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Thesis

The use of Language and Attitudes by Ethnic Minorities in Tehran: A case of Azeri Speakers

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Abstract

The 1979 Islamic revolution, being one of the most significant sociocultural events of the last few decades, has made the history of Iran an appealing case study for researchers. The purpose of this work is to summarize the historical changes that have led to the current sociolinguistic situation of Iran and then to put a special focus on the Azeri language condition, especially in terms of its amount and contexts of use, as well as the attitudes towards it by Iranian Azeri speakers in Tehran. A questionnaire was developed with the aim of shedding light on fundamental sociolinguistic elements, such as the institutional support the Azeri language currently receives in Tehran and the beliefs that Azeri speakers hold about their native language. Fifty-two Azeri/Persian bilinguals living in Tehran and coming from different educational, tribal, and social backgrounds participated in this online study. Results suggest that, despite institutional support issues, Iranian Azeri speakers have maintained a positive attitude towards the Azeri language.

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, studies about minority languages have always been at the center of researchers' attention. Nowadays, a large number of minority languages are starting to decay all over the map, and different researchers have presented various methods for the investigation in this area. One of the most frequent ways to research minority languages is to seek information relating to the attitudes of the speakers. This research project aims to give an overview of the sociolinguistic situation of Azeri speakers, explore their use of the native language, and their attitudes towards the Azeri language in Tehran, the capital city of Iran. Ethnic diversity and different regional subcultures have made Iran a multilingual country. For various reasons, such as political, geographical, scientific, and cultural, this country has been experiencing a lot of changes in its linguistic, ethnic, and cultural aspects. In this multilingual and multicultural country, 'Persian' is adopted as the *lingua franca* among other languages such as Azeri, Kurdish, Arabic, Etc.

There are different proposes within this study: to gather information about attitudes of Azeri speakers towards their mother tongue (1). This effort will be made investigating of the socio-psychological and socio-political factors in the current linguistic situation in Tehran. Moreover, this survey examines the status of Azeri speakers in the present society in Tehran. Moreover, the diglossic situation and the low or high variety of the Azeri language will be analyzed regarding its sociolinguistic background in the Tehran community (2). The study also sheds light on the use of the Azeri language in different social contexts (3), and finally, it aims to investigate the amount of support Iranian Azeri speakers receive from the government (4).

A selected group of Azeri/Persian bilinguals was tested using a questionnaire designed first to collect information related to the research questions mentioned above. We also compared the response of different categories of participants in order to understand to what extent variables such as gender, age, and ethnicity can affect the results. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items based on sociolinguistic studies related to the Azeri language and six demographic questions. The aim of this work is twofold. On the one hand, it investigates the amount of support the Azeri language receives from the government in Tehran. On the other hand, it also wants to shed light on whether existing difficulties regarding the diglossia situation in Tehran can affect the type of attitudes that Azeri speakers hold towards this language.

An online survey was prepared, validated, and then distributed via google forms. The questionnaire was developed with the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Azeri speakers toward the Azeri language in the city of Tehran?
2. What are the social position and the level of the Azeri language among its speakers?
3. How much is the Azeri language used in different contexts in Tehran?
4. Do Azeri speakers receive any institutional support in Tehran?

For greater understanding, this chapter includes a brief overview of the historical and sociopolitical revolutions and the language system from 1796 onwards. Section (2) will focus on the policies of language in contact in the present situation. The analysis of the general definition of the concept of diglossia and its features will be provided, based on recent literature reviews and the studies looking into bilingualism (2.2). To address the role of socio-psychological factors in language production, section (2.3) will carry out an analysis of different academic structures which have been applied to the attitudes towards a language and the diglossia situation.

2. Historical and Sociolinguistic overview of bilingualism in Iran

One of the most critical changes in the history of Iran happened following the 1979 Islamic revolution. Generally speaking, "Persia" today refers to Iran, and Persian, which is sometimes called "Farsi", is the language spoken by the majority population of this country. The same language is also spoken in a few other countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan; however, due to political reasons, these languages are now called "Dari" and "Tajiki", respectively (Shabani-Jadidi, Aug 2018). Over centuries, Persian has been an illustrious language in western, southern, and also central Asia. Due to the contact with surrounding countries, Persian has influenced other languages such as Turkish, Georgian, Armenian, Urdu, and Arabic.

To form a better understanding, a summary of the sociolinguistic revolution of the country and language changes from 1796 heretofore is presented in the following.

The Qajar Empire (1796-1925): Upgrading period

Taking a quick look at Iran's past days reveals that, before the eighteenth century, there were no specific efforts to support a language for political intentions. However, Persian withstood the Arab invasion in the seventh century, which brought Islam and its language (Arabic) to Persia. The reason why Persian not only survived the contact but also used Arabic influence to its advantage and flourished its high literature lies in the fact that the governors became aware of the critical role of language in reconstruction and modernization (Arasteh, 1962).

Comparably, the language for Turkish people who governed Iran for various centuries was not an ideological matter. It was anticipated that the mutually understandable Turkic languages spoken by the government could bring forth a new *lingua franca* to the area (Ostler, 2010). However, upon assuming Persian as a special language for government and the high-level principles and accepting Islam as their ruling religion, the Turkish language became a language spoken by authoritative communities and the Persian language, on the other hand, with its sophisticated culture, became standardized. Furthermore, the Turkish language was disregarded in written literature.

In the period of the Turkish kingdom, both Persian and Turkish languages remained as languages of their governments and literature (Jackson, 1986). Persian was legalized as the *lingua franca* of eastern Islamic societies for many years. On the other hand, Turkish remained as the language for the majority in Iran during the Qajar period. Moreover, the Turkic-speaking tribal Union occupied the country in the 1780-1790s. Before that time, Iran had suffered sociopolitical confusion and raids. Therefore, one of the considerable changes of that time can be the moment when Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar established his capital in Tehran in 1786 and formally became the king of Iran. The Qajar Empire continued for more than a century (Asgharzadeh, 2007).

In the nineteenth century, Persia and Russia were in disagreement over the control of the Caucasus, which was a part of Azerbaijan that belonged to Iran. The 1831 Gulistan agreement and handing over a large part of the Caucasus to Russia resulted from Iran's failure in martial campaigns. Another failure in 1825 made Iran sign the Turkmenchay agreement. As a result, Persia conceded the control of several areas of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan to Russia, together with the lands where Azerbaijani people were living (Shaffer, 2002).

The unpleasant experience led the Qajar leaders to create a modern system for education. One of the king's efforts to modernize the education system was to open schools for Christian missionaries from all religious groups. As a result, foreign languages, especially English and French, gained a strong position for making further progress in the community (Borjian, 2013).

The Qajar king's effort was not limited to opening schools; he also introduced the Western culture and its two dominant languages-English and French- to the union. Therefore, the 'Dar ul-Funun' (the house of skills) was organized in 1852. This foundation included the European Faculty was responsible for the training of the 'Sons of Nobility for public service'. By 1900, the number of people studying there increased, and some received a scholarship to study in Europe (Abrahamian, 2008).

Persian was indicated as the country's official language by the National Assembly in October 1960 (Abrahamian, 2008). Therefore, this declaration brought forth the language policies in the country. It was also specified that all the members of the congress had to 'possess the ability to speak Persian, read and write Persian, and be Iranian subjects of Iranian extraction' (Kia, 1998). Obligatory guidance was another new issue, which was commanded by an additional law. According to this order, all instructions in Persian should be governed by the ministry of Science and Arts (Sheyholislami, 2012) In this period, language and history were transformed into ideological issues with the help of the Nationalist and Formalist movements to introduce Iran as a country with a single language (Tvakoli-Targhi, 2009). The new nationalism and the contradiction of ethnolinguistic variety, which resulted from the Qajar Empire's policy-making, later led to discrimination and created some disagreements about this issue during Reza Shah and his son's kingship, the Pahlavi Empire (1925-1979) (Katouzian, 2009).

The Pahlavi Empire: Formalization of Persian, Elimination of languages of minorities

With the help of the British government in 1925, Reza Khan became the king of Iran. Theretofore he was an official agent who raised and became powerful throughout a maneuver in 1921 in Tehran. He was a Persian politician belonging to the group of realists. Calling his empire 'Pahlavi', the name of the middle Persian language, was perhaps one of his first proceedings (Katouzian, 2009). He changed the country's official name from historical 'Persia' to' Iran' in 1934. Experts argue that the reason for choosing this name was an allusion to 'The birthplace of the Aryan race' (Asgharzadeh, 2007). His chauvinist perspective and his nationalistic aspiration led to the clarification and the use of the Persian language as a device to repress the speakers of other languages in Iran. There was also an order banning languages other than Persian from use in public places (Abrahamian, 2008).

Another significant action taken by the king worth mentioning here is the foundation of 'Training college of Tehran' for the teachers in 1932, which was done to create new words and terminologies (Axworthy, 2008). Besides all the actions taken towards the clarification and modernization, Reza shah banned the other languages in any written materials and legal documents. In such a way, Persian became legalized as the only official language in the country. Ethnic languages, namely Kurdish and Luri, were

suppressed and denominated 'imperfect dialects'. Moreover, non-Indo-European languages such as Turkish and Arabic were marginalized (May S. , 2008). According to the king, all the ethnic languages were demanded to incorporate Persian culture and race, or else they would be subject to embarrassment and rejection (Asgharzadeh, 2007).

During World War II, the Anglo-Soviet invasion was a reason for the doom of the kingdom of Reza shah. Sincere to his father and his goals, his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi took over the country's responsibility. Like his father, he denied the non-Persian ethnic minority groups. Minority regions-including Azerbaijan, which become almost independent- were raided by the Pahlavi military, and many people were killed during this tragedy. Some researchers call this event a critical linguistic massacre during Mohammad Reza's command (Asgharzadeh, 2007). As a result of this occurrence, after a period of endurance, Azerbaijan finally broke down. Soon after that, the young king became the 'hero' who returned Azerbaijan to the motherland.

By and large, Persian was kept during this period (1905-1979) and led to elimination of non-Persian communities together with their respective languages (Sheyholislami, 2012). Although this attitude towards the language was also maintained in the Islamic Republic regime directly following Pahlavi, it was more implicit and less constraining with respect to the minority languages of Iran.

The Islamic Revolution and the question of ethnolinguistic distinctiveness (1979-Today)

From the sociopolitical and historical point of view, one of the most critical developments and perhaps suggestive moments to investigate during the twentieth century is the era of the Islamic Revolution in 1978-1979 in Iran. This revolution can be considered an extraordinary phenomenon. Due to the profoundly different history of Islam and its political theory, a very new outlook was created in the country involving every single social and individual aspect. From the linguistic point of view, since Arabic was the language of the Holy book of Islam, it was introduced as a mandatory school subject in every secondary school/ college and all areas of study. Islamic history also affected the ethnolinguistic variety approach insofar as it started to permeate the judicial system. As reported by Paul (Paul, 1999), it was also declared that 'the question of border, color, language, and race does not exist, and this statement became an essential element of the Islamic Republic of Iran's state'. Nowadays, the official language and *lingua franca* of Iran is Persian. However, to preserve the ethnic minority languages, they are now allowed in press media, and their literature is being taught in schools.

Iran's viewpoint on this matter is to create multilingual and multiethnic situations to establish a law different from the previous legislation, when Persian was officially declared the single official language of the country (Sheyholislami, 2012). Yet, differently from the old methods towards the non-Persian languages, they are now approved to be present in the mass media besides the schooling system. This method can be considered an attempt to preserve linguistic authority and attribute equivalent rights to every Iranian regardless of color, race, or language.

Even though the provisions mentioned above could have been diplomatic and remedial in sustaining the ethnic minority situation towards linguistic justice, they were not sufficient as a supporting factor, and instead, they remained hollow words (Fishman J. , 2013). According to Fishman, These ''no-policy policy'' circumstances are disposed to support the dominant languages (Fishman J. , 2006). . In Iranian society, non-Persian speakers are forced to learn the official language with no prior exposure to it, and therefore, they often face many difficulties at school. Consequently, Persian becomes the standard language in education and socioeconomic growth for all Iranians, despite their background and origin (Phillipson, 1988). The monolingual education system of Iran is suggestive of 'sink or swim' form of education (May S. , 2012).

Although the minority languages in Iran were given the impression of being present in some TV programs and news media, they never received support in the education system. However, the minority communities' position in Iran started to embellish slowly by entering the broadcast media in the late 1990s (Bani-Shoraka, 2009) Accompanied by the advent of technology and satellite popularity, people were able to watch more channels. Solving two problems with one solution, the government dedicated new TV channels to each region as an alternative to foreign channels from neighboring countries. According to some previous research (Mirvahedi, 2010), these channels were unsuccessful in attracting viewers, especially the younger population who found the programs tiresome and of poor quality.

2.1.1 Iran's language in contact policies

To investigate the different political ideologies on language in this study, the various historical stages and political periods in the history of Iran should be studied. The proposed policies that were chosen in these areas regarding language and language education can be appealing for researchers mainly because, throughout many years, the political ideologies have both supported and impeded language use and language teaching in Iran (Tohidi, 2009). As language is part of identity and a symbol of unity for societies, ideologists and politicians have always used language to reach their goals. Language policies can be described as a set of principles regarding language behavior (Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, the authority

creates policies to direct the first language and other languages in a country. In other words, language policies devise strategies towards reaching these targets (Luke, 1990).

