

# Language Learning and Learner's Self-identity: A Psycho-Pragmatic Study of EFL Learners in Kurdistan Region

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## Abstract

This paper is an extract from a PhD dissertation that tackles the probable changes in the self-identity of Kurdish learners of EFL. It is generally accepted that learning a new language, such as English, will have some influence on learners' world views. There have been many pieces of research about the relationship between language and identity. However, applying the theory in the field of EFL learners has not been thoroughly investigated.

This paper targets Kurdish EFL learners at various universities in Kurdistan who were given a questionnaire of 30 items in the form of five-scale grading. The core aim of this study, which refers to the psycho-pragmatic aspect of self-identity, is to reply to the research questions based on data collection. After collecting data from 150 respondents, the main questions about whether or not learning a new language would affect the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners will be answered.

It should be mentioned that the relationship between language learning and self-identity of EFL learners is the main focus of this paper since this point is part of a bigger project which investigates all the psychological and pragmatic aspects of selfhood, identity and language learning.

After dividing the learners into three types in relation to changing, keeping and dividing their self-identity, the paper ends with some conclusions.

**Key words:** Self-identity, language learning, Kurdish EFL learners, identity change, division in identity.

## 1 Introduction

It seems that there is a strong relationship between language and identity. Some scholars argue that language is one of the main features of one's identity. Furthermore, others claim that language is just one of the many instruments for expressing identity. To investigate the relationship between language and identity, one has to review the relevant literature related to the topic and then relate it to the case of Kurdish EFL learners in the Kurdistan region.

This paper starts with explaining the relationship between language and identity by showing the



impact of learning a second and/or foreign language on self-identity of learners. It is worth mentioning that scholars in the field have classified learners into three major groups. The first includes learners whose identities are changed; the second is known as division-identity learners; and the last group includes learners who experience no change in self-identity. This general categorisation of self-identity division, which is widely used around the world, will be followed in this study. Finally, the data collected from EFL learners are presented and discussed. The paper ends with some conclusions based on the collected data.

## **2. Language and Self-identity**

Tabouret-Keller (1998) argues that there is such a strong relationship between language and identity that sometimes a single feature, such as an accent, is enough to show the identity of an individual. In order to investigate the relationship between language and identity, it is important to investigate how scholars make this connection. Many experts in the field have defined language in relation to identity. One definition is given by Spolsky (1999) who states ‘language is a central feature of human identity’. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about his/her gender, education level, age, profession and place of origin. Beyond this individual matter, language can be regarded as a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity at the group or collective level (Spolsky, 1999: 181). Spolsky insists that it is through the means of language that we can presuppose the identity of an individual.

There are two basic approaches to interpreting self-identity: firstly, how we define ourselves and, secondly, how others define us. Goffman (1963) states that personal identity ‘is defined by how others identify us, not how we identify ourselves’. The counter argument is that we define who we are and we give identity to ourselves (Hoffman, 2009). It has to be mentioned that this controversy has not yet been settled.

It is generally accepted that there is a close relationship between language and identity. For some scholars, language is considered as an important tool to express the identity of an individual (Rovira, 2008). Furthermore, Ochs (2008) concurs with the previous statement by saying that ‘language is the main vehicle of expressing the self’. At the group level, language is considered an indicator of the identity of a group (Hozhabrossadat, 2015). Therefore, one can say that language is one of the main ways by which one expresses his/her own identity.

Since individuals tend to use many ways to identify themselves in the modern world, it is crucial to find out the similarities and differences between the languages people use in their communication and their identity. To this end, the following sections are devoted to showing the relationship between the mother tongue and the identity of a person. Then, the impact of learning a new language on the identity is focused on. Finally, whether or not this new language changes the identity of the person in any way is discussed.

### **2.1 First Language and Self-identity**

Language is considered a major vehicle for expressing one’s identity. Spolsky (1999) argues that ‘language is a central feature of one’s identity’. It can be understood that language here is regarded



as a symbol of one's identity. It is through language that one converts his/her ideas into verbal utterance and communicates with the surroundings (Tsoi, 2004). Starks (2005) considers language as an 'identity-maker'. Language is considered a tool for expressing social attitudes of a group of people, not only at the individual level, but also at the group level (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Ochs, 1996).

It can be said that language has a huge role in expressing one's identity. For instance, how one speaks, the accents and vocabulary, reveal part of one's self-identity (Spolsky, 1999). People generally express themselves better through using their mother tongue rather than any other language because this language is an important part of their experiences (Brown, 1994, as cited in Ghazali, 2006). As the first language is the language people use from birth, many feelings and emotions are attached to it. Therefore, as natural as the first language is (Brown, 1994), the way in which one expresses him/herself with that language seems natural as well.

