in communication within the family or in largely Kurdish villages, Kurdish people are subjected to attrition to a vast extent. Based on observations in language skills, Opengin (2008) suggests that in everyday conversation many encoders have changed, and in some cities a hybrid language has been created. This language is full of easily identifiable errors which cause the speaker to communicate inarticulately. There can be many factors behind this occurrence, such as sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and internal and external factors; and these are interwoven in the process of language attrition. However, "L1 attrition typically comes as a by-product of language contact, particularly in migrant settings." (de Bot & Hulsen, 2002, p. 262). Though, in the case of Kurdish this by-product is not related to any such migrant settings, but rather to the official and dominant second language that restricts the usage of the language, thereby causing it to be forgotten.

CHAPTER III

3. THE PILOT STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Before large scale studies, it is advisable to carry out a pilot study. A pilot study is required to see if anything is missing from the study, and to anticipate any problems which may arise throughout the process. Mertens (1998) states that pilot study can alert researchers to any problems they may encounter during the execution of the questionnaire and therefore pre-application is a very important process to ensure that reliable and valid results are obtained from the test.

A pilot study examines the validity and reliability of a questionnaire on the basis of data collected from the observation. By 'validity', we mean ensuring that the correct procedures have been applied to answer the proposed question; and by 'reliability' we refer to the quality of the procedure of measurement, to ensure that results are repeatable and accurate (Dawson, 2002). The pre-study helped us to identify how participants understood the items and terms in the questionnaire, whilst we worked to determine the factors that would be used to assess attitude in the study. Pilot studies also function to notify researchers of any issues in the founding ideas of the study, and also to check the functionality of the measuring instruments for the main study. When all findings from the pre-study have been collected and analysed, the test developer can formulate any new additions as appropriate. The sample size of the pilot study, and the manner in which the results of the application are assessed and applied to the different factors of the study. After examining the results of the pilot study and assessing the feedback received from the small scale sample, the final form of the study was constructed.

3.2 Methodology

In our pilot study, we used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilinguals (PLAQ-B), three picture naming tasks and one writing task were utilised as quantitative data collection tools, along with Think Aloud Protocol as qualitative tool. Two group of participants were chosen for this study, first of whom consisted six students and the second group was 435 Kurdish-Turkish bilingual adolescents in order to test the reliability and validity of PLAQ-B.

3.2.1 The Participants and Settings

Six high school students were chosen for the pre-application. They were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, and from the ninth grade of Niyazi Türkmenoğlu Anatolian High School in the province of Van in Turkey. Three girls and three boys (referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6) agreed to participate in this study voluntarily. All participants were bilinguals who could speak Turkish very well, and Turkish remains the dominant language in the region in which they lived, and the official language of Turkey. They understood and spoke Kurdish to some degree, as their parents were speaking in both Kurdish and Turkish at home. All participants had no formal schooling in Kurdish, and at the time the research was undertaken, were using Kurdish primarily to communicate with their non-Turkish-speaking relatives, who were mainly their grandparents. The first language of all the parents of the participants was Kurdish and their second language was Turkish.

Table 3.1: The Level of Education of the Parents of the Participants

Students	Mother' Education Level	Father's Education Level
Participant 1	University	University
Participant 2	No schooling	No schooling
Participant 3	No schooling	No schooling
Participant 4	No schooling	High school
Participant 5	No schooling	Elementary
Participant 6	No schooling	Elementary

As can be seen in Table 3.1, most of the participants' mothers did not attend primary school. The education of the participants' fathers was varied; two had received no

formal education, two had been to elementary school, one had finished high school and one was a university graduate, and he was the sole parent of the participants to have been educated to this level.

Based on the answers the participants gave in Section 1 of Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilinguals (PLAQ-B), most participants admitted that they responded in Turkish even when they were addressed in Kurdish whilst communicating at home with their relatives who also spoke Turkish. The participants were fully fluent in Turkish and it had become their dominant language, as the students' Turkish was categorised as nearing excellent for their age according to the 'Transition from Primary to Secondary Education' (TEOG) test applied by the Ministry of National Education in 2013.

Table 3.2: The Results of the Students in the Turkish Section of the TEOG Examination

Students	Total Questions	CORRECT	FALSE
Participant 1	20	20	0
Participant 2	20	18	2
Participant 3	20	19	1
Participant 4	20	18	2
Participant 5	20	20	0
Participant 6	20	20	0

Table 3.2 demonstrates that the all the participants could understand, read, write and speak Turkish without any problem at all, as their TEOG results show that all students could answer at least 18 questions out of 20 correctly. These results give us a clear idea about their level of skill in Turkish.

3.2.2 The Instruments

Three tools were used in this study; namely, The Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire, Picture naming tasks, writing tasks and Think-aloud Protocols.

3.2.2.1 The Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire

The Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire (PLAQ) consisted of two sections. The first section gathered personal information, such as age, place of birth, level of education and the languages used by parents and within the family. This section also

helped us to source information about the language the participants used with their parents, siblings, relatives and friends. Moreover, in this section we aimed to elicit self-assessment data from the participants about their language proficiency by asking them to evaluate their levels of skill in their first and second languages.

The Second Section of the PLAQ was generally concerned with the attitude of the participant towards his/her first language. This section also focused on the usage of Kurdish, and gathered information on the use of the language when communicating with different people and whilst performing various activities. We posed different statements and attempted to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with each one, and to do this we used a five-point Likert Scale which consisted of the items: 'Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree'.

In order to validate the scale, we applied it to 435 Kurdish-Turkish bilingual adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years old, from Niyazi Turkmenoglu Anatolia High School. As larger samples signify the characteristics of the populations more accurately, the sample size for this study can be regarded as quite good sample size because researchers generally give the following guide samples sizes: 50 as very poor; 100 as poor, 200 as fair, 300 as good, 500 as very good and 1000 as excellent. (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The responses to the PLAQ were analysed using the principal components factor analysis. Prior to the factor analysis, conformity with the factor analysis data was tested and the sphericity test was statistically significant, passing on factor analysis (Tatlidil, 2002). A larger number of cases is beneficial in this situation, with Hair et al (2006) suggesting that a sample should include more than 50 observations. For this reason, we applied the PLAQ to 435 people.

Concerning the pattern of correlation between variables, the correlation matrix should display the values whose coefficients are expected to be greater than 0.30. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test varies between 0 and 1, and the closer to 1 the better. Friel (2009) suggests the following scale to interpret the value of KMO statistics: 'excellent' is between 0.90 and 1; 'good' falls between 0.80 and 0.89; 'average' is between 0.70 and 0.79; 'mediocre' lies between 0.60 and 0.69; 'bad' is between 0.50 and 0.59 and 'inadequate' falls between 0 and 0.49. Hair et al (2006) suggest 0.50 as an acceptable level and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity (BTS) must be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the Bartlett sphericity test that show the adequacy of the PLAQ are as follows:

Table 3.3: The KMO and Bartlett Test of PLAQ

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5702,021
	Df	435
	Sig.	,000

As can be seen in Table 3.3 the KMO test result was 0.921, which qualified as 'excellent' as it was between 0.90 and 1. Similarly, the results of the Bartlett sphericity test were also significant ($c^2 = 5702,021$; $df = 435$, $p < 0.01$). The value of the KMO result was greater than 0.60 and the result of the Bartlett sphericity test was meaningful, which showed that the data obtained was appropriate for analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2007).

Factor analysis examines the variables that are associated with each other in each dimension so that conceptually unrelated variables can be realised, and rechecked or eliminated. After considering the results of the analysis we eliminated five items, items 16, 18, 9, 11 and 5, which were conceptually unrelated. Via rotation method, SPSS divided the items into 8 different factors, however after analysing the screen plot of the SPSS results we decided to use 4 factors in the study.

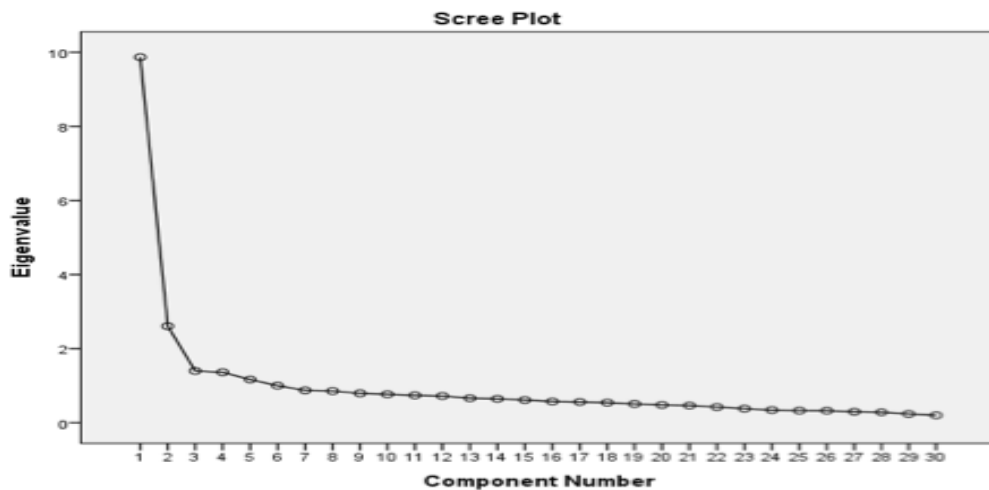


Figure 3.1: The SPSS Screen Plot of the Variables

In Figure 3.1 the gradient of the curve levels out after just four factors, rather than eight, and as a result of this we decided to simplify the division of items by using four different factors.

Table 3.4: The Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9,869	32,897	32,897	9,869	32,897	32,897	4,645	15,482	15,482
2	2,608	8,692	41,590	2,608	8,692	41,590	4,010	13,367	28,849
3	1,400	4,668	46,258	1,400	4,668	46,258	3,583	11,944	40,793
4	1,364	4,545	50,803	1,364	4,545	50,803	3,003	10,010	50,803

Table 3.4 shows that the scale consisted of 4 factors, and that the total initial Eigenvalues of the first factor were 9.869, the second factor 2.608, the third factor 1.400 and the fourth factor 1.364. In addition, the first factor accounted for 32,897 % of the variance, the second factor 8.692%, the third factor 4.668% and the fourth factor 4.545%. Accordingly, the total variance shown in the analysis was 50.803%.

Table 3.5: PLAQ - B: The Distribution of the Questions According to the Factor Analysis

Factor 1- Language Maintenance And Motivation	Factor 2- Self-Efficacy in the First Language	Factor 3 - Attitude Towards Prestige of Language	Factor 4 - Affective Domain
4	1	7	24
6	2	12	28
15	3	19	30
17	8	20	34
22	10	31	35
25	13	32	
26	14		
27	21		
29	23		
33			

In the division of the factors, the first factor represented the participants' degree of language maintenance and motivation. Motivation is regarded as one the most significant factors in the acquisition of a language. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, that is used to measure an individual's level of motivation and affective domain towards learning a language, is regarded as one of the most important instruments in second language acquisition research (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation is considered essential in the acquisition of a second language; however, we believe that it is also essential for the maintenance of the first language in the presence of a second

We prepared the items in the questionnaire in accordance with the two types of motivation: integrative motivation (intrinsic) and instrumental motivation (extrinsic).

Integrative motivation refers to an individual's desire to participate in the speech community, and their interest in the cultural values of that group. In the case of our study, this speech community is the culture of the participants as it exists within a dominant secondary culture. Instrumental motivation can be defined as an individual's desire to gain some practical or material rewards through learning or maintaining a language (Dörnyei, 1998; Lee & Kim, 2008). Gardner (1972) put forward that integrative motivation has a much larger influence on language acquisition than instrumental motivation. However, some of his other studies (1975; 1982; 1985) indicate that instrumental motivation is just as important as integrative motivation for language acquisition. Therefore, we added items related to both integrative and instrumental motivation to our study.

The second factor is related to the participants' self-efficacy in their first language. Self-efficacy refers to the judgements of individuals about their own ability to perform a task (Williams and Williams, 2010). Clément (1978) regards self-efficacy as self-confidence that consists of psychological and socio-environmental factors. In terms of language, the psychological elements manifest as positive and negative self-ratings in language proficiency. Therefore, there is a correlation between language acquisition and anxiety. Anxiety is regarded as a personality feature that is displayed by anxious people in various situations, and Clément (1978) proposes that anxiety is associated with self-confidence. In the case of our study, the anxiety that was associated with speaking the L1 with friends or in public was one of the fundamental reasons why participants chose not to use their first language frequently or to maintain it. Self-efficacy theory is an important part of the social-cognitive theory of human behaviour (Bandura, 1986), and according to this theory self-efficacy affects not only the thoughts, traits and beliefs of an individual, but also the social environment where individuals live. Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs regulate how people behave and articulate the results of their actions in the social environment they live in. Thus, nine items were added to the study that were related to the self-efficacy of the participants in their first language.

The third factor consisted of items that were related to the participants' attitude towards the prestige of their language, which refers to the favourable or unfavourable linguistic attitude of individuals or a society towards speaking a language. In a situation where two distinct linguistic systems co-exist, the concept of prestige takes

on greater importance. In this situation, one language will exist in a more dominant role than the other, and subordinate language will belong to a group who have less political, economic or cultural power. In contrast to this, as a general phenomenon the language of the dominant group is considered by society at large as the more prestigious language, the more beautiful, expressive and logical language, and the one to learn first (Grosjean, 2001). For this reason, languages outside of the official language might be considered as ungrammatical, impoverished or rude; and they might become the object of a negative attitude from society at large. As a result of this, those individuals who live in a second-language dominant environment can have negative attitudes towards their own L1 due to the perception that they have a less prestigious language; and due to prejudice, stereotypes and judgments related to their language and culture.

The fourth factor represents the affective domain, which in this study is related to the emotions of the participants concerning their first language. Languages are emotional instruments since they are spoken by individuals who have feelings and emotions, and these facets drive people to read, listen and speak a language (Ervin, 2000). This link between emotion and language choice were represented by 5 items in the scale. This link has been demonstrated by a large-scale web-based investigation of emotionally laden language use among multilingual (Dewaele, 2002; Pavlenko, 2004). Moreover, research by Pavlenko (2002) and Schmid (2002) provides evidence for the influence of affective and attitudinal factors in the process of attrition. For instance, a study on the attrition of L1 German by Schmid (ibid) shows that German Jews, who immigrated to English-speaking countries as a result of Nazi persecution, lost their linguistic skills in their first language due to the influence of affective and attitudinal factors. Therefore, having negative affection towards the mother tongue might be a factor in first language attrition, as a broad range of negative mood states, including fear, anxiety, hostility, scorn, and disgust. Positive affectivity, on the other hand, influences energy, mental alertness, interest and the determination to do something, all of which can be contributing factors in maintaining a language.

Table 3.6: The Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
S6	,778	,035	,137	,099
S17	,635	,152	,271	,236
S4	,631	,172	,272	,064
S26	,629	-,035	,282	,299
S15	,610	,195	,115	-,285
S29	,603	,103	,170	,140
S27	,528	-,004	,127	,467
S33	,505	-,044	,145	,322
S25	,481	,040	,393	,299
S22	,389	,233	,298	,230
S14	-,057	,699	,245	-,086
S2	-,026	,668	,212	,014
S1	-,132	,629	,093	,126
S10	,191	,624	,043	,401
S8	,166	,611	,086	,314
S21	,217	,563	,226	,228
S3	,292	,558	-,083	,001
S23	,327	,491	-,093	,387
S13	,427	,443	,291	-,015
S19	,208	,124	,809	-,016
S32	,267	,071	,757	,175
S12	,214	,201	,552	,203
S20	,167	,359	,528	,359
S7	,319	,072	,475	,086
S31	,347	,212	,463	,390
S28	,067	,072	,114	,673
S30	,204	,374	,442	,531
S24	,093	,359	,169	,530
S34	,308	,385	,406	,487
S35	,350	,169	,298	,427

Table 3.6 shows that the load value of the factors on the scale is between 0.778 and 0.516 for the first dimension, 0.699 and 0.443 for the second dimension, 0.809 and 0.463 for the third dimension and 0.673 and 427 for the fourth dimension.

Table 3.7: The Reliability Statistics for the Total Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,923	,926	30

Table 3.7 shows that the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, and according to this scale, 0.9 is 'Excellent', 0.8 is 'Good', 0.7 is 'Acceptable',

0.6 is 'Questionable', 0.5 is 'Poor' and values below 0.5 are 'Unacceptable. Thus, if Cronbach's alpha is above 0.6 it is acceptable, and the closer to 1 it is the higher the reliability (Malhotra, 2001). As can be seen from the reliability statistics of our scale the figure is 0,926, which can be interpreted as perfect reliability.

Table 3.8: Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S2	90,2506	500,165	,398	,450	,923
S3	90,3667	504,078	,364	,303	,923
S4	89,3462	497,912	,561	,424	,920
S6	89,0205	504,851	,528	,524	,921
S7	90,0524	495,091	,450	,312	,922
S8	91,1959	498,930	,535	,472	,921
S10	90,9021	486,801	,575	,511	,920
S12	91,0342	492,782	,534	,381	,921
S13	90,1754	488,529	,557	,413	,920
S14	90,2597	501,211	,375	,423	,923
S15	89,9977	504,135	,333	,310	,924
S17	89,7699	490,598	,627	,574	,919
S19	90,8246	491,793	,532	,595	,921
S20	91,6674	493,085	,642	,576	,919
S21	90,3257	489,389	,575	,482	,920
S22	91,1663	496,162	,533	,418	,921
S23	91,0251	491,751	,509	,396	,921
S24	91,5718	500,218	,494	,420	,921
S25	90,1093	493,751	,574	,452	,920
S26	89,8907	491,440	,555	,545	,920
S27	89,1959	503,144	,512	,422	,921
S28	90,6128	498,252	,378	,316	,923
S29	89,5285	501,912	,487	,440	,921
S30	91,3667	490,676	,707	,668	,919
S31	90,5763	485,026	,653	,577	,919
S32	90,7585	488,270	,596	,649	,920
S33	88,9499	509,856	,430	,361	,922
S34	90,5011	481,255	,743	,642	,918
S35	91,0569	490,387	,573	,407	,920
S1	91,0251	507,942	,310	,340	,924

Table 3.8 demonstrates that the total correlation of all items is over 0.30, which is the critical value for selecting an item for any questionnaire. A correlation value of less than 0.2 or 0.3 shows that an item has not got a significant correlation in line with the overall scale, and can thus be removed from the scale; thereby increasing the overall correlation (Field, 2005).

Table 3.9: The Reliability Statistics of the First Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,852	,858	10

In table 3.9 we can see that the first dimension consists of 10 items, and the reliability of the first dimension is 0.858, which is a high level of reliability according to Cronbach's Alpha range.

Table 3.10: The Item-Total Statistics for the First Dimension

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S4	34,1891	53,880	,601	,376	,834
S6	33,8633	54,990	,676	,484	,831
S15	34,8405	54,614	,397	,257	,856
S17	34,6128	51,156	,681	,497	,826
S22	36,0091	55,119	,459	,221	,847
S25	34,9522	52,849	,585	,364	,835
S26	34,7335	50,178	,661	,489	,827
S27	34,0387	55,777	,550	,357	,839
S29	34,3713	54,960	,538	,316	,839
S33	33,7927	57,914	,486	,310	,844

According to the results of the reliability analysis performed for the total correlation of all items in the first dimension, good internal consistency between the variables is indicated.

Table 3.11: The Reliability Statistics for the Second Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,823	,824	9

In this table the result for Cronbach's alpha is satisfactory at 0.824, and indicates good internal consistency between the variables of the second factor.

Table 3.12: The Item-Total Statistics for the Second Dimension

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S1	23,7813	59,792	,472	,280	,811
S2	23,0068	57,431	,531	,371	,804
S3	23,1230	60,181	,439	,233	,815
S8	23,9522	59,447	,585	,384	,800
S10	23,6583	54,582	,634	,463	,791
S13	22,9317	58,630	,451	,244	,814
S14	23,0159	56,979	,541	,361	,803
S21	23,0820	56,779	,576	,351	,799
S23	23,7813	57,395	,509	,312	,807

According to the results of the reliability analysis that was done performed for the total correlation of all items in the second dimension, good internal consistency between the variables is indicated.

Table 3.13: The Reliability Statistics for the Third Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,811	,814	6

Cronbach's alpha is satisfactory (0.814) in the third dimension too, which shows good internal consistency between the variables of the factor.

Table 3.14: The Item-Total Statistics for the Third Dimension

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S7	12,8155	28,758	,434	,199	,815
S12	13,7973	28,354	,528	,305	,791
S19	13,5877	26,371	,653	,549	,763
S20	14,4305	29,456	,580	,357	,782
S31	13,3394	27,645	,573	,365	,781
S32	13,5216	26,035	,691	,587	,754

The total correlation of all items in the second dimension is shown in the table. The results indicate a consistency between the variables of the reliable components according to item-total statistics.

Table 3.15: The Reliability Statistics for the Fourth Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,775	,788	5

Cronbach's alpha is also satisfactory (0.788) in the third dimension, again showing good internal consistency between the variables of the factor.

Table 3.16: The Item-Total Statistics for the Fourth Dimension

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S24	10,6036	18,514	,523	,349	,743
S28	9,6446	17,029	,425	,194	,788
S30	10,3986	17,660	,660	,496	,705
S34	9,5330	16,035	,675	,487	,689
S35	10,0888	17,273	,522	,291	,744

The total correlation of all items in the fourth dimension is shown in table 15. The table indicates a consistency between the variables of reliable components according to the item-total statistics.

3.2.2.2 The Picture Naming Tasks

In the pilot study we used 3 picture naming tasks to determine the participants' level of lexical access to Kurdish language. Pictures and lexical items are thought to be related symbolically, each a representation of referents in a language. These referents may not be understood if the symbols have not been or are not used, as pictures have something of an iconic relationship with the words in a language and Glaser (1992) states that the relationship between a word and the objects related to it dates back centuries in the evolution of a language. Via the pictures in the task, we can learn about the semantic memory of the individuals; which refers to their conceptual knowledge, including the meanings of words (Conginitiveatlas, 2015).

In the three tasks 48 simple line drawings in black and white, which depicted animals, action verbs and food were used. 'Picture Naming Task 1 featured action verbs, 'Picture Naming Task 2 consisted of food and 'Picture Naming Task 3' featured commonly known animals. These 3 tasks took around 10 minutes for the participants to complete, and in order to avoid fatigue or loss of attention and interest, the number of pictures was limited to 48. All pictures were photocopies of in a black outline on a white background. The pictures were handed out to the participants. Six individuals were tested in one session in a quiet room in the school they attended.

The participants were instructed to look at the pictures and write the name of the object or action featured, with the first word they thought. As the participants had received no formal schooling in Kurdish, we decided not to take spelling errors into account. When checking the answers of the participants, we allowed for some variation in each response such as in the case where different names were given for the same object or action, as there are different dialects within Kurdish. Even in the Kurmanji dialect, the dialect encountered within our study, there are variations because this dialect itself includes a number of other regional dialects, the most common of which is that from the province of Hakkari. (McDowall, 2004). For

example, in this dialect there are two common names for the word ‘pear’, which are ‘*hirmi*’ and ‘*karçîn*’, and for this reason we accepted both versions.

3.2.2.3 The Writing Task

The last measure used in the pilot study was a writing task in which the participants were asked to write two paragraphs about themselves their families and their daily routine. From this task, we aimed to elicit quantitative data about their knowledge of the structure of Kurdish, thereby examining the participant’s linguistic skills through written data. The writing method is recognised as a useful source of data, and one that can provide many opportunities to understand the manner in which participants use structures of language (Yang, 2003).

3.2.2.4 The Think Aloud Protocol

The questionnaire was also further assessed by conducting interviews with the students, so as to cross-validate their responses to the questionnaire. A think-aloud protocol is a verbal protocol to gain a further idea about the reasoning behind the choices made by participants in a task. The think-aloud method involves asking participants to ‘think-aloud’ whilst solving a task or problem (Someren, Barnard, Sandberg, 1994). In this study, the participants were asked questions about their motivation and attitude towards Kurdish and Turkish. They were asked about the reasoning behind their responses in the questionnaire, and their attitudes towards the Kurdish language in a second language environment. Their spontaneous responses were recorded with a computer.

There are several reasons to apply the think-aloud protocol, the first of which is that this procedure facilitates the evaluation of coding reliability. Secondly, a large amount of contextual information about the task can be clarified. The goal of the analysis of the protocol is to build the links between the psychological model and the cognitive process in the study (Jasper at al., 2004). Therefore, we asked the participants questions about their answers so that our analysis would outline the information between what the participants said and their context and by doing this, we could learn if the participants answered sincerely or not.

3.3 Procedures

In the pilot phase, after applying the statistics from the factor analysis, which showed the variables associated with each other in different dimensions so that the variables that were conceptually unrelated were realised and eliminated; we conducted the Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire (PLAQ). Post factor analysis, we eliminated five items of the questionnaire, which were 16, 18, 9, 11 and 5, as these were conceptually unrelated according to factor analysis by SPSS. Thus, the items of the were reduced to 30.

As explained, in addition to the questionnaire the tasks in the study consisted of three picture naming tasks and two writing tasks, which measured the level of attrition of the participants. First, the subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire, and following this, they were asked to complete the tasks. After completing the questionnaire, a short interview was conducted with the subjects about the answers they gave in the questionnaire and from the interviews we were able to see whether they had understood the items or not. In this way, we learned about the missing points and the difficulties the participants had faced whilst completing the questionnaire.

For example, the questionnaire was originally written in English but we made the decision to translate it into Turkish; this was a worthwhile decision, because after conducting the pilot study we realised that some of the students had difficulty understanding the items of the questionnaire. Moreover, after applying the questionnaire, we observed that the addition of several new items was necessary, such as: “On average, how many hours a day do you speak Kurdish and Turkish?”, because speaking duration is certain to have an effect on language attrition. The knowledge of the time spent speaking each language informed us about the language contact of the participants.

We also decided to add a storytelling task to the study, in which the participants wrote the story of ‘The Elephant and the Blind Men’ by looking at pictures that illustrated the story. The reason behind this addition was that we were not able to get a clear idea about their levels of Kurdish from the first writing task, as some participants only gave short and simple answers to the task and this was not enough to form a good judgment about their proficiency in Kurdish. By adding the story of

‘The Elephant and the Blind Men’ we aimed to gain more information about knowledge of Kurdish vocabulary and their ability to use Kurdish. Thus, after taking the findings from the results of the statistical analysis of the pilot study into consideration, as well as those from the interviews and our observations of the tasks, we restructured the design of the main study.

3.4 Results and Discussion

The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) application to learn about the relationship between the participants’ attitudes and the extent of the attrition of their first-language. The tasks were analysed looked for evidence of language borrowing, restructuring, convergence and shift (Pavlenko, 2004; Schmid & Köpke, 2008). According to Schmid and Köpke (2009), lexical elements are more vulnerable to attrition as the lexicon can only tolerate a certain amount of change, loss or interference. However, elements such as grammatical pronouns, prepositions and articles are inflexible as they are closed class elements. Schmid (2011, p. 38) stated that the mental lexicon of a bilingual is not only affected by contact between linguistic systems, but also by lack of stimuli, which limits access to elements of L1. Accordingly, almost all bilinguals who participated in our study reported that they had experienced some degree of undesired change or reduction in their L1 due to being exposed to a dominant second language:

Participant 1 : ‘As I always speak Turkish, I sometimes have difficulty in remembering Kurdish words.’

Participant2 : ‘I know my Kurdish is not very good because I don’t speak it a lot.’

Participant3 : ‘I used to speak better Kurdish in the past, but I have forgotten a lot of words now.’

Participant 4 : ‘Sometimes, I cannot find the correct words to express myself in Kurdish.’

Participant 5 : ‘Me and my siblings learned Turkish at school, and so my Turkish is better than my Kurdish now.’

Participant 6 : ‘When it comes to difficult subjects such as Physics, I cannot speak about them in Kurdish. ‘Sometimes, I forget words in Kurdish but then I am able to remember them.’

The students were aware that they had difficulty accessing the lexical items in their first language. When the participants tried to complete a task in their first language, as a result of the interference of language pairs, they were simultaneously exposed to the knowledge they sought to communicate in two languages, and this can cause difficulty when trying to recollect the correct lexical item (Blumenfeld & Marian, 2007).

In the results from the picture naming and writing tasks a deficiency in the lexicon was observed. Half of the participants in the pilot phase were not able to access some basic Kurdish words in the tasks. Instead, they used Turkish words to express themselves. The participants changed the verbal morphology of the Turkish verbs by replacing them with Kurdish morphemes, and this is known to be a key indicator of the simplification of and attrition of a language (Montrul, 2002). The pilot study provided preliminary evidence that the participants were experiencing some lexical and grammatical changes in their first language. In the tasks we noticed a reduction of vocabulary and difficulties in accessing the lexical items of the first language. Most of the participants borrowed a substantial number of lexical items from Turkish. Borrowing items from a language is a process by which those experiencing attrition are able to use linguistic materials from one language to compensate for the words that they have forgotten in another.

In accordance with the findings of other research (Hutz, 2004; Schmid, 2007), this change is related to lexical items within the Kurdish language. It was observed that the participants who had a positive attitude towards the Kurdish language tried to maintain their language by going to courses and reading or watching Kurdish media. They also said that they tried to speak Kurdish whenever they had an opportunity to do so, and that they liked speaking it no matter where they were. For these participants their first language meant a great deal to them and they thereby wanted to protect it.

In contrast, the participants who had a negative attitude towards Kurdish generally thought that knowledge of it held no advantages for them, and that Turkish was the more important language to know. This was one of the reasons that they generally

spoke Turkish at home and school. They also said that they did not use Kurdish unless they had to. In the study we observed that these participants did not want to speak Kurdish because of the reaction they might receive from others in the environment they inhabited. They said that whenever they wanted or tried to speak Kurdish, they were ridiculed by their friends who were able to speak Kurdish better than they were. In addition to this, they did not take any measures to maintain their Kurdish. When asked why they could not write certain words in the writing tasks, they answered that they had forgotten them. However, when they were reminded of the words, they said that they did in fact know them but had forgotten them at the time of asking. They stated that this incidence was a frequent occurrence for them. Thus, these participants had known the words beforehand and they cannot be regarded as incomplete acquirers, as their inability to state those words cannot be put down to their never having learnt the words.