Taking a glance at Iran's linguistic map, it can be seen that there are many different languages spoken in this country in different areas (See Figure 1). Although the individuals habitually refer to one language as their mother tongue, it is not easy to identify the speakers by their first language due to paradoxical claims and statistics in the bi/multilingual society (Tohidi, 2009). Persian is the lingua franca and the first common and official language of the country. The second most popular language is 'Azeri'. Iran's other languages are Kurdish, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Luri, Arabic, Balochi, and Turkmen. There are other less common languages such as Taleshi, Baddi, etc. Additionally, different dialects and branches of various languages have made Iran a linguistically diverse country.
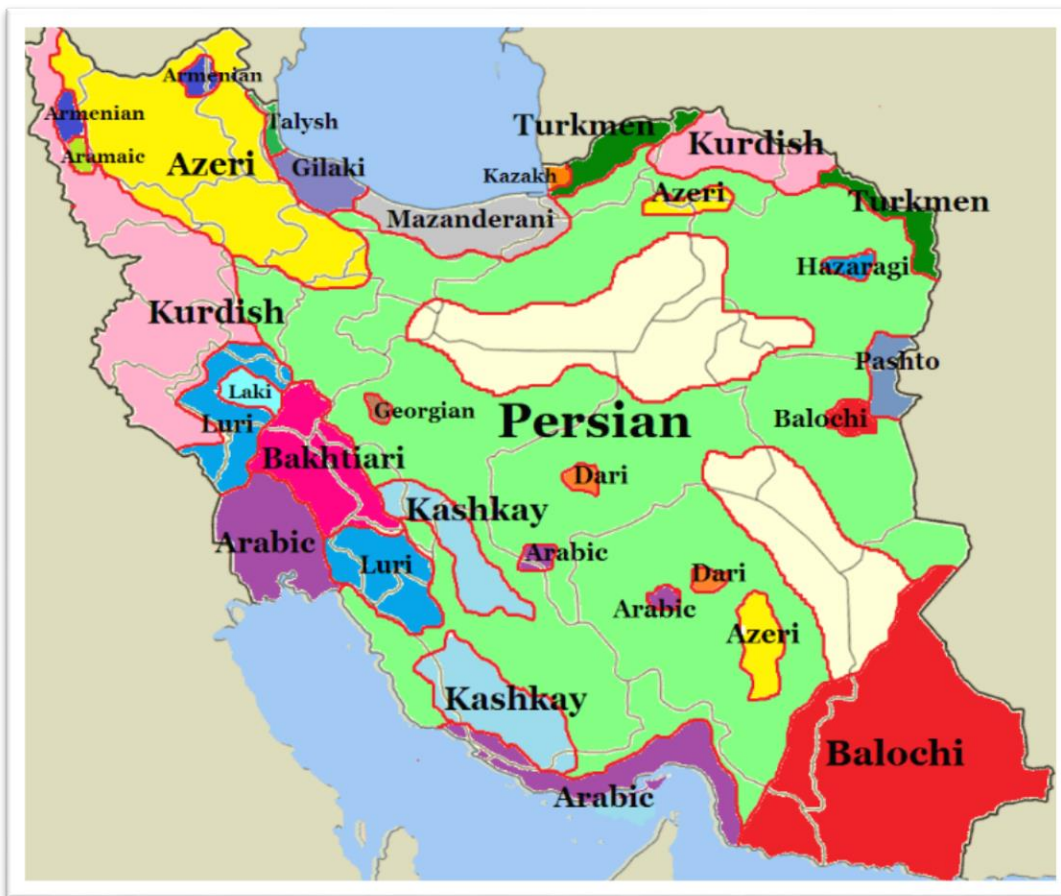
Figure 1 Iran linguistic map (Park, n.d.)

Excluding certain minority languages results in contradictory results about the actual number of speakers announced by the official enumeration system. The quantity of the speakers of these languages is calculated based on ethnicity. However, this is a debatable approach for different reasons, such as the

difference between regional borders and linguistic boundaries. In Iran, this fact has led to the occasional presence of minority language speakers in different ethnic areas (Tohidi, 2009). . Besides, this contradiction in the division of ethnolinguistic areas and the governmental boundaries has spread different language speakers all over areas that are traditionally associated with other languages (Elling, 2013, p. 21). (See Figure 2). For instance, Azeri speakers are supposed to inhabit West and East Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, in reality, the territory of the speakers of this language expands throughout the whole country. For instance, there are large communities of Azeri speakers in cities such as Ardebil and Zanjan (towards the North), and a significant number of them live in cities like Hamedan and Qazvin (towards the West), and last but not least in densely populated cities such as Arak, Karaj, and Tehran- the capital city.

Figure 2 Iran's administrative divisions (Alamy, n.d.)

From another perspective, there are large groups of Kurdish language speakers in cities such as Maku and Salmas, while there are fewer speakers in cities like Miandoab and Khoy. In addition to these

groups of language speakers, the minorities with the smallest population are Armenians, who have subsets of neo-Aramaic language speakers spread in different cities all over Iran. (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Iran-Languages and religions (Farsi-Persian Language, n.d.)

Negative attitudes towards this linguistic diversity are likely to contribute to the widespread notion that other languages are less important than Persian and this could, in turn, lead to loss of identity not only by considering Persian as the primary language in the community but also by featuring it as the original root of Iranian identity. To shed light on this, Yarshater claims that"… the king of Iran, Darius the Great (522-486 B.C), the Aryan and Persian ruler of countries who was proud of his national identity has defended Iranian identity as being Persian in his inscriptions." (Yarshater, 1993, p. 141). Moreover, "The Persian – National Paradigm" was maintained by the government to develop a national identity for the speakers of other languages in Iran. However, this effort was not sufficient to reach their goal (Yarshater, 1993).

Modern Persian has been inspired by old and rich poetry with a different style from the Arabic language. Furthermore, the last revolution of Islam has been an important event affecting the Persian language. The Iranian political and cultural government assumed considerable work to regenerate the Persian language. For example, Ferdosi is a Persian poet who is famous for writing purely Persian poems

(Tavakoli-Targhi, 1990). It has to be considered that some studies and research by Iranian scholars have often taken the language of this poet as a model and disregarded the historical and social background, which played an essential role in the acceptance of his works (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1990).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the idea of eliminating borrowings from Persian led to the development of a campaign by the Academy of Persian language and Literature following the official state policy of supporting the Persian language. Various strategies were implemented to "purify" Persian of the contamination of invading languages. Attempts were made to restore ancient Persian words or to coin new ones following Persian linguistic patterns (calque) (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1990). The first aim of this project was to remove Arabic words that were inserted after the 1979 revolution. Also, the borrowed words from European languages like French and English, such as *machine* and *automobile*, were changed to 'khodro' (literally: automatically-moving). Some of these recommended words are hardly ever used by the speakers. For example, people still use 'machine' rather than 'khodro'. Even though the legislative constructions and associations made it obligatory to use Persian counterparts in the formal/official contexts, there are still many foreign words without a suitable Persian counterpart (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1990). Words like, 'football', 'television', and 'shampoo' are instances of this situation. Furthermore, in several cases, the foreign words are employed as calques that are translated word by word to Persian. For example, 'sib-zamini' (potato) is a literal translation of the French word 'pomme de terre' (Tavakoli-Targhi, 1990).

Due to social and political issues, many speakers of non-Persian languages such as Bakhtyari (Luri), Gilaki, and Mazandarani - especially the young generation that is educated and raised in cities - consider themselves 'Persians' (Elling, 2013). In many metropolitan provinces like Luristan, Gilan, and Mazandaran, it is prestigious to speak in Persian. Many non-Persian speakers are humiliated when speaking their native languages and prefer to speak Persian without an accent (Elling, 2013). According to Elling's studies, speakers of minority languages of Iran choose to speak Persian to climb the social hierarchy. Additionally, native Persian speakers have higher chances of obtaining better jobs since this language is popular and more prestigious (Elling, 2013).

The second popular language after Persian in Iran is Azeri (Elling, 2013). Provinces such as Ardebil, Zanjan, Hamedan, Alborz, East Azerbaijan, and Tehran have the highest percentage of Azeri speakers. In the mid-eleventh century, through the Turkic tribes who journeyed from Central Asia, the Azeri language was brought into Iran (Elling, 2013). Azeri has been affected by Arabic and Persian to a large extent. Azeri speakers are now residing all over the country, mainly in Tehran, the capital city of Iran. In a large city like Tehran, these Azeri-speaking communities married monolingual Persian speakers and became bilinguals. Azeri speakers are perhaps one of the most influencing minority language speakers

groups that incorporated into the political situation of Iran, especially during and after the 1979 revolution (Elling, 2013).

The next popular language in Iran is the Kurdish language that is spoken by around 6 to 9 million of the total population of this country (Elling, 2013) Kurdish is spoken in provinces such as Kurdistan, Kermanshah, and Ilam, as well as some parts of Hamedan and Luristan. Besides, there is a banished group of Kurd speakers who were forcefully deported from their territory in Kurdistan during the Safavid Era, which dates back to the ancient days of the history of Iran. For economic and political reasons, this group was moved to other parts of the country. Neighbor countries like Iraq and Turkey influenced the writing of the Kurdish language, leading to the introduction of the Arabic alphabet, even though Kurdish speakers were used to adopting the Latin scripts because of their contact with Turkish speakers. Because of its rich and strong literature, this language has survived. Although Kurdish literature and rhyming have been fruitful in saving the language, it is not considered an official language (Haig, 2001).

Another language spoken in Iran is Arabic, which is a Semitic language. The Arabic speakers are 3 percent of the population of this country, living in Khuzestan, Hormuzgan, and Bushehr region. Due to its religious nature, Arabic was authorized in different Islamic periods. In the seventh century, Arabic was defended because of the holy book of Islam 'Quran', which is written in this language, and it is necessary to preserve it from the influence of other languages (Glassé, 2013). In the Iranian education system, traditional standard Arabic is being taught at the secondary school level mainly for religious purposes such as reading and reciting the holy book (Glassé, 2013).

If we consider the languages spoken in Iran as groups organized in different parts of this country, then there is a noticeable geographical change concerning the quantity of the speakers and their connection with one another. As cited by Ebrahimi, the areas with Persian speakers are widening, including the regions with speakers of the minority languages (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016). Not to be left aside, this stretching out brings about two main consequences: the modification of the culture of minorities as a result of the contact with a different culture and the assimilation via regimented development and the media in different circumstances (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016). The government's role is critical in approaching both these aspects, and in Iran's case, the government's method is to control all the legitimate educational and cultural organs that frame language through concentrating on international and worldwide education and media (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2016).

In the early twentieth century, when the first Iranian disposition was assumed in 1906, Persian was recognized as the only official language even though no more than 50 percent of the country's population were Persian mother tongues (Hassanpour, 1992). This legislation was conditioned following Reza shah's

crowing and the doom of the Qajar Dynasty when a vast amount of people who were advocators of Reza shah's loyalty to the country conquered the minorities' campaign and nominated Persian as the only official language of the country (Atabaki, 1993). This process towards "one country, one nation" generated such a jeopardized situation for the minority language speakers of that time (Elling, 2013, p. 94). Denominating the minority languages of any kind as 'dialects' of Persian is one of the efforts towards downgrading these languages by the institutions since they are frequently worried about assigning any authentic rank to minority languages (Elling, 2013). Additionally, this division, which arises from deep prejudice, has reached the point of classifying Persian as "Iranian language" (Hassanpour, 1992).

The educational situation of Iran is governed by Persian (Rust, 2012). Although the minority languages are the features of a country's identity and have an essential role in education, at the moment, these languages are not being taught (Elling, 2013). Moreover, in some instances, the minority languages have been formally and strongly prohibited (Hassanpour, 1992). Most of the time, the state has made the situation difficult by using more delicate policies to control and keep the non-Persian languages in unclear domains of informality and deficiency. In doing so, the minority languages seem to look legally not prohibited, yet it is tough to bring them into schools in reality. As Rust argues, the lack of mother tongue education had led many non-Persian children to be obliged to learn Persian in the first days of school as that is the medium of education, and this situation can lead to uneasiness and concern for the first years of school (Rust, 2012).

Another issue concerning the education in minority languages is the government's power in limiting the institutions by using different strategies and with critical control. In other words, the leading institution of culture authorizes to support and promote Persian and boycotts all connections and relations with minority languages (Elling, 2013). This leading institution was created by Ayatollah Khomeini, who was the founder of the Islamic Republic after the revolution of 1979. The first mission of this council was to redeem the educational and liberal environment of the universities first by spotting and then by eliminating the non-Islamic factors such as feminist, secular, and non-Persian individuals, including but not limited to professors, students, and activists. At present, the same council is responsible for adopting subcultural policies and controlling the ordinary cultural circumstances of the country. Moreover, by monitoring all types of cultural formations and announcements such as the Internet, films, and music, this council should focus on assuring that everything is consistent with the portrayal of Islam (Boroujerdi, 1998).

Persian is ruling over all the minority languages in the education system, and this idea of Persian as the only language of Iran is very authoritative in Persian-speaking parts of the country. Even though minority students are looked down on as 'dialect speakers', in some Persian- speaking areas, especially in cities like Tehran, people have a rather friendly behavior towards them. However, non-Persian speakers

feel nervous and are worried about speaking Persian with a minority/non-standard accent in these areas (Elling, 2013) A large part of the Persian speakers claims Iran is the country of the Aryan race and considers Persian as the individuals' identity language (Saleh, 2013). As Asgharzadeh claims, the limitation of the non-Persian languages in the society has influenced the educational system and led to the appearance of a 'racist 'outlook, which is the consequence of the government's refusal in preparing the situation for the students with minority language coming from a different culture to improve their abilities (Asgharzadeh, 2007).

Looking at the sociological aspect, we can find out that the media play a vital role in people's lives, and in this case, all the media and TV channels in Iran are under the complete control of the government. Apart from the nationwide channels, the government set local TV channels in the 1990s to advance and encourage regional cultures (Elling, 2013). Though, these channels do not meet the needs of the minority cultures as they are not entirely in the local languages. Considering the dominance of the Persian in the media, local channels are dependent on policy-making and are subject to the decisions made by Tehran as the capital city (Samii, 2000). In certain circumstances, there are some protests regarding the local channels. Following certain movies and TV programs that make fun of these cultures and languages, particularly Azeri speakers who are often ridiculed in such programs, minority language advocators claim that such programs are only not beneficial but are even detrimental non-Persian cultures (Elling, 2013).

One of the critical factors of linguistic change in Iran is the modifications that occurred in the organization and the number of migrants within the provinces of this country (Saleh, 2013). As Riaux claims, groups of minority language speakers in Iran reside near the borders, which are generally less advanced than other areas (Riaux, 2008). According to Moradi's economic and social schemes, there is a broad gap between the peripheral, mainly inadequate and deficient areas outside, and the affluent, successful parts in the center of Iran (Moradi, 2014). Typically, Iran's capital city is the center of political power in this country as it is the only city collecting the earnings from the oil that is obtained from bordering areas of Iran (Aghajanian, 1983). Simply put, so far, the economic space between Tehran and other parts of the country is critical.

Furthermore, groups of people migrate from agricultural and bordering provinces of the country to the citified and urban cities like Tehran (Javan, 2001). . Issues such as the economic and social chance deficiencies in the outer layers of Iran, together with the pleasure and enticement of living in large cities, led to the migration issue. Not to be left aside, the most prominent groups with linguistic minorities live in the bordering provinces of Iran (Javan, 2001).

Considering the government policies in Iran like the Universal Education in the Persian language and their developments towards modernization and the growth of cities, extinction of the minority languages would be eminent. Therefore, many cultures and languages, such as Khalaj Turkish, are predicted to die out by the mid-twenty-first century, as mentioned by Doerfer (Doerfer, 1998, p. 276).

From a sociolinguistic point of view, during the history of Iran, there have been many efforts put by minority language speakers to reach their linguistic rights (Elling, 2013). For example, many Azeri-speaking campaigns attempted to support and advance their language (Riaux, 2008). Iran's minority communities have faced many challenges to reach their rights, namely, the right to use their languages. For instance, they face difficulty controlling their accents while speaking Persian, along with a sense of embarrassment and humiliation (Saleh, 2013).