It seems that for some learners, the first language may have a huge influence on their foreign language (Saville-Troike, 2006). Due to this language interference, one's foreign language could be affected. Perhaps that is why some learners face a kind of split identity, as they find it very difficult to switch between the two languages. This lack of ability may influence their self-identity as well (Goa, 2007). It has to be mentioned that the first language and its relationship with self-identity is not a major concern in this study as it focuses on Kurdish EFL learners' self-identity. Therefore, the impact of foreign language on the identity of language learners is dealt with in a more detailed way in the following sections.

## **2.2 Foreign Language Learning and Self-identity**

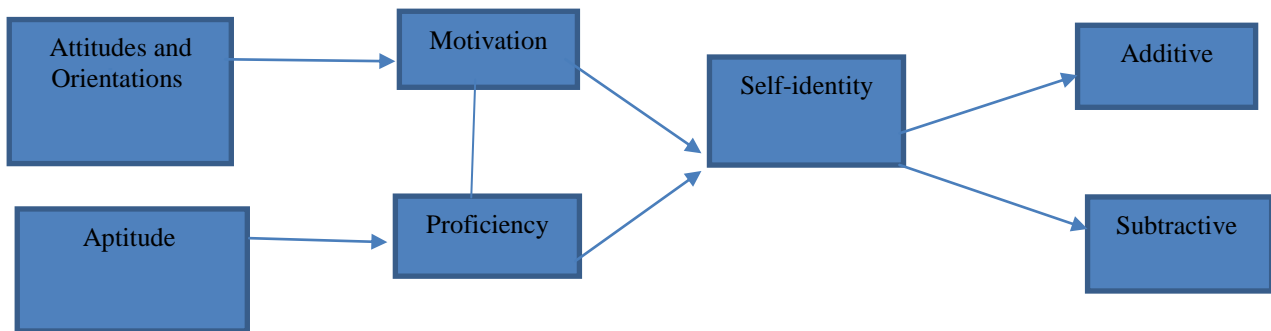
Initially, the investigation into the relationship between language and identity was mainly concerned with second language learners who live in countries where the language is largely used (Tylor et al., 2013). Norton (1972), also known as Peirce as she changed her name, is regarded as the first scholar in the area of second language acquisition to investigate the relationship between language learning and identity (Sacchi, 2014). For her, learning a new language is not just communicating in another language, but is also a continuous arrangement and rearrangement of who the learners are and how they can relate themselves to the people around them. In other words, language learners construct a new identity when they learn a new language (Norton, 1997). Furthermore, Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that learning a new language means learning a new identity.

Lambert (1972) is considered a prominent scholar who investigates the relationship between learning a foreign language and the self-identity of the language learner. He focuses on the role of motivation in learning a foreign language, which will consequently affect the self-identity of the learner (Lambert, 1981). Lambert established a model known as the Socio-psychological Identity Model. In this model, he asserts that the learners who successfully acquire a second language will change some of their behaviour to show their connection to the foreign language group and their culture (Goa et al., 2007).

Lambert strongly argues that learning a second language will have implications on the identity of the language learner (Lambert, 1981). In Lambert's model, aptitude and attitude play a huge role in



motivating someone towards learning a new language (Goa et al., 2007). Language aptitude can be defined as one's natural inborn ability to learn a language (Tellier, 2013). Attitude is regarded as the personal viewpoint of the learner of the language, whether positive or negative (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). Both of these trigger motivation and, depending on the extent to which one is successful in learning the foreign language, the self-identity will be affected. This influence can be called 'additive' or 'subtractive'. The following diagram illustrates Lambert's sociopsychological model for self-identity of a foreign language learner.



Based on Lambert's (1972) sociopsychological model, learning a foreign language will ultimately cause some changes in the identity of the language learner. It is important to notice that these changes happen due to social, as well as psychological, factors. To explain this, the following section empathises on the change that might happen in the self-identity of the language learner due to learning a new language.

### 2.2.1 Foreign Language Learning and Self-identity Change

Norton (1995) argues that 'neither identity nor language use is a fixed notion; both are dynamic, depending upon time and place'. In order to give a certain identity to a group and/or an individual, one must be aware of the changes that might happen to both notions. On the other hand, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) assume that identity is 'multiple and varied, individual representations of which embody particular social histories that are built up through and continually recreated in one's everyday experiences.' Therefore, as identities change overtime, language may just be seen as a mechanical means of expressing that change. Alternatively, due to learning a new language, one's identity may be changed. Therefore, it can be said that the influence is mutual.