The participants accepted that they had forgotten their language as a result of not using it frequently. Heritage speakers, incomplete acquirers, have incomplete or partial knowledge of their L1 (Montrul 2007), and incomplete or partial knowledge can also cause grammar reduction when it is passed from one generation to the next. This is also discussed by Sorace (2005), who states that heritage speakers may acquire a divergent grammar if the input is only qualitatively different; or an incomplete grammar, if the input is also quantitatively impoverished. However, in our case the students had already learnt the words that they were asked to recall in the tasks, but because of the lack of use of them they could not remember either lexical items or the grammatical elements of their L1. In addition to this, most of the students accepted that they used to have a better knowledge of Kurdish when they were younger. When living in an environment where an L2 is dominant and official, the gradual replacement of the L1 by the L2 is very probable, and at any rate will lead to less contact with the L1. Attrition is characterised mainly as a lack of use of a language that then manifests in the form of lexical access problems (Schmid & Köpke, 2009).

In our case, the bilinguals in Turkey normally use their L2 far more than their L1 because of the necessity and other requirements such as educational needs. The input and output of L1, accordingly, is rare and this can be the reason why they experience language attrition. However, as Turkey has applied to become a member of the EU

(European Union) it has supposed to have been following the structures of the EU regarding its Kurdish minority. Accordingly, the Kurdish language has recently been recognized as an official language by the Turkish authorities; private language courses have opened, several publications in Kurdish have arisen, and a new public television channel called *TRT6* began especially for the Kurdish language (O’Neil, 2007). So, at this point, Kurdish speakers are able to follow programs, films and newspapers entirely in Kurdish, which in turn may affect their attitude towards the language positively.

In order to understand the relation between our variables and attitude, we used SPSS and the results were worthwhile and encouraging for our main study.

Table 3.17: The Relationship between Attitude and Gender

	Gender	N	Mean
Total Score	Male	3	121,00
	Female	3	88,33

Table 3.17 demonstrates that the mean value of the attitude of the female participants was 88,33, which is below the medium value of 92, 12 on the scale. However, the mean value of the attitude of the male participants was 121,00, which is a high level of attitude according to the two-step cluster analysis of the scale. This difference is meaningful; however, since the pilot study was only applied to six people it is not an acceptable sample. According to some studies, gender can be significant in language attrition. In a study called ‘First Language Loss in Spanish-Speaking Children’, females were found to be more prone to language attrition than males (Anderson, 1999). After conducting the main study we will be able to either confirm or deny findings that support this.

Table 3.18: The Relationship between Attitude and Language Choice with Mother

	Language with Mother	N	Mean
Total Score	Kurdish	3	130,00
	Turkish	3	79,33

In Table 3.18, it can be seen that the three participants who preferred speaking Kurdish with their mother had a mean score for attitude of 130. On the other hand, the three participants that preferred speaking Turkish with their mother had a mean score of 79,33. Based on these results we can say that there is a correlation between the language choice with the mother and attitude. Those who had a low score for

their level of positive attitude towards Kurdish tended to speak Turkish with their mothers; whereas, those who had a high score for their level of positive attitude spoke Kurdish with their mothers.

Table 3.19: The Relationship between Attitude and Language Choice with Father

	Language with Father	N	Mean
Total Score	Kurdish	3	130,00
	Turkish	3	79,33

Table 3.19 illustrates that the three participants who preferred speaking Kurdish with their father had a mean score for attitude of 130, whereas those who preferred speaking in Turkish with their fathers had a mean score of 79,33. The results suggest that there is a meaningful relationship between the language choice with the father and attitude. Those who had a low level of positive attitude towards Kurdish preferred speaking Turkish, whilst those who had a high level of positive attitude towards Kurdish spoke Kurdish with their fathers. This again shows that attitude is an influential factor on language choice.

Table 3.20: The Relationship between Attitude and Language Choice with Siblings

	Language with Siblings	N	Mean
Total Score	Kurdish	2	144,50
	Turkish	4	84,75

In Table 3.20 we can see that the two participants who preferred speaking Kurdish with their siblings had a mean score for attitude of 144.50, whereas the four participants who preferred speaking Turkish with their siblings had a mean score of 84.75. Accordingly, we can say that there is a statistical significance between language choice with siblings and attitude.

Table 3.21: The Relationship between Attitude and Language Choice with Friends

	Language with friends	N	Mean
Total Score	Kurdish	2	127,50
	Turkish	4	93,25

As shown in Table 3.21, the two participants whose choice was to speak Kurdish while speaking with their friends had a score for their level of attitude towards the language of 127.50; whilst those four participants who chose to speak Turkish with their friends had a mean score of 93.25. Those choosing to speak Kurdish with their friends had a higher level of positive attitude towards their first language than those

preferring to speak Turkish with their friends, which once more shows the impact of attitude on language choice.

Table 3.22: The Relationship between Attitude and the Frequency of Language Use

	N	Mean
1 hour or less	3	79,33
2-3 hours	2	115,50
4 and more hours	1	139,00

As can be seen in Table 3.22, there was a strong link between the frequency of L1 use and attitude. Three out of six participants spoke Kurdish for one hour or less a day, and their score for level of attitude was low at 79,33. The two participants who spoke Kurdish for two to three hours a day had an attitudinal score of 115, which was higher than those speaking for one hour or less per day. Finally, only one of the participants spoke Kurdish for four hours or more a day, and this participant had the highest level of positive attitude towards Kurdish at 139. Thus, we can conclude that there is a correlation between frequency of L1 use and attitude, as those who had a positive attitude towards their first language spoke it more frequently than those who had a negative attitude.

Table 3.23: The Results of the First Picture Naming Task

ANIMALS	P-1 with 139	P-2 with 130	P-3 with 101	P-4 with 96	P-5 with 74	P-6 with 68
Goat	+	+	+	+	-	-
Lamb	+	+	-	-	+	-
Cat	+	+	+	+	+	+
Duck	+	+	-	-	-	-
Chic- ken/Rooster	+	+	+	+	+	+
Horse	+	+	+	+	+	+
Cow	+	+	+	+	+	-
Rabbit	+	+	-	+	-	-
Mouse	+	+	-	+	+	+
Pig	+	-	+	-	-	-
Frog	+	+	+	-	+	-
Dog	+	+	+	+	+	+
Fish	+	+	+	+	-	-
Lion	+	+	+	-	-	-
Snake	+	+	+	+	+	-
Bear	+	+	+	-	-	-

P = participant and 'Number' denotes the level of positive attitude.

Table 3.23 shows a strong correlation between attitude and the level of lexical attrition. The participants who had a high level of positive attitude towards their first language had experienced less attrition in their language. As we can see from the table, the participant who gained 139 points in PLAQ was able to access all words in the first picture naming task. The participant with 130 points missed just one word, the participant with 101 points missed four words and the participant with 96 points also could not recollect four words. However, the participants with a low level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue, scoring 74 and 68 points in the PLAQ, could not remember six and nine words respectively. The result of the first picture naming task shows that those participants with a negative attitude towards their L1 had experienced more lexical attrition.

Table 3.24: The Results of the Second Picture Naming Task

FOOD	P-1 with 139	P-2 with 130	P-3with 101	P-4 with 96	P-5 with 74	P-6 with 68
Apple	+	+	+	+	-	+
Aubergine	+	-	-	-	+	-
Mushroom	+	-	-	+	-	+
Pomegranate	+	+	-	-	-	-
Watermelon	+	+	+	+	-	-
Garlic	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pear	+	+	+	+	-	-
Chicken	+	+	+	+	-	-
Carrot	+	+	-	-	+	-
Beef	+	+	+	-	-	-
Fish	+	+	+	-	+	-
Milk	+	-	+	+	+	+
Grapes	+	+	-	+	+	-
Egg	+	+	+	-	-	+
potato	+	+	+	+	+	-
Bread	+	+	-	-	-	+

P = participant and 'Number' denotes the level of positive attitude.

The lexicon, as previously mentioned, is a flexible class element of language that can be forgotten as a result of less frequent use. From the pilot study, it is clear that the participants had experienced a loss or reduction in the lexicon of their first language. It is obvious from the study that there is an interesting parallel between attitude and the extent of attrition. The table related to Picture Naming Task 2, which covered food items, also shows a significant correlation between language attrition and

attitude, with those participants with a positive attitude towards their first language having experienced less lexical loss. The participant with the highest score for attitude towards Kurdish in the PLAQ was able to recollect all words in the task, and the participant with the second highest score at 130 was only unable to access three words. On the other hand, when the value for the level of attitude decreased the number of items forgotten increased accordingly. The participant with a score for attitude of 101 forgot seven words, the participant with 96 points also forgot seven words, the participant with 74 points was unable to name nine words and the participant with 68 points could not remember ten words.

Table 3.25: The Results of the Third Picture Naming Task

VERBS	P-1 with 139	P-2 with 130	P-3 with 101	P-4 with 96	P-5 with 74	P-6 with 68
To fly	+	+	+	-	-	-
To jump	+	+	-	-	+	-
To skip	+	+	+	+	-	-
To run	+	+	-	-	-	-
To walk	+	-	+	+	-	+
To climb	+	+	+	+	-	-
To sit	+	+	+	+	+	-
To stand	+	+	-	-	-	-
To laugh	+	+	-	-	-	+
To smile	-	-	-	-	-	-
To Listen	+	+	+	-	+	-
To ride a bike	+	+	+	+	+	+
To swim	+	+	-	-	-	-
To eat	+	+	+	+	-	-
To play base- ball	+	+	+	+	+	+
To play football	+	+	+	+	+	+

P = participant and ‘Number’ denotes the level of positive attitude.

According to Table 3.25, the participants who had experienced a higher level of attrition in the picture naming task that asked the verbs than the other two tasks. Based on the answers given in the task, it is clear that participants who had a positive attitude were also able to recall more words than those who had a low level of attitude. The participant with the highest score for positive attitude just one item, the participant with the second highest level of positive attitude forgot two items and the participants with moderate levels of positive attitude with scores of 101 and 96 in PLAQ, forgot six and eight items respectively. Those participants with a low level of positive attitude forgot eight words in one case and eleven in another affirming the

results of the previous tasks. However, one ‘moderate’ level student forgot the same as one ‘low’ level student.

In the pilot study, we observed that lexical elements could be lost, and Paradis (2004) refers to the memory where there is encyclopaedic knowledge and this memory linked to learning new words and increase the lexicon. However, the lexicon itself is considered as the linguistic field that is most heavily affected by the influence of the L2, inhibiting the language system of the speaker. The lexical field was the field most affected of all the fields of the language. The lexicon consists of a much larger number of elements when compared with other areas of language, and the lexical elements themselves function more independently and are more flexible than other elements of language, and are thereby more exposed to external phenomena such as change, loss or interference (Schmid and Köpke, 2009). These changes within the lexicon manifest as a lack of ability to access the L1 items, and consequently as a performance problem.

The writing tasks showed similar results, with the participants who had high levels of positive attitude performing well at writing tasks. The tasks were by noting the number of Kurdish and Turkish words used, and any Turkish words that were used were considered as a sign of attrition. The two participants that exhibited a high level of positive attitude towards their first language were quite good at writing. The first participant, who scored 149 points for attitude, wrote 184 words and used only 3 Turkish words. The second participant scoring 130 for attitude wrote 112 words, 3 of which were Turkish. The participant with an attitudinal score of 101 wrote 84 Kurdish words and used 8 Turkish words; the participant with a score of 96 wrote 66 Kurdish words and 8 Turkish words; the participant with a score of 74 wrote 35 Kurdish words and 11 Turkish words and finally the participant with score of 68 wrote just 28 Kurdish words and used 11 Turkish words. Those participants who were experiencing high levels of attrition in their language tended to use simple words and short sentences while speaking, and this was also seen in the writing tasks. The participants with a low attitudinal score could not write advanced level sentences or use conjunctions, instead using only simple sentences and resorting to code-switching while writing. The items of the L2 were shaped by the morphology of the L1 system. As can be seen in the following examples, those participants with a negative attitude had a tendency to depend on the Turkish language:

(1) Participant 6

Éz sabah zû dîrabîm ve dîçmê okulê. (I get up in the morning and go to school.)
(Turkish noun) (Turkish noun)

(2) Participant 4

Éz ders axê çalış mişdîbîm. (I study)
(Turkish noun) (Turkish verb)

(3) Participant 5

Kız kardeşamén hemsireye. (My sister is a nurse.)
(Turkish noun) (Turkish noun)

(4) Participant 6

Éz êvarî televizyonê seyredêkem ve dêşme yataka xe. (I watch television and go to
(Turkish verb) (Turkish noun) bed.)

The participants were not able to access such Kurdish words as: ‘şêfêk’ (morning), ‘xwendin’ (study), ‘dibistan’ (school), ‘cî’ (bed), ‘xoşk’ (sister) and ‘dadok’ (nurse). Instead they code-switched to the Turkish words: ‘sabah’ (morning), ‘çalışmak’ (study), ‘okul’ (school), ‘yatak’ (bed), ‘kız kardeş’ (sister) and ‘hemşire’ (nurse).

3.5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the participants who had a lower attitudinal level could not recollect many words in the picture naming tasks, and they could only use a very limited range of words and expressions, and tended to use Turkish words instead of forgotten Kurdish words, in the writing tasks. The pilot study has shown that participants’ attitudes play an important role in first language attrition. In other words, a positive attitude towards the L1 and its culture seems highly significant in L1 maintenance and seems leads to less attrition in the language; as there is a positive correlation between the participants’ attitudes and language maintenance. Those having a more favourable attitude towards their first language are more likely to maintain their mother tongue. Therefore, the pilot study has shown that a further and more comprehensive investigation regarding the relationship between attitude and language attrition would be worthwhile.

CHAPTER IV

4. MAIN STUDY

4.1. Methodology

After having analysed the data obtained from the questionnaire, the interviews and the statistical analysis of the pilot study into consideration, we restructured the design of the main study. To measure and clarify the role of attitude in first language attrition amongst Kurdish bilingual adolescents in Turkey, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative methods seek to study phenomena by describing, identifying, analysing and explaining them by expressing problem field with variables and statistical sizes (Gall et al., 2007). This type of research aims to obtain information on a number of factors, and to express this information in terms of number; allowing a statistical analysis of patterns in the data matrix (Hellevik, 2002). Quantitative research focuses on formal, structured, and nonstandard approaches the results of which are presented in terms of numbers, and can be applied generally across a larger expanse of the population.

In qualitative research the opinions, intentions and attitudes of those interviewed are central to the research. Data collection methods in qualitative research are characterised by a dynamic interaction between the researcher and those interviewed, and the researcher becomes an important instrument both in data collection and in the interpretation of data (Kleven, 2011). The results of qualitative research are presented in the form of quotes and cannot be generalised to a population. In this study both methods were used because quantitative and qualitative methods are often seen as complementary to each other and can thus be used in a single study.

In our research we collected quantitative and qualitative analysis from Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilingual (PLAQ-B), three picture naming tasks, two writing tasks, think-aloud protocols and informal comments, with the spoken elements stored as audio-recordings. We combined these forms of research in

an attempt to account for our different types of questions, and investigate attitudes and linguistic concepts interactively to see where beliefs and actions interrelate and interconnect (Barcelos, 2001). Through this methodological combination, we were able to trace the psycholinguistic profile of the participants in their speech community, and thus, to gain an insight into and analyse their attitudes towards their first language.

4.2 The Participants

In this study, 134 students (66 girls and 68 boys) were chosen to partake in this study. They were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, from the ninth and tenth grades of Niyazi Türkmenoğlu Anatolia High School in the province of Van in Turkey.

Table 4.1: The Descriptive Statistics of the Participants

Components	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTAL	male	68	99,3529	20,57151	2,49466
	female	66	88,2424	22,62202	2,78458

Table 4.1 depicts the number of the male and female participants and their attitudinal levels. As can be seen from the table, there were 68 male participants, whose mean level of positive attitude towards their first language of Kurdish was scored as 99.35; and 66 female participants whose mean level of attitude towards their first language was 88.24. All participants agreed to take part in the study voluntarily, and the necessary permission to conduct the study was given by the school's administration and Ministry of Education. All participants were Turkish-Kurdish bilinguals. They speak Turkish reasonably well, and Turkish remains the dominant language in the region in which they lived, and the official language of Turkey. They understood and spoke Kurdish to some degree, as their parents were speaking in both Kurdish and Turkish at home. All participants had no formal schooling in Kurdish, and at the time the research was undertaken, were using Kurdish primarily to communicate with their non-Turkish-speaking relatives, who were mainly their grandparents.

The participants can be considered as attriters due to the fact that they have been exposed to a second language since they were born, and studies on attrition claim that a reduction in language ability is expected if an individual is exposed to a different language from the ages of five to seven. In general, there is a consensus that attrition occurs in the first decade, and immigrants or individuals living in an L2

environment have a high probability of L2 fluency whilst at the same time losing their ability to use their mother tongue efficiently (Schmid; De Bot, 2004).

4.3 Instruments

4.3.1 The Design of the Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire for Bilinguals (PLAQ-B)

The questionnaire consisted of two sections (see Appendix I). The first section was concerned with age, gender, the level of education within the family, the duration of speaking L1 and L2, language choice with family members and friends and a self-assessment of the participants, which is an important way for researchers while doing a study (Nagasawa, 1999). Participants completed a self-assessment which involved rating their own levels in skills such as speaking, writing, reading and listening. Self-assessment is the major means of indirect assessment in researches, and it involves focused attention to some aspect of behavior or thinking (Schunk, 2004). Therefore our study included questions related to language choice in particular situations and participants' ideas about their own levels of the L1 and L2.

The second part of the questionnaire covered 30 items related to the students' attitude towards their first language, language choice and language contact. First, questionnaire was constructed in English; however, it was then translated into Turkish orally after some problems in understanding were observed with participants during the pilot phase. The questionnaire was built to evaluate the bilingual experience, and the attitudes present towards the first and second language. It also contained a self-assessment related to first and second language proficiency. The group who completed the questionnaire were bilingual adolescents who were educated up to the level of secondary school, and who considered themselves bilinguals. The PLAQ-B presented the questions in a simplified manner, and these were designed according to the Likert Scale. In the social sciences it is common to use different measuring instruments to measure the hypothesis of a subject under study. The use of such scales has been identified as a measure that can be taken to achieve satisfactory results that are reliable and allow for appropriate conclusions (Matos & Trez, 2012). For our study, we used a five-category Likert scale to measure the level of agreement or disagreement towards the statement. Although some researchers prefer to use seven or even nine levels, since it is the most common

used scale by researchers, we chose to use five levels of answers, which were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither agree nor disagree (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The advantage of using the Likert scale lies in the variability of scores that result from using the scale; scales based upon questions that require a more simple answer, such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’, tend to be less reliable than those that have more varied response options (Lissitz & Green, 1975).

Our five-category Likert scale was analysed by a Statistical Package for Social Science program (SPSS), whose internal consistency was measured by Cronbach’s (alpha). The empirical validation was performed by factor analysis in a wide range of applications. After the factor analysis of the scale we divided the items of the questionnaire into four components, which thereafter were the basis for our diagnostic tool in the implementation of the information collected.

4.3.2 The Think-aloud Protocol

The think-aloud protocol is a verbal self-reporting procedure in which the research subject describes aloud their thoughts towards and a cognitive task, and the measures they used to solve it. The vocalizations are recorded and later transcribed for analysis (Kuusela; Paul, 2000). Although the use of verbal protocols as a research tool was criticised during its application in psychological experiments in the early twentieth century, they are now widely used in research to process information, assess meta-awareness in multilingualism and to monitor pronunciation strategies, and so on (Wrembel, 2011).

For the verbal protocols, 14 participants were chosen from the 134 people who participated in the PLAQ-B according to their scores for attitude. These participants were divided into two groups: the ‘Low Level’ group, who possessed a low positive attitude towards their first language; and the ‘High Level’ group, who also held a high positive attitude towards their first language. Both groups consisted of seven people. The application of verbal protocols was performed in a quiet room with only the participant and the researcher. The participants were asked questions about the tasks they had performed before as part of the study (which included the questionnaire, the picture naming task and the writing tasks) to investigate what strategies the participants had used to complete the tasks. They were able to ask questions about the questions asked to them. The protocols were recorded and

analysed to learn more about causes of attrition, and to validate the information obtained from the tests and the questionnaire. Some of the questions asked during the think-aloud protocol can be seen below.

- Did you think whilst answering this question?
- What was going through your head whilst trying to respond to the tasks?
- It looks like you found this task a little difficult. Can you tell me why?
- Why did you change your answer?
- Were you not able to remember the appropriate Kurdish word here?
- Why did you write such a short response?
- Why do you prefer speaking Turkish at home?
- Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish at home?
- Do you think your Kurdish is good or bad?
- Why can't you remember some Kurdish words?
- Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish/Turkish with your parents /siblings /friends?
- Did your Kurdish used to be better before starting school?

In asking these questions we aimed to double check the answers the participants gave in PLAQ-B, and we were also able to learn the reasons why the participants experienced language attrition. The qualitative property of the think-aloud protocol is somewhat subjective, as it involves both the conscious and subconscious interpretations of the participants. This method, in which the participant is required to speak aloud while solving a problem or perform a task, is a good way to obtain necessary information. In this context, the think-aloud method is recognized as a useful source of data, and can provide ample opportunities to unravel the underlying psychological mechanisms and structures of knowledge for the solution of human problems in job-specific activities; i.e. in problem solving, reading, writing, second language learning, counselling, business and the study of individual-computer interactions, etc. (Yang, 2003).

4.3.3 The Picture Naming Tasks

To gain an understanding of the scope of the mental lexicon of each participant three picture naming tasks were used (see Appendices II, III and IV). The tasks consisted of 48 pictures. Of these, 16 were related to animals, 16 were related to food and the remaining 16 were composed of action verbs. The average time taken to complete the tasks was 15 minutes. The pictures were simple monochrome line drawings, and depicted animals, action verbs and fruit and vegetables. All pictures were photocopies of printed pictures, in a black outline on a white background.

The pictures were handed out to the participants, who were instructed to write the first word for the name of the object depicted that came to mind. Since they had undertaken no formal schooling in Kurdish we decided not to take spelling errors into account. Owing to the different dialects of Kurmanji, we accepted different names for the same item. Throughout the process, we were aided by Teaching Assistant Hacı Yılmaz from the Kurdish Language and Literature Department of Yüzüncü Yıl University in Van, Turkey.

The first picture naming task was composed of action verbs, which were: ‘fly’, ‘jump’, ‘skip’, ‘run’, ‘walk’, ‘climb’, ‘sit’, ‘stand’, ‘laugh’, ‘smile’, ‘listen to music’, ‘ride a bike’, ‘swim’, ‘eat’, ‘play baseball’ and ‘play football’.

The second picture naming task consisted of the following food items: ‘apple’, ‘aubergine’, ‘mushroom’, ‘pomegranate’, ‘watermelon’, ‘garlic’, ‘pear’, ‘carrot’, ‘chicken’, ‘beef’, ‘fish’, ‘milk’, ‘grapes’, ‘egg’, ‘potato’ and ‘bread’.

The third picture naming task asked the names of some commonly known animals, which were: ‘goat’, ‘lamb’, ‘cat’, ‘duck’, ‘cockerel’ (‘chicken’ was also accepted), ‘horse’, ‘cow’, ‘rabbit’, ‘mouse’, ‘pig’, ‘frog’, ‘dog’, ‘fish’, ‘lion’, ‘snake’ and ‘bear’.

4.3.4 The Writing Task

Speaking and writing are considered to be more vulnerable to attrition than the other skills, namely listening and reading (Tomiyama, 1999). The assessment of the participants’ writing was important, because writing is an essential dimension of literacy and is therefore fundamental to literacy and language acquisition (Soares, 1999). Two different writing tasks (see Appendices V and IV) were given to the

participants. The first task was concerned with the participants' own experience of school, family, hobbies and their daily routine, and was conducted in Kurdish. The second task was a story telling task called 'The Elephant and the Blind Men', for which the participants were asked to write a paragraph consisting of at least ten sentences in Kurdish. In this task, the level of attrition was determined by counting the number of Kurdish words and Turkish words used, as well as the use of longer and more complicated sentences with the correct conjunctions. The two writing tasks took the students 30 minutes to complete. We used Bauer and Pölzleitner's 'Range of Grammar and Vocabulary' system from their 'Assessment Scale for Written Work' (Pölzleitner & Bauer, 2013) to evaluate the participants' writing level, which can be viewed below.

Table 4.2: Bauer/Pölzleitner's Assessment Scale for Written Work (2013)

Range of	Grammar and Vocabulary	20
Excellent to very good	Wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures to express valid ideas efficiently	20
	Ambitious attempts at advanced, idiomatic language	19
		18
Good	Good range of appropriate vocabulary and structures	17
	Ambitious attempts at advanced language	16
Average	Moderate range of structures and vocabulary	15
		14
Fair	Limited range of vocabulary and structures; very simple	13
	Evidence of direct translation; interference from mother tongue	12
Poor to very poor	Inadequate range of structures and vocabulary	11
	Lack of vocabulary obscures communication; essentially translation	10-4

As depicted in Table 4.2, the scale uses five categories of measurement. The first category is 'Excellent to very good', which implies that the candidate can use a wide range of words efficiently and does not need to resort to a second language in their writing. The second categorical level is 'Good' and this means that a satisfactory number of words have been used in an appropriate way in the first language. The third category is 'Average', and at this level participants can access a moderate range of vocabulary while writing, but may use several Turkish words in place of Kurdish words. Following this, the next category is 'Fair', and this means that participants can only access a limited range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and, as in the case of our study, tend to use many Turkish words instead of first language items.

Finally, the last category is “Poor to very poor”, in which participants cannot access most of the lexical and grammatical items of their mother tongue.

4.4 Results and Discussion

This study was carried out with the aim of learning whether there is a link between attitude and first language attrition, and from the results of our study it is apparent that there is a statistically meaningful relationship between the two. The results supporting our thesis came from various tasks, as outlined in the previous paragraphs. Attitude has an effect upon almost every aspect of our lives, and learning process and psychology designates the layout connected to the judgment of certain objects of perception or imagination - that is, the tendency of a person to judge anything -including language- as good or bad, desirable or undesirable (Vogel, Bohner & Wanke, 2014).

Table 4.3: The Results of the Participants as Descriptive Statistics

Components	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
TOTAL	134	91,00	51,00	142,00	12580,00	93,8806	22,23458
Factor 1	134	38,00	11,00	49,00	5111,00	38,1418	7,51955
Factor 2	134	35,00	9,00	44,00	3784,00	28,2388	8,91495
Factor 3	134	24,00	6,00	30,00	2039,00	15,2164	5,72734
Factor 4	134	20,00	5,00	25,00	1646,00	12,2836	4,89838
Valid N	134						

Table 4.3 gives us information about the distributions of our variables and depicts the participants’ descriptive statistics according to their attitudinal scores and the descriptive section of our study was arranged according to the results of the SPSS analysis. As shown in table 24, the mean score of the 134 participants was 93.88 (SD= +/- 22,23), the minimum score was 51.00 and the maximum score was 142.00 for the total dimension.

The PLAQ-B was divided into four components: ‘Language Maintenance and Motivation’ (Factor 1), ‘Self- Efficacy in the First Language’ (Factor 2), ‘Attitude Towards the Prestige of the Language’ (Factor 3) and ‘The Affective Dimension’ (Factor 4). In factor 1 the mean score was 38.14 (SD= +/- 7.51), the minimum score

was 11.00 and the maximum score was 49.00. In factor 2 the mean score was 28.14 (SD= +/- 8.91), the minimum score was 9.00 and the maximum score was 44.00. In the case of factor 3, the mean score was 15.21 (SD= +/- 5.72), the minimum score was 6.00 and the maximum score was 30.00. Finally, in factor 4 the mean score was 12.28 (SD= +/- 4.89), the minimum score was 5.00 and the maximum score was 25.00.

Table 4.4: The Two-Step Cluster Analysis of the Participants

Cluster	N	MEAN	SD	% of Combined
LOW	33	63,3333	7,89647	24,6%
MODERATE	54	92,1296	8,04714	40,3%
HIGH	47	117,3404	8,72098	35,1%

From the results of the Two-Step Cluster Analysis, we divided the participants into three groups of low, moderate and high scores. The group with a low level of positive attitude towards their L1 consisted of 33 people, and the mean score for attitude of the group was 63.33 (SD= +/- 7.89). The second group with a moderate level of positive attitude was composed of 54 people and their mean score for attitude was 92.12 (SD= +/- 8.04). The final group, those with a high level of positive attitude, included 47 participants and the mean score of this group was 117.34 (SD= +/- 8.72).

After evaluating the tasks completed by the participants, we concluded that 80 points and below was appropriate as the mark of a low score. Therefore, the mean ratio for the low level group was 63.33 (SD= +/- 16.33), and thus the number of the participants increased to 39. The ratio of the moderate level group was accepted as 92.12 (SD= +/- 11.00), and so between 81 and 105 points was considered a moderate score, and the number of participants reduced to 48. Finally, the ratio of 105 and over was considered a high score for this scale, and accordingly, the number of the participants in this group did not change and remained as 47 participants.