Besides the suppression from the government, other predicaments that minority speakers often come across are the governmental control over the media and social disgrace that makes the situation more intolerable and difficult for them. Furthermore, regardless of Universal Education in Persian and assimilation schemes, many educated and knowledgeable minority speakers cannot write in their languages (Riaux, 2008). As Riaux claims, many efforts made by minority speakers such as Azeri and Kurdish people towards standardizing their languages are unproductive. In other words, the crucial element that is essential in the unification of the various dialects is to place culture and politics side by side. This approach is marked out as "turning linguistic disunity to linguistic unity" by (Hassanpour, 1992) , and it happens when the individuals belonging to minority communities consider themselves a unity even though they are speaking in diverse dialects. Therefore, their sense of entity can lead to a common grasp and empathy. As Hassanpour explains, this process supports the fact that language is non-objective, argumentative, dialectical, and it is parallel to mutual national identities. Despite all the difficulties and hardship put forward by the government, ethnic minorities became determined to claim their rights (Kontra, 1999) As Kontra points out, what is intended by 'right' is the linguistic rights that are also a part of human rights (Kontra, 1999). The way the Iranian government deals with this situation and the degree to which Iran's minorities would acquire their linguistic rights are still a matter of debate. Linguistic rights should not be limited to the partial context of human rights. One could argue that the minority language speakers' attempts towards reaching their linguistic rights should be comprehended in the greater situation of their difficulties for provincial political identification inside their territories. There are two types of disputes in studying the linguistic geography of Iran: technical and political. Technically, the inaccuracy in official reports regarding the languages in Iran has brought difficulties in investigating the situation (Elling, 2013). On the other hand, the political linguistic system in Iran is too restrictive which makes it challenging to study linguistic issues in this country (Hassanpour, 1992).

2.1.2 Summary

Many studies about languages in Iran confirm that due to the elimination of regional languages from the official statistics, it is not possible to estimate the exact number of people speaking diverse languages in this country. Scholars generally believe that almost half of the population in Iran are native speakers of non-Persian languages (Elling, 2013). The government of Iran is adamant about establishing a united country through supporting and promoting Persian and marginalizing the non-Persian languages. Consequently, by legislating Persian as the only official language throughout the country, a situation has been raised in which minorities have become active in protecting their languages. (Hassanpour, 1992).

2.2 Diglossia

Diglossia refers to the connection that exists between a specific language form and its social function. Many scholars have studied this phenomenon. Ferguson put forth diglossia, and his studies became a starting point for other scientists and researchers interested in this domain. In simple terms, diglossia alludes to the condition where two varieties present in the same society end up having compatible and complementary purposes. The concept of diglossia is one of the most interesting domains of sociolinguistic studies, and one of the reasons for this popularity derives from the fact that it has received a lot of criticism. Another reason could be that diglossia has vast and complicated aspects in different varieties, registers, or styles that people produce and recognize. According to Woolard, diglossia refers to the sociolinguistic discovery that in homogenous communities, people may speak or write differently from what they are obliged to because of some principles they believe in, while others might ignore these principles and prefer to face the consequences (Woolard, 1985). To better understand diglossia, we will go over the defining aspects in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Features of diglossia

The recent studies about the concept of diglossia date back to the article by 'Charles Ferguson'. (Ferguson, 1959). He described a particular form of bilingual community in which a special relationship existed between its primary languages. He labeled it simply the 'High' and 'Low' situations. As stated by Ferguson, a high type of language is used in public and official conditions, while a low form of the same language is present for private speech and informal situations. In other words, Ferguson adopted the term 'diglossia' to refer to a specific kind of bilingualism that occurs when two co-existing linguistic codes are used in different contexts. In the analysis of diglossia features from the Fergusonian point of view, a language can be labeled 'standard' when there is a performance of 'High' functions in the formal domains,

while the 'Low' functions are mainly attributed to the dialectal forms in private places such as home (ChF72p. 246). The 'H' and 'L' varieties are mutually exclusive: "where H is appropriate, L is inappropriate, and vice versa" (Stępkowska, 2012).

To define the status of the two languages, Ferguson identified nine criteria: *(1) function, (2) prestige, (3) literary heritage, (4) acquisition, (5) standardization, (6) stability, (7) grammar, (8) lexicon,* and *(9) phonology* (ChF72)*Function* is the first and initial concept that contains both (H) and (L) varieties of the same language. According to Ferguson, there may be a possible condition where only one of the varieties can be used by the speakers, and it might be difficult to understand whether the proper variety is used in the right situation (ChF72p. 236). The second fruitful feature of diglossia, which is called *prestige* by Ferguson, is based on the people's attitude in diglossic societies. Ferguson contends that the H variety is usually considered more beautiful and logical, and in turn, more preferable while expressing important thoughts (Stępkowska, 2012). Moreover, as far as *literary heritage* is concerned, the role of high variety is even more important.

According to the categories of diglossia made by Ferguson, the high variety usually has *literary heritage*. On the other hand, as far as the *acquisition* process is concerned, it is the method that has a crucial role. In other words, the low variety is the variety that is learned at home, while the H variety is usually taught in formal and official places such as schools (Stępkowska, 2012). *Standardization* is usually linked to assumptions about the *accuracy* of the language and the belief in "the one best variety", and the degradation of non-standard varieties (Vogl, 2012). According to Ferguson, *standardization* is the realm of the H variety that essentially contains grammar, orthography, and pronunciation (ChF72). As Ferguson pointed out:

> DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (ChF72p. 245)

Stability can be defined as the possibility to persist in being the same for a long period. Furthermore, the features of *grammar, phonology,* and *vocabulary* are connected with the *stability* feature of diglossia. Several grammatical types in the H variety which do not exist in the L variety can be examples of this kind (ChF72). Within a few years, the concept of diglossia went through significant developments. What follows is an outline of the relationship between diglossia and bilingualism.

2.2.2 Diglossia and bilingualism

Joshua Fishman was the one who made an extension of Ferguson's attempt (Fishman J. , 1967). In his view, the concept of diglossia is not bound to languages that are necessarily related to one another. Fishman outlines the maintenance of diglossia and its interaction with national and social identities, and he adds the notion of societal bilingualism to this concept. He believed that it is valuable to extend Ferguson's idea to any combination of languages. According to Fishman, the societal type of bilingualism can only reach stability and balance in a situation where there is a functional distinction between two languages (Fishman J. , Language and Nationalism, 1972). The diglossia represented by the Fergusonian definition can be called 'Classical diglossia' (Ferguson, 1959) which should be kept distinct from Fishman's notion of 'Extended diglossia' (Fishman J. , 1967).

According to Fishman, the development of the concept of diglossia- to show cases where *functional distribution* among language varieties exists - will be useless in conditions where there is a coexistence of classical diglossia with bilingualism (Fishman J. , 2013) After all, Fishman combined bilingualism and diglossia, considering the four possible relationships between them. The famous matrix developed by Fishman is a list of the combinations where diglossia and bilingualism can occur: (1) both diglossia and bilingualism, (2) diglossia without bilingualism, (3) bilingualism without diglossia, and (4) neither bilingualism nor diglossia (Fishman J. , 1967) He has explained these four situations as follows: Quadrant 1 ('diglossia and bilingualism') refers to the communities with most bilinguals who speak both languages. For example, Fishman took Paraguay, where two different languages, namely Spanish and Guarani, are spoken. Quadrant 2 ('diglossia without bilingualism') relates to situations where two communities officially are part of the same national and institutional unity. At the same time, they belong to different separate classes and social roles, and have different linguistic codes to speak within their group (Fishman J. , 1967). The European upper class against colonized people is taken as a case in point by Fishman.

Quadrant 3 ('bilingualism without diglossia': Fishman states that this type of linguistic condition is noticed in circumstances "of rapid social change, of great social unrest, of widespread abandonment of earlier norms before the consolidation of new ones" (Fishman J. , 1967, pp. 34-35) In other words, in bilingualism without diglossia, there is a risk of breaking up specific linguistic communities such as family, school, and work. As Fishman illustrates, situations such as immigration and periods in which social economics change can be considered an adaptation. This adaptation concerns the group that is faced with a breakdown in the domains mentioned above. For example, immigrant families come from non-industrialized areas intending to adapt themselves to the current situation. Furthermore, they use the language spoken in schools in the private domains such as their homes. Consequently, along with the industrialization progress, the language used at home and in private will gradually be degraded and even

mocked by groups of people from the higher ranks and prestigious levels of society. This condition that is so-called a 'developmental condition' by Fishman reveals the ideology of societal agreement that is an essential factor in distinguishing the roles of varieties such as those connected to the social and economic promotions. Finally, Quadrant 4 ('neither bilingualism nor diglossia') is a condition that is hypothetical and improbable. Fishman used the term 'self-liquidating for this linguistic situation (Fishman J. , 1967, p. 37).

2.3 Socio-psychological aspects: Language attitudes

2.3.1 Definitions

Social psychology is an influential factor in language attitude studies, and it is significant to know about the social and psychological complexity in attitudes related to language phenomena (Baker, 1992). While studies about attitudes have been critically and centrally crucial in social psychology, the notion of attitudes has also developed into a central point in sociolinguistics (Garrett, 2003). Despite many research in different fields of study about attitudes, the essence of attitudes is a matter of debate. An attitude can be defined through 'psychological propensity'. Reactions to a specific object involve agreement or disagreement, favor or disfavor, and attraction or aversion towards it (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993, pp. 3-4). Attitudes cannot be studied as they are not observable entities. According to Eagley and Chaiken, to achieve an eligible finding, it is needed to interpret from the visible and recognizable reactions (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993).

Through experience and experiments, the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements are the constituents of attitudes (Garrett, 2003). The first type, the cognitive response, is linked to the 'beliefs' that people hold towards the attitude object (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). The cognitive element pertains to a belief regarding the character and essence of the object and its connections to the other objects. According to Fishbein, this type of belonging can influence an individual's belief (Fishbein, 1967). The example that can be mentioned here is the belief that speaking a specific language might lead to better chances of finding a better position in society. The person who is convinced by this idea has set up a link between learning and speaking a specific language and finding a better job or position (Garrett, 2003).

Answers belonging to the affective type instead are made up of feelings and reactions: the individual's passion for a piece of a poem in a specific language, for example (Garrett, 2003) Moreover, the affective element of an attitude shows itself as the type of 'sympathetic nervous system activity that occurs when individuals face specific attitude objects (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993, p. 11). This type of occurrence can be different depending on various situations. For example, some individuals might encounter feelings of annoyance in thinking of nuclear power stations, while others may have an optimistic

perspective about that (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). Although beliefs are commonly liberated from affective essence, they may become influential due to affective responses (Garrett, 2003). Therefore, researchers need to estimate and calculate both individual's beliefs and their feelings regarding the attitude objects.

The behavioral essence is another element of attitudes, referred to as 'behavioral', 'conative' or 'action' (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). By this definition, we assume that the element of attitude mirrors a person's behavioral aims. In line with this definition, a behavioral reaction does not certainly appear as an indefinite behavior; it simply illustrates people's desire to act. However, Fishbein has a different viewpoint concerned with the behavioral element (Fishbein, 1967). Fishbein refers to the close connections between the cognitive element of attitude and the behavioral one. In his theory, the cognitive and action elements of attitudes are illustrated as beliefs about the objects. The cognitive aspect refers to the ideologies about the object's nature and connections to other objects, while the action element refers to beliefs corresponding to the decisions made regarding such objects (Fishbein, 1967).

Nowadays, many researchers debate on the cooperation among components of attitude. These patterns consist of 'cognitive', 'affective', and 'behavioral'. Attitudes can be based on any single one of the three notions. However, in a situation where all the elements are present, they do not necessarily need to agree with each other (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). As Fishbein claims, a multi-component notion of attitude happens to be a multi-dimension notion since the attitude of any individual regarding an object or concept may take place in three diverse areas, on three different dimensions. Therefore, an individual may believe that there is a better chance of finding the best career by speaking a specific language even if he/she has emotionally negative responses to that language (Fishbein, 1967).

2.3.2 The prediction of attitudes from beliefs

The analysis of attitudes is possible through rating the beliefs of individuals in general sum. Since individuals' beliefs are made consciously regarding the essence of an object, they can be obtained simply about that object and are linked to the degree of emotions they may have towards it. This value model aligns with the idea of connecting the cognitive and the affective elements (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993). According to this theory, individuals may have positive or negative feelings towards an object that may lead to emotional reactions regarding that same object.

We need to bear in mind that the formation of attitudes has a high level of complexity. According to social psychology research by Bohner, four functions of attitudes can are identified as the knowledge function (1), which concerns the attitudes towards an object that is possible to restore whenever the object in question is confronted. In other words, attitudes originate using cognitive learning, which occurs when

individuals confront a specific attitude object for the first time. In this process, the organized attitudes are saved so that whenever the corresponding attitude object is confronted, it can easily be restored (Bohner, 2001).

The second function is the so-called 'utilitarian function' (2) that originates through supporting individuals towards reaching positive aims. The example made by Bohner is concerned with specific types of foods and the attitudes towards those foods caused by their lovely taste. Bohner also certain specific side effects that might be negative outcomes of eating that food (Bohner, 2001). Therefore, there is a link made by individuals between attitudes and their positive and negative consequences. In line with this example, the notion of time can also affect the utilitarian attitude. For instance, an individual may usually have negative attitudes towards specific food, and his/her attitudes can depend on the fact that the disadvantages of that food are more than its advantages. Though, sometimes this may become the opposite. Consequently, the same person can periodically change his/her attitude towards that food (Bohner, 2001).

The following crucial function is the so-called 'social identity function', which is concerned with the need of people to identify themselves. This identification takes place in social groups through individuals expressing their attitudes (Bohner, 2001, p. 243). The last but not the least important function is the 'self-esteem maintenance' that makes individuals connect themselves with positive objects while staying far from the negative ones. The most practical instance in this subject is people who have negative attitudes towards minority groups like immigrants. Their specific attitudes are based on the premise that staying far from immigrants is a way of protecting themselves against danger and all the negativities of these groups (Bohner, 2001). As Bohner stated out, these functions are capable of influencing each other due to their available varieties.

Moreover, the attitudes can perform multiple functions simultaneously, which makes the separation from one another so difficult. In language attitudes studies, the functions of attitudes do not precisely reflect the socio-psychological context. Instead, they indicate a significant and noticeable overlap resulting from the multifunctional characteristics of attitudes.