A major way to realise and possibly measure the change of the self-identity of the learner is to consider a model developed by Goa (2007), which is based on Lambert's (1974) Sociopsychological Identity Model in which learners are classified into different categories. Goa et al. (2007) suggest the following classification to measure the impact of learning a foreign language on the self-identity of the language learner. For each section, they asked a set of questions to check the categories that they assigned. The following is the classification given by Goa et al. (2007):

1- **Self-confidence change:** In this section, some questions will be asked to realise if learning the new language has affected the level of the self-confidence of the learner in any way. This

measurement relates to the psychological aspect of the learner.

2- **Additive change:** This change refers to the coexistence of two different sets of values in the mind of the learner. This happens when a learner can easily adapt when using his/her first or foreign language. This type of change is regarded as an asset to the learner.

3- **Subtractive change:** This type of change refers to the replacement of the native values, behaviours and cultural norms of the first language by the foreign language. It occurs when the language learner feels that he/she is more powerful with the foreign language and more attached to it. This can be checked more easily by focusing on the contradictions between the native language and the foreign language. However, one has to bear in mind that these changes might not be 100% in all the areas.

4- **Productive change:** This change refers to the appreciation of the native language values, behaviours and cultural norms after learning a foreign language. It means that after learning English, Kurdish EFL learners are more appreciative of the cultural norms, behaviours and their worldview in Kurdish. This is quite possible when the language learner compares the foreign language with his/her own native language. This is regarded as a positive reinforcement of the native language values due to learning a foreign language.

5- **Split change:** This type of change indicates a kind of conflict between the native identity and the foreign language identity. Here, some questions will be asked to realise whether there is any contradiction between a learner's native language and the foreign language. This may lead to some sort of hesitation about the set of beliefs the language learner should act upon, and which cultural norms they should follow. This type of change leads to a kind of struggle by the learner and can consequently be confused in many situations.

6- **Zero change:** Here, the language learner does not feel any change from learning a foreign language. The learner acts in the same way regardless of what language he/she uses. These learners say that it is impossible for them to turn into someone else because of learning a new language. This resistance could be due to personal, psychological, social, religious, ethical or linguistic factors. This category is regarded as a base for measuring the other types of change that might happen due to learning a foreign language.

It has to be mentioned that many researchers have used these categories to realise and measure the impact of learning a foreign language on learners in different places. For instance, Goa et al. (1997) used them for Chinese EFL learners. Furthermore, Zare-ee & Matin (2014) used the same measurement for Persian EFL learners. Due to its wide usage and relevance, the same criteria will be used to check the changes, if any, in the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners due to learning English.

### 2.2.2 Language Learners' Motivation and Self-identity Change

In the last two decades, the role of motivation in language learning and its influence on the self-identity of EFL learners has been investigated by many researchers. Goa et al. (2007) conducted research on Chinese EFL learners' motivations for learning English and its impact on the self-identity of the learners. Zare-ee & Matin (2014) carried out similar research on Persian EFL



learners. Furthermore, Boonchum (2010) and Teer (2013) did the same experiment with Thai EFL learners. It has to be mentioned that all these studies concur that motivation plays a strong role in learning a new language and possibly changing the self-identity of EFL learners.

It can be deduced that there seems to be a strong connection between EFL learners' motivation and their tendency to change their self-identity after learning English. Generally, Kurdish EFL learners might be less motivated as most of them are admitted to English departments based on their high school grades. Therefore, their lack of motivation might affect their level of achievement and possibly their self-identity change as well.

### **3. Types of Language Learners' Self-identity**

As stated earlier, EFL learners are divided into various categories regarding the changes that might happen to their self-identity based on Lambert's (1972) Sociopsychological Identity Model and Goa's (1997) classification for changing self-identity. It is true that Goa's categorisation classifies learners into five major types. However, a new classification can be given under somewhat more general headings to combine those categories that are related. In this study, EFL learners are divided into three categories: learners whose identities are changed; learners who feel that they have a spilt identity; and those learners who do not feel any change in their self-identity due to learning a foreign language. The following sections are devoted to discussing these types of learners' self-identity.