Table 4.5: T-test for Equality of Means by Gender Variance

Dimensions		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total	Equal variances assumed	2,976	132	,003
	Equal variances not assumed	2,972	129,980	,004
Factor 1	Equal variances assumed	,858	132	,393
	Equal variances not assumed	,857	131,337	,393
Factor 2	Equal variances assumed	4,375	132	,000
	Equal variances not assumed	4,360	122,967	,000
Factor 3	Equal variances assumed	2,086	132	,039
	Equal variances not assumed	2,090	130,430	,039
Factor 4	Equal variances assumed	1,950	132	,053
	Equal variances not assumed	1,952	131,837	,053

As can be seen in Table 4.5, the mean score for attitude of the 68 male participants ($M=99.352$ $Std=20.571$) was higher than the mean score for score of the 66 female participants ($M=88.242$ $Std=22.6220$). When we look at the dimensions, $t=2.976$; $df=132$ and $p=0.003$ for the total factors $t=858$; $df=132$ and $p=0.393$, which is not statistically meaningful. For the second factor $t=4.375$; $df=132$ and $p=0.000$, and this has a very high significance. When we look at the third factor we can see that $t=2.086$; $df=132$ and $p=0.39$, demonstrating statistical significance. Finally, the fourth factor is not significant according to the statistics ($t=1.950$; $df=132$ and $p=0.053$).

From the figures in the table we can infer that there is a statistically meaningful difference between the genders in the total score and in the second and third factors. Since the value of the second factor is very high, we should take this significance into consideration.

The second factor refers to self-efficacy, and this is an important aspect of the psychological mechanisms of an individual's motivation (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1982), the self-efficacy of individuals determines their level of motivation. Therefore, self-efficacy influences the choice of course of action, goal setting and the amount of effort and perseverance in the pursuit of these goals. The female participants had a lower score of attitude towards their first language than the

male participants in the factor of self-efficacy. An individual's self-efficacy acts as a mediator between their actual capability (their skills, knowledge) and performance. That is, other factors that also contribute to performance may not yield a positive result unless there is a strong sense of self-efficacy in individuals. In an academic context, if a person engaging in learning activities believes in his/her knowledge, talents and skills, he/she can acquire new knowledge, master content, improve his/her skills, etc. Those individuals who have a strong sense of self-efficacy will select activities and strategies according to their beliefs, and those activities may be performed or abandoned because they have enough self-efficacy to know that which activity is wrong or right for them. Individuals can abandon their goals or course of action if they have a lack of encouragement or a lack of self-efficacy.

Finally, we must mention the effects of self-efficacy beliefs on self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learners are characterised as active learners who manage their own process of learning and motivation effectively and flexibly. They set goals for themselves and direct their efforts to reach them by monitoring their own motivation, depending on the requirements of each task. They have broad cognitive and metacognitive strategies of learning and they are able to select these to use and implement change as needed.

The antithesis of self-efficacy is having no self-regulations; and since they are not self-regulated individuals, they are not motivated, independent, active participants in their learning process (Zimmerman, 2000). In line with this, our study also showed that the participants who had a low level of self-efficacy did not have the necessary motivation to maintain their mother tongue. Yet in the case of our study, the difference in gender is particularly interesting, as this difference may not be explained only by low level self-efficacy in the female participants. It may be that they were affected by the domineering culture more than their male counterparts; for instance, they may have spent more time watching television or going out shopping than the males in the study and if this is the case, it may have led to more exposure to the dominant culture, and this may account for an apparent difference in attitude.

Very little research has been done to explore the relationship between gender and first language attrition. Yağmur (1997) proposed that there could be a link between language change and the sex of individuals, yet he stated that this variable should be explained with sociolinguistic variables rather than gender alone. Accordingly, the

results of our study showing that male participants had a more positive attitude towards their first language than female participants, cannot be explained by biology alone. For example, the attitude of the male participants may be related to sociolinguistic reasons. During the think-aloud protocol participants stated that it was their fathers who urged them to speak Kurdish at home and not their mothers, which might have led to the role of maintaining the language passing to boys rather than girls. According to my observations during the study, male participants were more politically motivated to maintain their first-language than female participants. People who are politically motivated could have the necessary ambition and perseverance to maintain an essential part of their culture.

Language starts in family environment and the ‘intergenerational transmission’ of a language (Fishman, 1991) is home. When parents use their first language as their main tool of communication the children will acquire the language. However, when home language shifts to second language frequently, native language will come to the edge of being forgotten by family members. Nevertheless, according to Schmid (2011) the emigrants trying to maintain their L1 as a home language and encouraging their children to learn and speak it have found it nearly impossible, due to massive influence of L2. Our study puts forward that attitude has an important role on language choice at home with family members and the results below are in line with our hypothesis.

Table 4.6: The Group Statistics of Participants by Language Preference with Mother

Dimension	Languages	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Kurdish	68	107,1912	14,58097
	Turkish	66	80,1667	20,39878
Factor 1	Kurdish	68	41,1618	4,77121
	Turkish	66	35,0303	8,53584
Factor 2	Kurdish	68	33,7353	6,00402
	Turkish	66	22,5758	7,82906
Factor 3	Kurdish	68	17,6324	5,19731
	Turkish	66	12,7273	5,18443
Factor 4	Kurdish	68	14,6618	4,32145
	Turkish	66	9,8333	4,22295

As Table 4.6 shows, in total the 68 participants who preferred speaking Kurdish with their mother had a high score for attitude towards their first language (M=107.192; SD=14.580), and the 66 participants who preferred not to speak Kurdish with their mother had a low score for attitude towards their first language (M=80.1667;

SD=20.398). Similar scores for these groupings can be seen across other factors. In the first factor for example, 68 participants had a high score for attitude (M=41.161; SD=4.771) whereas 66 participants had a low score (M=35,030; SD=8,535).

The second factor showed similar results, as those participants who preferred to speak Kurdish with their mother had a more positive attitude towards their first language (M=3.735; SD= 6.004), and those who spoke Turkish with their mother had a lower score in this factor (M=22.575; SD=7.829).

Again, looking at the third factor we can see that the participants who chose to use Kurdish while speaking with their mothers had a more positive attitude towards their first language (M=17.632; SD=5.197), whereas those who chose Turkish with their mother had a less positive attitude towards Kurdish.

In the fourth factor, the group speaking Kurdish with their mothers once more achieved a higher score for their attitude towards their first language (M=14.661; SD= 4.321), whilst the group speaking Turkish received a lower score (M=9.833; SD=4.222).

The study clearly shows that there is a close relationship between the attitude towards the first language and an individual's language choice with their mother, and this can be seen throughout all four factors; including language maintenance, motivation, self-efficacy, attitude towards the prestige of the language and the affective dimension. To be able to maintain their mother tongue an individual's beliefs, attitude, acceptance of their culture, and thereby language preference and commitment to the language, are important.

Some studies have found that there is a correlation between motivation, self-efficacy and language learning, and our study shows that there is also an association between these two variables and language maintenance. For example, Savia (2008) found significant and positive correlations between self-efficacy and metacognition, which is related to setting goals and plans for learning activities, the organisation and memorisation of information and the evaluation of results. Similarly, Zimmerman (1988), when analysing the use of learning strategies and self-efficacy in performing verbal tasks in mathematical education, found that beliefs of self-efficacy were linked positively to the use of learning strategies.

Our study shows that attitude towards a first language might be correlated with skills, beliefs of self-efficacy, social factors and the influence of parents. In order to get a statistical value for the relationship between attitude and language choice an independent sample *t*-test was conducted, and Table 4.7 below shows the results of this.

Table 4.7: T-test for Equality of Means in Language Choice with Mother

Dimensions		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total	Equal variances assumed	8,843	132	,000	27,02451
	Equal variances not assumed	8,800	117,435	,000	27,02451
Factor 1	Equal variances assumed	5,152	132	,000	6,13146
	Equal variances not assumed	5,112	101,357	,000	6,13146
Factor 2	Equal variances assumed	9,276	132	,000	11,15954
	Equal variances not assumed	9,239	121,864	,000	11,15954
Factor 3	Equal variances assumed	5,469	132	,000	4,90508
	Equal variances not assumed	5,469	131,900	,000	4,90508
Factor 4	Equal variances assumed	6,539	132	,000	4,82843
	Equal variances not assumed	6,541	131,993	,000	4,82843

We can see from Table 4.7 that there is a strong link between the attitude of the participant and their language choice with their mother. In the ‘total’ dimension the relationship is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 8.85$). We found the same meaningful result for the first factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5.152$), the second factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 9.276$), the third factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5.469$) and the fourth factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 6.539$). Our study suggests that having a positive or negative attitude towards the first language has a statistically significant influence on an individual’s language choice with their mother.

Over time, a notable number of minority languages have been exposed to language shift, because when children of minority languages participate in school related activities they start to use media printed in the majority language, and they gradually become more assimilated into the dominant society and thus its official language. This could result in such children feeling less positive towards their mother language

and thereby using it less frequently. As far as was observed in this study, attitude towards the maintenance of the Kurdish language changed from one family to another. Some families were very eager to maintain their language and to try their best to teach the language to their children; whereas other families wanted to assimilate into Turkish culture, and to teach their children Turkish as soon as possible. The home has often been cited as a key element in language maintenance: If a language is not maintained in the home domain, then it cannot be maintained elsewhere. (Clyne & Kipp, 1999). Whilst conducting interviews with the participants of our study one participant (Participant -12) said that his family speaks Kurdish in the home and does not like him to speak Turkish but he claimed to always respond in Turkish. He further stated that his family force him to speak Kurdish, but that he dislikes speaking it, as he does not feel relaxed and comfortable while speaking Kurdish and cannot express himself easily in his mother tongue.

According to Brito (1998), the dimensionality of attitude depends on certain variables. The attitude one takes towards a language is related to anxiety, their skills, beliefs of self-efficacy and social factors, and is influenced by parents; it is dependent on gender and is affected by attitude and motivation. During the think-aloud protocol the participants were asked why they preferred speaking Kurdish or Turkish with their mothers, and we believe that their answers could contribute to an understanding of the relationship between the variables of language choice and attitude.

(1)

Researcher: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

Participant 4: Because I'm bad at speaking my native language. I've been exposed to Turkish since I started school. Turkish is generally used in almost every part of life. That's why, I've lost my Kurdish speaking ability day-by-day. Because of these reasons, I speak Turkish not only with my parents but also with my friends, my sisters and brothers, etc.

Here we can understand that the participant has a low level of self-efficacy when speaking their native language, and that the use of the dominant language can also lead to the attrition of the first language. This occurrence is not abnormal and can be seen in many parts of the world, especially among immigrants in different countries.

Montrul (2013) points out two more factors in language of acquisition, and these are important to gain an idea of the linguistic profile of an individual. The first is the functional dimension of the language and the second the socio-political dimension of the language. This can be described in terms of the primary language environment, wherein the primary language is the dominant language of the individual, and the second is where the majority language is the second language in every aspect of social life. In Turkey the Turkish language is spoken everywhere and in all situations, and the participants of our study felt that they forgot their language because of this. The ‘intergenerational transmission’ of a language is when parents spend time teaching their native language to their children, thus ensuring the continuity of the language in question (Fishman, 1991). So, if a family start to use the second language as their main tool of communication the individuals within the family will naturally begin to forget their mother tongue.

However, language attrition cannot be explained only by the attitude of the family towards the language. There are also a number of other reasons for the intergenerational transmission of a language, one of which is the loyalty of the main language group and another is the ‘usefulness’ of the language (Strubell, 2001). If the language community does not have a positive attitude towards the language, as is revealed in our study, the language can be ignored and forgotten. Furthermore, the participants who had a less positive attitude towards their language also saw their first language as lacking in usefulness. The data from our study indicates that the beliefs and attitudes of individuals are decisive factors in the language development of a person. The family has an important role in language maintenance since parents are one of the most influential factors in a person’s life. We asked the same question to another participant and we received a response related to language status, which is the third factor in PLAQ-B:

(2)

Researcher: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

Participant 12: When I started school I couldn’t speak Turkish and because of this at times I was exposed to bad treatment from my teachers, and also my friends looked down on me. When I spoke Turkish, I made some mistakes and my pronunciation was bad. So, I began to feel that Kurdish was embarrassing. I was even ashamed of

being Kurdish. Then I tried to speak Turkish well, and now I've lost my native language. Now I can't speak Kurdish fluently.

This response raises the concepts of identity and the status of a language, and how they can influence the beliefs of an individual about their language. We can define identity as a social process, that is, the self-identification process made by each individual to assume membership in certain social categories, such as in religion, class, sexuality or nationality (Larrain, 2001). In a study by Faba (2008), the question "What is your language?" was used in a demographic survey, and the question was clearly posed to link to the identity of the individual concerned, and the result thereof is presented under 'linguistic identity'. So we can infer that if somebody does not like his/her language, he/she will probably have some problems with his/her identity as well. The participant featured above stated: "I thought that Kurdish was embarrassing. I was even ashamed of being Kurdish." This participant has a negative attitude towards both his language and his identity, so he therefore does not have the necessary motivation to maintain his first language.

The general perception of the usefulness of a language, wherein language is a tool for social advancement, can also affect the people living in a dominant second language environment. A low-status language can influence the decision of parents in deciding which language(s) to transmit to their children. Parents might hold the belief that knowing Kurdish very well will not aid the social status of their children. As we witnessed in the example, the participant does not want to encounter embarrassment as a result of using their language. A language with a higher status generally carries benefits, but minority languages cannot offer as many opportunities to their speakers in a society. A majority language is defined as a language that is spoken by the majority group of the population of a territory; it enjoys official status and is used in the media and education. A minority language is spoken by an ethno-linguistic minority of the population; not necessarily a numerical minority, but sometimes as a minority of low social, cultural or political status (Montrul, 2013). There is thus a frequent association between language and identity.

From the think-aloud protocols, we can understand that one of the possible factors that can positively affect the attitudes of individuals towards a language might be the prestige afforded to the language. The lower the prestige of a language is the greater the chance of its rejection in society. When an individual thinks that his/her language

is not worth learning or maintaining, she or he can reject it. Whereas, the higher the prestige of a language is the more it is respected, not only by the people who primarily speak that language but also by others who speak a different native language, who such a situation will should arise have more of a desire to integrate. For instance, English is considered as a world language because of its status and prestige. In Turkey the most prestigious language is Turkish, and it can be seen as natural for speakers of other languages to make an effort to learn it when in the country. However, this idea may lead to negative attitudes forming towards any languages of lower prestige in the region, and this can cause the attrition of such languages. For Schmid (2011, p. 96-7), an immigrant who has a strong motivation to integrate into the host society will experience more attrition than someone who is comfortable staying abroad without integrating. We have a similar case in Turkey. The individuals are naturally under the influence of the dominant culture and language, some of them readily want to integrate into Turkish society and are motivated to be a part of Turkish culture, thereby wanting to abandon their own language and culture, which naturally accelerates the attrition process.

Thus, the attitude felt towards a language is related to social issues, such as identity, and is crucial in determining whether the outcome of the acquisition process is an additive or a subtractive one in bilingualism (Schmid and Bot 2004). In the first case, it is an enriching experience, learning an L2 without losing the L1. In the second case, the acquisition of the new second language has a harmful effect on the maintenance of the L1 and can trigger the process of attrition. Therefore, attitude is a crucial factor in language attrition.

Table 4.8: The Group Statistics of the Participants by Language Preference with Father

Dimensions	Languages	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Kurdish	62	108,9516	14,80632
	Turkish	72	80,9028	19,19886
Factor 1	Kurdish	62	41,8226	4,42987
	Turkish	72	34,9722	8,18789
Factor 2	Kurdish	62	33,7742	6,03655
	Turkish	72	23,4722	8,23249
Factor 3	Kurdish	62	17,9839	5,17083
	Turkish	72	12,8333	5,10178
Factor 4	Kurdish	62	15,3710	4,67373
	Turkish	72	9,6250	3,26931

According to Table 4.8, 62 of the participants who preferred speaking Kurdish with their father had a high score for their attitude towards the language (M=109; SD=14,800), and the remaining 72 participants who preferred speaking Turkish with their father had a low score for their attitude towards their first language (M=80,902; SD=19,198). The study showed similar scores across other dimensions.

In the first factor, 62 participants had a high score (M=41,822; Sd=4,429) and 72 participants had a low score (M=34,972; SD=8,187). The results of the second factor showed similar results, the participants preferring to speak Kurdish with their father had a more positive attitude towards their mother language (M=33,774; SD= 6,036), than those who spoke Turkish with their father (M=23,472; SD=8,232). The results of the third factor did not suggest any difference, and we can see once more that the participants whose choice of language was Kurdish whilst speaking with their father had a more positive attitude towards the language (M=17,983; SD=5,170), whereas the participants whose choice was to speak Turkish with their father once again had a less positive attitude towards their mother tongue. Finally, the fourth factor also showed that those participants whose preference it was to speak Kurdish with their father had a higher score for attitude towards their first language (M=15,371; SD= 4,673) than those who had the choice of speaking Turkish with their fathers (M=9,625; SD=3,270).

The results demonstrate that the participants whose preference was Kurdish whilst speaking with their father or mother had a higher positive attitude towards their mother tongue when compared to those who preferred speaking Turkish with their parents. To further see the relationship between language choice and attitude towards the first language we conducted an independent samples *t*-test.

Table 4.9: Independent Samples t-test Comparing the Language Choice of the Participants with Father

		T	Df	Sig. tailed)	(2-Mean Difference
Total	Equal variances assumed	9,354	132	,000	28,04884
	Equal variances not assumed	9,534	130,492	,000	28,04884
Factor 1	Equal variances assumed	5,886	132	,000	6,85036
	Equal variances not assumed	6,133	112,361	,000	6,85036
Factor 2	Equal variances assumed	8,145	132	,000	10,30197
	Equal variances not assumed	8,331	128,867	,000	10,30197
Factor 3	Equal variances assumed	5,791	132	,000	5,15054
	Equal variances not assumed	5,785	128,534	,000	5,15054
Factor 4	Equal variances assumed	8,332	132	,000	5,74597
	Equal variances not assumed	8,120	106,925	,000	5,74597

As is presented in Table 4.9, the relationship shown in the total dimension is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 9,35$). The table illustrates that the results of the first factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5,88$), second factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 8,145$), third factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5,791$) and the fourth factor are also significant ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 8,332$). The p-value is 0,000 in total throughout all factors, which shows that there is a meaningful relationship between the attitude towards the first language and language preference with the father. The participants who had a more positive attitude towards their first language wanted to speak Kurdish with their fathers, whereas those who had a less positive attitude towards Kurdish preferred speaking Turkish with their fathers, though they were able to speak Kurdish. The most important factor in language maintenance is that the language is passed down to the next generations. Language is related both to communication and cultural identity of the any speech community. Thus, the most crucial role belongs to parents as they must choose whether to teach their language to their children (Fishman, 1991). However, with the passage of time most minority languages are exposed to language shift, as their speakers take part in school activities, spend time with their friends, are exposed to media in the official language and integrate into the language and culture of the dominant society. If this takes place speakers may feel less positive towards their mother language and use it less day by day.

It is clear then that attitude plays an important role for bilinguals when deciding which language to use. The results of our study show that the preference for the use of Turkish or Kurdish with parents depends on four factors that form the attitude of an individual towards the language. The participants who wanted to speak Kurdish had the motivation to maintain their language, and because of their self-efficacy they believed that they could speak their mother language with their parents. The status of language was also important for them because they valued their language. And finally, the affective domain caused the participants to have positive feelings towards their language.

On the other hand, the other group of participants did not want to use their first language of Kurdish with their parents. This can be attributed to the status of Kurdish in Turkey, because knowledge of Kurdish in Turkey does not generally aid in employment or carry prestige, and this may decrease the perception of usefulness and the overall status of the language. Similar cases have been observed in different parts

of the world, a study by Boix-Fuster and Torrens Guerrini (2011) showed that the prestige of language influenced parents' choice of which language to talk to their children in. Thus prestige or social status, perceived as the usefulness of the language, will also affect the attitude of individuals towards their language.

During the think-aloud protocol, we asked the participants why they preferred speaking Turkish with their father instead of Kurdish:

Group 1 (low level of positive attitude towards Kurdish)

Participant 4: My father generally speaks Turkish with me and with my siblings, because he wants us to learn Turkish better. He had a lot of problems because of his lack of Turkish. However, he usually speaks Kurdish with my mother.

Participant 12: I like speaking Turkish, it is easier for me and I do not need Kurdish for now.

Participant 24: I think I cannot say everything I feel in Kurdish, so I speak Turkish.

Participant 49: My father does not speak Kurdish with me, so we speak Turkish.

Participant 60: My family spoke Turkish with me when I was a child so that I could be more successful at school. So I forgot Kurdish. To pass exams you need Turkish not Kurdish. My Turkish is better and how can I speak about maths in Kurdish? I don't remember some Kurdish words but sometimes I try to speak Kurdish because I want to learn.

Participant 83: My Turkish is better than my Kurdish. I forgot a lot of Kurdish, so I speak Turkish.

Participant 132: I feel more comfortable when I speak Turkish, I cannot tell everything to my father in Kurdish.

The participants with a low level of positive attitude towards their first language preferred speaking their L2 rather than their L1, not only because of their attitude but also because their language skills had attrited, and when they wanted to speak their mother tongue they could not easily remember the words of their language. Thus, they stopped speaking their mother tongue.

Maintaining a language depends essentially on the attitude of bilinguals towards two languages in a communicative context. The relevance of using one language or the

other will determine the context of the interaction. The participants with a negative attitude towards their mother tongue preferred speaking Turkish because the disappearance of some lexical elements in their language caused problems for them when expressing themselves. For example, Participant 132 stated: “I cannot tell everything to my father in Kurdish.” Participant 60 stated: “How can I speak about maths in Kurdish? I don’t remember some Kurdish words.” Here we are able to witness participants with a negative attitude expressing their difficulties in accessing some words in Kurdish. The more difficult a language becomes to access, the more bilinguals are reluctant to speak it. They lose the motivation to maintain their mother tongue. Again, we can see similar cases around the world; for instance, in his studies on Korean families, Park (2007) stated that maintaining a language largely depends on the family and its motivation to speak that language at home.

The Think-aloud results for the same question asked to those with a high level of positive attitude showed that they want to maintain their language by using it, as can be seen below:

Group 2 (high level of positive attitude towards Kurdish)

Participant 5: Because it is my mother tongue I want to speak it. And also to be able to speak better Kurdish. When I speak Turkish with my father sometimes we misunderstand each other.

Participant 16: If I don’t speak Kurdish, I may forget it. So I speak Kurdish with my family.

Participant 52: Because I want to speak Kurdish, and my father is Kurdish. We must protect our language.

Participant 71: My father and I prefer speaking Kurdish together rather than Turkish.

Participant 100: Why should I speak Turkish at home? Turkish is not my mother tongue.

Participant 104: If I speak Turkish, I may forget Kurdish. I don’t want that.

Participant 124: My father always wants me to speak Kurdish at home so I speak Kurdish

Some researchers consider that mere exposure to a language is not enough to cause language attrition (Dewaele, 2002). Individuals themselves are also either active or passive during language maintenance or language attrition. Participant 16 stated: “I want to speak Kurdish.” This expression shows the affective domain of the speaker, the speaker likes his language. Another participant, Participant 104, stated: “I may forget Kurdish, I don’t want that.” Here we can see evidence for motivation towards maintaining the language. Participant 100 was quoted as saying: “Why should I speak Turkish at home? Turkish is not my mother tongue.” In this quote we can see a reaction against the second language, and the participant has the desire for the retention of her language. The linguistic environment plays a key role in the desire to retain one’s minority language (Köpke, 2004) and so does the attitude according to data we gained from think-aloud protocols. If the individual has the necessary motivation, the language can be retained. Our study revealed that the attitude of individuals plays an incredibly important role in the process of retention. As can be seen in the dialogues of the think-aloud protocol, the participants who had a more positive attitude towards Kurdish did their best to maintain their language. When the effects of being in a second language dominant environment are externalized by the individuals in the speech community, the speakers somewhat voluntarily attrite (Seliger, 1991) therefore the process of attrition is significantly affected by the social context and attitudes of its speakers. The attrition of language is a phenomenon that can be closely related to external, social factors; and occurs mainly as a result of extra-linguistic reasons (Hulsen, 2000). Our study reveals that the attitude of the speakers combined with such external factors can accelerate the process of language attrition.

Table 4.10: Group Statistics of the Participants by Language Preference with Siblings

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Kurdish	29	111,6552	16,57941
	Turkish	105	88,9714	21,11391
Factor 1	Kurdish	29	41,9655	5,30823
	Turkish	105	37,0857	7,71501
Factor 2	Kurdish	29	34,9310	6,90720
	Turkish	105	26,3905	8,53555
Factor 3	Kurdish	29	18,2069	5,18500
	Turkish	105	14,3905	5,61505
Factor 4	Kurdish	29	16,5517	4,49274
	Turkish	105	11,1048	4,33218

In Table 4.10 we are able to see the group statistics of the participants' language preference with their siblings. In the study, 29 participants preferred speaking Kurdish with their siblings, whereas 105 participants preferred to speak Turkish with their siblings. The mean value for the level of attitude of the 29 participants was 111,665 and the Std. Deviation of this group was 16,579. The mean value of the 105 participants was 88,971, which is considered a low score for attitude level according to our attitude cluster scale (See table 25). The Std. Deviation of this group was 21,113.

Our study revealed similar scores across all four dimensions. In the first factor, the participants preferring to speak Kurdish with their siblings had a high score for their level of attitude towards the language ($M=41,965$; $Sd=5,308$), whereas those who chose to speak Turkish with their siblings had a low score ($M=34,972$; $SD=8,187$). The results of the second factor were similar to the first factor, as the participants who found Kurdish more preferable to speak with their siblings had a more positive attitude towards their mother language ($M=34,931$; $SD=6,907$); however, the participants who spoke Turkish with their siblings once again had a lower score for attitude in this dimension ($M=26,390$; $SD=8,535$). The third factor again gives similar results, and we can see that the participants who wanted to speak Kurdish while speaking with their siblings had a more positive attitude towards Kurdish ($M=18,206$; $SD=5,185$); whereas the participants who would rather speak Turkish with their siblings had a less positive attitude towards their mother tongue. ($M=14,390$; $SD=5,615$) Finally, in the fourth factor in the table, we can also see that those participants who spoke Kurdish with their siblings had a higher score for their attitude towards their first-language ($M=16,551$; $SD=4,492$) than those who had the choice of speaking Turkish with their siblings ($M=11,104$; $SD=4,332$).

The results show that the number of participants whose preference was Kurdish whilst speaking with their siblings were fewer than those who spoke Kurdish with either of their parents. The participants generally preferred speaking Turkish with their siblings. Siblings have an important role in the continuation of a first language, and are widely seen as having a positive impact upon first language maintenance (Anderson, 2001). Intergenerational transmission of Kurdish as a minority language in Turkey depends on the family and home environment, and linguistic attitudes are

an important factor in this owing to language contact, consequently, this area of life is important in maintaining a minority language.

The question of why the majority of the participants preferred speaking Turkish with their siblings rather than Kurdish is a worthwhile question to be answered. The dominant language may affect the younger generation more so than it does adults, or, perhaps the attitude of young people towards Kurdish is more negative than that of adults. The study showed that when one of the speakers was an adult, the number of participants preferring to speak Kurdish was high; however, when the speakers involved were all young the number of participants who spoke Kurdish was drastically low. Generally, all social interactions made by young people in Turkey are conducted in the dominant language, and the linguistic attitudes of individuals are shaped by this and by the reactions of other individuals in society and by those of the individuals themselves when Kurdish is spoken in society. These reactions make up the linguistic values of the individual, and these values are shaped progressively during social interaction (Hilgemann, 2004). The linguistic attitudes of individuals are constructed according to the value attributed to the language in the various environments in which the individual interacts, such as at school and whilst shopping, as well as in conversations between friends and people in society, etc. Thus, the linguistic attitudes of individuals are constructed by the dominant culture, if not explicitly then simply by exposure; and they may cause either the rejection of an identity as it is related to a particular culture or a language, or they may cause admiration or a desire to maintain that language and identity (Infante, 2002).

From a Piagetian perspective (Blake and Pope, 2008), values come from an emotional exchange that the individual performs with the outside world and are built slowly, forming scales or systems. Thus, the values associated with the mother tongue are related to socially constructed beliefs, the language's perceived usefulness within society and the motivation of individuals towards speaking and maintaining the language. This may explain why more participants preferred speaking Turkish with their siblings than with their parents. The value system attributed to the language by society may affect the younger generation more than adults; and when those partaking in communication are young, the choice of language is most often the dominant language. The various elements of life, such as the school environment or the social environment, are constructed by and function with Turkish; and these

public fields provide less opportunity for success to those individuals who use their mother tongue. Furthermore, within the home environment the level of L1 skill can vary from sibling to sibling, which may be another reason why the participants more readily speak Turkish with their siblings.

In order to more clearly see the relationship between language choice with siblings and attitude towards the first language, we conducted an independent samples *t*-test.

Table 4.11: Independent Samples *t*-test Comparing the Language Choice of the Participants with Siblings

		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total	Equal variances assumed	5,343	132	,000	22,68374
	Equal variances not assumed	6,123	55,693	,000	22,68374
Factor 1	Equal variances assumed	3,199	132	,002	4,87980
	Equal variances not assumed	3,934	64,309	,000	4,87980
Factor 2	Equal variances assumed	4,955	132	,000	8,54056
	Equal variances not assumed	5,584	54,013	,000	8,54056
Factor 3	Equal variances assumed	3,292	132	,001	3,81642
	Equal variances not assumed	3,445	47,728	,001	3,81642
Factor 4	Equal variances assumed	5,946	132	,000	5,44696
	Equal variances not assumed	5,824	43,456	,000	5,44696

As can be seen in Table 4.11, the total dimension shows that the relationship is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 9,35$). The table illustrates that the results of the first factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5,343$), second factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 4,955$), third factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 3,292$) and the fourth factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 5,946$) were statistically meaningful. Therefore, our study shows that there is strong relationship between the attitude of the participants towards their first language and their language preference with their siblings.