Researchers have differentiated between two types of attitudes with different functions: instrumental attitudes and integrative attitudes (Baker, 1992). The instrumental attitudes are those affected by utilitarian reasons. The positive attitudes towards a prestigious language because of the social acceptance and economic benefits are examples of this kind (Baker, 1992). These attitudes are known as 'self-oriented and 'individualistic' and are linked to the socio-psychological utilitarian function and the so-called self-esteem maintenance one. Oppositely, integrative attitudes are regularly interactive and have a social nature (Baker, 1992). The language attitudes, which are known to be positive integrative, are usually stimulated

by an individual's willingness to create a specific social relationship (Gardner, 1959). Therefore, the positive integrative attitudes of an individual towards learning a new language are usually affected by that person's demand to build a certain friendship instead of the interest in learning the language itself. In other words, this type of attitude depends on an individual's attempt and their will to unite themselves with a specific linguistic group of people they are interested in being a part of (Baker, 1992). As a result, in the notion of integrative language attitudes, there is a noticeable overlap with the social identity function of attitudes that is put forth by social psychologists.

From another interesting point of view, some scholars have claimed that attitudes have a dual function: input and output (Garrett, 2003). Baker also contends that these types of attitudes have a crucial effect on educational research (Baker, 1992). According to Baker, when a student has a positive attitude towards learning a specific language, his/her positive attitude may operate like an input which is an essential factor in language accomplishment. However, the attitude towards a language may change after learning that language, and in Baker's opinion, this is the output function of attitudes (Baker, 1992).

2.3.3 The importance of the attitudes in the approach towards diglossic situation in Iran

Language attitude is a crucial and influential element that strongly connects with the motivation in learning a language, and it is strongly connected with the social psychology studies of language (O'Rourke, 2005). In such studies, attitudes are defined as feelings and as a propensity towards a specific language (Hyekstedt, 1998).

Language attitudes studies often deal with language maintenance attempts, since the attitudes towards a language might play a significant role in the maintenance process. One of the methods to explore the language maintenance process in a community is to examine individuals' attitudes towards their language, its condition, and the institutional support the speaker of the language receives. In other words, policymakers must calculate and figure out the moves to protect the mother tongue status of ethnic groups' languages (Nahir, 1984). According to Edwards, recent language attitudes studies have often focused their attention on minority languages. Even though studies in the domain of language attitude are not frequent, a small number of studies have concentrated on attitudes toward minority languages in Iran (Edwards, 2010).

Among the most recent studies on attitudes and minority languages in Iran, the one put forth by 'Mirshahidi' analyses Persian native speakers' attitudes towards the accented speech produced by non-native Iranian speakers of Persian (Mirshahidi, 2017). The study wanted to answer the following questions:

"(1) Are Tehranis (as the speakers of the standard variety of Persian) able to identify the language background of accented Persian speech?

(2) How do Tehranis evaluate speakers of accented Persian on solidarity dimensions (i.e. attractiveness, dynamism, and perceived personality traits)?

(3) How do Tehranis evaluate speakers of accented Persian on status dimensions (i.e. social and education status)?

(4) How would interacting with speakers of accented Persian impact judgements of Tehranis in an ethnically unbiased, social situation?"

This examination is done by including two groups of participants. The first one was a group of 18 participants who were Persian native speakers (6 women and 12 men). They were between the ages of 22 and 31, and they had migrated to the United States after 2009 to live in a better and more civilized society (Mirshahidi, 2017). These participants maintained their connections with their homeland, and therefore, they were chosen to see if leaving abroad did affect their linguistic attitudes. The second group of participants was composed of ten speakers of non- Persian languages, namely Arabic, Gilaki, Azeri Turkish, Mazandarani, and Kurdish, who recorded themselves reading the passage in Persian. The method used by the researcher in this survey was the verbal-guise technique. To prepare an 'ethnically natural topic', the researcher chose a 20-second passage about a type of car that is quite common in Iran. Participants were asked to listen to the recorded voices of the car owners and choose from which speaker they would prefer to buy the car, and they were also asked to tell what they think about the personality of each owner by listening to their voices. In the end, the researcher requested if it was possible to link each person's accent to their respective native language.

Referring to the first challenging research question in this survey, all the participants could identify the non-Persian accented voices; however, they were only able to recognize the specific languages of *Gilaki* and Azeri Turkish accurately probably because of two reasons: the first reason is that the group of Azeri speakers constitute a great portion of the Iranian community. Also, the region of Gilan is a popular tourist destination in which *Gilaki* is commonly spoken (Mirshahidi, 2017). The second cause is the stereotypical characteristic of these two languages that distinguish them from other non-Persian languages. The fact that there are many ethnic jokes regarding the speakers of these two minority languages is one of the most important contributing factors (Mirshahidi, 2017).

Concerning the second research question, the participants commented on Azeri and Gilaki accents, considering them the highest attraction level. According to the statistics in this research, the least attractive accent was Arabic, as the participants considered this accent to be rather rough and harsh. The impartial type of accent in this study was found to be the *Mazandarani*. To obtain results about the dynamic characteristics of each accent, participants in this study (first group), were asked to express their interest in a presupposed conversation with each owner of the car to get more information about the product and ask

for a discount (Mirshahidi, 2017). It was concluded that the speakers with an Arabic accent, followed by Kurdish and then Azeri, were ranked in the last positions in this respect.

Furthermore, the results for the following part of the second question reveals that although Arabic and Kurdish-accented speakers seemed to be rougher and their features appear to be not friendly, they are also perceived as trustworthy, hardworking, and frank. The Mazandarani speakers, on the other hand, were perceived to be more sociable and intimate. At the same time, Gilaki and Azeri-accented were identified as having negative characteristics and features such as being tricky and deceitful. Most of the participants in this survey stated that their personal experiences had affected their judgments (Mirshahidi, 2017).

About questions related to the perceived social class, from the participants' responses, it can be concluded that compared to the other non-Persian accents, Arabic-accented, followed by Kurdish-accented speakers, were perceived to belong to the most unattractive and least dynamic classes: the lower-middle-class and the middle-class, respectively (Mirshahidi, 2017). On the contrary, the Mazandarani speakers were perceived to belong to the upper-middle class. However, due to lack of familiarity, some participants identified Mazandarani-accented people as speakers trying not to show their accents and placed them in a high social position. Referring to the education level, we can find that the study indicates Arabic-accented as the least educated group followed by Gilaki and Azeri-speakers. The Kurdish-accented speakers were perceived to belong to the middle-level education group. Finally, speakers with Mazandarani accents were identified as the group with the highest level of education (Mirshahidi, 2017).

The final research question is based on the willingness of the participants to make a deal with the car owners. It can be concluded from the participants' responses that the speakers of Arabic and Kurdish languages were groups with whom members were more inclined to have a deal. Which, in turn, shows a more positive attitude on participants' part towards Arabic and Kurdish-speaking car owners. On the other hand, Gilaki and Azeri speakers obtained fewer positive judgments, and Mazandarani-accented speakers were the group with whom Tehrani native speakers were least inclined to make a deal (Mirshahidi, 2017).

Overall, what can be concluded from this research is that minority languages are stigmatized by speakers of majority languages. Moreover, these judgments can bring about consequences that can influence non-standard language speakers' open positions and employment possibilities and affect their social positions (Mirshahidi, 2017).

3. Methodology and Data Analysis

3.1 Participants

This investigation has been done with the cooperation of 52 Azeri/Persian bilinguals from Iran, residents, or having grown up in Tehran. We contacted them via social media platforms, firstly Telegram and then Facebook, and they were electronically sent a link to the 20-item questionnaire. Contribution in the study was on an optional basis, and the respondents were informed that they would not be identified in any way.

Table 1 illustrates that, out of the 54 Azeri/Persian bilinguals, 29 (56%) were male and 23 (44%) were female. The participants were from different cities: 30 (58%) were from Tabriz, 10 (19%) were from Ardebil, 8 (16%) of the respondents were from Zanjan and Maragheh (4 people for each city), while the rest of them belong to Oromieh, Ghazvin, and Khoi (2, 1, and 1 for each town respectively). 19 (37%) of the participants were within the age range 20 to 30, the majority of them (38%) fall between the range from 31 to 40, and 13 (25%) of the respondents belong to the group age between 41 and 50.

Gender	Male	29(56%)
	Female	23(44%)
Ethnicity	Tabriz	30(58%)
	Ardebil	10(19%)
	Zanjan	4 (8%)
	Maragheh	4 (8%)
	Oromieh	2 (4%)
	Ghazvin	1 (2%)
	Khoi	1 (2%)
Occupation	Employee	13(25%)
	Student	8 (15%)
	Housewife	7 (13%)
	Self-employed	7 (13%)
	Manager	4 (8%)
	Designer	3 (6%)
	Teacher	3 (6%)
	Nurse	2 (4%)
	Architect	2 (4%)
	Dentist	1 (2%)
	Dentist assistant	1 (2%)
	Researcher	1 (2%)
Age	20-30	19(37%)
	31-40	20(38%)
	41-50	13(25%)
Education	Bachelor's degree	32(62%)
	Master's degree	16(31%)
	Doctoral degree	4 (8 %)
Mother tongue	Azeri	42(81%)
	Persian	10(19%)

Table 1 -Participants

The participants' level of education ranged from having Bachelor's (62%), Master's (31%), to 4 people having a Ph.D. (8%). Finally, with regard to participants' mother tongue, 42 (81%) reported Azeri as their mother tongue, and 10 (19%) belong to the group of Persian mother-tongue speakers.

3.1.1 Questionnaire

The first main aim of the present study was to shed a light to the attitudes that Azeri speakers have towards their language. The second aim was to investigate the social position of the Azeri language in Tehran. Another aim was to explore the use of this language in different circumstances, and finally, to reveal to what extent the Iranian Azeri speakers receive institutional support from the government and the society. In so doing, we divided the 20 questions into four different components:

1. Attitude toward Azeri language (questions 5, 10, 12, 18, and 16)
2. The social position of the Azeri language (questions 4, 1, and 20)
3. Azeri language use in Tehran in different contexts (questions 2, 9, 7, 3, 14, 19, and 17)
4. Institutional support for Azeri language speakers (questions 6, 8, 13, 15, and 11)

First, the respondents were asked to answer a number of demographic questions. After that, they were requested to express their level of agreement with 20 statements using a six-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The way of coding the results is shown in Table 2:

Numerical Score	Coding
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Somewhat disagree
4	Somewhat agree
5	Agree
6	Strongly agree

Table 2-Likert scale coding

Regarding the statements belonging to the same component, they were not placed in consecutive order to avoid that the respondents would realize that there was a connection among them. Participants were not told that the experiment was investigating institutional supports of any kind; however, they were aware that they were giving judgments of their attitudes towards the Azeri language for certain contexts.

Since we were not certain that the participants could read and write in English, the questionnaire was prepared in Persian and then translated into English. Table 3 includes an English translation of the Persian questionnaire employed for the current study among Iranian Azeri speakers resident in Tehran.

Component	Related items in the questionnaire
Attitude	(5) Among Azeri and Persian, Azeri is more important to me.
	(10) I like Persian language more than Azeri.
	(12) Speaking Persian with Azeri accent is Sweet.
	(16) I think Azeri is a lovely and respectful language.
	(18) I like to choose Azeri names for my children.
Social Position	(1) It is an honor to speak Persian with Azeri accent in Tehran.
	(4) In Tehran speaking Azeri is not very prestigious.
	(20) Speaking Azeri has brought me dignity and respect in Tehran.
Language use in Tehran in different contexts	(2) While sending text messages via cellphone I use Azeri.
	(3) I watch TV and programs that are in Azeri.
	(7) I read books that are written in Azeri.
	(9) I speak Azeri a lot during the day.
	(14) I usually speak Azeri when I am with my Azeri-speaking friends.
	(17) When writing a letter or sending an email, I use Azeri language.
	(19) I speak more Azeri rather than Persian when I am home with my family.
Institutional support	(6) In Tehran there are events where Azeri speakers can share their ethnic culture of food, music, and art with other groups.
	(8) In the recent years, more media and TV programs are prepared for Azeri audience.
	(11) In Tehran they use Azeri words to name streets and places.
	(13) Azeri language is being taught along with Persian language at school.
	(15) There are courses about Azeri language and literature that people can choose to take at universities in Tehran.

Table 3-Questionnaire

The respondents' results were automatically saved to the server of Google Forms and then collected by the researcher and organized accordingly on Excel sheets.

3.2   Results and Discussion

The study contains different aims: to collect data on the level of attitudes Azeri speakers have toward their language (1); to obtain information about the social status of this language in Tehran (2); to investigate the use of Azeri language in different situations (3), and to investigate whether Azeri speakers receive institutional support in Tehran (4). In order to do so, the answers that different groups of participants gave to the questionnaire were first analyzed separately, then compared to find out how the specific variables in this study, namely gender, age, and mother tongue, can be influential in this study the results.

Research question one

The breakdown of the results concerning the first research question is shown in the table below:

Responses	Item (5)	Item (10)	Item(12)	Item (16)	Item (18)	Mean(Total)
Strongly disagree	13%	19%	8%	2%	8%	10%
Disagree	8%	10%	10%	0%	8%	7%
Somewhat disagree	10%	13%	12%	0%	4%	8%
Somewhat agree	23%	15%	21%	4%	25%	18%
Agree	12%	13%	23%	17%	19%	17%
Strongly agree	35%	29%	27%	77%	37%	41%

Table 4-Research question one-general percentage

Table 4 shows the Azeri/Persian bilinguals' attitude towards the Azeri language. This table reports each type of response for each item (5, 10, 12, 16, and 18). Generally, according to the statistics provided by the table, item (16) has the highest percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with it, while the item with which the lowest rate of participants agreed is item (12).

As seen in this table, 4, (77%) of the responses admitted that Azeri is a lovely and respectful language (item 16); while, as already mentioned, item (12) has the lowest percentage of this table since (27%) of the participants had fully agreed in the sweetness of speaking Persian with Azeri accent. Item (18), with (37%) of participants who fully agreed with choosing Azeri names for their children, is the second-highest percentage item in this table.

On the other hand, after item (5), article (10), i.e., 'I like the Persian language more than Azeri' – which the researcher has reversely coded in order to become semantically corresponded with the item (5) - has the second-lowest percentage of respondents who chose 'strongly agree.' As can be seen, the percentages of Items (5), i.e., 'Among Azeri and Persian, Azeri is more important to me', and item (10) respectively are (29%) and (35%).

Table 4 also illustrates the results based on the sum of the responses given to the items. According to the statistics provided in this table, the majority of the participants (76%), have strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed with the items; while, the rest of the respondents have chosen 'strongly disagree' (10%), 'disagree' (7%), and 'somewhat disagree' (8%). In other words, the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this survey had a very positive attitude toward the Azeri language.