#### **3.1 Change in Learners' Self-identity**

Goa et al. (2007), Boonchum (2010) and Zare-ee & Matin's (2014) studies of EFL learners confirm that many learners feel that their self-identity has changed due to learning English. It is worth mentioning that Goa et al.'s study investigated Chinese learners, Boonchum's study investigated Thai EFL learners and Zare-ee & Matin's study was conducted on Persian learners. All confirmed that learning English has changed the self-identity of many EFL learners. Interestingly, all studies report a significant change in the self-confidence of EFL learners due to learning English. Participants state that they feel more confident after learning English.

Many studies (e.g. Goa, 2007; Boonchum, 2010; Zare-ee & Matin, 2014; Morsunbul, 2015) show a strong relationship between self-identity and self-confidence. They argue that better self-confidence will affect the self-image of the person and this consequently affects the self-identity of the learner. It will be interesting to know whether or not Kurdish EFL learners will have the same feeling about changing their self-confidence due to learning English.

Another area of change in the self-identity of EFL learners is their attitudes. Learners reported that they feel their attitudes have changed since learning English. For instance, Persian learners say that now they have a more positive view about women's rights. Some learners say that they are influenced by English; they see women differently (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). Chinese learners feel more open to differences compared with their attitudes before learning English (Goa et al., 2007). Thai learners report that part of their behaviour changed after learning English (Boonchum, 2010). Almost all participants have had a positive view on the English language, saying that they have



been influenced more due to learning it. As far as Kurdish EFL learners are concerned, it seems necessary to find out the extent to which their attitudes have changed since learning English.

One should bear in mind that these studies did not follow a purely psychological or pragmatic approach in their investigation. Therefore, one should expect some different results, as well as few similarities, from this current study in comparison with those previously conducted.

### **3.2 Division in Learners' Self-identity**

After learning a new language, some learners' self-identities were split between their real community and their imagined community. One way in which this split can be realised is through uttering native language words while speaking English (Teer, 2013). Many researchers (e.g. Goa et al., 2007; Boonchum, 2010) argue that this stage could be temporary as learners develop during their learning process. However, for some learners, this division continues even after learning the language. One reason could be the learner's hesitation to follow the cultural norms in his/her society (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). For instance, there might be many normal things within the English culture, but Persian EFL learners may not be able to carry these out due to the different nature of their society (ibid). Therefore, it can be stated that the similarities and differences between the two cultures have a huge impact on reflecting upon ideas that might be changed due to learning English.

Other factors that might cause this split self-identity include personal beliefs, social norms and religious backgrounds. Various studies conducted on Japanese EFL learners concluded that when learners are given a certain question in Japanese, they will answer in a different way compared with answering the same question in English (Goa, 2005). Social norms and the expectation of the society for personal behaviour have their own impact on creating this perplexity (Teer, 2013). One instance is that when Thai EFL learners communicate with native speakers, they generally act in a different way compared with when they are speaking as a Thai bilingual. The problem is that with bilingualism, they find it hard to stick to one way of communicating. Therefore, they mix between the social norms of English and Thai (Boonchum, 2010).

It should be mentioned that the number of those learners who feel there is a split in their self-identity is less compared with others who feel that their self-identity has changed after learning English in China, Japan, Thailand and Iran (Goa et al., 2007; Goa, 2005; Teer, 2013; Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). It would be revealing to find out whether or not Kurdish EFL learners experience this division in their self-identity due to learning English.

### **3.3 No Change in Learners' Self-identity**

The third group of language learners are resistant learners. They are those learners who do not feel any change in their self-identity, even after learning a new language, because they think that learning a new language is not related to changes in self-identity (Teer, 2013). For these learners, it is impossible to turn into someone else because of learning a new language (Goa et al., 2007).

When considering the reasons that might lead to no change in self-identity, language proficiency is regarded as one of these. Zare-ee & Matin (2014) report that the vast majority of those EFL learners who state that they have not been changed in any way due to learning English are low level learners. They argue that less proficient EFL learners struggle to understand English culture and are possibly affected by it.



The personality of the learner is believed to be another influential factor for this no change in self-identity. Boonchum (2010) argues that those Thai learners who communicate more with English native speakers will be more open to change. However, those learners who hardly or never communicate with native speakers are less likely to be affected by learning English.

A final factor could be the major field that EFL learners study. Those EFL learners who study English as their major field of study are more likely to be influenced by the language compared with English non-majors. Both Boonchum (2010) & Teer (2013) reported that Thai learners specialising in English are nearest to witnessing no change in their self-identity compared with English non-majors.

It should be mentioned that generally fewer EFL learners fall into this category than the two previously mentioned categories. The actual number remains to be checked and compared with other categories in relation to Kurdish EFL learners.