The positive correlation between attitude and language choice shows a relationship that will undoubtedly affect the maintenance of a language. Although the number of the participants preferring to speak Kurdish is low, there are still 29 participants who were determined to maintain their mother language, and in turn their level of attitude, motivation, self-efficacy and affective domain is significantly high.

The role of siblings in language development is known, and it has been known for a long time that children observe and imitate their siblings. Older siblings have an important role, not only for cultural and social development, but also for learning and practicing language (Cicirelli, 1994). Owing to their shared experience, siblings

could be more effective during the language acquisition period. When brothers and sisters interact, younger siblings especially may benefit, improving their vocabulary and background knowledge of their mother tongue through the interaction. The participants who spoke Kurdish with their siblings utilised an important social network, because using L1 with family, and friends is an important factor in maintaining the mother tongue (Fishman et al., 1971).

On the other hand, our study shows that the majority of the participants wanted to speak Turkish with their siblings (see table 4.11). The acquisition of a second language is also determined by the family, as well as the pressure from a social environment that encourages the learning of a dominant language (Cummins, 2000). The role of siblings is not only influential in maintenance of the mother tongue, but they also play a role in first language attrition. The process of language attrition involves many aspects, but the role of the family deserves special attention since the family as a part of social factor may as well contributes directly or indirectly to the process of language attrition. Participant 124 told us: *“My father always wants me to speak Kurdish at home, so I speak Kurdish.”* In this example the father played a direct role in preserving the language, and this itself has clearly played an important role in the participant’s score for level of attitude towards his first language.

However, the role of the family can also discourage both children’s’ attitude towards their mother tongue, and the maintenance of the first-language at large. Participant 4 stated: *“My father generally speaks Turkish with me and with my siblings. He usually speaks Kurdish with my mother.”* The attitude of this participant towards his mother tongue is negative, and the underlying reason could be due to the behaviour and attitude of his father. Families have the most direct and lasting influence on children’s learning and development, and if parents get involved in the process of learning children exhibit a more positive attitude towards learning, and feel more comfortable in new settings (National Dropout Prevention Centre/Network, 2003). In the think-aloud protocol, we asked the participants why they preferred speaking Turkish with their siblings. Though we generally received similar answers, some of them are worthy of discussion.

Researcher: What about your siblings? Why Turkish?

Participant 132: Because they are like me and they cannot speak Kurdish very well.

Here the participant and his siblings are shown to prefer to speak Turkish because they believe that they cannot speak Kurdish very well. Both the participant and his siblings choose to use the best way for them to communicate, which is in this case Turkish.

Researcher: *What about your siblings? Why Turkish?*

Participant 183: *Because we are young and we can speak in Turkish better. We cannot speak about music, games and lessons in Kurdish, and we cannot even argue in Kurdish.*

As can be seen the examples from thin protocols, the participants tend to prefer to use their L2 rather than their L1 with his siblings and thinks his L1 is not sufficient to converse about some topics. Schmid (2011) emphasise this fact that almost all emigrants report that when the second child reaches school age, encounters more and diverse L2 contexts and L2 role models, the siblings communicate with each other in the L2 at home and often become reluctant to use the L1 any further, or even refuse to do so altogether.

Gradual attrition refers to the relative loss of ability to use a language or languages in younger generations due to bilingualism. Contact with a dominant language and culture will influence an individual's way of seeing the world. In the case of the above quote, the participant cannot imagine how they can speak about music, the internet or games in their mother tongue, because the changing world requires language to keep up with new developments and to create new expressions related to these developments. In the case of our study, there are two languages with different statuses, and Turkish has a dominant role in nearly all domains and functions within the community. In our study, we can see that about half of the participants do not speak their mother tongue even with their Kurdish parents, and thus the language is beginning to be lost even within the domains of the family. Moreover, amongst siblings and friends Kurdish is not seen as a language to be used to express current social events any longer by young people. In this situation, the minority language has lost ground to the majority language, and the phenomenon of attrition is occurring whilst individuals try to speak their mother tongue.

Language attrition is an inevitable phenomenon when individuals immerse themselves in a foreign language, and it has significant effects. Words of the mother

tongue that were once commonly known are suddenly forgotten and become unreachable. However, the process of attrition itself is not enough to completely lose a language, unless the individual is ready to forgo using his or her language. At this point, the attitude of the individual becomes crucial for the retention of the language, and one of the motivations for speakers in bilingual contexts to keep the L1 is the family (Mota, 1999). As mentioned earlier, parents have a notable influence on the maintenance of their children's first language as they have the ultimate decision over language choice whilst spending time with their children. Houwer (1999) furthers this by stating that if parents have a negative attitude towards the first language, they may decide not to talk to their children in that language and this can cause children to have a negative attitude towards their mother tongue, creating in the child a rejection of the language in question. The beliefs and attitudes formed in the home environment regarding language will thus very likely influence the linguistic choice made by children.

Table 4.12: Group Statistics of the Participants by Language Preference with Friends

Dimensions	Languages	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Kurdish	13	117,0769	12,03787
	Turkish	121	91,4750	21,72361
Factor 1	Kurdish	13	44,1538	4,29818
	Turkish	121	37,5083	7,54593
Factor 2	Kurdish	13	34,6923	4,98973
	Turkish	121	27,6083	8,98860
Factor 3	Kurdish	13	21,7692	4,63957
	Turkish	121	14,5333	5,40764
Factor 4	Kurdish	13	16,4615	4,35154
	Turkish	121	11,8250	4,77328

Table 4.12 shows that 13 of the participants preferred speaking Kurdish with their friends, and the mean score for attitude of these participants was high ($M=1117,076$; $SD=12,0378$). The remaining 121 participants who preferred to speak Turkish with their friends had a low mean score for attitude towards their first language ($M=91,475$; $SD=21,723$). The table demonstrates that those whose language choice was Kurdish whilst with their friends had a high score across all four dimensions.

In the first factor 13 participants had a high score ($M=44,153$; $Sd=4,298$), however 121 participants had a low score ($M=37,508$; $SD=7,545$). The second factor shows similar results, because those participants preferring to speak Kurdish with their friends had a more positive attitude towards their first language ($M=34,692$; $SD=$

4,989), and those who were more partial to speaking Turkish with their friends had a lower score in the second dimension ($M=27,608$; $SD=4,639$). The third factor also shows that the participants who preferred to use Kurdish while speaking with their friends had a more positive attitude towards Kurdish ($M=21,769$; $SD=4,639$), whereas the participants whose choice was Turkish with their friends had a less positive attitude towards their mother tongue ($M=14,533$; $SD=5,407$). In the case of the fourth factor the group preferring to speak Kurdish with their friends again had a higher score for attitude towards their first language ($M=16,461$; $SD= 4,351$) than the group speaking Turkish with their friends ($M=11,825$; $SD=4,773$).

Our study shows that though first group consisted of just 13 people, their attitudinal score was significantly higher than the second group. The participants of group used the official language with their friends, and a higher number did so than those who spoke Kurdish with their siblings. However, the participants sometimes switched to Turkish with their friends in the think-aloud protocol we learnt that even the participants having high attitudinal score had to resort to Turkish because their friends were not as good as them at Kurdish or because other friends who could not speak Kurdish at all. Perhaps, this can be by referring to Silva-Corvalan (1994), who suggested factors that may contribute to an individual resorting to language switching. The first factor Silva-Corvalan proposed is the subjective attitude of the bilingual speakers of both languages. Having a positive or negative attitude towards a language can influence code switching. The second factor she proposed is the attitude of the whole community towards the use and maintenance of different languages. This idea in particular can explain why 13 of the participants wanted to speak Kurdish with friends, whilst the majority of participants chose to speak the dominant language. The 13 individuals wished to preserve their language and so spoke Kurdish in all possible situations. The third factor she suggested is the relative level of expertise held by a group of the languages present in that area, depending on the specific area, topic, participants and the number of bilinguals in a given community. This factor can determine at which particular times to speak the mother tongue or the official language. The participants who had a less positive attitude towards their mother tongue had the tendency to use their mother tongue only with their parents or at home, and they did not regard their mother tongue as something to be used in the social and educational domains of society. Home is a place for

Kurdish, but school or other social situations are when the official language should be used. Finally, the fourth factor she suggested was the attitude held about the culture of each linguistic community. In our study the scale we used (PLAQ-B) featured a third factor, ‘language prestige’, which refers to the degree of esteem and social value attached by members of a speech community to certain languages, dialects, or features of a language variety (Pearce, 2007). The results show that the participants under the influence of domineering culture and its established language, while choosing the language to converse with their friends.

In order to find out whether this difference between the participants who preferred to speak Kurdish with friends and those who preferred to speak Turkish with friends is statistically meaningful, we conducted a t-test for equality of means with SPSS, and the results can be seen below.

Table 4.13: Independent Samples t-test Comparing the Language Choice of the Participants with Friends

		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total	Equal variances assumed	4,171	132	,000	25,60192
	Equal variances not assumed	6,593	21,689	,000	25,60192
Factor 1	Equal variances assumed	3,114	132	,002	6,64551
	Equal variances not assumed	4,827	21,114	,000	6,64551
Factor 2	Equal variances assumed	2,789	132	,006	7,08397
	Equal variances not assumed	4,403	21,651	,000	7,08397
Factor 3	Equal variances assumed	4,639	132	,000	7,23590
	Equal variances not assumed	5,250	15,758	,000	7,23590
Factor 4	Equal variances assumed	3,353	132	,001	4,63654
	Equal variances not assumed	3,613	15,306	,002	4,63654

Table 4.13 shows that there is a statistically meaningful link between the participants’ language preference with their friends and their attitude towards their first language. As can be seen in Table 32 the total, relationship between attitude and language choice with friends is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 4,171$). The table illustrates that the results of the first factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 3,114$), second factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 2,789$), third factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 4,639$) and the fourth factor ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 3,353$) are also statistically meaningful. This suggests that attitude affected the language choice of the participants whilst speaking with their friends. The participants who preferred using their mother tongue with their friends had a far more positive attitude towards their first language than those who had the choice of

using their second language while communicating with their friends. Our study reveals that there is a strong relationship between attitude and language choice.

Nevertheless, as with the group statistics in table 31, most of the participants preferred speaking Turkish with their friends rather than Kurdish. As our study shows, the participants' language preference and shift to Turkish when speaking to their siblings or friends are closely related to the effect of the dominant language and culture. We tried to learn more about this occurrence by asking the participants some questions about the situation in the think-aloud protocol. We asked them specifically why they preferred to speak Turkish with their friends, who themselves are able to speak Kurdish. Their answers can be seen below.

Group 1 (low level of positive attitude towards Kurdish)

Participant 4 : *We want to speak Turkish rather than Kurdish, everybody speaks Turkish.*

Participant 12 : *Because everybody speaks Turkish, what can I do?*

Participant 24 : *It is easier both for me and for friends to speak Turkish.*

Participant 49 : *My Kurdish is bad, so when I speak Kurdish my friends laugh at me.*

Participant 60 : *Nobody knows Kurdish very well.*

Participant 83 : *I don't know. We just speak Turkish.*

Participant 132 : *My friends speak Turkish, and it is more comfortable.*

There are four dimensions in the scale we used to measure the participants attitude towards their first language, and the second dimension of these is related to the self-efficacy of the participants in their mother tongue. Looking at the participants' answers from the think-aloud protocol, it is clear they have difficulty in speaking their mother tongue, and that this causes them to avoid using it. Because of lack of self-efficacy in their native languages, in many cases of attrition the bilinguals affected might understand what is being said or what they are reading in their languages, but it is very difficult or impossible for them to speak it (Harding and Riley, 1986). The term self-efficacy covers a wide area and refers to the feelings, emotions, beliefs and attitudes that influence our behaviour (Oatley and Jenkins,

1996). If you do not feel competent in using a language you may develop a negative attitude towards it, and prefer not to use it at all.

Factors that directly affect the individual include anxiety, inhibition, self-esteem, willingness to take risks, self-efficacy, learning styles and motivation. Participant 4 declared “We want to speak Turkish rather than Kurdish.”, and participant 83 remarked: “I don’t know. We just speak Turkish.”. These quotes give several hints that the participants with a low score for their attitude towards Kurdish did not have the necessary motivation or affective feelings towards their mother tongue to speak it. Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney (1996) explain that affect is, by definition, an intrinsic motivator. Positive affect involvement sustains and deepens interest in any subject, and these positive factors are relevant in maintaining a language as they can facilitate the language maintenance process. Without this influence individuals may not have the desire to maintain their mother tongue and it can naturally accelerate the attrition process.

When looking at the responses to same question from the think aloud protocol of the group who felt highly motivated towards speaking Kurdish, it is important to keep in mind that only four out of seven of these participants said they spoke Kurdish with their friends.

Group 2 (high level of positive attitude towards Kurdish)

Participant 52: *Because I want to improve my Kurdish, if we don't speak it we might forget it. You can see many students, who are Kurdish but they cannot speak Kurdish well.*

Participant 71: *My friends sometimes speak Turkish but I say let's speak Kurdish and then we speak Kurdish.*

Participant 100: *I like speaking Kurdish with friends because I can practice it.*

Participant 104: *As I said, If I speak Turkish, I will forget Kurdish, so we speak Kurdish.*

Communicative activity is not only affected by knowledge, understanding and skills, but also by individual factors related to personality, such as attitude, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types; and these contribute to personal identity (Yashima, 2002). Our study reveals that there is a close relationship

between motivation (Factor 1 of our categories), self-efficacy (Factor 4), attitude towards the prestige of the language (Factor 3), the affective domain (factor 4) and language maintenance. For example, the participants who held affective qualities for their mother language tried to practice and maintain it. Four participants have the necessary motivation to maintain their mother tongue. The willingness of participants to maintain their L1 can be understood from their responses. “*I want improve my Kurdish*” (Participant 52) the other participant says “*I like speaking Kurdish*” (participant 100). The value attached to the language is a factor for the participant to develop and maintain it. Affective factor in this study cover the emotional side of the participants towards their native language. The development of affective domain depends on both person and society. For Krashen, the affective filter is the first hurdle with the input faces before being processed and internalized. The affective filter of the internal process in which shape the emotional states, attitudes, needs, motivation of the learner to learn a language, and regulating and selects language models to be learned, the order of priority in the acquisition and the speed this acquisition. Our hypothesis of affective domain’s influence on first language maintenance, therefore, incorporates Krashen’s view that a number of emotional variables have a facilitating role in the acquisition of a second language. These affective variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Motivated learners are confident and have low anxiety, so they tend to be more successful in the acquisition of a second language process than those learners have a low affective domain. Those whose attitudes are not ideal with respect to the acquisition of a second language, not only tend to have less input of that language but also they prevent the input reaches to the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition (Krashen, 1993).

In a similar study on the positive effect of group dynamics in a foreign language class (Arnold, 2001) holistic education, a form of education which takes into account the cognitive, emotional and physical aspects of individuals, was implemented; and the experimental group were better than the control group at using language as a vehicle of communication, emphasising the importance of group dynamics. Furthermore, the experimental group performed better than the control group in terms of confidence, self-esteem, creativity and the ability to speak in public. We can see similar results in our study, wherein the group who had a more positive attitude

and a higher level of motivation towards their mother tongue had a statistically significant score in the PLAQ-B.

One of the most important discoveries from the PLAQ-B was that the participants spoke their second language only whilst at school. 135 participants stated that they spoke only Turkish while at school, which is clearly a significant factor in any language attrition they have experienced. Outside of their home, it would have been unlikely that the bilingual students in the study could have found any further support to help maintain their language directly or indirectly. The participants spent most of their time at school and thereby were heavily exposed to their second language.

Kouritzin (1999) analysed the school as an external factor of influence on language attrition, and she stated that it is a natural process, and therefore any interaction with other students and teachers depends on the command of the language used in school, namely the L2. In this situation, if the family cannot provide sufficient contact with the L1 so as to maintain it, the speaker will most likely receive a greater exposure to the L2. It is often with the beginning of school life that a child experiences full immersion in the majority language. In various case studies by Kouritzin (1999) she shows that it is likely that the need to belong to the group and catch up with their peers will accelerate immersion into the second language. As a result of this the child begins to look for ways to keep up with others who can speak the official language readily. Language becomes an inevitable means of integrating and actively participating in social life at school. According to Kouritzin (1999), the full immersion into the language and culture of the L2, and the continuous use of it at school, can be one of the foremost causes of attrition and the loss of the L1.

It is common and natural that school life greatly enhances the acquisition and mastery of L2; however, bilinguals in this situation may not have any opportunity to maintain their L1, and as a result they may start to forget it. In such cases, it is possible that bilinguals even develop discriminative attitudes towards their own community and language. Some families even stop speaking their L1 at home on the grounds that they want to aid the rapid acquisition of the L2 in their children, and this of course reduces the frequency of use of the L1. Such a loss is not only related to the desires of the child and the family to belong to the group, but is also related to the importance and prestige of the second language, without which these individuals could not find employment or lead a prosperous life.

Another significant result that our study showed was that the participants' preference of language changed according to the person with whom they were communicating. This can be seen clearly in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Language Choice

Languages	L with Mother	L with Father	L with Siblings	L with Friends
Kurdish	68	62	29	13
Turkish	66	72	105	121

The table shows that 68 participants out of 134 preferred speaking Kurdish with their mother whilst 66 participants preferred to speak Turkish with their mother. The number of those who chose to speak Kurdish with their father fell slightly, with 62 participants choosing to use Kurdish, and 72 participants choosing to speak Turkish with their father. Interestingly, when we look at the language choice with siblings and friends, we can see a significant drop in the number of participants speaking Kurdish, with the majority of the participants preferring to speak Turkish whilst they were with their friends. It is of course essential for minority groups to make friends, and since the dominant language also dominates social life, and as all facilities as well as public education operate in the dominant language, it is very likely that the student will use L2 much more with their friends.

The psychology of relationships between siblings and friends takes into account the notion of affection and emotion, which might affect language choice. Vygotsky (1991) emphasised the social nature of psychological development and assumed that an individual is constituted in social relations. Therefore, for Vygotsky the psychology of individuals must be understood through their social interactions, since the functions of individuals and their construction of knowledge is determined by their social interactions. Thus, social life and the individual are interconnected, and since the dominant language is often the choice of language in social life individuals might afford it higher esteem than their mother tongue, and this can promote a negative attitude towards the first language. The language one uses with friends seems to prevail in the competition between the mother tongue and the social language in the speech community, as was certainly the case in this study as 121 out of 134 participants choose to speak Turkish with their friends whilst only 13 chose their mother tongue.

The importance of the role of friends in language choice can be seen in this quote. “Like I said, my Kurdish is not good, and when I try to speak Kurdish my friends laugh at me.” (Participant 49). The participant feels self-conscious whilst speaking Kurdish, and when she tries to speak her mother tongue her friends laugh at her, and thus she has begun to stop speaking Kurdish. These reasons may be why the participant had a less positive attitude towards her mother tongue. From the research, we were able to see that choosing to speak either Kurdish or Turkish was motivated by ideas that existed within the community. As stated by Calvet (2002), the relationship of a language and its speakers is not neutral. There is a whole set of feelings and attitudes held by speakers towards their language, and towards the variety of languages that exist in the area, and towards those that use them. So, any attitudes held towards the language by the community may trigger feelings of prejudice if they are negative. We can see from the example above that the participant did not want to be laughed at by her friends, and as a result her language is no longer a part of her daily life or cultural activities because the community where she lives does not take her language seriously. Thus, the community has a role in the attitude of minority groups towards their culture and identity.

As seen above, the attitudes regarding each language present in a society can influence the attitudes of each language community as well. Language attitudes are reflections of psychosocial attitudes because each language has social connotations. It is therefore very difficult to understand where attitudes held in society towards a language those of social groups or users begin and end (Giles and et al, 1977). They propose two hypotheses on this issue. The first is ‘the hypothesis of inherent value’, and this establishes the possibility of comparing two varieties of language and concluding that one of them is considered more attractive than the other; and the second is ‘the possibility of imposed rule’, which holds that one variety of language can be considered as more attractive than the other if it is spoken by a group with greater prestige. Our study also confirms this hypothesis (Which one, just the latter?) demonstrating that the positive or negative attitudes of the speakers themselves depend on the appreciation that the speech community as a whole has towards the minority language (Fernández, 2008).

Turkish is spoken by most people in Turkey, and it is considered more prestigious than the other languages found in the region. As stated by one of the participants, “We

want to speak Turkish rather than Kurdish because everybody speaks Turkish.” (Participant 4). Generally, linguistic attitude is conceptualized as a preference, and the dominant speech community has an important role in the speakers’ attitude towards the status of their language. Owing to this relationship, the attitude towards a language is generally positive if the speakers’ language has a good level of prestige and a high social consideration. On the other hand, if the language is not considered as prestigious the speakers of the minority language can have a negative attitude towards their own language, and this usually happens when that language prevents social progression. As will be discussed in the next table, motivation is also needed to learn or maintain a language if the language you speak affords little or no social status reward or prospect of a better life. We formulated Factor 3 of our scale to try to determine this connection, and results on this can be observed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: The Relation between Frequency of Language Use and Motivation-Maintenance Dimension

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Factor 1	2111,729	4	527,932	12,592	,000
	5408,576	129	41,927		
	7520,306	133			

Table 4.15 shows that there is a close relationship between language, attitude and motivation ($p = <0,5$, $M_s = 527,932$ $F = 12,592$). The term ‘motivation’ in psychology is defined as a set of processes that give the behavior an intensity to certain direction and own way and provides individuals with the drive to complete a task (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2009). Motivation is a kind of psychological energy or tension that activates the human body and determines a given behaviour. So, motivation is responsible for inspiring an individual to perform a task.

The first factor of our scale included some elements that were related to motivation. For instance, the sixth item of the PLAQ-B: “I believe speaking Kurdish would bring me no good.” and the fifteenth item: “I don’t believe speaking Kurdish will help me gain a better status in Turkey.” examined the participants’ level of motivation in relation to their mother tongue. These two items looked at extrinsic motivation, which is the variety of motivation that is related to external environmental factors that can drive an individual towards completing a goal. This goal might be praise, a reward or a life experience in a pleasant environment, etc. In this way, environmental

factors help to sustain the initial motivation to perform a task. For instance, many people learn a second language to get a job, travel easily or to communicate with other people from different countries. However, if you don't believe a language that you speak or are learning can provide any benefits for you, you will lose your willingness to learn or develop it. The participants who had no desire or stimulation to maintain their first language naturally lacked the motivation to help their language survive.

Motivation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon and it is influenced by a multitude of factors. Based on the work of Dörnyei (2005) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) we can conclude that motivation can be addressed from cognitive, social or socio-cultural perspectives. The cognitive perspective, emphasises mental processes, such as the individual's expectations in relation to the learning process or maintenance process. Goal setting for the maintenance of L1 can be important when looking at motivation from a cognitive perspective. As an illustration, refer back to the quote from Participant 16 that said, "If I don't speak Kurdish, I may forget it. So I speak Kurdish with my family." This participant has a goal for maintaining his language and this in turn might influence his attitude towards his mother tongue. In contrast to this, recall the participant who had a low score for attitude and who said, "I like speaking Turkish, it is easier for me and I do not need Kurdish for now." (Participant-12). This participant thinks that she does not

need to maintain her mother tongue and naturally she does not anticipate any external motivation to do so. If the personal goals and extrinsic objectives of an individual do not share a common thread, it is possible that they will have poor performance whilst working towards that goal because they will exert less effort whilst performing that task (Dessler, 2003).

It is also possible to study motivation from a social and cultural perspective because, as discussed earlier, it is clear that the influence of parents, friends, school and teachers have a significant role in the motivation of individuals. Hickey and Grenade (2004) and Turner (2001) approach motivation from a sociocultural perspective, wherein the interactions between individuals, their context and their socio-cultural activity can shape their motivation and perception of anything in life. As we witnessed in the example from the think-aloud protocol, if the parents were not willing to speak the first language at home, the participants also did not have the

desire to speak or maintain their mother tongue. The participants who had a more positive attitude towards speaking Kurdish spoke the language both with their parents and siblings. This means that the parents and the siblings of the participants also had a positive attitude towards the Kurdish language and culture.

Choice and preference of language are affected by the environment people live in. Dörnyei (2010) states that theories of motivation, in general, seek to clarify three aspects of human behaviour: the choice for a given action, the persistence maintained throughout and the effort spent. Motivation is the reason people decide to do something. If they don't have a strong enough reason to pursue their goals, they will not be as willing to see a task through to the end and to fight to achieve their goals when the process is difficult. In accordance with this, the participants who had a low score for attitude towards their first language also had a low level of motivation to keep their language alive.

"I speak Kurdish with everybody at home. Because I am used to speaking Kurdish, my sisters and brothers are also used to speaking Kurdish." (Participant 104)

It is clear from the above quote that maintaining a language does not only depend on the attitude of the speakers in the communicative context, but also on the attitude and the motivation of the people around an individual, their parents, siblings and friends. Motivation can be seen as a reflection of the internal forces of a human, such as their instincts, emotional states and mental energy; and moreover, it can also be considered in terms of behaviour, as a function of stimulus and reinforcement. For example, people learn a second language for a particular reason or for a personal goal. It is an advantage to know the cultural diversity of the other countries. By means of that language people can access information, or may have the opportunity to go to a good university and to access better jobs, etc. Individuals will find the desire and willingness to learn the language easier if they have a good reason for doing so. Similarly, to be able to maintain their first language they need reason to do so from their parents, siblings, friends and society. The participants who had the motivation to maintain their mother tongue had both intrinsic motivation, their personal desire to keep their language and their positive attitude towards their language; and they had extrinsic motivation, the external rewards they gained and the and satisfaction or pleasure they felt as a result of external sources as they achieved it.

One of the most important reasons for first language attrition is considered to be a lack of contact with the L1 in an L2 environment, which leads to a reduction in language proficiency (Schmid and Bot, 2004). L1 weakening by the increased use of L2 is also put forward by Seliger and Vago (1991). Our study revealed another important fact, that there is a close connection between the duration of language use and attitudinal factors. In the case of our study, the adolescents observed were found to use their mother language only in certain family situations, such as when conversing with their parents or grandparents. However, they were found to speak Turkish almost everywhere; including whilst shopping, in their free time, whilst speaking on the phone and at school, where they spent about 7 hours a day during weekdays. They therefore spent approximately 9 hours a day speaking Turkish, whilst Kurdish was spoken for approximately 3 hours a day. This fact can be seen in the results shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Group Statistics of the Participants by the Frequency of Language Use

Dimensions	Duration	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Less than one hour	19	68,7895	14,32395
	One to two hours	51	84,0784	18,65781
	Three to four hours	33	103,8788	11,95763
	Four to five hours	17	110,5294	15,69681
	Six hours or more	14	119,8571	11,81822
	Total	134	93,8806	22,23458
Factor 1	Less than one hour	19	31,3158	7,61616
	One to two hours	51	36,0000	8,00999
	Three to four hours	33	41,0606	3,81559
	Four to five hours	17	41,5294	5,23352
	Six hours or more	14	44,2143	4,40592
	Total	134	38,1418	7,51955
Factor 2	Less than one hour	19	18,3684	5,94615
	One to two hours	51	24,5294	8,05569
	Three to four hours	33	32,0303	5,35306
	Four to five hours	17	35,7059	4,88319
	Six hours or more	14	37,1429	4,84938
	Total	134	28,2388	8,91495
Factor 3	Less than one hour	19	10,7895	3,99415
	One to two hours	51	13,5098	5,11223
	Three to four hours	33	16,6667	4,51848
	Four to five hours	17	17,6471	5,88368
	Six hours or more	14	21,0714	5,48374
	Total	134	15,2164	5,72734
Factor 4	Less than one hour	19	8,3158	2,86846
	One to two hours	51	10,0392	3,65492
	Three to four hours	33	14,1212	4,02149
	Four to five hours	17	15,6471	4,91097
	Six hours or more	14	17,4286	4,30946
	Total	134	12,2836	4,89838

Table 4.16 shows that 19 participants spoke Kurdish for less than one hour a day, and that the overall mean score for attitude towards the language of these participants was very low ($M=68,789$; $SD=14,323$). Fifty-one participants spoke Kurdish for one to two hours a day, and their mean attitudinal score was also low, though still higher than that of the first group ($M=84,078$; $SD=18,657$). Thirty-three participants spoke Kurdish for three to four hours a day and their mean attitudinal score was high ($M=103,878$; $SD=15,696$). Seventeen participants spoke Kurdish for four to five hours a day, and their mean score for attitude was very high ($M=110,529$; $SD=15,696$). Finally, fourteen of the participants spoke Kurdish for six hours or more per day and their mean score for attitude was higher than all other groups ($M=119,857$; $SD=11,818$).

When we look at the first factor, the factor concerned with motivation and language maintenance, the group who spoke Kurdish for less than one hour a day had the lowest mean score for attitude ($M=31,315$; $SD=7,616$). The participants speaking Kurdish for one to two hours a day also had a low score for their attitude towards their language ($M=3.00$; $SD=8.009$). Those participants who spent three to four hours per day speaking Kurdish had a relatively high attitudinal score ($M=41.060$; $SD=3.815$). The participants who spent four to five hours a day speaking Kurdish had more motivation to speak their mother tongue in accordance with their high mean score for their attitude towards it ($M=41.529$; $SD=5,233$). The last group, who spoke Kurdish for six hours or more per day, had the highest score in this dimension. ($M=44.214$; $SD=4.405$).

The second factor in our study was related to the self-efficacy of the participants, and in this dimension the participants who spoke Kurdish for less than one hour per day had the lowest mean score for attitude ($M=18,368$; $SD=5,946$), and those participants who spoke for one or two hours per day also had a low score ($M=24,5294$; $SD=8,0556$). The participants who spoke Kurdish for three or four hours each day had a relatively high score for their attitude towards their language ($M=32,030$; $SD=5,353$), and so too did those who spoke their mother tongue for four or five hours per day ($M=35,705$; $SD=4,883$). However, the group speaking Kurdish for six hours or more each day had the highest attitudinal score in this dimension as well ($M=37,142$; $SD=4,849$).