Attitudes	Mean	Standard deviation
Item (5)	4.16	1.78
Item (10)	3.81	1.89
Item (12)	4.23	1.58
Item (16)	5.65	0.84
Item (18)	4.5	1.58
Total Mean	4.47	
Total SD	0.78	

Table 5-Research question one-total mean/standard deviation

The breakdown of the overall results is presented in the table above (Table 5). The statistics in this table are computed through a different method from Table 4. The six-point Likert scale applied in this study from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) gave us a better measurement. The average score and the standard deviation elicited from the items: (5), (10), (12), (16), and (18) are respectively (4.48) and (0.78).

All in all, the data collected in Table 4 and Table 5 confirm that the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this study undoubtedly prefer the Azeri language and find it more important than Persian when it comes to attitudes.

Research question two

The Tables below (Table 6, and Table 7) show the results of the second research question:

Responses	Item (1)	Item (4)	Item (20)	mean (Total)
Strongly disagree	15%	4%	13%	11%
Disagree	15%	13%	17%	15%
Somewhat disagree	12%	6%	13%	10%
Somewhat agree	13%	13%	15%	14%
Agree	17%	31%	21%	23%
Strongly agree	27%	33%	19%	26%

Table 6-Research question two-general percentage

Table 6 represents the social position and the level of Azeri language among the participants of this study. The percentage of every response given by participants to items (1), (4), and (20) are presented in this table. As seen from the analysis of this table, item (4) - which has been reversely coded by the researcher – has the highest percentage (77%) in the "strongly agree" option. In other words, the Azeri / Persian bilinguals who participated in this study fully agree with the statement "speaking Azeri is very prestigious in Tehran," while (23%) of the participants who are against this idea have strongly disagreed, disagreed, and somewhat disagreed.

According to the item (20) in Table 6, Speaking Azeri has brought dignity and respect to (55%) of the Azeri/Persian bilinguals who participated in this survey, while other (43%) of them do not feel the same. It can be found that, concerning the social position, there is a debate between the Azeri/Persian bilinguals about speaking Azeri in Tehran. Item (1), i.e., 'It is an honor to speak Persian with Azeri accent in Tehran,' has the second high proportion (27%) of participants who have chosen 'strongly agree', as shown in Table 6. On the other hand, (15%) of the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this study have shown negative opinions regarding the first item of the questionnaire.

As can be seen in Table 6, the lowest share of participants did not find Azeri a prestigious language in Tehran (36%); while a large percentage of them were in favor of the idea of considering Azeri as a high-level language in Tehran.

Social position	Mean	Standard deviation
Item (1)	3.83	1.84
Item (4)	4.52	1.53
Item (20)	3.71	1.73
Total Mean	3.87	
Total SD	0.59	

Table 7-Research question two-total mean/standard deviation

Finally, regarding the scoring method of the six-point Likert scale, the elicited average outcome is (3.87) while the standard deviation (0.59)(see Table 7). We can conclude that despite the high status the Persian language has in Tehran's society in some respects, the Azeri language still belongs to the highly respected level of social position according to its speakers.

Research question three

Regarding the data gathered from the Azeri/Persian bilingual participants of this study, it is possible to see the amount of Azeri language used by them in different contexts in Table 8:

Responses	Item(2)	Item (3)	Item(7)	Item(9)	Item (14)	Item (17)	Item (19)
Strongly disagree	19%	12%	13%	15%	4%	27%	10%
Disagree	31%	12%	21%	10%	12%	29%	6%
Somewhat disagree	6%	4%	8%	10%	2%	8%	2%
Somewhat agree	15%	42%	37%	21%	17%	13%	15%
Agree	13%	17%	10%	17%	13%	10%	12%
Strongly agree	15%	13%	12%	27%	52%	13%	56%

Table 8-Research question three-general percentage

As we can see in this table, each item represents a different context in which the Azeri/Persian bilingual respondents use the Azeri language. This table also shows the exact response breakdown for each condition. Generally, according to the numbers provided by the table, items (19) and (14) received a

considerable percentage of clearly positive responses, respectively (56%) and (52%). After items (19) and (14), item (9) with (27%) of "Strongly agree" responses is the next item with the high percentage in this table. We can imply that Azeri/Persian bilinguals who participated in this study speak more Azeri than Persian when they are at private places and groups such as at home, with their family, or Azeri-speaking friends.

On the other hand, items (7), (3), (17), and (2), as can be seen, are in the group of contexts that received a small proportion of "Strongly agree" responses corresponding to (12%), (13%), (13%), and (15%). Moreover, these items exemplify the contexts where communication occurs through electrical and advanced devices, such as using a computer or mobile to send emails or messages.

The Figure below shows the total responses to the third research question, i.e., "How much is the Azeri language used in different contexts within the Tehran community?" (Figure 4)
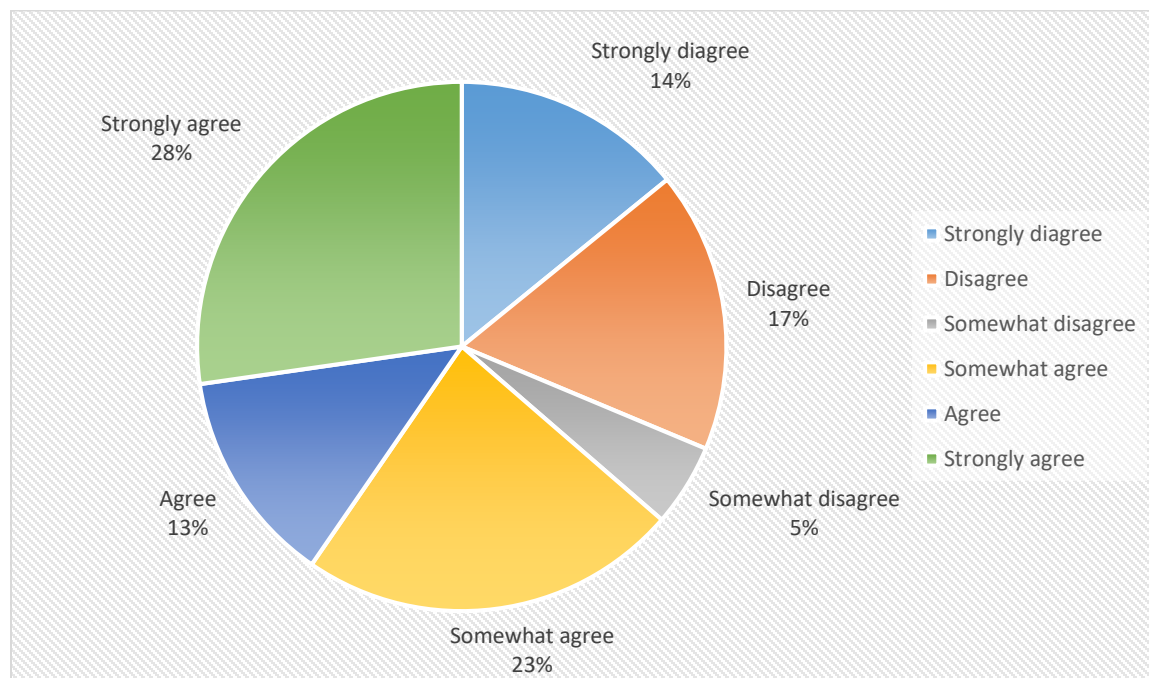

Figure 4-Different contexts (Items 2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, and 19)

As can be seen from the data collected in the pie chart, "Strongly Agree," "Agree," and "Somewhat agree" responses reach a high percentage (64%). We can understand that many respondents have accepted

the claim about using the Azeri language more than Persian in daily conversations. On the other hand, (36%) participants showed the opposite situation. The responses given by this group are:" Strongly disagree" (14%), "Disagree" (17%), and: "Somewhat disagree" (5%).

Azeri in different contexts	Mean	Standard deviation
Item (2)	3.19	1.78
Item (3)	3.83	1.5
Item (7)	3.42	1.55
Item (9)	3.96	1.78
Item (14)	4.81	1.56
Item (17)	2.9	1.77
Item (19)	4.81	1.69
Total Mean	3.85	
Total SD	0.75	

Table 9-Research question three-total mean/standard deviation

According to Table 9, the average score and standard deviation are (3.85) and (0.75), respectively. All in all, looking at these data, we can find that the speakers who participated in this survey tend to use Azeri more than Persian in private places such as their homes. However, in the formal contexts where there is no intimacy and familiarity with others, these people prefer to speak Persian.

Research question four

Table 10 reports participants' answers to the fourth research question. According to this table, the opinions shared by Azeri/Persian respondents are primarily negative towards the institutional supports they receive in Tehran

Responses	Item(6)	Item (8)	Item (11)	Item (13)	Item (15)
Strongly disagree	4%	13%	25%	31%	23%
Disagree	6%	21%	23%	23%	27%
Somewhat disagree	8%	12%	25%	4%	10%
Somewhat agree	8%	25%	17%	13%	15%
Agree	31%	23%	8%	13%	6%
Strongly agree	44%	6%	2%	15%	19%

Table 10-Research question four-general percentage

As can be seen, the percentage of items (13), (11), (15), is (31%), (25%), (23%), respectively. From The percentage of disagreement within participants about the support received by the Azeri language, we can assume that the Azeri/Persian bilinguals believe that the Azeri language is not employed so much by the government in public places. They have also disagreed with the claim about the effective use of Azeri in formal and educational contexts such as streets, schools, and universities in Tehran.

According to the statistics provided by the table, 25 percent of respondents have somewhat agreed with the item (8), which is about the development of Azeri language TV programs in recent years. Item (6), on the other hand, was given the highest rate in the choice of '' strongly agree'', which means that (44%) participants have fully agreed with the statement about the presence of events where Azeri speakers can share their ethnic culture of food, music, and art with other groups in Tehran. The Figure 5 shows the overall percentage for these four components:
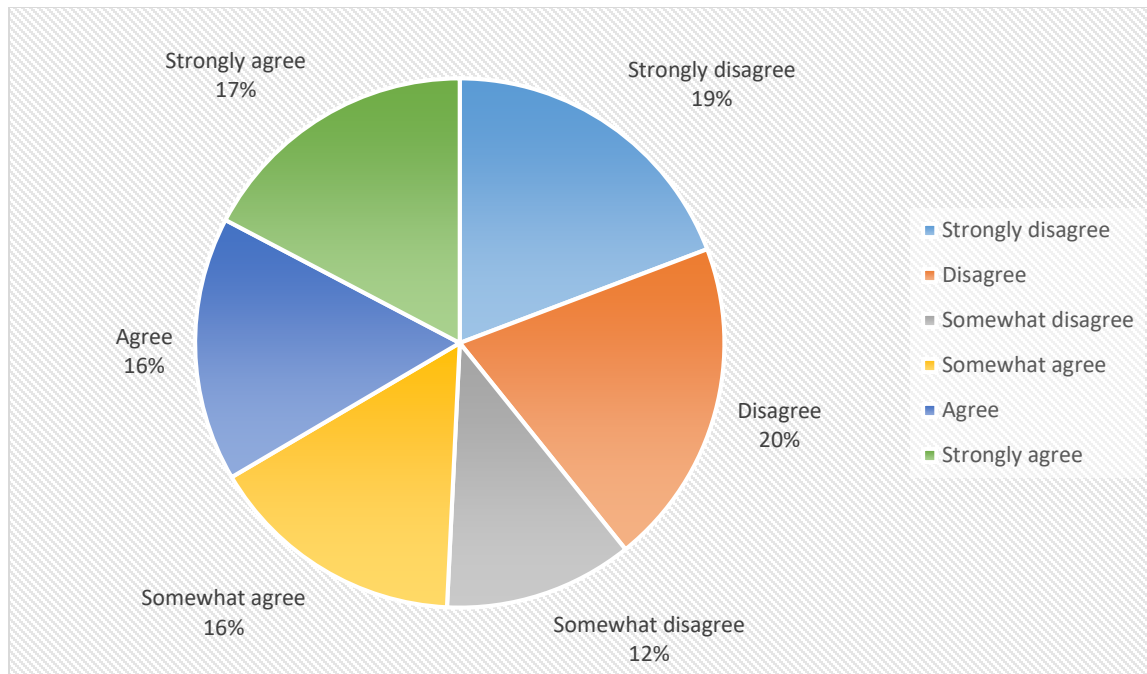
Figure 5-Institutional support (Items, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15)

As shown in Figure 5, approximately a half of participants (about 51%) chose "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "somewhat disagree," which is a remarkable share of the total Pie chart; while the other half (49%) have strongly agreed, agreed, and somewhat agreed. Moreover, the data score calculated through the six-point Likert scale method shows the more specific statistics regarding each item (See Table 11).

Institutional support	Mean	Standard deviation
Item (6)	4.88	1.41
Item(8)	3.4	1.52
Item (11)	2.65	1.34
Item (13)	3.02	1.89
Item (15)	3.12	1.83
Total Mean	3.41	
Total SD	0.86	

Table 11-Research question four-total mean/standard deviation

3.3 Gender

In gender studies, the role of men and women in societies and different social groups is significant. These differences are essential since, apart from being biological, they are affected by factors such as history, religion, ethnicity, economic, and culture. Ideologies supported by different societies can be another trigger for this variation. To shed light on this, humans acquire different social expectations and cultural standards for girls and boys during their childhood. Moreover, every society has its own set of standards, which are referred to as 'sexual codes' (Tylor, 2003). However, the gender phenomenon has had a considerable impact on ethnic identity, among other influential factors.

In light of the importance of 'gender' as one of the variables in sociolinguistic and cultural studies, this part of the study can be considered crucial to our understanding of gender differences in terms of answers given to the questions of this study. Therefore, this part of the study attempts to make a comparison among the statements made by male and female participants of this survey. The diagram below shows the average score regarding the male and female participants' ideas about the Azeri language in different components.
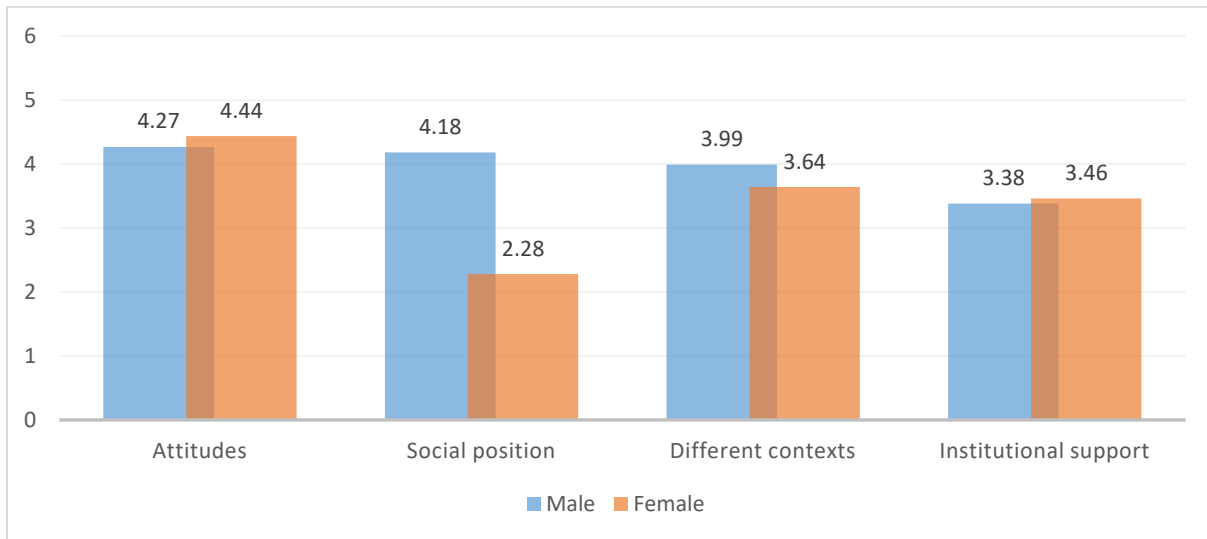

Figure 6-Female vs Male

Figure 6 illustrates the male and female ideas about the Azeri language in the four components of attitudes, social position, different contexts, and institutional support in Tehran. Generally, according to this bar, the average score given by participants in all components has significant fluctuations.