## **4. Methodology**

This section is devoted to the methodology followed for this paper. Firstly, it includes sampling and data collection tools. Then, the data analysis method is explained. Finally, the theoretical model for the data analysis is outlined.

### **4.1 Sampling and Data Collection Tools**

This study targets Kurdish EFL learners at undergraduate level who have studied English for more than ten years prior to college. At college, they are all majors in English and study both English language and literature. There were 150 respondents to the questionnaire who voluntarily participated in the data collection. They are from three major universities in the region: University of Sulaimani, University of Salahaddin and University of Duhok. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions in the form of a Likert Questionnaire.

### **4.2 Data Analysis Method**

The method used for data analysis involves dividing the questions into four variables. The first one is the learner's motivation to learn and/or study English. The second variable is those learners whose self-identity is changed due to learning English. The third variable is those learners who do not feel any change in their self-identity as a result of learning English. Finally, the fourth variable is those learners who feel that they have a divided identity since learning English. A specialised program is used for data analysis which is done by an expert in the field of data analysis.

### **4.3 The Selected Model for Data Analysis**

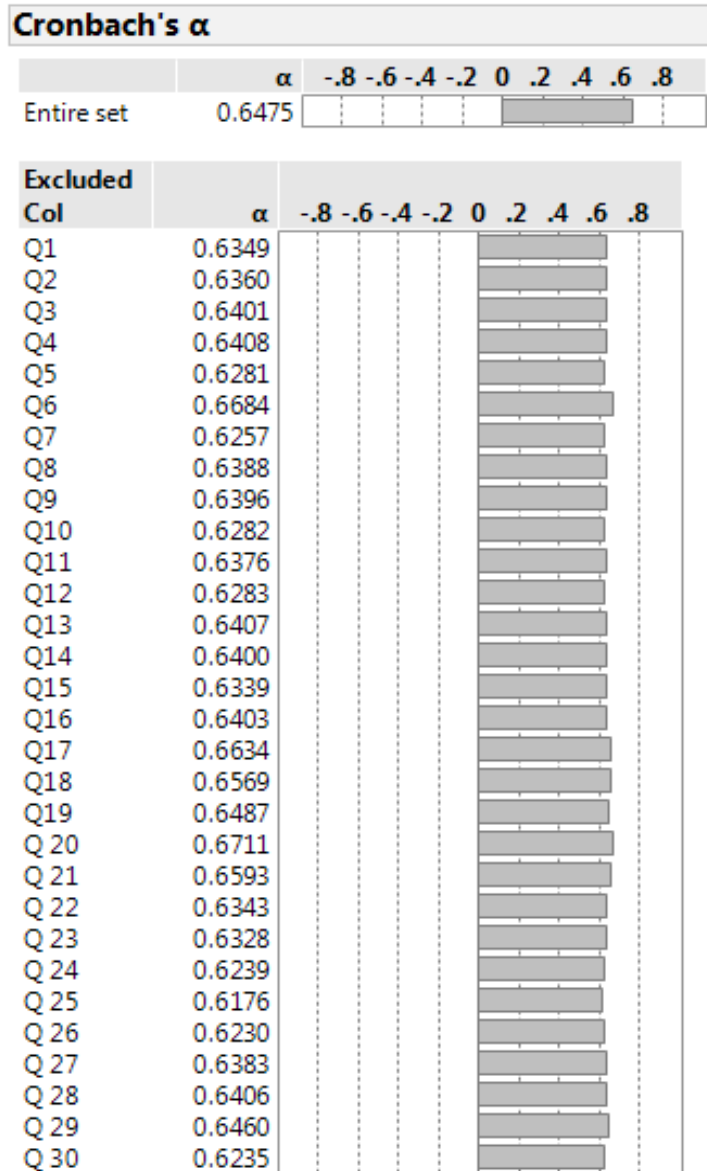
As this study tackles the pragmatic and psychological aspect of self-identity, all the questions are set based on the major premises of Pragmatic Identity Theory by Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) and Identity Structure Analysis by Weinreich (1986). The details of both these theories are discussed in the extended version of this study.



## 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

The following section presents the major sections of the data related to the study. It should be mentioned that there are many more details included in the PhD dissertation from which this paper is extracted.

Plot (1) The value of the reliability coefficient for the internal consistency of each variable



Plot (1) shows that the reliability and coefficients for all study variables are acceptable. This means the collected data is possible for statistical analysis and scientific research.