In the case of the third factor, which was related to the prestige of the language, the participants speaking Kurdish for less than one hour per day had the lowest mean score for attitude once more ($M=18,368$; $SD=5,946$), and as before, those participants who spoke for one or two hours per day also had a low score in this field ($M=24,5294$; $SD=8,0556$). Those participants who spoke their mother tongue for three or four hours each day again had a relatively high score ($M=32,030$; $SD=5,353$); and again it was clear that the participants who spent four to five hours each day speaking Kurdish had a more positive attitude towards this particular factor, as again their scores were higher than the previous groups ($M=35,705$; $SD=4,883$). Once more, the final group who spoke Kurdish for six hours or more each day had the highest score in this dimension ($M=37,142$; $SD=4,849$).

Finally, in the case of the fourth factor, which was related to the affective domain of the language, those participants who spoke Kurdish for less than one hour each day once more had the lowest mean score for attitude ($M=18,368$; $SD=5,946$), and those participants who spoke Kurdish for one or two hours a day also recorded a low score for their level of attitude ($M=24,5294$; $SD=8,0556$). Again, those participants who spent slightly more time speaking Kurdish per day, three to four hours, had a relatively high score for their attitude level ($M=32,030$; $SD=5,353$); and those participants who spent four or five hours each day speaking their first language also recorded a high score for attitude ($M=35,705$; $SD=4,883$). Finally, the group speaking Kurdish for six or more hours per day recorded the highest score again in this dimension ($M=37,142$; $SD=4,849$).

As we can see from the statistics in the table there is a correlation and a meaningful link between the frequency of speech and the attitude towards the language. Frequency of language use may explain why some speakers experience a much higher degree of attrition than others (Silva-Corvalán, 2001; Schmid, 2011), and our study supports the fact that there is a strong link between language use and attitude. A definition of the phenomenon of first language attrition appears in the concept of sociolinguistics, which itself covers contact language, diglossia, social interaction and change code, according to the topic. Language attrition may refer to the loss of lexical items in a language as a result of increased contact with a majority language and less contact with the mother tongue (Stringer, 2010). Situations wherein speakers can find little opportunity to use their L1 may lead to

language attrition, because in such situations speakers depend mainly on the L2 in the speech community. This can be a factor of language attrition because language input and the maintenance of a language depends on the frequency of input. Both Köpke (2001b) and Schmid (2011) propose that an individual manifests greater levels of language attrition if they have no contact with their L1. Contact with other speakers of an L1 allows such individuals to use their language and maintain it. According to Köpke (2004), bilinguals who have no contact with their L1, and who are thereby not receiving any input of the language, start to use the L2 as a bridge to fill the gaps present in their L1.

For Paradis (2004), each linguistic element has a threshold that changes according to the commonality and frequency of its use. An element of frequent and current use has a low threshold, and if this element of the language were to be used less its threshold would rise, thereby making the element more difficult to access. A lexical element with a high threshold requires more effort on the part of an individual to be accessed, and if the frequency of language use is low elements in that language begin to have higher thresholds. Paradis (2004: 28) states that this process does not necessarily result in a permanent loss of these linguistic elements but only a momentary outage. Thus, these elements are recoverable through a greater effort by the bilingual.

In Table 4.16, there is a clear connection between the duration of language use and the attitude of the participants. Those having a high score for level of attitude tended to use their first language more frequently, whereas those having a lower score for level of attitude were prone to use their first language less frequently. As can be seen in following sections, our study shows that there is a close connection between lexical attrition (picture naming tasks and writing tasks) and attitude. The lower attitudinal scored participants showed, poor performance comparing with those having high attitudinal scores because they could not reach many lexical items in their L1, which is in alignment with the the Activation Threshold Hypothesis by Paradis (2004). Kurdish adolescents are frequently in contact with their dominant second language as they must use this language almost everywhere in their daily lives, including in education, whilst shopping and in their free time. For instance, when Kurdish adolescents go to cinema they watch Turkish films or foreign films recorded in Turkish, and through these they are further exposed to Turkish. Therefore, they are not able to be exposed to their mother tongue in addition to using

their own language less frequently thereby not activating the linguistic elements. As the thresholds of linguistic items in Kurdish might get higher because of lack of use and this fact was observed in applied attrition tasks. In order to determine whether the relation between the frequency of language use and attitude was meaningful, we conducted ANOVA.

Table 4.17: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of The Frequency of Language use and Attitude

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	34319,781	4	8579,945	35,213	,000
	Within Groups	31432,309	129	243,661		
	Total	65752,090	133			
Factor 1	Between Groups	2111,729	4	527,932	12,592	,000
	Within Groups	5408,576	129	41,927		
	Total	7520,306	133			
Factor 2	Between Groups	5085,018	4	1271,254	29,896	,000
	Within Groups	5485,340	129	42,522		
	Total	10570,358	133			
Factor 3	Between Groups	1170,677	4	292,669	11,828	,000
	Within Groups	3192,047	129	24,745		
	Total	4362,724	133			
Factor 4	Between Groups	1230,371	4	307,593	20,236	,000
	Within Groups	1960,853	129	15,200		
	Total	3191,224	133			

Table 4.17 presents the outcome of the ANOVA analysis of our participants, and we can see that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the different groups. The significance level is 0.000 across all dimensions. The total result of table 35 shows that the relationship between attitude and language use is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $F(4, 129) = 35,213$). Looking at the other dimensions, we can see that the first factor is also meaningful ($p < .05$; $F(4, 129) = 12.592$), as are the second factor ($p < .05$; $F(4, 129) = 29.90$), ($p < .05$; $F(4, 129) = 11.828$) and fourth factor ($p < .05$; $F(4, 129) = 20.36$).

As stated throughout this work, the influence of the L2 and the lack of contact with the L1 are the main linguistic causes for language attrition, and this has also been shown once more by the data obtained from the participants. Whilst speaking about

language attrition we have also taken extralinguistic factors into account such as, attitudes, level of education, frequency, amount and settings of use of the attriting language (Kopke & Schmid, 2004b, because lack of L1 use alone is not enough to explain the language attrition process. Moreover, it is reasonable assumption that any speakers who continue to use a language will remain fluent in it, while those that don't will forget it (Schmid, 2011). The important point here is that the amount of L1 usage itself is not easy to measure independently and objectively, because as Schmid (2011) says, you cannot hang a tape recorder around someone's neck and monitor their language behaviour over weeks, months or years. We have to rely on the self-evaluations and assessments of the participants. Therefore, in our studied we included both the self-assessments of the participants and their attitudinal scores in PLAQ-B, thereby covering extra-linguistic factors to some extent. According to the data featured in the study, there are statistically meaningful outcomes. The results in the table show that there is a strong connection between the frequency of language use and attitude in all factors in our scale.

The frequency and the recent use of the first language will certainly have important implications for the production of the language. L1 use is significant for maintenance when dealing with individuals who use the L1 only in restricted contexts, where the frequency of L1 use is much lower than the second language. The bilinguals who participated in our study spent most of their time at school. They started school at 8 a.m. and finished school at about 4 p.m., which meant that they spent around eight hours at school each weekday; and as Turkish is the formal language, and thus the language spoken at school the participants were exposed to Turkish for around eight hours every day. They were not given the opportunity to use their first language throughout the schooling process.

The phenomenon of L1 attrition occurs mostly when there is a period of disuse as a result of continued exposure to an L2 (Isurin & MacDonald, 2001). In the activation threshold hypothesis Paradis (1994) likened lexical items to the psychological and cognitive functions of individuals. Following the analogy, a lexical item can be activated when there is a sufficient amount of positive neurological impulses to reach their neurological substrate; and the number of pulses required to activate the item is its level of activation. As clearly stated in this hypothesis, If an item is not stimulated it becomes more and more difficult to access over time. The accessibility of a

linguistic item depends on its usage by speakers; however, in the case of the bilinguals in our study, it was nearly impossible for them to use the lexical items of Kurdish frequently. Table 35 shows that most of the participants stated that they spoke their first language for approximately one to two hours a day, and the rest of the time was spent speaking the dominant second language. Little or no usage of a language is considered to be a cause of attrition, and this can be seen in several studies.

Seliger (1991) observed changes in the syntax of first language English in the case of a young girl who was born in the United States but who immigrated to Israel. In another study by Fillmore (1991), the sociolinguistics of a heterogeneous group were examined, most of whom were immigrant children with various first languages. Within this group, Fillmore found that English was exposed to attrition, and dramatic losses of the language had been experienced. According to these studies, the attrition of the L1 is quite significant and rapid in children, even among those who had continued exposure to their L1. The reasons for this rapid and seemingly radical loss in children, in contrast to the slower and less severe rates of attrition of the L1 in adults, are unknown. However, one of the clear factors shown to contribute to language attrition in children is the lack of input and output of the language.

The phenomenon of first language attrition can be said to be the result of a lack of long term stimulation of first language. The use of and intensive exposure to an L2 in a bilingual context leads to a lower level of activation of the native language, because individuals have fewer resources and opportunities to use their mother tongue. In this environment, a speaker may endeavour to try to use his/her language, and an attempt to do this can be attributed to a positive attitude towards his/her language. However, that the second language environment is the sole reason for language attrition can be a difficult factor to quantify, because the data from our study shows that some participants, though not many, tried to speak their mother tongue whilst they were at school or with their friends. As shown in table 35, a group of participants consisting of 14 people with an attitudinal score of 119,857 stated that they spoke their native language for six hours or more each day.

Schmid and Bot (2004) showed that language contact depends on two factors: opportunity and choice. It is therefore a complex factor, and it is hard to determine to what extent language choice is influenced by the attitude of the speaker, or by those

factors which are simply beyond their control. For example, an immigrant can live in a place where there are no speakers of his/her L1, and yet it is possible to maintain contact with fellow speakers of the L1, but to choose not to use the mother tongue in those interactions. However, in our case the situation is different, because if an individual wants to speak Kurdish they can easily find people to do so with. Therefore, the attitude of individuals really does matter in the process of preserving a language.

We can infer from our study that if an individual is motivated enough to use their language, the attrition level of their language will reduce in turn. However, if the speakers do not care about using their first language the availability of the items of that language will develop a high threshold frequency and recent use of the activation may cause a process of inhibition in the language. This process will cause language switch, convergence and the restructuring of the native language according to the linguistic system of the second language. The production of an item, its activation, is more difficult than understanding the same item, as the underlying neurological substrate has to be generated, and if the level of activation is not sufficient the speaker cannot produce some of the words or use a particular syntactic construct in L1 (Paradis, 1993). Thus, the frequency and the recurrent use of the first language have implications in its production, and seem to be important causes of first language attrition.

According to studies on immigrants in various countries similar to those previously mentioned, the duration of residence in the foreign country has an important effect on language change. This variable shows statistical significance for migrants who receive frequent input of the L2 and use it regularly (Flege, 2009). The same study concludes that although there are other significant factors at play in this issue, such as age and the cognitive development of the speaker, frequency and the recurrent use of the L1 may allow us to retain significant levels of function in terms of language production. However, it is very difficult to measure the quality of language use; and even if individuals state that they speak Kurdish every day for two to six hours the 'language mode' meaning predominant activation of one language (Grosjean, 2001) should be taken into consideration. That is, bilinguals may use one language more actively and frequently than the other, and in the case of our study, the participants can in reality be regarded as monolingual language users as they used Turkish much

more actively than their L1. This however is a very natural occurrence in their situation, because they used and were exposed to Turkish almost everywhere.

The Participants' Self-Evaluations of their Writing and Reading Skills

The participants' self-evaluations are an important tool in learning about the reasons for the attrition process. Generally, the participants did not write in their mother tongue, and this can be a further cause of language attrition, as individuals are exposed to the second language whilst writing and continue to repeat the words used during the writing process. Learning to write requires the acquisition of a system of signs produced by humans in response to their specific socio-cultural needs. It is important to note that an individual usually uses their writing skills in the course of everyday life, and to realize that when we write we are also communicating with the text itself as we record the information. Writing task helps us to explore ideas, emotions and concerns (Kramer, 2000). It is known that the development of writing in children is related to everyday, socio-cultural practices, such as participating in reading and writing events. In this sense of writing as an essential cultural practice, studies on literacy (Smith, 1999) have shown that illiterate individuals cannot pass down their culture and social values to their children and thus, the next generations. Written language from its origin is linked to the processes of domination, participation and exclusion that were inherent in social relations; however, it may also be linked to the socio-cultural and cognitive development of people, causing significant changes in communication practices (Tfouni & Seidinger, 1997). Therefore, the results of writing can give us important insights into the knowledge of people's proficiency of L1.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that writing has an important role in social life, and that writing itself contributes to the development of a language directly or indirectly. Everyday actions, such as reading a newspaper or writing a note, letter, email or message in the first language, will certainly help the development and maintenance of a language. With this in mind, the results of the participants' self-evaluations for writing can be seen below.

Table 4.18: The Group Statistics of the Participants by Self-Evaluation of Writing in Kurdish

Dimensions	Grading	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Bad	71	84,4366	21,29033
	Fair	48	102,0208	18,72135
	Good	13	114,0769	11,76479
	Excellent	2	102,5000	30,40559
	Total	134	93,8806	22,23458
Factor 1	Bad	71	36,0141	8,26955
	Fair	48	39,8750	5,90933
	Good	13	42,9231	4,68084
	Excellent	2	41,0000	7,07107
	Total	134	38,1418	7,51955
Factor 2	Bad	71	24,4085	8,49130
	Fair	48	31,9792	7,46193
	Good	13	34,7692	5,18256
	Excellent	2	32,0000	16,97056
	Total	134	28,2388	8,91495
Factor 3	Bad	71	13,7465	5,28534
	Fair	48	16,2708	5,86276
	Good	13	19,2308	5,34094
	Excellent	2	16,0000	5,65685
	Total	134	15,2164	5,72734
Factor 4	Bad	71	10,2676	4,19168
	Fair	48	13,8958	4,68697
	Good	13	17,1538	4,12000
	Excellent	2	13,5000	4,70711
	Total	134	12,2836	4,89838

Table 4.18 clearly shows that the majority of participants thought that they could not write in Kurdish. Seventy-one of the participants felt that they were ‘bad’ at writing in Kurdish, and importantly, they also had the lowest score for attitude towards their mother tongue ($M=84,436$; $SD=21,290$). Forty-eight participants felt that they could write at a ‘fair’ level in Kurdish, and their score for attitude was higher than those who felt that they were ‘bad’ at writing in Kurdish ($M=102,020$; $SD=18,721$). Thirteen participants thought that they were ‘good’ at writing in Kurdish, and this group had a high mean score for attitude ($M=114,076$; $SD=7,071$). Only 2 participants stated that they were ‘excellent’ at writing in Kurdish, however their mean score for attitude was lower than the group who claimed to be ‘good’ at writing in Kurdish ($M=7,071$; $SD= 30,405$). With the results of the final group as an exception, there appears to be a correlation between writing ability and the attitude towards the language.

Looking at Table 4.18, we can see that there are similar results in the sub-dimensions of the scale. In the first factor, the first group who thought that they were ‘bad’ at

writing in Kurdish again had the lowest score for attitude towards their first language (M=36,014; SD=8,269). Those participants who felt that they could write at a 'fair' level in Kurdish again gained a relatively high score for attitude (M=39,875; SD=5,909). Those 13 participants who thought that they were 'good' at writing in Kurdish and had the highest mean attitudinal score (M=42,923; SD= 11,764), whereas the participants who stated that they were 'excellent' at writing in Kurdish did not gain the highest score for their attitude towards the language (M=41,00; SD=7,071).

Again, the second factor showed a similar outcome, with those who felt that they were 'bad' at writing in Kurdish gaining the lowest score for attitude towards their mother tongue (M=24,408; SD=8,491), and those participants who felt that they could write in Kurdish at 'fair' level of ability had a relatively high attitudinal score (M=31,979; SD=7,461). The 13 participants who thought that they were 'good' at writing in Kurdish again had the highest mean attitudinal score (M=34,769; SD= 5,182), whereas those who said they were excellent at writing in Kurdish once again did not get the highest score for their attitude levels (M=32,000; SD= 16,970).

Looking at the third factor, the participants who considered themselves as 'bad' at writing in Kurdish once more had the lowest mean attitudinal score (M=13,746; SD=5,285), and the participants who considered that their Kurdish writing ability was 'fair' again had a relatively high score for attitude (M=16,270; SD=5,862). Those participants who believed that their writing in Kurdish was 'good' had the highest score for attitude in this dimension as well (M=19,230; SD=5,340), and again the participants who thought that their writing skills were 'excellent' in Kurdish had a high score for attitude towards the language, though once again not the highest score (M=16,000; SD=5,656).

Finally, in the case of the fourth factor those participants who believed that their writing ability in Kurdish was 'bad' had the lowest mean score for attitude (M=10,267; SD=4,191), and those participants who thought that their Kurdish writing ability was 'fair' had a somewhat higher score for their level of attitude towards the language (M=13,895; SD=4,707). Once more, the participants who felt that they were 'good' at writing in Kurdish had the highest score for attitude towards their mother tongue (M=17,153; SD=4,120), and those who believed that they were 'excellent' at writing

in Kurdish had a high score, though again not the highest score (M=13,500; SD=4,707).

We can see from these statistics that there is a connection between the level of skill in writing and the attitude towards the language. In total, only 15 students believed that they could write in Kurdish well or very well. This result is not surprising, as everything in Turkey is done in the official language, and education is also given in Turkish; and thus, all writing activities are done in Turkish. From the results of this study we conducted an ANOVA analysis to see if there was a statistical significance between the ability to write in Kurdish and the attitude towards the language.

Table 4.19: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Self-Evaluation of Writing Skills in Kurdish and Attitude towards Kurdish

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	14964,223	3	4988,074	12,768	,000
	Within Groups	50787,867	130	390,676		
	Total	65752,090	133			
Factor 1	Between Groups	779,147	3	259,716	5,008	,003
	Within Groups	6741,159	130	51,855		
	Total	7520,306	133			
Factor 2	Between Groups	2295,916	3	765,305	12,024	,000
	Within Groups	8274,442	130	63,650		
	Total	10570,358	133			
Factor 3	Between Groups	417,500	3	139,167	4,586	,004
	Within Groups	3945,223	130	30,348		
	Total	4362,724	133			
Factor 4	Between Groups	724,637	3	241,546	12,731	,000
	Within Groups	2466,587	130	18,974		
	Total	3191,224	133			

Table 4.19 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference between the group means. It is clear from the table that the relationship between attitude and the skill of writing in Kurdish is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $F(3,130) = 12,768$), and that the other dimensions are also statistically meaningful. The first factor is clearly meaningful ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 5,008$), and the second factor also shows statistical significance ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 12,024$). The third factor too is statistically meaningful ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 4,586$), as is the fourth factor ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 12,731$).

The results show that only approximately 20% of the participants believed they could write well in Kurdish. During the think-aloud protocol we tried to learn about the participants' writing and reading habits in Kurdish. Only a few participants said they

could read and write in Kurdish very well. Most participants thought that writing or reading in Kurdish was difficult because they did not know the Kurdish alphabet. We asked the students whether they could read or write in Kurdish and some examples of their responses are given below:

Participant 4 : ‘I cannot write or read in Kurdish because it is difficult. There are some letters in Kurdish that I don’t know.’

Participant 24 : ‘No. I tried to read a Kurdish newspaper, but it was very difficult. And the alphabet is different.’

Participant 83 : ‘No. Nobody taught me how to write. The alphabet is different in Kurdish.’

As can be seen from the examples taken from the think-aloud protocol, the participants had not received any systematic instruction about reading or writing in Kurdish. They had little or no knowledge of the alphabet in Kurdish. Moreover, there are different styles of writing in the language. For instance, the Sorani dialect is written mainly with a modified Persian alphabet; whereas in Turkey and Syria, the Kurmanji dialect is written primarily with a process developed by Celadet Ali Bedirxan in an alphabet based on the Latin alphabet. This alphabet was developed in the 1930s and has gained acceptance in the past decade, largely for the use of Kurmanji in Turkey and Syria (Schmidinger, 2015).

Although no single variety of Kurdish is recognized as an official language in the world, in Iraq two varieties of Kurdish, Sorani and Bahdîni, are considered as part of the official language of Kurdish. Previously, across the Kurdish diaspora teaching materials were available only in these two varieties of the language, as where newspapers and books. Moreover, these two dialects dominated radio and television (Schmidinger, 2015). However, in recent years, with the advent of the peace process in Turkey, there are now plenty of books and newspapers written in Kurmanji, and Kurmanji speaking radio and television programmes in Turkey. Furthermore, Kurdish language and literature departments can also be seen in several universities in Turkey, and some schools are allowed to offer Kurdish as an optional subject. Since these developments are so recent, the effect of them cannot be seen as yet. Therefore, it is not surprising that despite these developments many of the participants were still not good at writing and reading in Kurdish. Nevertheless,

though they were only a few in number, those participants who had a more positive attitude towards their mother tongue tried to read and write in Kurdish. One of the participants in the study even said that she went to a Kurdish course to improve her Kurdish writing and reading:

Researcher: ‘Do you write or read in Kurdish?’

Participant 54: ‘Yes, I went to a Kurdish course to improve my Kurdish and there I learned the Kurdish alphabet, and now I am reading and writing in Kurdish regularly. I have a diary in Kurdish.’

As we can see from this example, if individuals have the necessary motivation and positive attitude to maintain their mother tongue they can achieve the retention of it. According to Köpke and Schmid (2004a), attitude appears a much more decisive factor in language retention than the duration of the period spent outside of the native language, or the frequency of exposure to the L2. To clarify, those individuals who have a more positive attitude towards their L1 will experience less attrition in their language than those who have a more negative attitude. This phenomenon may be explained by the effect of neurocognitive processes or it can be attributed to the notion that speakers who feel positively towards their L1 may actively seek out opportunities to use it (Varga, 2012). The participant in the example performed this latter action to maintain and develop her mother tongue.

Table 4.20: The Group Statistics of the Participants by Self-evaluation of Reading in Kurdish

Dimensions	Grading	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	Bad	37	76,0541	18,76306
	Fair	48	92,6875	17,74783
	Good	44	108,3182	18,30589
	Excellent	5	110,2000	19,58826
	Total	134	93,8806	22,23458

From the figures in Table 4.20 we can see that 37 participants thought that they were ‘bad’ at reading in Kurdish, and their mean score for attitude was the lowest when compared with the other groups ($M=76.054$; $SD=18.763$). Forty-eight participants felt that they could read Kurdish at a ‘fair’ level, and their score for attitude was higher than those who considered themselves as ‘bad’ at reading Kurdish

($M=92.687$; $SD=17.747$). Forty-four participants thought that they could read Kurdish at a 'good' level ($M=108.3182$; $SD= 18,305$). Only 5 participants said that they were 'excellent' at reading in Kurdish, and their mean attitudinal score was the highest ($M=110.200$; $SD= 19.588$).

The results illustrate that there is a correlation between the participants' reading level in Kurdish and their linguistic attitude. Whether reading can slow down the process of language attrition has not yet been studied thoroughly; however, Berman and Olshtain (1983) examined the retention of English in children whose first language was Hebrew who had returned to Israel where their first language was spoken, and they discovered that the older children experienced less attrition than the younger ones, at least to the level that they were literate upon leaving the L2 environment. As they had read in English regularly they were able to maintain their L2, but the younger children forgot their L2 because they could not read and write in it at the point of leaving.

Our study shows that attitude has a positive effect on reading in one's native language. Those who had a more positive attitude towards their language had a better level of reading skill than those who did not in their mother tongue. The maintenance of language skills and the prevention of language attrition through reading books and magazines in the foreign language, contributed to language maintenance (Bot et al, 1986). Reading is an important means of accessing knowledge and information. However, it is not an innate ability, and it is a virtual impossibility that when a person starts to learn to read in their L2, that he/she can transfer the rudimentary skill of reading learnt from the reading ability of the L1 directly across to the L2 (Wolf, 2007). Those individuals who read often in their L1 tend to have a large vocabulary in their mother tongue. They are exposed to many words whilst reading and this can help the process of retention of the mother tongue.

The study suggests that the linguistic attitudes of the participants had a determining role in their reading ability, and in order to see whether this difference is statistically significant we conducted an ANOVA analysis.

Table 4.21: An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Self-Evaluation of Reading Skills in Kurdish and Attitude towards Kurdish

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	22329,540	3	7443,180	22,284	,000
	Within Groups	43422,550	130	334,020		
	Total	65752,090	133			
Factor 1	Between Groups	1714,980	3	571,660	12,801	,000
	Within Groups	5805,326	130	44,656		
	Total	7520,306	133			
Factor 2	Between Groups	2370,109	3	790,036	12,525	,000
	Within Groups	8200,250	130	63,079		
	Total	10570,358	133			
Factor 3	Between Groups	829,990	3	276,663	10,181	,000
	Within Groups	3532,733	130	27,175		
	Total	4362,724	133			
Factor 4	Between Groups	996,353	3	332,118	19,671	,000
	Within Groups	2194,871	130	16,884		
	Total	3191,224	133			

Table 4.21 shows that there is a statistical significance between the group means, and that the relationship between attitude and the level of reading skill in Kurdish is statistically meaningful in the total dimension ($p < .05$; $F(3,130) = 22,284$). The table also demonstrates that the other dimensions are statistically meaningful, and that all indicate a meaningful difference. The first factor ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 12,801$), second factor ($p < .05$; $F(3,130) = 12,525$), ($p < .05$; $F(3, 130) = 10,181$) and fourth factor ($p < .05$; $F(3,130) = 19,671$) all show statistical significance.

Our study suggests that an individual's attitude towards their language and their literacy skills are intertwined, because the participants who had a higher score for their level of attitude were better at reading Kurdish than those with a negative attitude; and this ability to read might have been an important factor in the maintenance and retention of their mother tongue. We know well that the attrition of a first language in a second-language dominant environment, in which there is little contact with the mother language, leads to a reduction of proficiency in that language (Schmid; Bot, 2004). Seliger and Vago (1991) also point out that the L1 is weakened by the increased use of the L2. Both being in an L2 setting and possessing a less 'valuable' language are considered as complementary in accelerating the first language attrition process. Deprivation of the input of L1 can be counteracted by reading in the mother tongue, however, for that, as our study confirms, the speakers must have motivation and a positive attitude towards their mother tongue.

In the picture naming tasks, the total number of Kurdish and Turkish words written by each participant was divided by the total number of participants, and from this we arrived at the mean value for the Turkish words used instead of Kurdish words. From this we were able to gain an idea about the scope of attrition experienced by the individuals. In order to see the correlation between the attitude towards the mother language and the attrition in the vocabulary, we compared the mean scores from the picture naming tasks of the three groups, who were divided as before into ‘low’, ‘moderate’ and ‘high’ according to their scores for attitude.

The first group, who had the lowest score for level of attitude, consisted of 39 people whose mean score for attitude was 63,33 (SD= +/- 16,67). This score was accepted as reflecting a negative attitude towards the first language, in accordance with the two-step cluster analysis of the participants. The ratio of the group with the moderate score for attitudinal level was accepted as 92,12 (SD= +/- 11,0), so between 81 and 105 points was accepted as a ‘moderate’ score and the number of the participants in this group was 48. Finally, the ratio 105 and over was accepted as a ‘high’ score for attitudinal level within this scale, and the number of participants in this group remained as 47 participants (see Table 4.4).

As stated, the picture naming tasks consisted of 48 pictures, 16 of which were animals, 16 were food items and 16 were action verbs. Each task was graded out of 100 and each item was worth 6.25 marks.

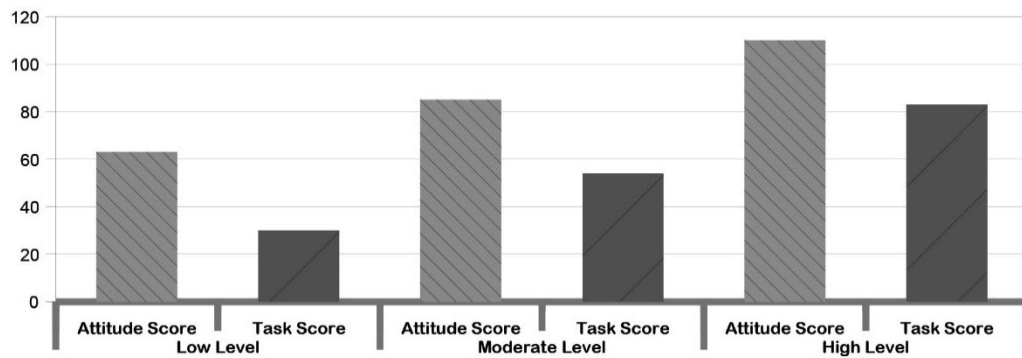


Figure 4.1: A Comparison of the Groups in Accordance with their Scores for Attitude and their Scores in the First Picture Naming Task

Figure 4.1 shows that there is a meaningful relationship between attitude and lexical attrition in the first picture naming task. The task consisted of naming 16 action verbs which were: 1. *firîn* (to fly), 2. *lotik kirin* (to jump), 3. *benik hilavêtin* (to skip), 4. *revîn* (to run), 5. *rê ve çûn, meşîn* (to walk,) 6. *hilkişîn* (to climb), 7. *rûniştin* (to sit),

8. *rabûn* (to stand up), 9. *kenin* (to laugh), 10. *girrnijîn* (to smile), 11. *guhdar kirina muziki* (to listen to music), 12. *siwar bûna biskîleti* (to ride a bike), 13. *melevanî kirin* (to swim), 14. *xarin* (to eat), 15. *lîstina fê tbulî* (to play football) and 16. *lîstina basketbulî* (to play basketball).

The mean number of correct answers for the low level group was approximately five ($M=4,7$), and according to the 100 point grading system the mean score of this group in the task was 29,375, which was a poor result in this test. The participants could remember only 5 words out of 16 and could not recall the Kurdish meaning of 11 words, resorting to using Turkish verbs instead of Kurdish verbs. As can be seen from the graph, the participants who had a negative attitude towards their native language could not recall the majority of words in the first picture naming task.