Compared to the female participants, the average of male respondents' positive attitudes towards the social status of the Azeri language is higher. Moreover, their higher average of positive attitudes can also be seen in their answers concerning the use of this language in different contexts of society. The average score of positive responses broke down by male participants in these two components are (4.18) and (3.99) respectively; while, the responses by female participants are (2.28) and (3.64). On the other hand, a marginal fluctuation can be seen in the average of responses given to the questions concerning the amount of support that the Azeri language receives. This means, the average score obtained by the answers given by male and female participants is (3.38) and (4.46), respectively.

As can be seen in Figure 6, women showed to have more positive attitudes towards the Azeri language than men: (4.44) and (4.27) respectively. It has been found that there is a difference between male and female participants in terms of positive attitudes towards Azeri. However, this difference is quite marginal.

Considering the differences in the attitudes between the male and female participants, the first and perhaps the most important reason might be the psychological characteristic known as a common feature among women. Generally, women are distinguished in behaving more emotionally than men when it comes to traditional and family-origin subjects, such as speaking the mother tongue in this case. Another important reason might be the impact of gender socialization (Beverly, 2012). Although gender attitudes have undergone significant changes worldwide from tradition to modernity, the traditional attitudes might still exist among women towards the family (Beverly, 2012). In other words, women spent more time at home with their family members and are more likely to have a higher tendency when they are compared to men in speaking their native language. This might shed light on the difference in the results in attitudes between male and female participants of this survey.

As can be seen in the second column in Figure 6, there is a remarkable difference in the results elicited about the social status of the Azeri language between male and female participants in this study. According to this bar chart, the average of positive responses to the social level of the Azeri language in Tehran among men is (4.18); while, the score obtained regarding the female participants from the same situation is (2.28).

In this study, the reason of the disagreement between male and female respondents regarding the social status that the Azeri language has in Tehran might be related to the different individuals' social interactions that men and women have. As Brian claims, gender has an essential role in portraying the person's social identity (Brian.W, 2004). In other words, people's social interactions are conditional to their social identity, which is in turn influenced by social and cultural gender expectations

Psychologically looking at the subject, several possibilities support the idea for which women participants in this study are not satisfied with the current social status of the Azeri language in Tehrani society. Implementing Brian's argument about 'individual's social interactions' (Brian.W, 2004), we can assume that working conditions in Tehran, has made women more likely to handle specific household jobs. For this reason, men ought to be more sociable than women. In other words, by working outside the home, men are taken through socialization and have gained more self-efficacy in their social interactions with other people in society. Additionally, there is a correlation between self-efficacy and social status. As Bandura claims, people who believe in their abilities are more confident in most aspects of their lives (Bandura, 1995). We can assume that self-confidence has made it easier for people to communicate their feelings and ideas and show their authentic selves without fear of being rejected in society. Therefore, these people are more likely to have a positive perspective about themselves while interacting with others in the community.

To reach a more specific answer regarding the noticeable disagreement between our male and female participants concerning their attitudes towards the status of the Azeri language in Tehran, we put the percentages of the answers given by each group in to separate tables below:

Male respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	14%	17%	14%	10%	14%	31%
Question 4	31%	38%	21%	0%	3%	7%
Question 20	14%	7%	17%	14%	28%	21%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	20%	21%	17%	8%	15%	20%

Table 12-Male-Social position

Female Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	17%	13%	9%	17%	22%	22%
Question 4	35%	22%	4%	13%	26%	0%
Question 20	13%	30%	9%	17%	13%	17%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	22%	22%	7%	16%	20%	13%

Table 13-Female-Social position

Table 12 and Table 13 show the percentages that refer to the answers given by male and female participants to the items: (1), (4), and (20). According to the statistics provided in both tables, the percentage of the positive answers by male participants to item (1), "It is an honor to speak Persian with Azeri accent in Tehran", is (55%). On the other hand, (61%) of female participants gave positive responses to the same statement. More specifically, the positive responses given by women are 22 percent "strongly agree", 22 percent "agree", and "17 percent "somewhat agree". At the same time, the percentage of positive answers given by men to this statement is 31 percent "strongly agree", 14 percent "agree", 10 percent "somewhat agree".

Looking at item (4), "In Tehran speaking Azeri is not very prestigious"- which is a negative sentence -, we find that the percentage of the positive answers given by male participants is lower than the one given by female respondents. The statistics show that the percentage of positive responses by men and women in this study as (10%) and (39%), respectively. At the same time, the negative responses to this statement are (90%) and (61%) given by male and female respondents, respectively.

Finally the item (20), "speaking Azeri has brought me dignity and respect in Tehran", has received (63%) of positive answers by male participants. On the other hand, female respondents gave (47%) of positive answers to this statement. In contrast, the percentage of negative responses given by male and female participants to this item is (38%) and (52%) respectively.

From the third column in Figure 6, we can conclude that men participants speak Azeri more than women in different contexts. This sheds light on the fact that the use of the Azeri language has more vitality among male respondents of this study. In other words, the average of positive responses given by men who prefer to speak Azeri more than Persian in public and private situations is (3.99), while women participants, with a slight different average from men - (3.64) - tend to use Azeri more than Persian in different situations.

As mentioned earlier, there are many possible reasons for the disagreements between male and female participants in this study, and the dispute about the use of the Azeri language and its power in different contexts in Tehran is not an exception. Factors such as the level of attitudes towards a native language by people in a society in which that language is overlooked by a community or the amount of self-confidence each person holds in their social interactions significantly impact people's ideas.

On the other hand, it can be assumed that due to their sense of ethnic solidarity, female participants prefer to use Azeri in more private places such as home and group of their Azeri- speaking friends. As Herzfeld argues, ethnic solidarity is known to have specific features such as intimate feelings between people belonging to the same ethnicity and culture (Herzfeld, 2006). This feature is likely to exist more

among women compared to men since intimacy between family members and friends is essential in most of women's lives (Stevi Jackson, 2020).

Finally, looking at the last column in Figure 6, we can see that the attitudes of male and female Azeri/Persian bilinguals towards the institutional support they receive, with a minimum average difference, is (3.38) and (3.46), respectively. Regarding the influence of gender variable on the final research question of this survey, we can say that participants more or less have the same mentality about the institutional support that the Azeri language receives in Tehran. To reach a more specific answer regarding this minor disagreement, we decided to compare the percentage of responses given by both men and women to every item of this component.

Male Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 6	7%	7%	7%	14%	31%	34%
Question 8	14%	17%	14%	21%	28%	7%
Question 11	24%	17%	24%	17%	14%	3%
Question 13	38%	17%	3%	10%	17%	14%
Question 15	24%	31%	10%	10%	7%	17%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	21%	18%	12%	14%	19%	15%

Table 14-(Male respondents)-Institutional supports

Female Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 6	0%	4%	9%	0%	30%	57%
Question 8	13%	26%	9%	30%	17%	4%
Question 11	26%	30%	26%	17%	0%	0%
Question 13	22%	30%	4%	17%	9%	17%
Question 15	22%	22%	9%	22%	4%	22%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	17%	23%	11%	17%	12%	20%

Table 15-(Female respondents)-Institutional supports

Table 14 and Table 15 illustrate the percentage of answers given by male and female respondents, respectively. The responses given by these participants are to the items: (6), (8), (11), (13), and (15), which are the statements about the amount of institutional support towards the Azeri language in Tehran.

To further analyze the data, the three options 'strongly agree, agree, and somewhat agree' have been inserted in Tables 16-20 under the umbrella term of 'Agree.' similarly, 'strongly disagree, disagree, and somewhat disagree' can be generalized as 'Disagree':

Item 6	Male	Female
Agree	79%	87%
Disagree	21%	13%

Table 16-Item 6-Male vs Female

According to Table 16, (79) percent of men and (87) percent of women have agreed with the item number (6), i.e.," In Tehran, there are events where Azeri speakers can share their ethnic culture of food, music, and art with other groups." On the other hand, only (21%) and (13%) of men and women have disagreed with this item.

From the statistics provided in this table, we can assume that male and female participants are equally satisfied with the government's plan regarding the different events provided to support the Azeri language in society. In other words, the government has prepared a situation in which minority language speakers (namely Azeri speakers in this survey) have easily interacted with each other and talked about their differences without being afraid of judgments.

Item 8	Male	Female
Agree	56%	51%
Disagree	45%	48%

Table 17-Item 8-Male vs Female

As shown in Table 17, the percentage of positive responses in both male and female participants is a bit higher than the percentage of negative responses given by the same groups. It can be found that there is a slight difference between the positive and negative answers provided by the male and female participants to the item (8). Male respondents with only 5 percent more than women have agreed with the statement: "In the recent years, more media and TV programs are prepared for Azeri audience." The

percentage of the positive answers given by male and female participants are (56%) and (51%), respectively.

On the other hand, negative responses to item (8) are (45%) and (48%) for men and women participants, respectively. From the data elicited from Table 15, we can assume that female participants with only 3 percent more than men are among those who criticize the TV programs developed for the Azeri audience.

The broken-down data by male and female responses to item (11) shown in Table 18. According to this table, most of the participants disagree with the sentence: "In Tehran, they use Azeri words to name streets and places." That is to say, male and female participants have disagreed with the claim that Azeri words are used to name public places. The percentage of negative responses by men and women are (65%) and (82%), respectively. However, compared to the positive reactions (34%) given by men, women with a difference of 17 percent less agree with this statement (17%).

Item 11	Male	Female
Agree	34%	17%
Disagree	65%	82%

Table 18-Item 11-Male vs Female

Tables 19-20 illustrate the percentage of 'Agree' and 'disagree' options chose by male and female participants regarding the item (13) and (15).

Item 13	Male	Female
Agree	41%	43%
Disagree	58%	56%

Table 19-Item 13-Male vs Female

Item 15	Male	Female
Agree	34%	48%
Disagree	65%	53%

Table 20-Item 15-Male vs Female

From the statistics shown in the tables above, we can find that participants reject the idea that the Azeri language is taught alongside Persian at schools and universities. From the data gathered in these

tables, we can assume that most participants (male and female) believe that the Azeri language is being overlooked in public and formal places in Tehran, such as schools and universities. Regarding the statistics in Table 19, the percentage of 'Disagree' responses given by male participants (58%) is 2 percent more than that of females (56%). On the other hand, the percentage of 'Agree' answers given by women is (43%) compared with men's responses (41%).

As shown in Table 20, the difference is a bit more noticeable between male and female negative responses (65%) and (53%), respectively. Moreover, the contrast also can be seen between the positive percentages of the answers given by them. (48%) female participants have agreed with the statement present in the item (15), while only (34%) of male respondents agreed with that same statement.

3.4   Age

The passage of time is an undeniable phenomenon that is connected to all aspects of human's life, including language. Aging can be considered as a physical and psychological development. During this process, there are also social and linguistic behavior developments. Many researchers investigated the factor of age as a variable in study fields such as biology, sociology, etc.

The focus of this part of the research is to study and discuss the extent to which changes in ages between 20 and 50 influence the results of the components that we identified in this work, namely attitudes of Azeri/Persian bilinguals towards the Azeri language (1), the social position and the level of the Azeri language among its speakers (2), the amount of vitality the Azeri language has in different contexts in Tehran (3), and the institutional supports Azeri speakers receive in Tehran (4). Figure 7 illustrates the data gathered from participants of different ages between 20 and 50. Participants fall into three age groups, namely (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50). As can be seen in this figure, responses of participants of a certain age to a specific component are designed separately in this figure.
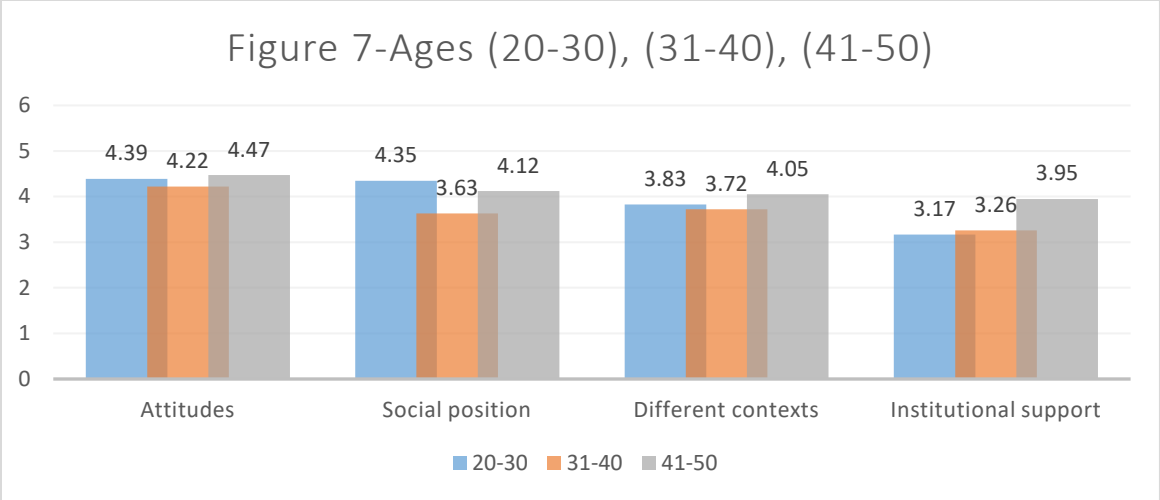
Figure 7-Ages (20-30), (31-40), (41-50)

Figure 7-Ages

3.4.1 Effects of age on Azeri speakers' attitudes towards Azeri language

The first column of Figure 7 represents the responses given by participants in the three age groups (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50). Conforming to the statistics in the first column of the bar chart, we can state that the respondents' attitudes towards the Azeri language in the third age group of our study (41-50) has an higher average score, (4.47), when compared with the other two groups' attitudes with average scores of (4.39) and (4.22). To study the participants' opinions on each case, we decided to compare the percentage of their responses separately.