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not learning English will have any impact on the learners' self-identity. To know this, the data is classified into four main variables: a dependent variable (Motivation to Learn English) and three independent variables (Change in the Self-identity of the Learner, No Change in the Self-identity of the Learner,



and Division in the Self-identity of the Learner). A five- point Likert-type scale was used for rating the answers of the items, from 1 to indicate *Strongly Agree* to 5 to indicate *Disagree*, and between them three other weights (2 for *Agree*, 3 for *I do not Know*, and 4 for *Strongly Disagree*). Based on the results, the values of the arithmetic averages reached will be solved to interpret the data as follows:

High Level Agreement	Moderate Level Agreement	High Level Disagreement	Moderate Level Disagreement
$1 \leq \mu \leq 2$	$2 < \mu \leq 3$	$3 < \mu \leq 4$	$4 < \mu \leq 5$

Statistical analysis. The weighted arithmetic, and standard deviations of the responses were obtained as follows:

Table (1) Statistical Analysis for Dependent Variable Motivation to Learn English

Variables	Sections	Answers of Sample Members					Weighted Mean	Statistical Indicators		
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Standard Deviation	p-value	Ranks
Motivation to Learn English	I study English because I like English culture, songs and movies.	47	62	12	8	21	2.2933	1.3389	<.0001*	3
	I feel more confident when speaking English.	62	59	15	6	8	1.9267	1.0750	<.0001*	1
	I think learning English affected my personality and behaviour in a positive way.	49	70	18	6	7	2.0133	1.0166	<.0001*	2

One can understand the following based on the previously mentioned table:

1. The weighted mean of the first question “I feel more confident when speaking English” is 1.9267 with a standard deviation of 1.0750, and it is in rank 1 which indicates that students highly agree with this question.

2. The weighted mean of the question “I think learning English affected my personality and behaviour in a positive way” is 2.0133 with a standard deviation of 1.0166, and it is in rank 2 which indicates that the students’ agreement is at a moderate level. In other words, students believe that learning English influences their personality and behaviour in a positive manner.

3. The weighted mean of the question “I study English because I like English culture, songs and



movies” is 2.2933 with a standard deviation of 1.3389, and it is in rank 3 which indicates that students are in moderate agreement with the question It can be understood that fewer students want to study English because they like English culture, songs and movies.

As a result, it can be said that learning English affects the confidence level of the learners and affects their behaviour in a positive way. However, the impact of English culture and songs is less motivating for learners to learn the language.

Table (2) Statistical Analysis for Independent Variable ‘Change in the Self-identity of the Learner’

Variables	Sections	Answers of Sample Members					Statistical Indicators			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value	Ranks
Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner	I have, somehow, two different personalities after learning English.	42	61	27	7	13	2.2533	1.1712	<.0001*	2
	I can express my ideas and talk about my feelings better in English.	27	54	42	11	16	2.5667	1.1839	<.0001*	6
	When I speak English, I believe I am thinking differently.	30	66	31	6	17	2.4267	1.1891	<.0001*	5
	I can express my opinions better by using English rather than Kurdish.	17	44	30	19	40	3.1400	1.3904	<.0001*	14
	When speaking with my classmates, I prefer to use English for interaction.	25	63	33	10	19	2.5667	1.2174	<.0001*	6
	I think learning English has been a new experience which has affected my entire life.	49	65	21	4	11	2.0867	1.1109	<.0001*	1
	After learning English, I began to reject some ideas, such as my opinion about the equality between man and women.	31	42	33	20	24	2.7600	1.3545	<.0001*	11
	It is somehow challenging for me to agree on many cultural norms in Kurdish society after learning English, such as arranged marriage.	12	60	49	18	11	2.7067	1.0268	<.0001*	8
	After learning English, I take some issues such as Global Warming more seriously.	20	52	52	8	18	2.6800	1.1488	<.0001*	7



I believe learning English gives me a new identity in a sense that I have a different opinion about myself.	32	70	29	8	11	2.3067	1.0927	<.0001*	3
I feel I am socially more attached to English society after learning English.	40	63	24	5	18	2.3200	1.2442	<.0001*	4
I think the more I learn English language and know about English culture, the more I feel a change in my personality.	24	63	22	15	26	2.7067	1.3338	<.0001*	8
I think even if I speak in Kurdish, my personality and behaviours change after learning English.	19	57	24	11	39	2.9600	1.4184	<.0001*	13
It is easy for me to convert (change) my thoughts and behaviours when I speak English.	22	56	34	19	19	2.7133	1.2334	<.0001*	9
I find it more comfortable to speak about socially sensitive issues such as homosexuality using English rather than Kurdish.	33	60	31	12	14	2.4267	1.1891	<.0001*	5
I think learning English has affected my religious beliefs in the sense that I am more open to communicate with people from a different religion.	28	44	28	21	29	2.8600	1.3952	<.0001*	12
I believe I am more aware of political issues and my political views have changed as a result of learning English.	24	54	30	20	22	2.7467	1.2911	<.0001*	10