The group who had a moderate score for attitude performed better the low level group. The difference between the groups can be seen clearly in the graph. The participants with a low score for attitude could remember the least number of verbs in the task, and those with a moderate level of attitude towards their mother tongue were able to remember slightly more than the first group, remembering half of the verbs ($M=8,64$) taking 54 points out of 100. However, they themselves could not recall half of the verbs ($M=7,33$) and also resorted to borrowing these verbs from Turkish. The participants with the highest score were able to recall most of the verbs in the task ($M=13,31$) earning 83.18 points. They could not recall only around three verbs ($M=2,68$) in the task, and in this instance they too used Turkish verbs instead of Kurdish ones. From these results we can say that there is a strong connection between the attitude of the bilinguals and the level of their attrition.

As mentioned before, many studies on first language attrition focus on the influence of the L2, and consider this as one of the most important causes of attrition. According to Schmid and Bot (2004, p. 212), the linguistic contact situations that produce modifications in the system of a language are due, at least in part, to the “invasion” of the other language; the L1 undergoes an “attack” from the L2 when the latter is used frequently, and the L1 begins to lose elements as a result of this. These losses lead to gaps forming in the knowledge of the L1 that will be filled by items from the L2 if they remain. This analogy of war used by Schmid (2006), Sharwood Smith (1989) to describe the process of attrition reflects the importance of the influence of L2 on L1, ensuring this process is a readily accepted major cause

attrition. Therefore, in the regions where Turkish and Kurdish meet it is not strange to hear phrases like “My Kurdish is very bad now.” or “I can no longer speak my mother tongue very well.”, as the phenomenon behind these statements is none other than attrition.

One of the linguistic elements that is exposed to such erosion is the lexical area of language. In the tasks, participants wrote Turkish words to answer the question instead of the Kurdish words that they had forgotten. However, some participants resorted to the Kurdish verb ‘-*kirin*’, meaning ‘to do’ or ‘to make’ and which can also be used as an auxiliary verb, and supplemented it with borrowed Turkish verbs. Additionally, we came across many examples of this type of response in the picture naming task, and it was also commonly seen in the writing tasks. Similar cases can be seen among attriters in different countries, and several scholars have focused on such hybrid constructions (Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Muysken, 2000; Türker, 2002; Myers-Scotton, 2002; Wohlgemuth, 2009). One of the most commonly used constructions by bilinguals is called the bilingual compound verb. As an example of this, consider the case of Turkish attriters in Norway in a study by Türker (2002). The individuals in this study resorted to the same solution, using ‘*yap-*’ (to do) and incorporating Norwegian verbs into this format, forming a ‘do -verb’ construction (Türker, 2002).

Another case studied in England involved Spanish immigrants who utilised the Spanish verb ‘*hacer*’ (to make, to do) in the same way, as a method to use English verbs while speaking. In this strategy ‘*hacer*’ was used together with an English verb and the structure ‘*hacer + verb*’ was formed. Here, the Spanish verb appears to carry the grammatical meaning of tense, mode, aspect, and agreement while the English form carries the lexical meaning (Silva-Corvalán, 1994). In the case of our study, the participants used the construction ‘*turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ to be able to express themselves in their attrited language. Below is an example found in the study regarding the verb ‘to jump’:

‘*zıpla + miş + kir*’

Turkish verb for ‘to jump’ + Turkish affix + Kurdish verb ‘to do’.

In this example, the attriters could not recall the Kurdish equivalent of the verb ‘to jump’, ‘*lotik kirin*’, so they used the Turkish verb instead; yet whilst doing this they attempted to utilize Kurdish by adding the verb *kirin*. Other such examples were:

‘Turkish verb + *miş* + *kirin*’

oyna +miş + kir (to play)

bisiklete bin +miş + kir (to ride a bike)

yüz +miş + kir (to swim)

tirman +miş + kir (to climb)

kos +muş + kir (to run)

ip atla +miş + kir (to skip)

dinle +miş + kir (to listen)

otur +miş + kir (to sit)

gül +miş + kir (to laugh)

gülüm + semis + kir (to smile)

As we can see from these examples, ‘*Turkish verb + kirin*’ is used to be able to somewhat name the picture in Kurdish. While forming this borrowed verb, the participants used *kirin* with an inflectional affix, and an uninflected or inflected Turkish verb with lexical meaning was added, *-miş*, which is used as an auxiliary verb of past tense in Turkish. The use of the *verb+miş+kirin* construction seemed to occur with nearly all verbs used in the picture naming tasks and writing tasks. The auxiliary verb *kirin* tended to help the participants to use a Turkish verb that they knew instead of the forgotten Kurdish verb, whilst still somewhat referencing Kurdish. The Turkish lexical item provides the semantic content of this construction, and the use of *-miş* seemed to be as a derivational affix, however there is not such an affix in Kurdish. This *-miş* affix featured in nearly all such constructed compounds in the tasks, and it acted to turn the verb into a noun as it helped the participants use an element as a direct object of the sentence. Thus, it must be a noun and therefore *-miş* must have been used as a derivational affix.

Another important point that we observed in our study was that more common lexical items such as ‘*listin*’ (‘to play’) were remembered more frequently than those

which are used less commonly, supporting the activation threshold hypothesis (Paradis, 2004). According to this theory, less commonly used lexical items, and lexical items that have not been used for a long time, become harder to access.

A further significant result gained from this task, was that the participants with a low score for attitude towards their mother tongue in particular were able to recall words which seemed to be used less frequently in their daily lives. For instance, the verb ‘*girnijîn*’ (to smile) was the verb that was most frequently forgotten. In addition to *girnijîn* (to smile), ‘*helkişiyân*’ (to climb), ‘*melevanî kirin*’ (to swim), ‘*lotik dan*’ (to jump) and ‘*siwar bûn*’ (to ride) also forgotten frequently by most participants of the low level group. We tried to ascertain the reason behind why ‘to smile’ was so frequently forgotten in the think-aloud protocol. The participants said that they did not use this word frequently, or that when they did they used the word ‘*kenin*’ (‘to laugh’) instead and this can be attributed to the simplification of the language. In other words, the participants tried to speak their mother tongue with a restricted number of words.

Researcher: ‘You seem to have forgotten some words in the tasks such as: *helkişiyân* (to climb), *girnijîn* (to smile), *melevanî kirin* (to swim), *lotik dan* (to jump) and *siwar bûn* (to ride).’

Participant 24: ‘I always speak Turkish so I forget Kurdish, and we use ‘*kenin*’ (to laugh) instead of ‘*girnijîn*’ (to smile). But now I remember them. I think I should speak Kurdish more.’

As mentioned previously, this phenomenon can easily be explained by the relationship between the frequency of use of a linguistic element and its activation, or the ease of access one has in using the element (Gürel, 2002b). For Paradis (2004) each linguistic element has a threshold that changes according to its frequency of use. Thus, the participants could not recall some of the verbs due to their higher threshold, such as in the case of the verb ‘*melevanî kirin*’ (to swim). They were not able to remember this because they used it less frequently. However, those verbs which have a lower threshold were recalled faster and easier as the participants used them more frequently, such as in the case of the verb *xarin* (to eat).

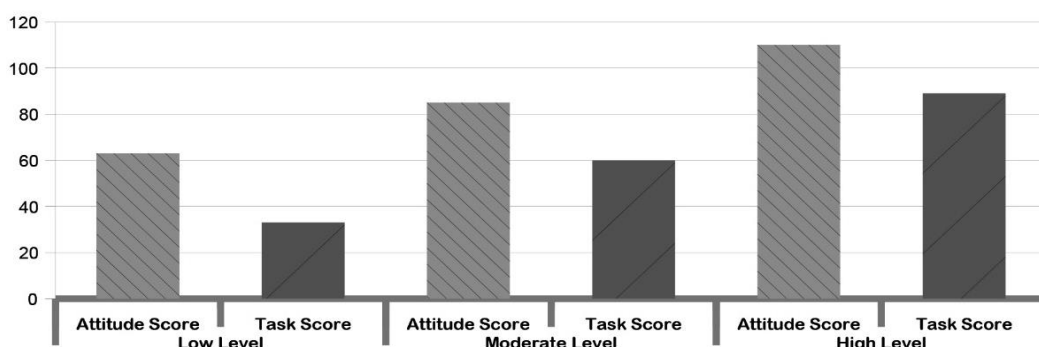


Figure 4.2: A Comparison of the Groups in Accordance with their Scores for Attitude and their Scores in the Second Picture Naming Task

The graph reveals that there was a meaningful relationship between the attitude towards the mother tongue and lexical attrition in the second picture naming task. The second picture naming task consisted of naming 16 pictures of food, which were: 1. ‘*sêv*’ (apple), 2. ‘*kuvark*’ (mushroom), 3. ‘*hinar*’ (pomegranate), 4. ‘*zebeş*’ or ‘*şiftî*’ (watermelon), 5. ‘*hirmî*’ or ‘*karçîn*’ (pear), 6. ‘*mirîşk*’ (chicken), 7. ‘*hêk*’ (egg), 9. ‘*gêzer*’ (carrot), 10. ‘*bacan*’ (aubergine), 11. ‘*şîr*’ (milk), 12. ‘*tirî*’ (grapes), 13. ‘*goşt*’ (meat), 14. ‘*sîr*’ (garlic), 15. ‘*masî*’ (fish) and 16. ‘*nan*’ (bread).

The mean score of the low level group in this task was 5 (M= 4,7) and they achieved 29 points. This means that the participants could only remember about 5 words out of 16, and they failed to recall around 11 words (M= 11, 051). Once again, they were forced to resolve attrited words by borrowing words from Turkish. The group with a moderate score for level of attitude achieved better scores than the first group. They were able to remember more than the half of the nouns in the task (M=9,67) and achieved 60.43 points, although they could not recall about half of the verbs (M=6,83) and were forced to borrow these from Turkish. The participants with the highest score managed to remember most of the nouns in the task (M=14,52) and accordingly achieved 90.75 points. They could not recall only around two nouns (M=1,47), and they too used Turkish words instead of Kurdish ones. When taking the results into consideration, we can say that there is a meaningful connection between the attitude of the bilinguals and the level of their attrition.

After evaluating the task we found that the participants frequently forgot certain words in particular, such as: *kuvark* (mushroom), *bacan* (aubergine), *hirmî* or *karçîn* (pear), *gêzer* (carrot), *tirî* (grapes) and *hinar* (pomegranate). Once again, the reason for this can be explained by the activation threshold hypothesis (Paradis, 2004) as

these items are used less often than items such as *sêv* (apple), *mirîşk* (chicken), *hêk* (egg) and *şîr* (milk) which were remembered by most of the participants.

One of the interesting facts that we observed in this task was that the participants used Turkish nouns in place of the forgotten Kurdish words. For instance, in the word ‘*elma-ye*’. The word ‘*elma*’ is Turkish for ‘apple’, however ‘-ye’ or ‘-e’ are Kurdish morphemes which are used as the accusative case or as a simple present tense auxiliary verb. Thus, ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ was used instead of the forgotten Kurdish nouns, and this was seen in words such as ‘*nar-e*’ (‘pomegranate’) in place of the Kurdish equivalent *hinar*, ‘*patlican-e*’ (‘aubergine’) in place of the Kurdish equivalent *bacan* and ‘*havuc-e*’ (‘carrot’) in place of *gêzer*. This was especially observed in the lower level group who had a low score for attitude towards their mother tongue, serving to demonstrate the clear effect of attitude in the prevention of language attrition. Language attrition is caused by the limited use of and input of the minor language for various reasons, such as moving into a new environment or living in a second language dominant society. When two or more languages meet it is quite a natural occurrence for the converging languages to influence each other, and this phenomenon is described as a cross-linguistic affect, a phenomenon that has been observed and researched by many academics. The relationship between two or more languages can cause some changes in the language(s) that is less active compared to the other language(s). The extent of the changes as a result of this interaction can be significant, and take various forms. However, the role of attitude seems to accelerate this attrition process. The participants who were living under the same conditions show different levels of language attrition, and our study shows that their attitude is a determining factor in this.

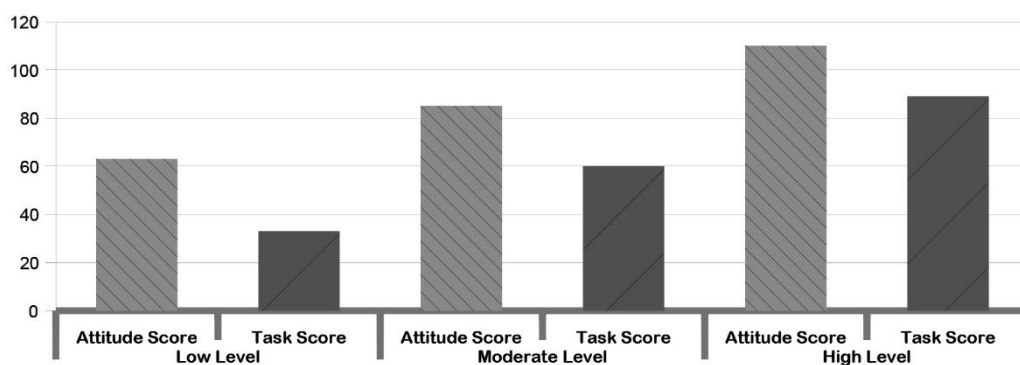


Figure 4.3. Comparison of the Groups in Accordance with their Score for Attitude and their Scores in the Third Picture Naming Task.

As can be seen in Figure 4.3, there was a significant difference between the score for attitude of the participants and the extent of their lexical attrition in the third picture naming task. This task consisted of naming 16 pictures of animals, which were: 1. 'bizin' (goat), 2. 'berx', 'bêz' or 'mih' (lamb' or 'sheep), 3. 'kitik' or 'pisîng' (cat), 4. 'werdek' (duck), 5. 'dîk' (cockerel), 'mirîşk' (hen), 6. 'hesp' (horse), 7. 'çêl' (cow), 8. 'kêrguh' or 'kêvroşk' (rabbit), 9. 'mişk' (mouse), 10. 'beraz' or 'xinzîr' (pig), 11. 'beq' (frog), 12. 'kûçik' or 'se' (dog), 13. 'masî' (fish), 14. 'şêr' (lion), 15. 'mar' (snake) and 16. 'hîrç' (bear).

Upon looking at the scores of the three groups, we can see that the mean score of the low level group was around 5 (M= 5,30) and they achieved 33.12 points in this task. The participants could recall only about 5 words out of 16 and they could not access around 11 words (M= 10, 82), borrowing the words that they could not recall from Turkish. The group with a moderate score of attitude towards their mother tongue could access more words than the first group, and were able to remember over half of the words in the task (M=9,66) and gained 60.37 points. Despite this, they could not recall around 6 nouns (M=6,33). Finally, the participants who had the highest score for attitude managed to access most of the nouns in the third task (M=14,33) and they gained 89,56 points. The same participants could not recall around 2 words (M=1,66). When assessing the results, we can once more say that there is a statistical significance between the attitude of the bilinguals and the level of their attrition in the third picture naming task.

Much like the previous picture naming tasks, the results obtained suggest that the participants forgot some nouns in particular, such as: 'werdek' (duck), 'hesp' (horse), 'kêrguh' or 'kêvroşk' (rabbit), 'beraz' or 'xinzîr' (pig), 'beq' (frog), 'şêr' (lion), 'mar' (snake) and 'hîrç' (bear). 'Pisîng'(cat), 'dîk' (cockerel), 'mirîşk' (hen), 'çêl' (cow), 'mişk' (mouse) and 'kûçik' or 'se' (dog) however were accessed by most of the participants. As with the previous picture naming tasks this occurrence can be linked with the activation threshold hypothesis (Paradis, 2004), as the input and output of the items that were recalled easily *Pisîng (Cat)*, *Dîk(il)*, *Mirîşk (Hen, Rooster)*, *Çêl (ek)(Cow)*, *Mişk(Mouse)*, *Kûçik, Se (Dog)* are occurs more frequently than that of the items *werdek (Duck)*, *Hesp (horse)* *Kêrguh, Kêvroşk (Rabbit)*, *Beraz, Xinzîr (Pig)*, *Beq (Frog)*, *Şêr. (Lion)*, *Mar (Snake)*, *Hîrç (bear)* that the participants were unable to recall. Thus, decreased use of a language experiencing attrition can

potentially lead to problems accessing the lexicon (Schmid & Köpke, 2007). The level of effort needed to retrieve an item can be controlled by the frequency of use of the item and how recently it was last used. As stated, those items used less frequently or that have not been used for a long time become difficult to access. Attrition is therefore hypothesized to predominantly affect the lexical items that are used less frequently, and to be more pronounced for those speakers who do not use their L1 on a regular basis (Andersen, 1982, Paradis, 2007).

Our final two tasks were the written tasks, and the first of these asked participants to write an essay of at least 100 words in Kurdish about school, their family, their hobbies and their daily routine. The second task was a story telling task called ‘The Elephant and the Blind Men’, in which students were asked to write an essay of at least 150 words in Kurdish. In order to discern the level of attrition in the participants the Kurdish and Turkish words were counted, and the tasks were assessed based on Bauer and Pölzleitner’s ‘Assessment Scale for Written Work’ (2013). As mentioned, the Scale has five-categories of measurement: ‘Excellent to very good’, meaning the students can use wide range of words efficiently and they don’t need to resort to their second language at all. The grades for this category are between 100 and 85. The second categorical level is ‘Good’, meaning a good number of words have been used in an appropriate way in the first language and the grades for this category is from 84 to 70 points. The third level is ‘Average’, at which the participants can access a moderate range of vocabulary while writing; nevertheless, they might use a few Turkish words in the place of attrited Kurdish words and the grade-points were and the grade-point for this category are from 69 to 55. The fourth category is called ‘Fair’ and level, indicating the participants can access only a limited vocabulary and grammatical structures and for our study the participants tend to use a good number of Turkish words instead of their first language items and the grade-points for this level are from 54 to 45. The last category is the ‘Poor or very poor’. Level, in which the participants cannot reach most of the lexical and grammatical items of their mother tongue and use Turkish words instead. The grade-points for this category are 44 and below. The evaluation of the writing tasks was completed by the lecturers Hacı Yılmaz from the Kurdish Language and Literature Department of Yüzüncü Yıl University in Van, Turkey; and Şehmuz Kurt from the Kurdish Language and Literature Department of Mardin Artuklu University in Mardin, Turkey.

While checking the writing of the participants, we could easily notice that they were mostly under the influence of their second language, and whenever they had difficulty expressing something in Kurdish and they resorted to Turkish in order to make up for the gaps they had in their mother tongue.

(1)

“Dayîkamîn jîna malê dir” (My mother is a housewife)

In this example, the attriter uses ‘*dir*’ Turkish morpheme to complete his Kurdish sentence due to being under the influence of his L2, and also in our study we observed that the attriters tended to use Turkish morphemes such as “–miş” instead of those from the Kurdish language. In a different study covering L1 attrition of Turkish in first generation immigrants in Australia (Yagmur, 1997), an example of Turkish attriters is given where speakers developed morphological errors such as doubling pluralization after a quantifier, for example speakers may state “*çok kitaplar*” in place of “*çok kitap*”.

Changes also occur in L1 syntax as a result of attrition, an effect which covers a number of changes in the L1 on account of the loss or resetting of the L1 parametric values under the influence of the L2 as shown by the examples below:

(2)

“Êz hero dîçmê meytebî.” (Correct usage of Kurdish syntax)
(I everyday go to school.)

(3)

“Êz hero meytebî dîçmê.”
(I everyday school go to.)

As we can see from the example, there is an incorrect usage of Kurdish syntax owing to the influence of the Turkish syntax.

“Ben her gün okula gidiyorum.” (Turkish)
(I everyday school go to.)

(5)

‘Ez bêraxû dîdêm lî televizyonê.’ (I watch television.) In the Kurdish sentence above, the word ‘televizyonê’ is borrowed from Turkish because there is no equivalent word for ‘television’ in Kurdish, and in fact nor in Turkish. This type of borrowing cannot be considered as attrition.

(6)

'*Tavşan zûka banzda.*' (The rabbit ran fast.) However in this sentence 'tavşan' (Rabbit) is a Turkish word borrowed in place of the Kurdish equivalent 'kîroşk', where the speaker cannot use it because the speaker does not remember or does not know the Kurdish word 'kîroşk', which can be considered as attrition.

As illustrated, the way words are put together to form phrases, clauses or sentences can be influenced by the L2. Due to the influence of Turkish the speakers of Kurdish as an L1 tend to use the Turkish arrangement of words in sentences. They do not follow the standard Kurdish subject-verb-object word order and instead switch the order of the sentence to subject-object-verb, the order of Turkish, and subsequently Kurdish in this modified case.

Certain traits show that attrition has started, and these contribute to a gradual decline in L1 proficiency. In the case of our study, the individuals observed experience this because they inhabit linguistic environment where their L2 is official and thus the dominant language. Based on these considerations Kurdish, the first language of the attriters in this study, is a minority language that is only used proficiently by a small number of speakers from the oldest generation, whilst younger generations have only acquired an incomplete system of an already simplified language. According to researchers, most Kurdish people do not know the writing system of their L1 and are also unable to read it. The elder and more competent speakers of Kurdish live in a kind of isolation from younger speakers, who technically have the same L1, but who spend long periods of time using their Turkish L2. Such people may spend 8 hours a day at school, generally watch Turkish television channels, listen to Turkish pop music and use Turkish while conversing with their friends. Newer generations of Kurdish speakers often differ from their parents in that they have generally acquired an incomplete version of their L1, which is further limited in its nature as a spoken variety; a result perhaps of the necessity of communicating with family, in particular with elderly relatives and with others in the community. However, the desire to maintain a mother language can make a difference, and the comparison of the groups in accordance with their score for attitude and their score in the first writing task confirms the importance of attitude.

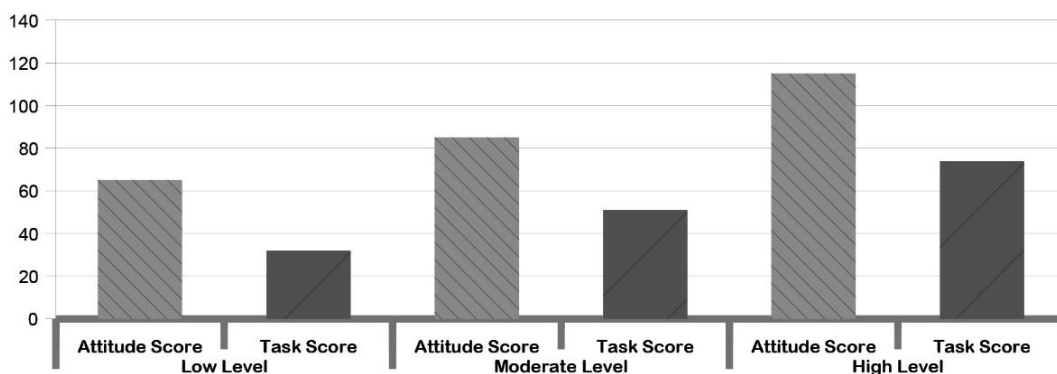


Figure 4.4: A Comparison of the Groups in Accordance with their Score for Attitude and their Score in the First Writing Task

Figure 4.4 shows that there is a strong link between the attitude of the participants and their scores in the first writing task. The group with a low score of attitude towards their mother tongue gained only 32 points on average, showing a correlation with their attitudinal scores. The group who had a moderate level of attitude towards their first language gained an average of 51 points in the first writing task. Finally, the participants who had a high level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue gained 72 points, which was the highest set of average points in the first written task. As can be seen from the graph, there is a strong link between the attitude of the participants and the attrition they have experienced based on the results of the first written task.

The pieces of writing completed by the participants with a low attitudinal score showed that they were unable to recall the necessary words or linguistic items to write what they wanted to convey. None of the participants were able to write up to 100 words, and the mean number of words they were able to use was around 16 words, and around 4 were borrowed ($M= 3,88$) from Turkish to enable them to complete the passage. As previously stated, first language attrition generally manifests itself in the lexicology of that language (Schmid & Köpke, 2009), and individuals cannot access the necessary lexical items to express themselves. In the case of our study, the participants who had a low level of attitude towards their first language tended to use simplified forms and were not able to call forth many words to write about themselves.

Example 1: Written Task 1, Participant 127 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

<i>Navê babamin Yusuf.</i>	(My father's name is Yusuf.)
<i>Navê diyamin Mihriban.</i>	(My mother's name is Mihriban.)
<i>Navê brayimin Arda.</i>	(My brother's name is Arda.)
<i>Navê xushkami Muzeyen.</i>	(My sister's name is Muzeyen.)
<i>Navê mamimin Salih.</i>	(My uncle's name is Salih.)
<i>Gel arkadaşi xe tup dileyzim u film seyrdikim.</i>	(I play football with my friends and I watch movies)
<i>Bilgisayari dileyzim.</i>	(I play computer games)

Example 1 shows that the participant was not able to use a good range of words from his mother tongue, as the task requested that at least 100 words be used. However, the participant could only write 24 words, including those he borrowed from Turkish. We can see that he had trouble expressing himself as he is often repetitive and uses very simple sentences. Morphological attrition is a commonly occurring phenomenon in attriters (Altenberg, 1991, Keijzer, 2007, Schmid, 2002), and this phenomenon can be seen in this example. In the sentences he wrote the participant wrote his relatives' names, but did not use the Kurdish auxiliary verbs '-ye' or '-e' (e.g. *Navê babamin Yusuf*, *Navê diyamin Mihriban*, *Navê brayimin Arda*, *Navê mamimin Salih*, *Navê xushkami Muzeyen*). In Kurdish the simple present auxiliary verb morpheme 'e' is used like 'am', 'is' and 'are'. The present-tense copula 'e' ('am', 'is' and 'are') is enclitic, that is, unstressed, but it is usually written as a separate word (Thackston, 2006). "*Navê babamin Yusuf e*, *Navê diyamin Mihriban e*, *Navê diyamin Mihriban e*, *Navê brayimin Arda ye*, *Navê mamimin Salih e*, *Navê xushkami Muzeyen e*." would have been the correct way for the participant to write about his family. The influence of Turkish could be the reason for this form of attrition because in spoken Turkish the auxiliary '-dir' ('am', 'is' and 'are') is omitted, e.g. *Annemin adı Esra* (My mother's name Esra), and therefore this could have influenced the construction of the participant's sentence.

Borrowing is another sign of attrition in the first language, and it is caused by the intrusion of the dominant L2 into the system of the L1 and results in the borrowing of items from the L2 (Silva-Corvalan, 1994), which can be seen in example 1. In the

first sentence, the participant said ‘*babamin*’ (my father), however ‘*baba*’ is the Turkish word for ‘father’ and not the Kurdish word. He added the Kurdish possessive suffix ‘*-min*’, and then used this construction in place of the Kurdish word ‘*bavîmîn*’. There are also further examples of borrowing in the last two sentences of the same participant.

Gel arkadaşî xe tûp dileyzim u film seyrdikim. (I play football with my friends and I watch movies)

Bilgisayari dileyzim. (I play computer games)

In these sentences, ‘*arkadaş*’ (friend) is a noun borrowed from Turkish and used in place of the forgotten Kurdish word ‘*heval*’; and so that he could use the Turkish noun the participant attached the accusative affix ‘*(y)e*’. Like the Turkish-Kurdish constructions in the picture naming tasks, ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ is a common way of borrowing whereby attriters use Turkish nouns instead of the forgotten Kurdish nouns.

Example 2: Writing Task 1, Participant 122 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

...Ez sîbî, saat he şta drabim. Ez kahvaltiyi dikim ba şe ez dicim meytebi. Ez derse xe dinlemişdikêm, ez ba şe gel arkadaşî xe dilizîm...

(I get up at eight o’clock. I have breakfast then I go to school. I listen to my lessons then I play with my friends.)

In this example, borrowing can be observed in the sentences. The Kurdish verb *kirin* (do) is used to construct words with nouns and verbs that are borrowed from Turkish. ‘*Turkish noun + kirin*’ or ‘*Turkish verb + (miş) + kirin*’ is a general strategy used by Kurdish-Turkish bilinguals to borrow the forgotten or unknown nouns and verbs from Turkish, and this strategy can be seen in most of the written tasks of the participants, especially those with a low or moderate score for their level of positive attitude towards Kurdish. These participants used this strategy much more than those with a high level of positive attitude towards Kurdish. For example, *kahvalti + yi + dikim* (I eat breakfast) is a clear example of borrowing, as ‘*kahvalti*’ (breakfast) is a Turkish noun and has been used in this case as a borrowed noun in the form of ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ with the addition of ‘*kirin*’ (do) to make it a Kurdish-like verb. The other constructed verb in the example, ‘*dinlemişdikêm*’ (I listen) is also another example of this type of construction. Furthermore, this example the sentence ‘*Gel*

arkadaşı xe dilizîm.’ (I play with my friends) features ‘*arkadaş*’, a Turkish noun for ‘friend’, and the participant has used it in place of the equivalent Kurdish noun ‘*heval*’, as he not able to locate it in his lexical inventory when it was needed.

From previous research on attrition we know that different parts of language are affected at different times throughout the process. For instance, the vocabulary is the first area to suffer losses, whereas areas like morphology, the formation and inflection of words, and what is broadly defined as syntax, the knowledge regarding the construction of grammatical sentences, are more resilient to loss (Köpke & Schmid, 2004). From the examples, we can see that the participants were able to use the morphological items from their L1 to borrow the lexical items from their L2. They could not reach some of the lexical items of their L1, however their L1 morphemes were available in their inventory to use to construct something of an alternative. Therefore, in this sense our findings support the previous research on attrition.