The pie charts below show the percentage of participants' responses to our first research question, i.e., "What are the attitudes of Azeri speakers toward the Azeri language in the city of Tehran?"
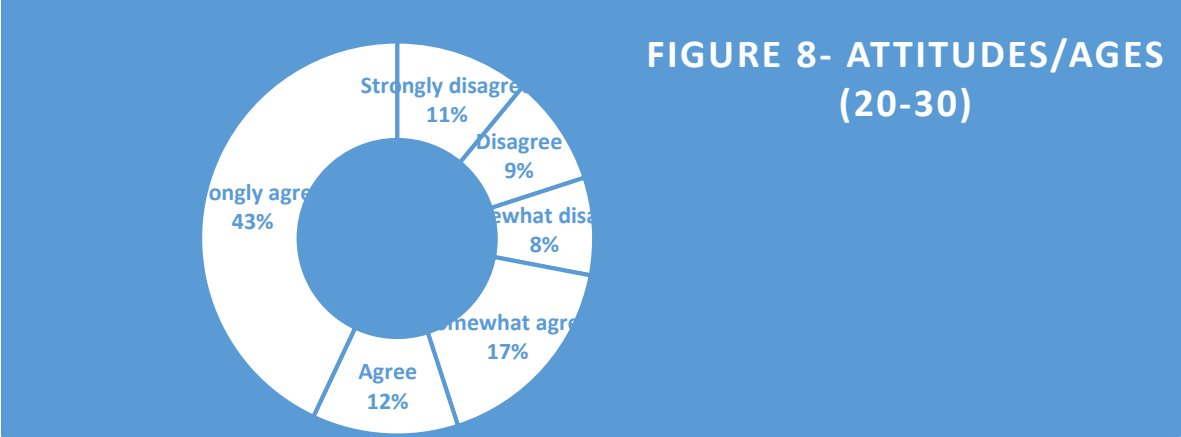
FIGURE 8- ATIITUDES/AGES (20-30)

Strongly disagree 11%
Disagree 9%
Somewhat disa 8%
Somewhat agre 17%
Agree 12%
Strongly agree 43%

Figure 8-Attitudes and Ages (20-30)

According to the Figure 8, the highest share of this pie chart belongs to the 'Strongly Agree' option chosen by respondents between the ages 20 and 30. In addition, 72 percent of the youngest participants have 'strongly agreed,' 'agreed,' and 'somewhat agreed'; while only 28 percent of them have 'strongly disagreed,' 'disagreed,' and 'somewhat disagreed' with the specific items regarding the 'Attitudes' component.

Comparing the second age group (31-40) to the youngest group in Figure 9, we can find out that the percentage of their positive attitudes towards the Azeri language - with a slight difference of 1 percent - is almost equal to the first age group (71%). On the other hand, (29%) of the participants chose 'strongly disagree,' 'disagree,' and 'somewhat disagree'. Regarding the data summarized by this pie chart, we can assume that there is no noticeable difference in the attitudes maintained by the first and second group ages (See Figure 9).
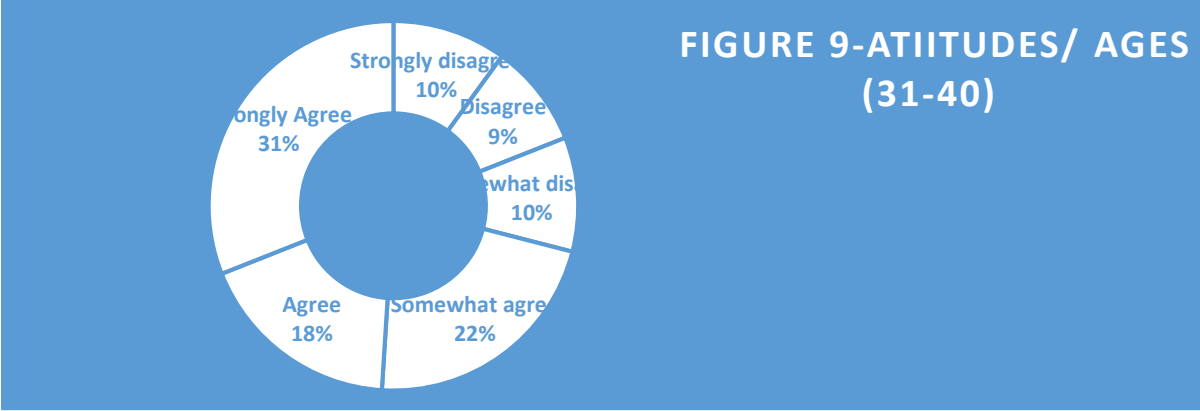

FIGURE 9-ATIITUDES/ AGES (31-40)

Strongly disagree 10%
Disagree 9%
Somewhat dis 10%
Somewhat agre 22%
Agree 18%
Strongly Agree 31%

Figure 9-Attitudes and Ages (31-40)

As shown in Figure 10, the oldest group of the participants (41-50) shows the highest percentage of positive attitudes towards the Azeri language. As stated in this pie chart, 72 percent of the respondents chose the options 'strongly agree', or 'agree', or 'somewhat agree'. While only 25 percent of them have 'strongly disagreed', or 'disagreed', or 'somewhat disagreed' with the items that form the attitudes component.
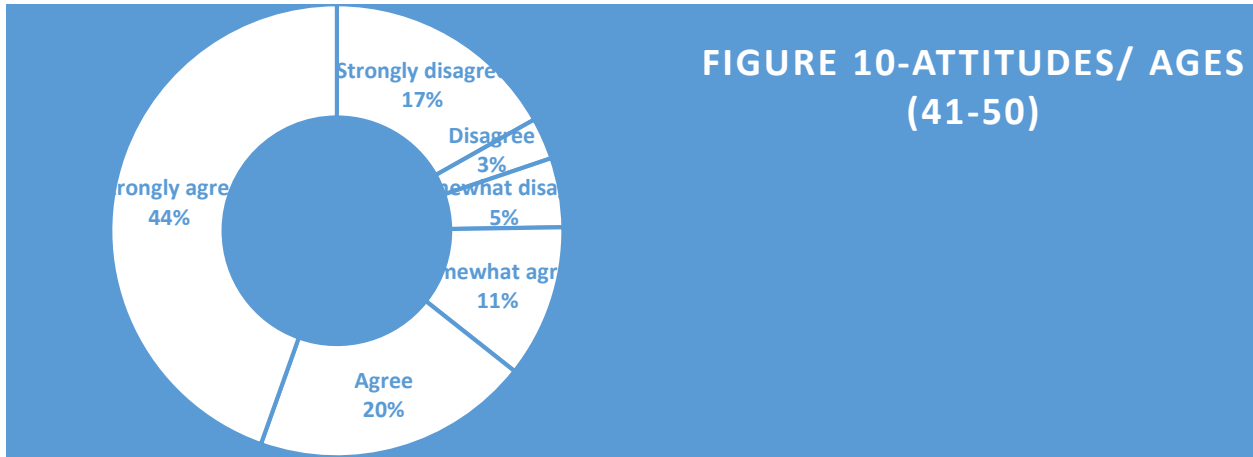

Figure 10-Attitudes and Ages (41-50)

Considering the charts above and comparing them with one another, we conclude that all the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this study maintain a high percentage of positive attitudes towards the Azeri language. Moreover, when we examined the statistics in more detail, we found that the positive attitudes towards this language are higher in older people.

3.4.2 Effects of age on the social status of the Azeri language among its speakers

The second column in Figure 7 shows the responses given by participants to the second research question, i.e., "What are the social position and the level of the Azeri language among its speakers?" Statistics reported in this bar chart show that the average score given by participants in all three age groups has considerable fluctuations. For example, compared to the second group of participants between ages 31 and 40, the average score broke down in the younger respondents (ages 20-30), and in the older ones (ages 41-50) are different: (4.35) and (4.12), respectively. While the average score in participants between ages 31 and 40 is (3.63) in the same component.

To get more detailed information about the social status of the Azeri language among respondents, we examined their viewpoints on each sentence and compared the percentage of their agreements and

disagreements. In the following, we can see the respondents' opinions about statements: (1)' It is an honor to speak Persian with Azeri accent in Tehran'. (4) 'In Tehran speaking Azeri is not very prestigious'. (20) 'Speaking Azeri brought me dignity and respect in Tehran'.

20-30 Respondents	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Question 1	5%	16%	0%	21%	32%	26%
Question 4	42%	21%	21%	5%	11%	0%
Question 20	16%	21%	0%	11%	26%	26%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	21%	19%	7%	12%	23%	18%

Table 21-Social status- ages (20-30)

Table 21 represents the percentage of the answers given by participants between the ages of 20 and 30. According to the data elicited from the table, the portion of the positive answers given by respondents to the items (1) and (20) is very noticeable. In other words, most of the participants in the ages 20 to 30 have 'strongly agreed,' 'agreed,' and 'somewhat agreed' with the idea that the Azeri language has great respect in the Tehrani community. The percentage of positive responses given by this group to the items (1) and (20) is (79%) and (63%), respectively.

On the other hand, only 16 percent of the participants gave positive responses to the item (4). That is to say, 84 percent of the respondents have 'strongly disagreed,' 'disagreed,' and 'somewhat disagreed' with the idea of considering Azeri language as the low level language in Tehrani society.

However, Table 22 shows various statistics and numbers when it is compared to Table 21. According to Table 22, participants falling between ages 31 to 40 have different attitudes towards the Azeri language's social position in Tehran.

31-40 Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	25%	15%	10%	10%	10%	30%
Question 4	15%	35%	10%	10%	20%	10%
Question 20	10%	10%	35%	15%	25%	5%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	17%	20%	18%	12%	18%	15%

Table 22-Social status-Ages (31-40)

As can be seen in Table 22, participants gave (60%) of negative answers to the item (4) by choosing "strongly disagree" (15%), "disagree" (35%), and "somewhat disagree" (10%); while 40 percent the answers were "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree". In other words, the Azeri/Persian bilinguals of this study among ages 31 to 40 are not in agreement with the idea of the Azeri language as a language without prestige in Tehran. Furthermore, we can find that these respondents agree with each other about the statement in item (4). On the other hand, item (20):" Speaking Azeri brought me dignity and respect in Tehran", contains 55 percent negative and 45 percent positive answers given by the participants. That is to say, the respondents in this age group are yet not completely satisfied with the level of the Azeri language in Tehran.

The percentage of the positive and negative answers given to the item (1) by this group is entirely equal, so that (50%) of the respondents agree and other (50%) disagree with the sentence "it is an honor to speak Persian with Azeri accent in Tehran."

41-50 Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	15%	15%	31%	8%	8%	23%
Question 4	46%	38%	8%	0%	8%	0%
Question 20	15%	23%	0%	23%	8%	31%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	26%	26%	13%	10%	8%	18%

Table 23-Social status-Ages (41-50)

Table 23 illustrates the responses of participants between ages 41 and 50 to the items (1), (4), and (20). According to the data in this table, the percentage of the positive answers to the item (20) by the oldest group of the respondents is (62%). More precisely, 31 percent of them strongly agreed, 8 percent

agreed, and 23 percent somewhat agreed with the statement about achieving respect and dignity through speaking the Azeri language in Tehran. At the same time, 38 percent of the responses to this statement were negative. On the other hand, only 8 percent of the participants strongly agreed, agreed, and somewhat agreed with the item (4) and (92%) of them disagreed with the statement about considering the Azeri language at the low class of the Tehranian society. Therefore, we can assume that the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this study hold noticeable positive attitudes towards the position of this language in the Tehrani community.

In agreement with the statistics shown in Table 23, (61%) of the participants do not think that speaking Persian with the Azeri accent is an honor in Tehrani society.

3.4.3 Effects of age on the use of the Azeri language in different contexts by its speakers in Tehran

The third column of Figure 7 illustrates the average use of the Azeri language in different contexts in Tehran gathered from participants of different ages between 20 and 50. Generally, according to the numbers represented in the bar chart, we can find out that the average score of using the Azeri language by its speakers (ages 41-50) in the formal and private contexts is (4.05). At the same time, the average use of this language in different contexts by the other two groups ages (20-30) and (31-40) are (3.83) and (3.72), respectively. In other words, we can assume that the tendency to use the Azeri language in different situations is more noticeable in the older group of the participants compared with the other two groups.

To reach more detailed data in this part of the study, we decided to investigate the percentage of the responses given by participants to every item. The participants divided into three different age groups (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50) gave responses to the items: "(2) while sending text messages via cellphone I use Azeri.", "(3) I watch TV and programs that are in Azeri.", "(7) I read books that are written in Azeri.","(9) I speak Azeri a lot during the day.", (14) I usually speak Azeri when I am with my Azeri-speaking friends.", " (17) when writing a letter or sending an email, I use Azeri language.", and "(19) I speak more Azeri rather than Persian when I am home with my family."

According to the bar chart below (Figure 11), the average percentage of the positive responses to the item (2) given by participants between ages 20 and 30 is (40%). In other words, respondents have 26 percent 'strongly agreed,' 11 percent 'disagreed,' and 5 percent 'somewhat agreed'; While (58%) have rejected the claim about using Azeri language in their text messages while working with their phones. The data elicited from their responses are: "strongly disagree" (21%), "disagree" (32%), and "somewhat disagree" (5%). As reported through statistics in the bar chart about the second column, the percentage of

the positive responses regarding the TV programs in the Azeri language given by the participants is (64%). That is to say, of the young Azeri/Persian bilinguals who participated in this study, 16 percent strongly agreed, 11 percent agreed, and 37 percent somewhat agreed with watching the programs conducted in the Azeri language in Tehran. However, 37 percent responded as "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "somewhat disagree."