Results of Table (2) illustrate the following outcomes:

1. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “I think learning English has been a new experience which has affected my entire life” is in the first place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.0867, standard deviation 1.1109, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, English language, as a new experience, has affected the entire lives of the students.

2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “I have, somehow, two different personalities after learning English” is in the second place of agreement by the sample members, in



which the mean is 2.2533, standard deviation 1.1712, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . It indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of positivity. In some way, students believe that they have two different characters after learning English.

3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to “I believe learning English gives me a new identity in a sense that I have a different opinion about myself” is in the third place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3067, standard deviation 1.0927, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This means that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of positivity, so the English language provides a new identity for the learner.

4. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “I feel I am socially more attached to English society after learning English” is in the fourth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3200, standard deviation 1.2442 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of positivity. Therefore, the English language is a great way to connect the English communities.

5. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the items relating to “When I speak English, I believe I am thinking differently” and “I find it more comfortable to speak about socially sensitive issues such as homosexuality using English rather than Kurdish” are in the fifth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the means of both items are 2.4267, standard deviations 1.1891 and their  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of these items with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, the English language makes people have different ideas, and provides more comfort for speaking about the sensitive matters of the communities compared to the Kurdish Language.

6. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the questions relating to “I can express my ideas and talk about my feelings better in English” and “When speaking with my classmates, I prefer to use English for interaction” are in the sixth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the means are 2.5667, standard deviations 1.1839 and 1.2174 respectively, and their  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of these items with a moderate degree of positivity. It means students believe that English is an easier language for expressing their ideas and interacting with others.

7. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “After learning English, I take some issues such as Global Warming more seriously” is in the seventh place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.6800, standard deviation 1.1488 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this item with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, the English language gives more information and knowledge regarding all countries around the world.

The same analysis for other questions can be understood in the same way.

Table (3) Statistical Analysis for Independent Variable No Change in the Self-identity of the Learner



Variables	Sections	Answers of Sample Members					Statistical Indicators			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	P-value	Ranks
No Change in the Self-identity of the Learner	I feel embarrassed when speaking English.	16	35	22	31	46	3.3733	1.4025	<.0001*	4
	I think learning English has not affected my personality.	9	32	17	33	59	3.6733	1.3436	<.0001*	5
	I find it very hard to change my thinking and behaviour just because I studied English.	19	32	41	19	39	3.1800	1.3663	<.0001*	2
	No matter if I speak English or Kurdish, I feel like I am the same person.	33	44	19	26	28	2.8133	1.4396	<.0001*	1
	I do not feel that my ideas or behaviours changed as a result of learning English.	16	40	30	22	42	3.2267	1.3862	<.0001*	3

Results of Table (3) illustrate the following outcomes:

1. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to “No matter if I speak English or Kurdish, I feel like I am the same person” is in the first place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.8133, standard deviation 1.4396, and its *p – value* = 0.0001 less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this item with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, some Kurdish learners of the English Language do not feel a huge change whilst speaking in English.

2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “I find it very hard to change my thinking and behaviour just because I studied English” is in the second place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.1800, standard deviation 1.3663, and its *p – value* = 0.0001 less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. That means that the English language really can change the personality and behaviour of the learners.

3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question “I do not feel that my ideas or behaviours



changed as a result of learning English” is in the third place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.2267, standard deviation 1.3862, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. Therefore, the English language changes learners’ attitudes.

4. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to “I feel embarrassed when speaking English” is in the fourth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.3733, standard deviation 1.4025, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. In other words, these English learners feel embarrassed when speaking English.

5. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to “I think learning English has not affected my personality” is in the fifth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.6733, standard deviation 1.3436, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. In other words, the English language influences the personality of the learners.