Example 3: Writing Task 1, Participant 23 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

<i>Ez rabe.</i>	(I get up.)
<i>Ez çum mektebe.</i>	(I go to school.)
<i>Brêmun heye.</i>	(I have brother.)
<i>Brêmun çu mektebe.</i>	(My brother goes to school.)
<i>Saat se brêmun hat.</i>	(It is three o’clock, my brother came.)
<i>Saat çar ez hattim.</i>	(It is four o’clock, I came.)

As can be seen in the past three examples, the participants who possessed a negative attitude towards their first language struggled to write even half of the 100 words that was asked of them in the first writing task. In the above example the participant was only able to write 17 words, and when the repeated words of these are removed, only 10 words remain. This bilingual participant, whose score for attitude was quite low at 69, had lost his skill and fluency in his L1 as he did not possess a positive attitude towards his first language and thus was not motivated to maintain his it. This type of bilingualism is called subtractive bilingualism, in which the lexical items and grammatical system of the native language are affected adversely, allowing attrition

to manifest itself through simplified grammatical systems and vocabulary gaps (Haynes, 2010).

Example 4: Writing Task 1, Participant 18 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

<i>Ez top dilizim.</i>	(I play football.)
<i>Ez dekenim.</i>	(I laugh.)
<i>Ez zef durinim.</i>	(I sit a lot.)
<i>Brimin meytebî, dıçıt.</i>	(My brother goes to school.)
<i>Babımın iş dıçıt.</i>	(My father goes to work.)

In this example, the participant could only use an extremely limited vocabulary and very simplified grammar rules. The absence of grammatical complexity, such as tenses and conjunctions, is clear. The participant was able to use around 10 words to write about himself, and because of the interference of his L2 he wrote most of his sentences according to the syntax of Turkish. The general word order of Kurdish is subject-verb-object (SVO), however, in Turkish the word order is subject-object-verb (SOV), and the verb usually goes at the end of the sentence. For example, the following sentence ‘*Kadın kitabı okudu*’ in English literally means ‘The woman the book read.’ The basic structure of Kurdish, Turkish and English can be seen in the table below, in that order.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Verb</u>
<i>Ez</i>	<i>meyteb î,</i>	<i>dıçım</i>
<i>Ben</i>	<i>okul a</i>	<i>giderim</i>
I	school to	go.

The correct syntactic order of this sentence is ‘*Ez dıçım meytebe*’ and is similar to the word order of English. However, in his sentences the participant used Turkish word order because of the interference of his L2.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Verb</u>
<i>Brimin</i>	<i>meytebî,</i>	<i>dıçıt.</i>
<i>Kardeşim</i>	<i>okul a</i>	<i>gider.</i>
My brother	school	to go.

We can see similar interference in this sentence as well. The correct syntactic order of this sentence is “*Brimîn dıçıt mektebi.*”

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Verb</i>
<i>Babımın</i>	<i>iş</i>	<i>dıçıt.</i>
Babam	<i>iş e</i>	<i>gider.</i>
My father	work to	go.

Here we can see both syntactical and lexical attrition as the attriter borrowed ‘*iş*’ (work) from Turkish as well as writing the sentence according to Turkish word order (SOV). The correct syntactic order of the sentence should be “*Bavımın dıçıt xebatê.*” The example shows that L2 syntax has affected the way that L1 is processed. The mental grammar - a form of internal linguistic knowledge which operates in the production and recognition of appropriately structured expressions in that language - of the participant regulates the syntactic properties of the L1, which means that the domineering linguistic knowledge available in the individual’s mind governs the other weaker linguistic systems although usually not consciously (Towell & Hawkins, 1994).

Example 5: Written Task 1, Participant 22 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

<i>Malame 5 mîrove.</i>	(Our house has five people.)
<i>Babam, daykamîn, brayîmin, xûşkamin, ez .</i>	(My father, my mother, my brother, my sister and me.)
<i>Ez sîbi zû drabîm. Dest u çavuxu dîşum.</i>	(I get up early, I wash my hands and my face.)
<i>Paşê, hazırlanmışdibim bo mektebe.</i>	(Then I prepare for school.)
<i>Paşê, dîçim servisi beklemişdikim.</i>	(Then I go and wait for school bus.)
<i>Servisi bimişdibim, Paşê girmişdibim derslere.</i>	(I get on the bus then I enter my lessons.)
<i>Tenefuste gel dayka xe dîaxîwim.</i>	(At break I speak with my mother on phone.)
<i>Paşê, mekteb xilas dibit. dîçême servisê.</i>	(Then school finishes and I go to school bus.)
<i>Servis ji mi dibete Yurdê.</i>	(School bus take me to the hostel.)

Paşê, Ez yurdêda diçême Etûtde. (Then I go to the study room.)

Ev ji xîlasdibit. (That finishes.)

Diçême odaxe u gel arkadaşê xe konuşmuşdikem. (I go to my room and speak to my friends.)

Paşê, razîm. (Then I sleep.)

The participant in this example was able to write around 60 words, which achieves the level of ‘fair’ in the grading system. Even so, when we remove the repeated words only 35 words are left and 3 of these were repeated, and there were 12 words borrowed from Turkish (*konusmuşdikem, etut, yurt, servis, beklemişdikim, bimişdibim, hazirlanmişdibim, arkadaş* and *babam*). Again, this shows that the participant could not access the Kurdish equivalent of these words. There were also signs of simplification where the participant was not able to use complex grammar, such as conjunctions, in the passage. A breakdown of the participant’s sentence structure can be seen below.

hazirlan miş dibim bo mektebe.
Turkish verb - Turkish past tense affix - Kurdish verb (do) - Kurdish prep., - Kurdish noun

Servis i bin miş dibim
Turkish noun - Kurdish affix - Turkish verb - Turkish past tense affix- Kurdish verb (do)

Diçe me oda xe
Kurdish Verb and affix - Turkish noun - Kurdish poss. affix

u gel arkadaş é xe konuş
Kurdish conjunction - Kurdish prep. - Turkish noun - Kurdis poss. affix - Turkish verb
muş dikem.
Turkish past tense affix - Kurdish verb (do)

We can see from the above examples we can see that the participant used Turkish and Kurdish linguistics together to express himself. Lexical borrowing accompanied by the ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ construction was used by the participant several times whilst writing about himself (*konusmuşdikem, hazirlanmişdibim, girmişdibim* and *bin-mişdibim*). Since the participant could not recall the verbs *axaftin* (speak), *amade kirin* (prepare), *têketin* (enter) and *siwar bûn* (get on) he had to resort to the ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ strategy to complete the first task. Higher frequency of use of the lexical items of the L2 in place of the L1, causes loss of forms and the elimination of morphological and grammatical complexity, such as in tenses and conjunctions. The phrase ‘redundancy reduction’ refers to the instance

where if both languages contain a rule that serves the same semantic function, the version of the rule that is less complex and has a greater level of usage will replace the more complex rule (Seliger, 1989). To be more precise, those L2 items or rules that are used more frequently will be more easily activated when they are in competition with those items or rules of the L1 that are less frequently used (Kopke, 2007).

Example 6: Written Task 1, Participant 18 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

<i>Ez top dîlizim.</i>	(I play football.)
<i>Ez dîrunim.</i>	(I sit.)
<i>Ez hîndik dîrevim.</i>	(I run a little.)
<i>Ez meytebi dîçîm.</i>	(I go to school.)
<i>Babîmin nan dîxut.</i>	(My father eats bread.)
<i>Daykamîn dîçê îşî,</i>	(My mother goes to work.)
<i>Brîmin mektebi dîçît.</i>	(My brother goes to school.)

As in the previous examples, Participant 18 was not able to access many words and grammatical items to complete the first task. She used an inadequate range of words, around (15 in total), and very simple sentences without any conjunctions or transitions. Moreover, she was clearly under the heavy influence of her L2, as can be seen in her use of borrowed words from Turkish, and in the places where the syntax of her L2 has influenced the processing of her L1.

Ez meytebi dîçîm. (I go to school.) *Brîmin mektebi dîçît.* (My brother goes to school.)

<i>Ben okula gidiyorum.</i>	<i>Kardesim okula gidiyor.</i>
S O V	S O V

The correct word order of both examples should have been Subject + Verb + Object, which is shown below.

<i>Ez dîçîm meytebi.</i> (I go to school.)	<i>Brîmin dîçît mektebi.</i> (My brother goes to school.)
S V O	S V O

Grammatical interference, both morphological and syntactical, occurs once linguistic items of a language enter another language in the same speech community, and progressively, these languages become integrated grammatically. As a result of this

interaction, the speakers of these languages start to speak and carries over from either language and the exchange of linguistic elements depends on the power of the languages involved; If one of the languages involved in the process is official, more prestigious or more dominant than the other language(s), this language can assimilate the other(s) through convergence, which refers to the process of languages becoming more similar to one another (Clyne, 2003). This process can be regarded as a natural result of cross linguistic influence; however, the attitude of the native speakers of minority languages can be decisive in the maintenance of that language in this situation. Taking the examples given above into account, our research shows that if individuals have a negative attitude towards their mother tongue the attrition process will accelerate, and therefore maintaining it could become more difficult.

The use of borrowing is likely to be a useful factor to use to form an idea about the extent of lexical attrition. In our study, all borrowed Turkish words in the first written task were counted. According to research by Bakker (1999), if the extent of borrowing is around 15% or more it can be regarded as extensive borrowing from the other language. The graph below is useful in observing the rate of borrowing in the participants.

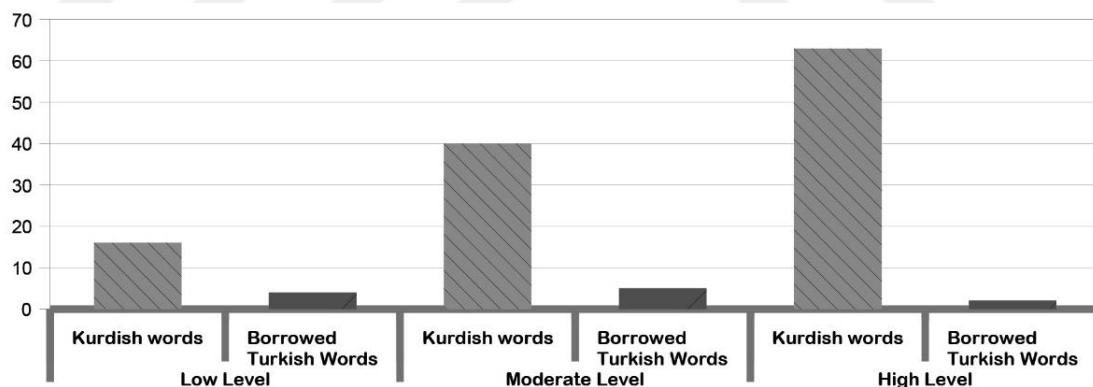


Figure 4.5: The Mean Number of Kurdish Words and Borrowed Turkish Words in the First Written Task

The graph shows that the first group who had a low score for attitude towards their mother tongue were able to write approximately 15 Kurdish words, around 4 of which were borrowed Turkish words, which accounted for 25% of the total words used in the task ($4/15 = 25\%$). This percentage can be regarded as a heavy level of borrowing. The second group with a moderate score for attitude towards their mother tongue were able to write about 40 words in Kurdish, and borrowed around 5

Turkish words; indicating that 12.5% of the task was written by borrowing words from Turkish (40/5= 12.5%). The third group, who had a high level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue, were able to use about 63 words in Kurdish, and in contrast to the other groups they used about 2 Turkish words in the task (63/3= 3,12 %). This graph too shows that there is a correlation between the attitude towards the L1 and language attrition.

Paradis (2007) proposed that attitude, either positive or negative, might play a significant role in the activation threshold process. Therefore, a negative emotional attitude towards an L1 could hasten the process of attrition by raising the L1 activation threshold. Yet, in contrast to this, the process can be delayed if the individual has a positive emotional attitude toward his/her L1. Such an attitude will decrease the activation threshold of the linguistic elements in the L1, making them more accessible. In order to adequately demonstrate the difference between the groups in the study examples from the first task have been randomly chosen, and three participants from each different group are shown in the following pages.

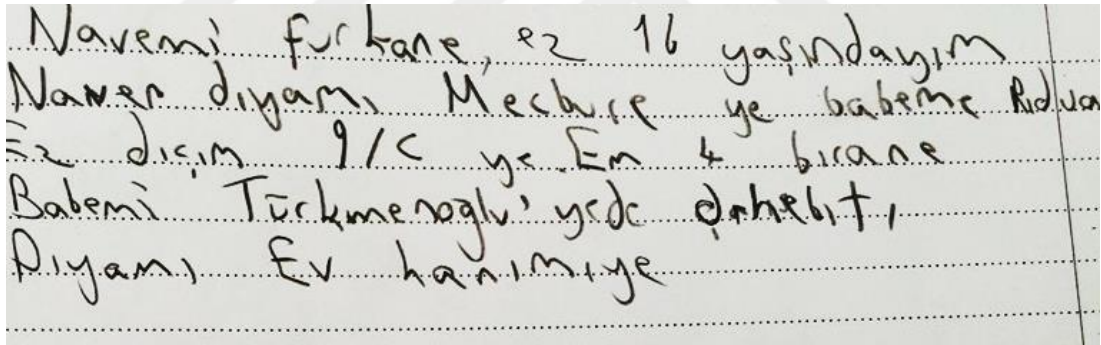


Figure 4.6: An Example from Written Task 1 Belonging to a Participant from the Group with a Low Level of Positive Attitude towards their Mother Tongue

From the example, it is clear that the participant possessed a very limited vocabulary in Turkish, using around 15 words to write the first written task which was to have been at least 100 words. Linguistic and lexical elements of Turkish were used, with the participant often transitioning from the L1 to the L2. The participant borrowed the word 'yaş' (age) and 'ev hanımı' (housewife) from Turkish while doing this short piece of writing. The example also shows that the participant used the Turkish location case morpheme '-de' instead of the Kurdish 'li'.

Babimin Niyazi Türkmenoğluyde dexebiti. (Turkish location case morpheme usage)

Babam Niyazi Türkmenoğlunda çalışıyor.

Babamin li Niyazi Türkmenoğliyda dexebit. (correct usage)

(My father works at Niyazi Türkmenoğlu.)

Moreover, the participant was only able to write simple sentences with a limited vocabulary, and could not use basic coordinating phrase-level conjunctions such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘yet’ and ‘or’; and was certainly not able to stretch to sentence-level transition like ‘however’, ‘moreover’, ‘in addition’ and ‘on the other hand’.

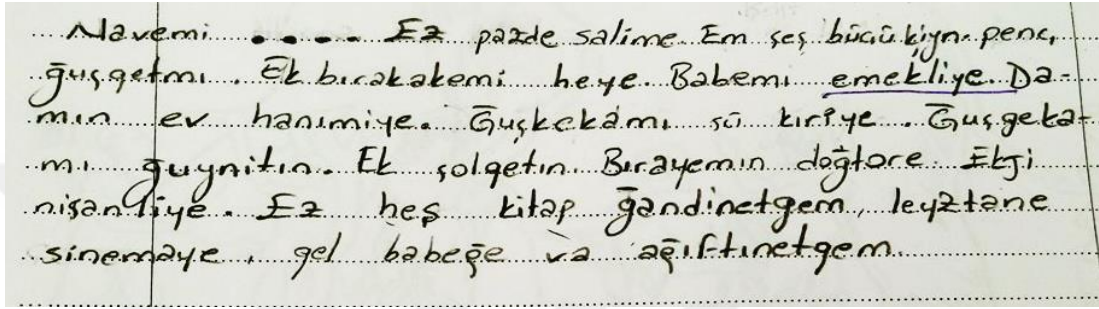


Figure 4.7: An Example from Written Task 1 Belonging to a Participant from the Group with a Moderate Level of Positive Attitude towards their Mother Tongue

This piece of writing was completed by a participant who had a moderate level of positive attitude towards his mother tongue, and a difference in skill is visible from the previous piece of writing. The participant was able to access more Kurdish words than the previous participant, 40 in total; however, he used a similar number of borrowed words from Turkish. For example, ‘emekli’ (retired), ‘ev hanımı’ (housewife) and ‘nişanlı’ (engaged) are words that are borrowed from Turkish in place of the Kurdish words ‘bermal’ or ‘kabani’, ‘jikarketî’ and ‘destgirtî’. This participant also could not use basic coordinating phrase-level conjunctions (and, but, yet, or), though he was able to use the ‘ji’ conjunction (as well, too) in one sentence:

Brimin doxture, evji nişanlıye.

(My brother is a doctor, he is also engaged.)

In the example, the words ‘emekli’ (retired), ‘ev hanımı’ (housewife) and ‘nişanlı’ (engaged) from the L2 lexicon were incorporated into that of the L1 morphologically by the participant, through the use of the ‘*Turkish noun + Kurdish (y)e morpheme*’ strategy. This strategy was used by most of the participants in this study such examples as *emekli-ye*, *ev hanımı-ye*, *nişanlı-ye*.

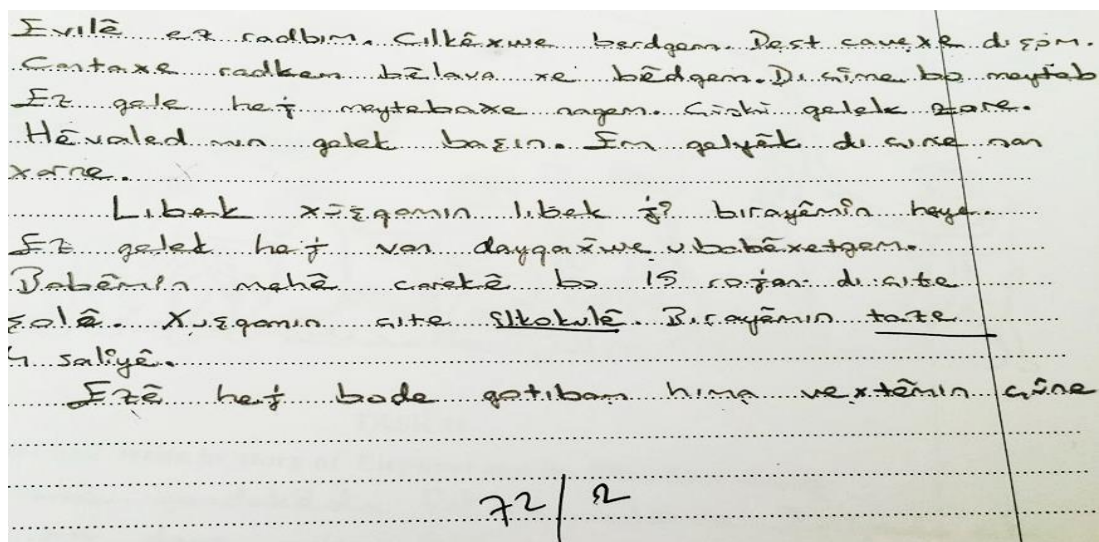


Figure 4.8: An Example from Written Task 1 Belonging to a Participant from the Group with a High Level of Positive Attitude towards their Mother Tongue

The written task of the participant with a high level of positive attitude towards her mother tongue reveals that she had a good understanding of the elementary vocabulary of her L1, and she was able to write over 70 words, which is much closer to the requested range of 100 for vocabulary in this task. The participant, unlike the previous two, could write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked by simple conjunctions like ‘u’ (and), ‘çimki’, (because) and ‘ji’ (as well). Out of over 70 words there were only two examples of borrowed words from Turkish, which were ‘ilkokul’ (primary school) and ‘taze’ (new), as she was unable to remember their Kurdish equivalents ‘dibistan’ and ‘têze’. Though she demonstrated a better control of her L1 than the other participants, she still had difficulty in accessing some lexical items. The lexicon consists of a much larger number of elements than other areas of language. Researchers claim that lexical elements are more independent and flexible, leaving room for phenomena such as change, loss or interference (Schmid and Köpke, 2009). Aside from this, she has a sound basic range of lexical, morphological and grammatical elements with which to write her personal details and daily routine. Looking at this piece in comparison to the others, attitude appears to be a very significant force in the maintenance of a language. This participant had a high level of positive attitude towards her mother tongue and was able to access basic linguistic items to express herself in Kurdish.

Our second task was related to a story called ‘The Blind Men and The Elephant’, for which participants were asked to write a paragraph consisting at least 150 words in

Kurdish. This task can be thought of as difficult, as it requests the use of more words than the previous task, and participants were required to know more complicated and abstract vocabulary to complete it. Completing this section seemed to be more difficult for all three groups as collectively the mean number of words used in this task was lower than 55. Storytelling requires receptive and expressive language, complex syntax and semantics, abstract and imaginative thinking, general knowledge and a range of pragmatic and discourse skills, as well as drawing upon a set of internal organizational rules (Liles, 1993). Thus, those participants who were experiencing language attrition naturally had difficulties with storytelling.

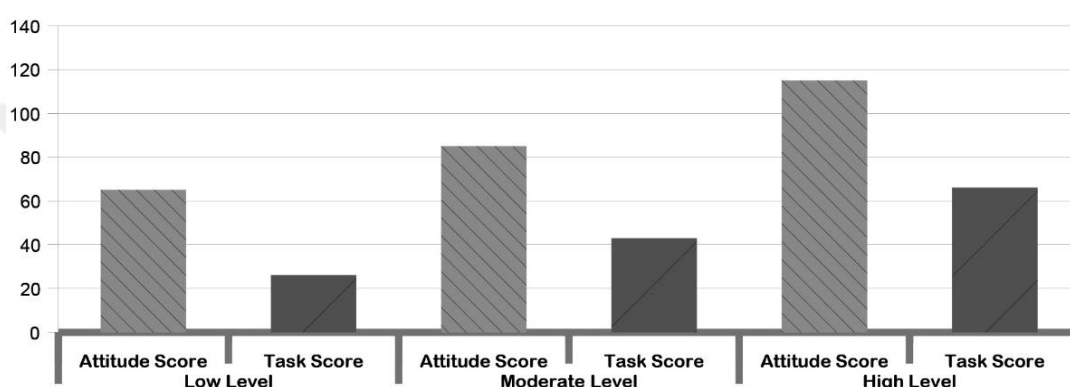


Figure 4.9: A Comparison of the Groups by Score for Attitude and Score in the Written Task 2

Figure 4.9 suggests that there is a meaningful difference between the attitude of the participants and their scores in the second writing task. The group who had the least positive attitude towards their mother tongue gained only 26 points on average, showing a correlation with their scores for attitude. The group who had a moderate level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue gained an average of 43 points in the second writing task. Finally, the group who had the highest level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue gained 66 points, which was the highest average score in the second written task.

We can see from the graph that there is a significant relationship between the attitude of the participants and the level of attrition they had experienced. The participants who had a low attitudinal score were unable to recall most of the necessary words or linguistic items to write what they had in mind. No participant was able to write over 100 words; they were able to write around 8 words on average and around 4 were borrowed from Turkish ($M= 1,5$) to complete the piece of writing. Those who had a

moderate level of positive attitude towards their L1 were able to write 21 words, 4 of which were also borrowed from Turkish. Finally, those who had a high level of positive attitude towards their L1 were able to write approximately 54 words, wherein around 2 of which were borrowed from Turkish. Thus, in terms of the lexicon, the results show that a participant's level of attitude has a significant effect on their level of lexical attrition.

Example 7: Written Task 2, Participant 22 (negative attitude towards Kurdish).

Bir grup kor çarpişmışdikin file. (A group of blind people hit an elephant.)

Ek bêjit dıfine. (One says nose.)

Ek bêjit peye . (One says leg.)

Ek bêjit sutune. (One says pillar.)

Ek bêjit kuyruke. (One says tail.)

Ek bêjit diş. (One says tooth.)

This example illustrates that the participant had some signs of language attrition. The first sign is that the vocabulary used is very limited. He was only able to use 10 different words and 4 of those were Turkish, yet, in the task he was asked to write at least 150 words to tell the story of 'The Elephant and the Blind Men'. There are frequent repetitions in the passage he constructed, for example 'ek bêjit' is used throughout most of his work, and his sentences contain grammatical errors. In the sentences, the participant should have used the demonstrative adjective 'eva' to refer to the elephant, as is illustrated below:

Ek bêjit eva dıfine. (One says this is a nose.)

Ek bêjit eva peye. (One says this is a leg.)

Ek bêjit eva sutune. (One says this is a pillar.)

The second indicator of language attrition is the use of borrowing from his L2. As in the previous examples from the first written task, it is clear that the participant has used the morphological items of his L1 in order to borrow lexical items from his L2, as a result of not being able to access some lexical items. As he could not remember the Kurdish equivalents, he borrowed 'bir' (one), 'kuyruk' (tail) and 'diş' (tooth)

from Turkish and utilised it in the form of ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ strategy, such as in the examples of ‘*kuyruk-e*’ and ‘*diş-e*’. Similarly, he borrowed the verb ‘*çarpmak*’ (to hit) from Turkish in the form of ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ construction strategy, as he could not recall the Kurdish equivalent noun ‘*lê dan*’ or ‘*li hev xistin*’ as it is no longer available in the repertoire of his Kurdish vocabulary.

çarpış - *miş* - *dikin*

Turkish verb - Turkish past tense suffix - Kurdish verb (do)

According to Muysken (2000), the interference of the L2 develops according to three types of changes: (1) Borrowing accompanied by lexical syntactic loan; (2) Systematic convergence due to a prolonged coexistence of two linguistic codes, and (3) The imitation of specific features of the L2 by the L1 user. In the example above there is a clear interference of L2 on L1, and this is visible through syntax, morphological items and lexical items. When there is difficulty in accessing the elements of the L1, which mainly manifests in lexical retrieval difficulty, the transfer of elements belonging to the dominant language to the minor language appears inevitable.

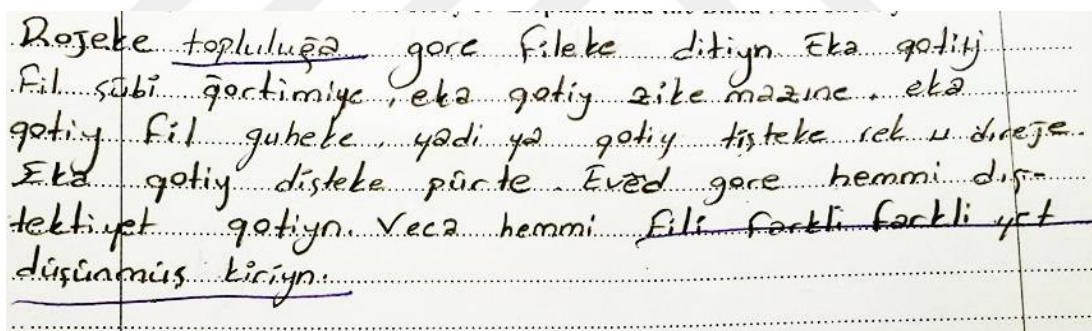


Figure 4.10: An Example from Written Task 2 from Participant 37 (Moderate Level)

This example shows that the participant was able to access a fairly sound range of lexical items, totalling around 40 words, and was able to write a series of simple phrases, such as ‘*rojeki*’ (‘once upon a time’), and sentences that were linked with simple conjunctions like ‘*u*’ (and), ‘*vecca*’, (so) and ‘*ji*’ (as well). However, the participant was pushed to use some Turkish words in order to tell the story. ‘*Topluluk*’ (group) and ‘*fil*’ (elephant) are Turkish words and replaced the Kurdish words ‘*civat*’, ‘*kom*’ and ‘*diranfil*’, as these words were unable to be recalled by the participant. Thus, this participant also used the ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ strategy in

order to use these words. The same strategy was also used in the following sentence by the same participant:

Rojeke toplulug-a kor fiil-e-ki dibinitin. (A group of blind men see an elephant.)

This example also reveals that if the lexical item in Kurdish had been available to the speaker then there would be no need to use the ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ construction, but when the Kurdish lexical items, particularly verbs, were unavailable then ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ was used. To illustrate, ‘*düşün-müş-kirin*’ construction was used instead of Kurdish verb ‘*difikirit*’ (to think), which is clear evidence of this phenomenon. According to Pavlenko (2004), lexical borrowing is evidence of L1 attrition only in cases where an exact L1 equivalent exists but is no longer available to the speaker. These lexical items could be low frequency ones or related to unfamiliar contexts, as in the story of ‘The Blind Men and The Elephant’. Therefore, L2 can become an obstacle in the maintenance of L1 because individuals tend to transfer the grammatical structure of their L2 across to their L1 during a lack of accessibility of L1 elements, rather than repairing their L1.

The quantity and quality of L1 input, which depends on the attitude of individuals, can lessen the interference of L2. Our study clearly shows that those participants who had a high level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue had more control over their L1, despite having been exposed to L2 in the same manner and to the same extent. The influence of L2 seems not to affect their ability and/or performance, and thereby they seemed to be experiencing less attrition when compared with those who had a low or moderate level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue.

Wax tabê qundakêda Fel peydalekirine. Deriyeda ek
 destê xê daya guha filê qatîya ewe sergê yalîzedidit.
 Ek destexê daya qicê filê qatîya ewe sergê kolonê didit
 Ek destaxê daya guhêka filê qatîya ewe sergê xortê
 didit. Kes nîbanîya ewe fila.
 Xerî qatîya ewe hamê kes xerî na fikirîf.
 Hemê kes dîşîk bay xedidit.
 64/1

Figure 4.11: An Example from Written Task 2 Belonging to a Participant from the Group with a Moderate Level of Positive Attitude towards their Mother Tongue

In the above example, the participant demonstrated a sufficient control of grammar and vocabulary in his L1, and managed to tell the story in a comprehensible manner.

He was able to access over 60 words, and to write advanced phrases such as *'waxteki'* ('once upon a time') and sentences that were linked with simple conjunctions like *'li'*, *'u'* (and), *'vecca'* (so) and *'ji'* (as well). Furthermore, the organization of the text is better in this example than in previous examples as ideas are linked together. Nevertheless, there are 2 borrowed nouns from Turkish, *'değişik'* (different) and *'yelpaze'* (fan), as the participant could not recall their Kurdish equivalents *'cihê'* and *'baweş'*.