Table (4) Statistical Analysis for Independent Variable No Change in the Self-identity of the Learner

Variables	Sections	Answers of Sample Members					Statistical Indicators			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	P-value	Ranks
Divided Change in the Self-identity of the Learner	Sometimes speaking in English makes me have a different view from most of the people around me.	29	63	41	7	10	2.3733	1.0590	<.0001*	2
	After studying English, I feel that I should be more proud of myself as a Kurd.	59	51	14	9	17	2.1600	1.3163	<.0001*	1
	After studying English literature, I have a better understanding of Kurdish literature.	33	46	27	9	35	2.7800	1.4649	<.0001*	3
	I feel like I am kind of lost in terms of how I think after learning English.	7	34	46	20	43	3.3867	1.2467	<.0001*	5



I get confused between English and Kurdish culture when I act with a foreigner.	15	39	41	14	41	3.1800	1.3515	<.0001*	4
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Results of Table (4) illustrate the following outcomes:

1. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the item relating to “After studying English, I feel that I should be more proud of myself as a Kurd” is in the first place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.1600, standard deviation 1.3163, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this item with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, the English language makes Kurdish learners feel more proud of themselves as Kurdish people.

2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the item relating to “Sometimes speaking in English makes me have a different view from most of the people around me” is in the second place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3733, standard deviation 1.0590, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this item with a moderate degree of positivity. In other words, the English language makes learners think differently from the rest of the people.

3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the item relating to “After studying English literature, I have a better understanding of Kurdish literature” is in the third place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.7800, standard deviation 1.4649, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students agree with the content of this item with a moderate degree of positivity. That means, English learners believe that there is little relationship between learning about English literature and Kurdish literature.

4. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the item relating to “I get confused between English and Kurdish culture when I act with a foreigner” is in the fourth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.1800, standard deviation 1.3515, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. In other words, the relationship between the English and Kurdish language does not mean their cultures are correlated. That is why English learners are confused when dealing with a foreigner.

5. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to “I feel like I am kind of lost in terms of how I think after learning English” is in the fourth place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.3867, standard deviation 1.2467, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that students disagree with the content of this item with a high degree of negativity. In other words, learning English does not make learners feel lost in terms of how they think when they speak in English.



## 6. Conclusions

Based on the analysed data, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1- Learning the English language boosts the self-confidence of Kurdish EFL learners. Furthermore, learners feel that learning English has affected their lives in a positive way.
- 2- Most learners feel that learning English affects their self-identity and as a result their self-identity has changed.
- 3- Some Kurdish learners feel that their self-identity has not changed due to learning English.
- 4- Few Kurdish EFL learners feel that they have a divided self-identity due to learning English.

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## پوخته

ئەم تووژینه وهیه ههلهینجراوه له نامهیهکی دکتورا به ناوه نیشانی 'لیکۆلینه وهیه کی سایکۆپراگماتیکیانه له ناسنامه ی کهسی فیرخووانی ئینگلیزی وهک زمانی بیگانه له ههریمی کوردستاندا. لهم تووژینه وهیه دا کاریگه ریه کانی فیربوونی زمانی ئینگلیزی له سه ر فیرخووان له پووی گۆرانکاری له ناسنامه ی کهسیاندا لیکۆلینه وهی له سه ر کراوه. بو ئه م مه به سه ته، راپرسی به ۱۵۰ فیرخووان کراوه له سی زانکۆ سه ره کهیه که ی ههریمی کوردستان که زانکۆی سلیمانی، سه لاهه ددین و دهوک. راپرسیه که پیکهاتوه له ۳۰ پرسیار که پێوانه ی ۱ بو ۵ ی بو دانراوه بو وه لامدانه وه. تووژینه وه وه که به وه گه شتوه که فیربوونی زمانی ئینگلیزی ناسنامه ی کهسی و دنیا بینی فیرخووان دهگۆریت. بو گه شتن به م ده ره نه نجامه، داتا کۆکراوه کان شیکراونه ته وه به هوی به رنامه یه کی تایبه تمه نه وه که به JMP.

## ملخص

هذا البحث مأخوذ من أطروحة دكتوراه بعنوان "دراسة نفسية تداولية للهوية الذاتية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في إقليم كردستان". يتناول هذا البحث التأثيرات المحتملة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على الهوية الذاتية للمتعلم. ومن أجل تحقيق هذه الغاية تم تقديم إستانبان من ۳۰ بندا موزعة من درجة ۱- ۵ إلى ۱۵۰ طالبا في ثلاث جامعات رئيسية وهي جامعات السلیمانیة وصلاح الدين ودهوك. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام برنامج إحصائي متخصص المعروف باسم JMP

إستانتج هذا البحث بأن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية غيرت الهوية الذاتية بالإضافة إلى تغيير نظرة العالم من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