The level of borrowing present can be used to make an assumption about the extent of lexical attrition (Bakker, 1999). To further see the relationship between the level of borrowing that occurred in the tasks, and attitude we counted all borrowed Turkish words and all Kurdish words used in the second written task. Below is an illustration of this quantity.

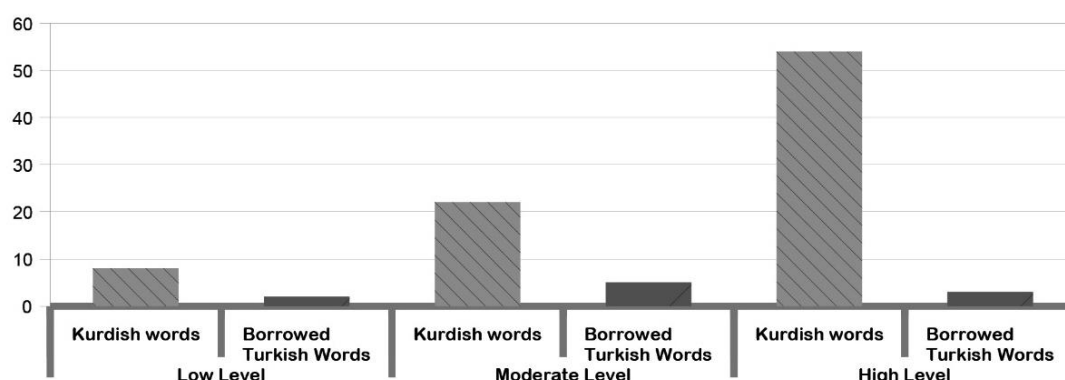


Figure 4.12: The Mean Number of Kurdish Words and Borrowed Turkish Words in the First Written Task

The graph makes clear that the mean number of Kurdish words written by the participants who had a low score for attitude towards their mother tongue was approximately 8 words, and the mean number of borrowed words was around two words, accounting for 25 percent of the total borrowing used in the task ($8/2 = 25\%$). The number of words written for the task by this group was around half of the words written in the first task, in which they were able to write around 16 words. As the first written task was related to familiar topics, such as talking about personal details, family, hobbies and daily routine, the participants were able to use basic and simple words to write it. However, the second task required the participants to use a large range of vocabulary, connective words, conjunctions and transitions. Thus in this task, the participants had a lower level of success.

The second group with a moderate score for attitude towards their mother tongue were able to write around 22 words and used 4 borrowed Turkish words, meaning 20 percent of the task was written by borrowing words ($22/4 = 20\%$). The mean number of words written by this group was around 40 words, and thus the second group also had some difficulty in writing the task.

In the case of the third group, who had a high level of positive attitude towards their mother tongue, we can see that the mean number of Kurdish words they were able to use was around 54 words, and they used around 3 Turkish words in the tasks ($54/3 = 6\%$). This group was also less successful in the second task when compared to their success in the first task, in which they were able to write over 60 words. Since this task asks for a wider range of vocabulary, and as they did not have the broad lexical repertoire necessary for telling the story, they had difficulty in writing this task.

Once more, a very strong correlation between the attitude towards the L1 and the level of language attrition is shown in this graph, depending on the general figures from the second written task.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Overall Concluding Remarks

The findings of our study demonstrated that there was a close connection between several variables and attitude. One such variable was that the male participants had a more positive attitude towards their first language than the females ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 2.97$). The study showed that 66% of the participants with a negative attitude towards their L1 were female; and these participants were unable to access the linguistic elements of their mother tongue to give sufficient answers to the exercises in the picture naming and writing tasks in the study. As a result, we were able to answer one of our preliminary research questions as to whether gender is a factor that affects L1 attrition.

Another significant result of the study was that it confirmed that there is a close relationship between the attitude towards the mother tongue and the language choice with the mother ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 8,85$). The same statistically meaningful result was gained for the relationship between the attitude towards the first language and the language preference with the father ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 9.35$). Furthermore, our research demonstrates that there is strong relationship between the attitude of the participants and their language preference with their siblings ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 9.35$) and friends ($p < .05$; $t(132) = 4.171$). However, the study also showed that those who preferred to speak in their L1 with their siblings and friends were fewer than those preferring to speak in their L1 with their mothers and fathers, and this choice was also determined by attitude. This could indicate a divide between young people and the generation of their parents in their relationship to their native language, as the adolescents in our study generally preferred to speak in their more popular and prestigious L2 with their siblings and friends. From these results we were able to confirm that there is a relationship between attitude and the language choice with others.

Our findings also confirm that attitude and motivation are interrelated in the process of language maintenance ($p < 0.5$, $M_s = 527.932$ $F = 12.592$). The choice to pursue a given action, to persist at it and to exert effort depends on the level of motivation an individual possesses (Dörnyei, 2001). According to the results from the think-aloud protocol, those who did not see a reason to maintain their L1 were not willing to try to do so through speaking their mother tongue.

The statistics from the dissertation also suggested that there is a meaningful link between the frequency of speaking a language and attitude ($p < .05$; $F(4.129) = 35.213$). The data gained from this research gave us an insight into why some speakers experience a much higher degree of attrition than others, and our study confirms the results found in previous studies on the frequency of language use and attrition (Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Schmid, 2011). The negative attitudes that some participants held towards their L1 reduced the appreciation they had for their L1, and consequently this led to a shift towards the more prestigious language of Turkish by the participants, who began to speak their native language far less than their second language. As a result, they were unable to access a wide range of lexical and grammatical items from their mother tongue; and this is consistent with Paradis's activation threshold hypothesis, which proposed that the accessibility of a linguistic item depends on its usage by speakers (2007).

One particularly useful outcome of this study was that the participants' self-evaluation about their writing and reading skills in Kurdish correlated with their attitudes, and this was statistically meaningful for both writing ($p < .05$; $F(3.130) = 12.768$) and reading ($p < .05$; $F(3.130) = 22.284$).

In the case of the picture naming tasks, the study showed that there was a meaningful relationship between attitude and lexical attrition in the first, second and third picture naming tasks. Our study also supported the assumptions that the lexicon is the most vulnerable area of language and that L1 attrition usually manifests first in the lexicon (Schmid, 2008). The participants who had a low positive attitude towards their L1 could recall only about 25% of the lexical items in the picture naming tasks, however those with a moderate level of positive attitude towards their L1 were able to access about 50% of the words in the picture naming tasks. Those with a high level of positive attitude towards their native language were able to access more than 75% of the lexical items in the picture naming tasks, which is a significant demonstration of

the link between attitude and language attrition.

With regard to the writing tasks in the study, the results of the first and second written tasks revealed that there was a strong link between the attitude of the participants and their scores in the first and second writing tasks. The group who had a low score for attitude towards their first language achieved poor or very poor results in both tasks, and the group with a moderate level of attitude towards their L1 achieved fair results in both. Those participants who had a high level of positive attitude towards their L1 got the most points in the tasks, achieving good results on average in both tasks.

In these tasks we also observed that the group with a low score for attitude towards their L1 borrowed about 25% of words from their L2, and this can be considered as a heavy level of borrowing. Moreover, they wrote with an inadequate range of vocabulary and structures in their L1. The group who had a high level of positive attitude in comparison used only about 3% of borrowed words from their L2. Most of participants were able to make use of their L1 morphemes efficiently, and this once again confirms that the lexicon is more vulnerable to attrition than the morphosyntax (Schmid 2007; Köpke, 2001a). During the process of borrowing the participants used two strategies to compensate for their diminished L1, and this was done by using Kurdish morphemes to borrow lexical elements from their L2. The first was the ‘*Turkish verb + miş + kirin*’ construction, whereby the participants were able to borrow Turkish verbs; and the second was the ‘*Turkish noun + (y)e*’ construction, by which they borrowed Turkish nouns.

Moreover, the results gained from the think-aloud protocol show that attrition is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, as is consistent with the Dynamic Systems Theory (Herdina and Jessner, 2002; de Bot et al., 2007) putting forward that first language attrition is determined by a multifaceted range of factors, such as communicative requirements, the general use of the language in cultural, social or political environments; the motivation and attitude of bilinguals towards their own language and culture and the language and culture of the majority.

The overall conclusion of this dissertation is that the factor of attitude is one of the most influential factors in first language attrition, as well as in the inadequate activation of L1 due to the influence of a dominant L2.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Though the sample scale is quite sufficient for the generalizability of the results, the research is limited by only one high school in one city. A larger scale study could be done by taking more schools from different schools into account. We have tried to find out the impact of Turkish on Kurdish bilinguals; however, other languages known by the bilingual have not been taken into account, which may have an effect on language attrition as well. The other limitation of this research can be said that it has not included the income into demographic variables, nevertheless, there could be a relationship between the income of the participant's family and his/her language attrition level. Because socio-demographic variables; particularly Socio-economic status, are known to affect many factor in individuals' lives.

Our study showed that there is a close link between attitude and lexical attrition and it would be worthwhile to study the relation between phonological attrition and language attitude. The same study can be carried out for other languages spoken in Turkey such as Arabic, Armenian, Greek and the like. It would be interesting to conduct a qualitative study on parents experiencing first language attrition and its reflections on their children. It is conceivable to apply PLAQ-B to bilingual parents and try to understand whether there is a correlation between attitude of parents and their children towards their L1, thus studying the role of family on first language attrition.

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APPENDIX -I

Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire (For Bilinguals) (PLAQ)

Please answer the questions or tick the box which best suits you.

PART I

1. How old are you? I am years old.

2. Are you Male or Female ?

3. Do you feel?(Tick the box)

Turkish

Kurdish

Others

4. Please list the languages you speak:

Your **first** language

Your **second** language

Your **third** language (if you have one)

5. What is your mother's first language?

What is your father's **first** language?

6. What is your father's education level?

No schooling

Elementary School Graduate

High School Graduate

University Graduate

Post Graduate

7. What is your mother's education level?

No schooling

Elementary School Graduate

High School Graduate

University Graduate

Post Graduate

8. Please list the languages you generally speak with people below:

People	Languages
Your mother
Your father
Your brothers and sisters
Your friends

9. Please list the languages you generally think in situations below:

People	Languages
At School
At Home
With Friends
Outsite (Cafes, Shopping park)

10. On average, how many hours do you speak Kurdish a day?

- A) Less than one hour B) one to two hours C) three hours to four hours
 D) four to – five hours E) six or more

11. On average, how many hours do you speak Turkish a day?

- A) Less than one hour B) one to two hours C) three hours to four hours
 D) four to – five hours E) six or more

12. How is your level at your first language?

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good
<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK
<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad

13. How is your level at your second language?

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good
<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> OK
<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad

PART II

Please answer the questions or tick the box which best suits you. Please do not spend more than 30 seconds for each items.

N

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neither agree nor disagree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

1. I worry a lot about making mistakes while speaking in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

2. I'm afraid people will laugh at me if I speak in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

3. I hardly communicate with people whose L1 is the same as mine.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

4. Deep inside me, I don't want to speak Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

5. I don't speak in Kurdish because other people react me negatively.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

6. I believe speaking Kurdish would bring me no good.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

7. I think the people of a country should learn the official language first.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

8. I sometimes answer in Turkish even though being asked in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

9. At school, I prefer speaking in Turkish with my Kurdish friends.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

10. At home, I prefer speaking in Turkish with Parents, whose mother tongue is Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

11. I first think in Turkish then say it in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

12. I feel comfortable when I speak in Turkish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

13. I speak in Kurdish only if I have to.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

14. I am afraid that the friends who can speak Kurdish well will laugh at me when I speak in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

15. I don't believe speaking in Kurdish will provide me a better status in Turkey.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

16. I speak Turkish, my family and friends are happy.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

17. I don't think it will be an important gap in my life if I cannot speak, write or read in my first language.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

18. Having known Turkish very well is enough for me to get by in Turkey.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

19. When my parents are at formal places (such as school, work, meetings, bank, library, department store, government building), I want them to speak Turkish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

20. I can express my feelings better in Turkish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

P

21. Though I am bad at Kurdish, I am comfortable when speaking Kurdish in front of people.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

22. At school, I prefer speaking in Kurdish with my Kurdish friends.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

23. At home, I prefer speaking Kurdish with my parents, though they can speak in Turkish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

24. I first think in Kurdish then say it in Turkish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

25. When I speak in Kurdish, my family and friends are happy.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

26. I feel that it will be a great loss in my life if I cannot speak, write or read in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

27. Maintaining my mother tongue is important to me.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

28. I used to speak in Kurdish better before I started school.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

29. I try to to speak in Kurdish despite my mistakes and lack of knowledge.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

30. I can express my feelings better in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

31. I try to speak my first language whenever I get the opportunity.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

32. When my parents are at formal places (such as school, work , meetings , bank, library,department store, government building), I want them to speak Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

33. I like Kurdish people and Kurdish Culture.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

34. I feel more comfortable when I speak in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

35. I like reading in Kurdish.

SA	A	N	D	SD
----	---	---	---	----

If your answer is SA or A for question 35

35.1. How often do you read in Kurdish?

- A) Always B) Usually C) Sometimes
D) Rarely E) Never

35 .2. What do you usually read in Kurdish ? (you can choose more than one option)

- A) Novels B) short stories C) magazines
D) newspapers E) comics F) on-line articles
Other:

APPENDIX -II

PICTURE NAMING TASK-1

Please write the Kurdish names of the pictures below.


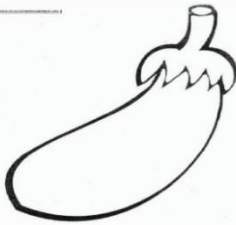

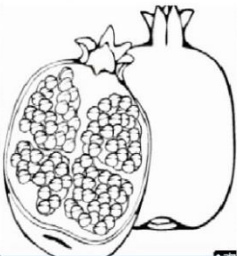
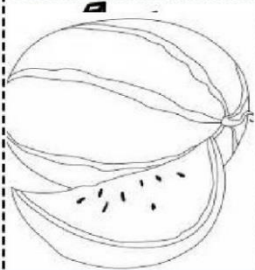

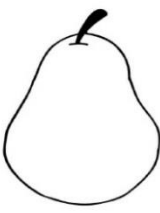

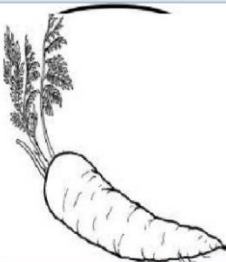

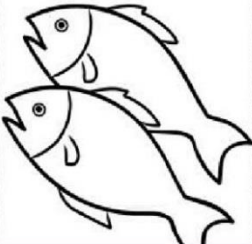


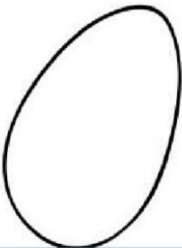
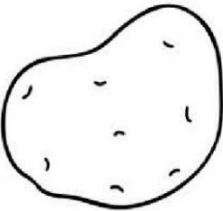

PICTURE NAMING TASK-1
Please write the kurdish names of the pictures below.

			
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APPENDIX -III

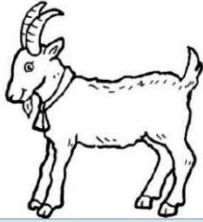
PICTURE NAMING TASK-2 Please write the Kurdish names of the pictures below.

PICTURE NAMING TASK-2
Please write the kurdish names of the pictures below.

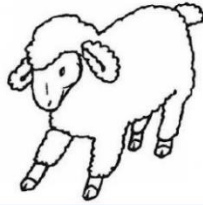
			
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APPENDIX -IV

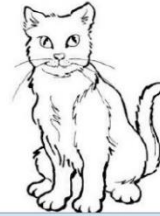
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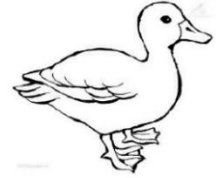
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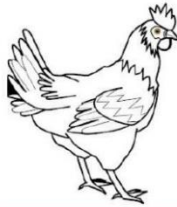
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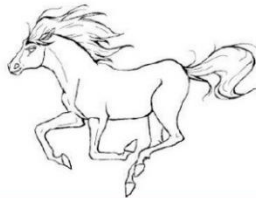
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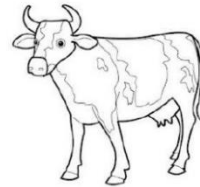
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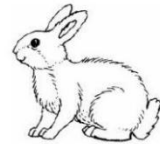
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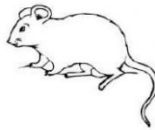
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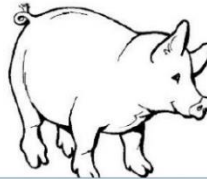
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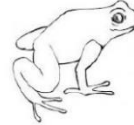
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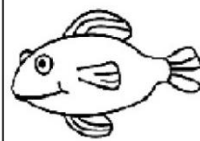
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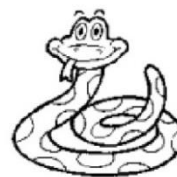
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APPENDIX -VI



WRITING TASK -II

Look at the picture and write the story of Elephant and the Blind Men story in 150 words.

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APPENDIX –VII

Think-aloud Protocol

14 volunteer participants chosen for Think-aloud Protocol to learn more about the reasons of attrition and to validate all the information obtained from the questionnaire and the tasks. Seven of them have low level of attitude towards their mother tongue and seven of them have high level of attitude towards their mother tongue.

P = Participant

I = Interviewer

F= Female

M= Male

Participant Having Low Level of Attitude Score

Student 4 (Female)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. When I was a child , I did not used to speak so much Turkish.

I:Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P:Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember some of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: Because I'm bad at speaking my native language. I've been exposed to obligation of speaking Turkish since I started to school. Turkish is generally used in almost every part of life. That's why I've lost my Kurdish speaking ability day-by-day. Because of these reasons, I speak Turkish not only with my parents but also with my friends, my sisters or brothers etc.

I: And with your father?

P: My father generally speak Turkish with me and with my siblings, because he wants us to learn Turkish better, he had a lot of problems because of his lack of Turkish. However, he usually speaks Kurdish with my mother

I: What about your siblings?

P: We want to speak Turkish rather than Kurdish.

I: Can you read or write in Kurdish?

P: I cannot write or read because it is difficult. There are some letters in Kurdish that I don't know.

Student 12 (F)

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: When I started to school, I couldn't speak Turkish. Therefore, Sometimes I've been exposed to bad treatment of my teachers and also my friends looked down on me. When I spoke Turkish, I made some mistakes and my pronunciation was bad. So, I took an idea about Kurdish. I thought that Kurdish was embarrassing. Then I tried to speak Turkish well, and I've lost my native language. Now I can't speak Kurdish fluently.

I: you speak Turkish with your friends and siblings too.

P: Yes, because everybody speaks Turkish, what can I do?

I: You seem to forget some words in the tasks such as, to climb..... to smile to swim to jump..... to ride a bike

P: Yes, because I don't remember them, but after you said the words I could remember. Like I said, I do not speak Kurdish very much.

Student 24 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Well yes, Turkish was not so common at that time.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember the words during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: Because they didn't speak Kurdish with me when I was a child. So I couldn't learn Kurdish. As I couldn't learn Kurdish, I speak Turkish with almost everybody.

I: With your siblings and your friends?

P: With everybody. It is easier both for me and for friends to speak Turkish.

I: Can you read or write in Kurdish?

P: No. I tried to read a Kurdish newspaper, but very difficult. And the alphabet is different.

I: You seem to forget some words in the tasks such as, to climb..... to smile to swim to jump to ride a bike

P: We use 'kenin' (to laugh) instead of (to smile). But now I remember them. I think I should speak Kurdish more.

Student 49 (F)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. I was with my mom and dad and naturally spoke more Kurdish.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Most of them. I knew them but I did not recall.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: I've been exposed to Turkish since I was baby. My family spoke Turkish with me. At school, we have to speak Turkish. Because we speak Turkish is everywhere, I couldn't learn Kurdish and now I can't speak, sometimes I can understand but not speak.

I: Why do you speak Turkish with your friends?

P: Like I said, my Kurdish is not good and when I try to speak Kurdish my friends laugh at me.

I: You seem to forget some words in the tasks such as, (to climb), (to smile), (to swim), (to jump), (to ride a bike) in Kurdish?

P: Yes, but now I remember some them. I don't use Kurdish a lot, so I forget.

Student 60 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. Then, I was at home and Kurdish was everywhere.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. . But I could not remember many of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: Because I can't speak Kurdish very well. So I speak Turkish with my mother.

I: Why?

P: My family spoke Turkish with me when I was a child so that I could be more successful at school so I forgot Kurdish. To pass exams, you need Turkish, not Kurdish. My Turkish is better and how can I speak about Math in Kurdish? I don't remember some Kurdish words but sometimes I try to speak Kurdish because I want to learn.

I: What about your siblings and friends?

P: No, because, Nobody knows Kurdish very well

I: Do you write or read in Kurdish?

P: No. I don't understand Kurdish reading.

Student 83 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, because I was at home and I could speak more Kurdish.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember some of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: When I speak Turkish, I feel relax. Because I can speak comfortably.

I: But you are Kurdish, aren't you?

P: Yes, I am but I don't know. We just speak Turkish. Well, I am bad at speaking Kurdish I encounter difficulties when I speak Kurdish. So I speak Turkish with everybody.

I: What about your siblings? Why Turkish?

P: Because we are young and we can speak in Turkish better. We cannot speak about music, games, lessons, and even we cannot argue in Kurdish.

I: Do you read or write in Kurdish?

P: No. Nobody taught me how to write. The alphabet is different in Kurdish. So I have not tried.

Student 132 (F)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, when I was a child, I used to speak Kurdish everywhere.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. I did not remember during the test. When I saw the answers I recalled them.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Turkish with your mother?

P: I don't know Kurdish very well. So I prefer speaking Turkish naturally.

I: What about your siblings and friends?

P: My sisters, my brothers and friends speak Turkish, and it is more comfortable for us so generally speak Turkish.

I: Why can't you speak Kurdish very well?

P: My parents didn't speak Kurdish with me so I couldn't learn.

I: What about your siblings? Why Turkish?

I: Because they like speaking Turkish not Kurdish, and they cannot speak Kurdish very well.

Participant Having High Level of Attitude Score

Student 5 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: I think yes, at school we always speak Turkish.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember some of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: My mother can't speak Turkish so we speak Kurdish with each other.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your father?

P: For better communication. When I speak Turkish with my father, sometimes we have misunderstandings.

I: Do you write or read in Kurdish?

P: Writing no. only I sometimes send messages to friends in Kurdish. But I try to read Kurdish books. I learned some letters that are not in Kurdish. It is difficult but I understand step by step.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your sister and brother?

P: We feel relax because it is our native language and we speak Kurdish better than we speak Turkish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: They usually speak Kurdish. So I speak Kurdish with them, too. Sometimes we speak Turkish because you can meet someone who can't speak Kurdish. At that moment, you have to speak Turkish.

I: Do you write or read in Kurdish?

P: Writing, yes I sometimes write my notes in Kurdish but not very often. And read

Kurdish Newspaper. If you learn some letters that are not in Kurdish, It is not difficult. When I read, I come across the words that I forget.

Student 16 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. I didn't know Turkish very well.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. But I did not remember them in the test..

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: Because it is my native language so we speak Kurdish at home. My father or sisters or brothers everybody speaks Kurdish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: Of course for protection our culture. If we don't speak Kurdish, we may forget our language and then our culture. So I speak it.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish outside home?

P: Usually I speak Turkish outside because many people prefer speaking Turkish at school or when doing shopping etc. That's why I usually speak Turkish but I want speak Kurdish with everybody It is our culture.

I: Do you write or read in Kurdish?

P: I rarely write because you have to know the writing system and Turkish letters are not enough. Reading well, if I find anything in Kurdish, I read.

Student 52 (F)

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: I can't speak Turkish fluently. And when I was a child or baby my parents spoke Kurdish with me so I got used to speaking Kurdish with my parents.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: 'Because I want to improve my Kurdish, if we don't speak it we can forget it. You can see many students, they are Kurdish but they cannot speak Kurdish well'. However, we also speak Turkish, too. But I think when we speak Kurdish, I feel relax and I can speak Kurdish with some of my friends more comfortably than Turkish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish outside of home?

P: The people who liv in our district speak Kurdish with each other that's why I prefer speaking Kurdish.

I: Do you write or read in Kurdish?

P: Yes, I went to Kurdish course to improve Kurdish and there I learned the Kurdish alphabet and now I am reading and writing in Kurdish regularly. I have a diary in Kurdish.

Student 71 (F)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. Because we spoke more frequently.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not a few of them.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: It is our native language. That's why, it is very natural for me to speak Kurdish and I don't want to forget my language so I speak it with my mother. In addition, my mother cannot speak Turkish very well so we speak Kurdish.

I: Do you speak Kurdish with your family, sister and brother?

P: Of course, I speak. But sometimes we speak Turkish too, because we cannot find everything's equivalence in Kurdish.

P: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

I: In order not lose my native language but I have to say that we speak Turkish more than Kurdish. My friends sometimes speak Turkish but I say ' let's speak Kurdish and we speak Kurdish.

Student 100 – (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. Because we spoke more.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember some of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: Because, She doesn't know Turkish

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your father?

P: He is bad at speaking Turkish and don't want me to speak Turkish with him.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: I got used to speak Kurdish because of my family. So when I speak Kurdish I feel relax and when speaking Turkish, I may have difficulties and I like speaking Kurdish with friends and so I can practice it.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish outside of home?

P: I would want to speak Kurdish but usually we speak Turkish because many people prefer speaking Turkish.

Student 104 (M)

I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten in task after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. Ofcourse. But I could not remember them then.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: I speak Kurdish with everybody at home. Because I got used to speak Kurdish, my

sisters and brothers also got used to speaking Kurdish and if we don't speak Kurdish we will forget it. I don't want this.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: We are Kurdish so we speak Kurdish, as I told you beforehand, If I speak Turkish, I will forget Kurdish, so we speak Kurdish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish outside of home?

P: I speak Kurdish with my friends because of our race. But when shopping or doing something like that I speak Turkish because the other people may not know Kurdish or may not understand you.

Student 124 (F) I: Did you used to speak Kurdish better before starting school?

P: Yes, I did. Turkish was only on TV that time but now everywhere.

I: Did you remember the words you forgotten after you saw the answers?

P: Yes. But I did not remember a few of them during task.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your mother?

P: I prefer speaking Kurdish with almost everybody.

I: Why?

P: I don't want to speak Turkish and I don't like Turkish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish with your friends?

P: I don't speak Turkish when I speak with my friends who know Kurdish. But sometimes I have to speak Turkish because some of my friends don't know Kurdish.

I: Why do you prefer speaking Kurdish outside of home?

P: As I said, Sometimes you have to because the person who is opposite of you may not know Kurdish. But I want to speak Turkish. Kurdish is our native language.

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 22/02/2016-759



T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

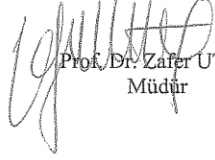
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22/02/2016

Sayın Süleyman KASAP

Enstitümüz Y1112.620005 numaralı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı lisans sonrası doktora programı öğrencilerinden Süleyman KASAP'ın "THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG KURDISH BILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS IN TURKEY" adlı tez çalışması gereği "Apendix-1" ile ilgili anketinizin 01.02.2016 tarih ve 2016/02 İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyon Kararı ile etik olarak uygun olduğuna karar verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.


Prof. Dr. Zafer UTLU
Müdür

Evrak Doğrulama İçin : <https://evrakdogrula.aydin.edu.tr/en/Vision.Dogrula/BelgeDogrulama.aspx?V=BEKR3VHL>

Adres: Beşyol Mah. İnönü Cad. No:38 Sefaköy , 34295 Küçükçekmece / İSTANBUL
Telefon:444 1 428
Elektronik Ağ: <http://www.aydin.edu.tr/>

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Unvanı: Enstitü Sekreteri





T.C.
VAN VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 94104669-20-E.124742
Konu : Anket Uygulaması
(Süleyman KASAP)

06.01.2016

İLGİLİ MAKAMA

İlgi : a) İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Doktora öğrencisi Süleyman KASAP' ın 11/11/2015 tarihli dilekçesi.

b) 11/11/2015 tarih ve 94104669-20-E.11509798 sayılı yazı.

İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Doktora öğrencisi **Süleyman KASAP**'ın 11/11/2015 tarihli dilekçesine binaen ilgi yazımız ile verilen onay yazısı ile ; "**İki Dilli Öğrencilerde Tutumun Dil Üzerindeki Rolü**" konusu kapsamında Müdürlüğümüze bağlı İlimiz İpekyolu ilçesi Niyazi Türkenoğlu Anadolu Lisesi öğrencilerine yönelik dersleri aksatmayacak şekilde bir ders saatinde anket uygulaması yapmıştır Söz konusu çalışma orijinal ismiyle "**THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE ATTRITION AMONG KURDISH BILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS IN TURKEY**" tez çalışması için yapacağı "**Personal Language Attitude Questionnaire For Bilinguals** " adlı anket çalışmasını içermektedir.

Bilgilerinize arz ederim.

Mehmet Şirin ATLI
İl Millî Eğitim Şube Müdürü

VAN İL MİLLÎ EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
Abdurrahman Gazi Mah. İskele Cad. 65040 - VAN
e-posta : temelegitim65@meb.gov.tr

Ayrıntılı Bilgi için: Cahit KUTLAR, Şef (Dâhili 176)
Telefon: 0(432) 222 41 62-63,64,65,69,67
Fax:0(432) 222 41 61 İnternet:http://van.meb.gov.tr

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RESUME

Name Surname: Suleyman KASAP

Place and Date of Birth: 25.01.1978

E-Mail: kasap_hakan@hotmail.com

EDUCATION:

Bachelor: 2001, Istanbul University, The Faculty of Education, ELT Department.

Master: 2012, Istanbul Aydin University, English Language and Literature
Department.