Figure 11-ages (20-30)

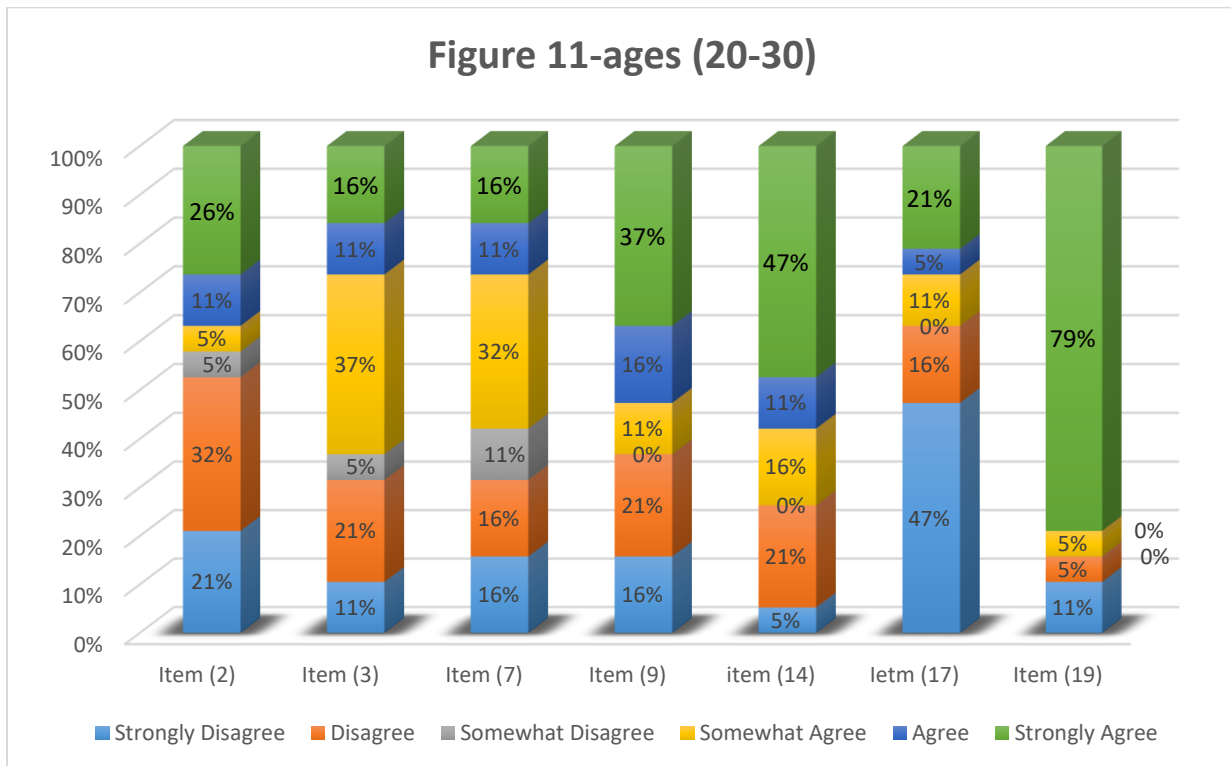Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Figure 11- Azeri in different contexts-Ages (20-30)

Regarding the item (7) represented in the bar chart, the percentage of the answers given by respondents is (59) percent of "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree"; while (43) percent of the responses were "strongly disagree", 'disagree", and "somewhat disagree". That is to say, most of the young participants in this survey read books that are written in the Azeri language. As can be seen in this bar chart, item (9) has the highest rate of positive answers given by the youngest group age participants. In other words, 64 percent of the respondents have strongly agreed, agreed, and somewhat agreed in speaking the Azeri language a lot during the day; while, only 37 percent of them rejected the statement (9).

On the other hand, item (14), which (74%) positively judged by the young Azeri/Persian bilingual participants, is among the highest percentage columns with positive answers in this bar chart. That is to say, a noticeable portion of the respondents usually speak Azeri when they are with their Azeri-speaking friends.

At the same time, (26%) of "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "somewhat disagree" answers given by other members of this group reveals the fact that these people prefer to speak Persian even when they are in groups of Azeri speakers. The sixth column of the bar chart represents the answers given by this young group to the item (17). From the statistics provided in this bar chart, we can assume that these participants do not have a noticeable tendency to use the Azeri language in written and formal situations, namely writing a letter or sending an email. The percentage of negative answers elicited from this group is 63. However, 37 percent of the responses given by them is "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree".

Finally, the last column in this figure illustrates the percentage of the answers given to the item (19). As can be seen, this column of the bar chart has the highest share of the positive responses (84%). That is to say, in a private place, namely home with the family members, our young participants speak more Azeri rather than the Persian language. However, (16%) of the responses answered in a negative way to the statement (19).

Figure 12 below shows the percentage of the responses given by Azeri/Persian bilinguals between ages 31 and 40. Their answers to the items (2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, and 19) are presented in this bar chart with options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." According to the statistics shown in the first column, (40%) of the responses given by this group is "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree"; while (60%) of their answers is "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "somewhat disagree". To be specific, the highest percentage of these participants are in contrast with the sentence "While sending text messages via cellphone I use Azeri." Setting participants between ages (20-30) and (31-40) side by side, they both gave similar responses to the statement about using Azeri language to communicate through electrical and advanced devices such as a cellphone (See Figure 12).
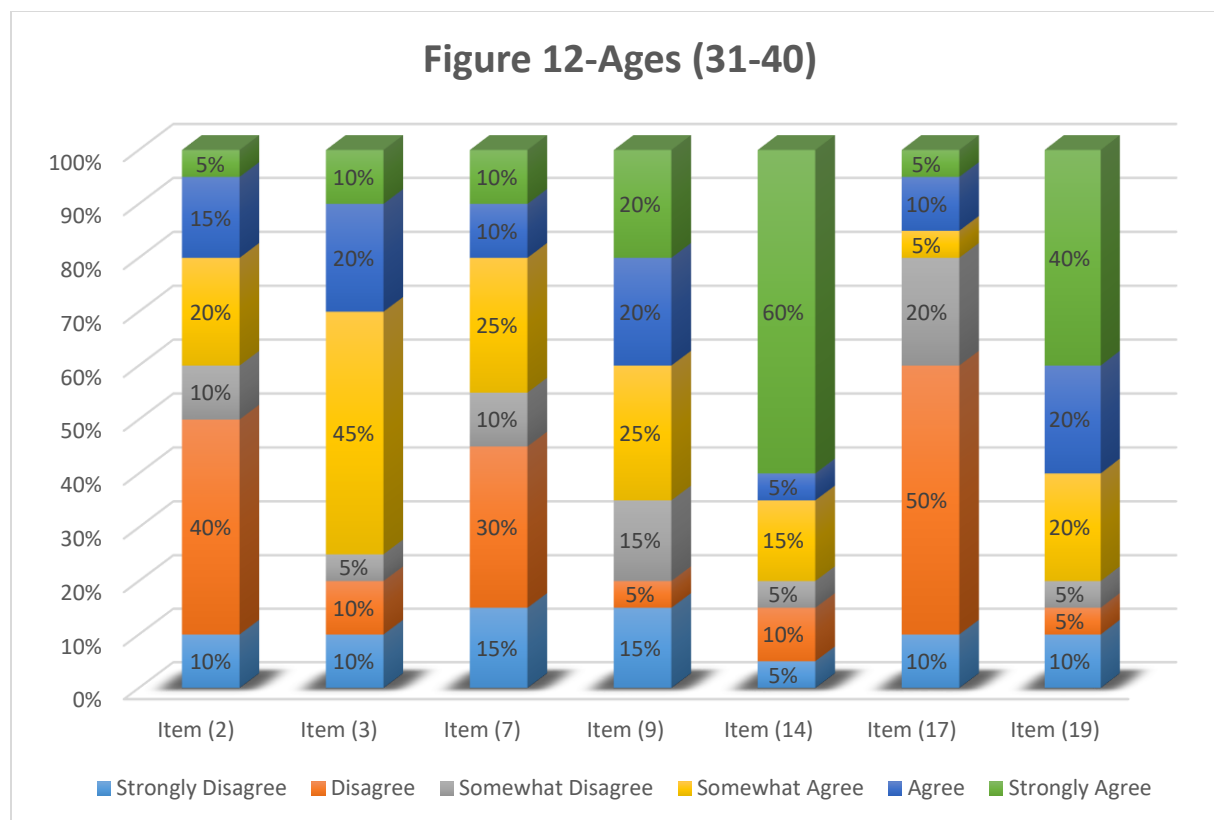
Figure 12-Ages (31-40)

Figure 12-Azeri in different contexts-Ages (31-40)

On the other hand, the second column of this bar chart shows the percentage of positive and negative responses to the statement about watching TV and programs in the Azeri language. As can be seen, 75 percent of the answers are positive. More precisely, 10 percent of respondents strongly agreed, 20 percent agreed, and 45 percent somewhat agreed with that statement. That is to say, similar to the first age group (20-30), the most chosen option for this statement was "somewhat agree". We can assume that, although the respondents between ages (31-40) agree with the statement number (3), they are not fully agreed with watching the Azeri TV programs conducted for Azeri audience in Tehran. Moreover, 25 percent of their negative responses to this statement can be proof of this hypothesis.

As reported in the third column of this bar chart, (45%) of the participants in the second age group (31-40) agree with the claim about reading books that are written in Azeri, while the higher percentage of them (55%) disagree with item (7). To compare the first and second age groups, the participant of the second group (ages 31-40) have a lower tendency of reading books written in the Azeri language. The next column shows the percentage of the answers given to item (9) that is "I speak Azeri a lot during the day." Participants gave (65%) positive answers. That is to say, 20 percent of participants

(ages 31-40) have strongly agreed, 20 percent of them agreed, and 25 percent of them somewhat agreed with the item (9). However, (35%) of participants of this age group gave negative answers to this item. The percentage of "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "somewhat disagree" chosen by this group are (15%), (5%), and (15%), respectively. Furthermore, we can assume that both age groups (20-30) and (31-40) maintain similar attitudes towards using the Azeri language during the day.

In agreement with the statistics represented in the fifth column of the bar chart above, we can determine the percentage of the participants between ages 31-40 speaking the Azeri language with their Azeri-speaking friends. As can be seen, (80%) of these participants have strongly agreed, agreed, and somewhat agreed with the item (14). In contrast, only (20%) of the participants rejected the statement regarding this situation. From the data gathered in the (Figure 11) and (Figure 12), we can assume that our participants in both age groups- (20-30) and (31-40) - have a noticeable tendency in using the Azeri language in private places where there is more intimacy between the members rather than formal situations. On the other hand, the data broke down by the answers to the item (17) shows the highest share of negative answers. More precisely, 10 percent of respondents strongly disagreed, 50 percent disagreed, and 20 percent somewhat disagreed with that item. This item elicited the lowest percentage of positive answers (20%). More specifically, out of 20 percent of positive answers. 5 percent is "strongly agree", 10 percent is "agree", and 5 percent is "somewhat agree". From the data gathered in this column, we can assume that the Azeri/Persian bilinguals between 31 and 40 do not use the Azeri language extensively in their writings, specifically letters, and email.

Finally, conforming to the last column of this bar chart, we can see that the highest share of the positive responses is (80%) that is given to the statement, "I speak more Azeri rather the Persian when I am at home with my family." At the same time, (20%) of the participants have rejected this claim which shows the high tendency to use the Azeri language by its speakers in intimate situations rather than the Persian language.
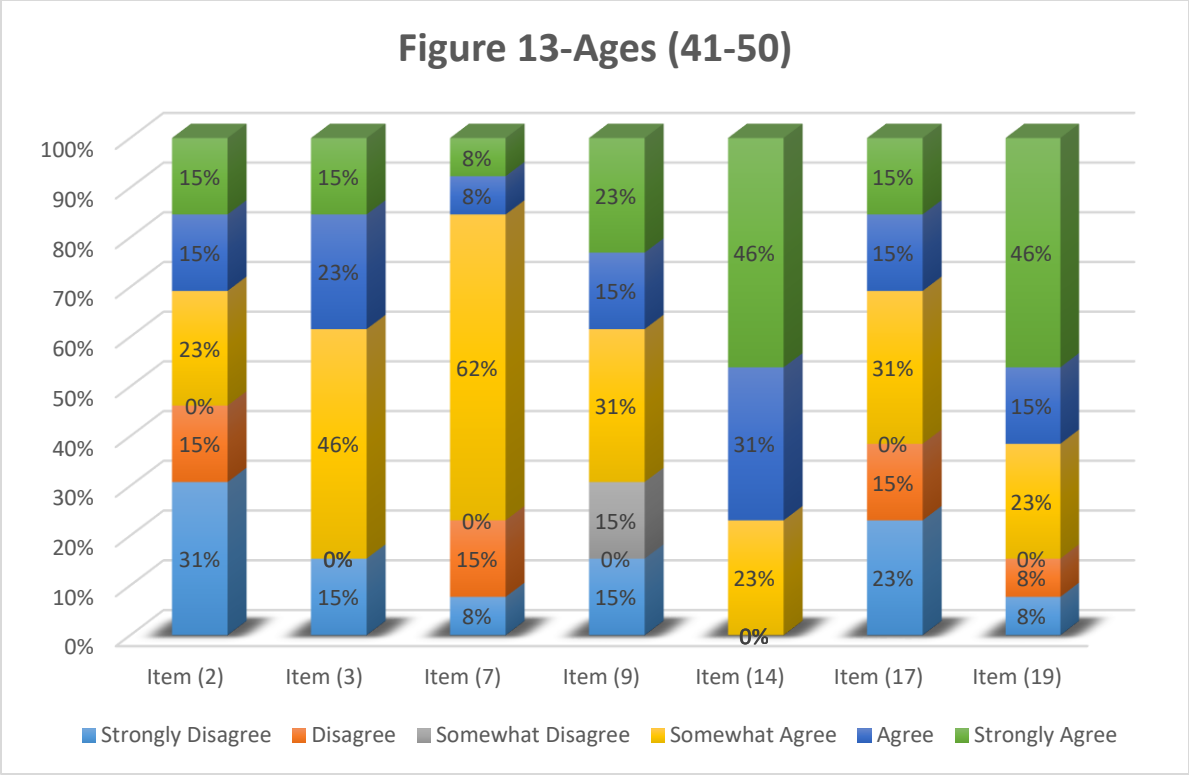
Figure 13-Azeri in different contexts-Ages (41-50)

Figure 13 illustrates the percentages of the responses to the items: (2), (3), (7), (9), (14), (17), and (19) given by the oldest group of Azeri/Persian bilinguals (ages 41-50). As reported by the data in the first column, we can find out that 53 percent of the participants agree with item (2); nevertheless, 46 percent of the answers were negative about this claim. From the statistics represented in the first column, we can assume that the oldest members among the respondents tend to use more the Azeri language in sending text messages via cellphone compared with the other two age groups, (20-30) and (31-40). With regard to the item (3): "I watch TV and programs that are in Azeri.", we can see the percentage of positive responses being (84%) and the percentage of negative responses being (15%). That is to say, the participants in the third age group (41-50) tend to watch more Azeri programs on TV in comparison with the other two groups.

(87%) of respondents in this age group gave positive answers to item (7). To put it another way, the positive rate given by the participants is 8 percent for "strongly agree," 8 percent for "agree," and 62 percent for "somewhat agree." Conversely, (23%) of the responses were "strongly disagree," "disagree," and "somewhat disagree." Hence, we can assume that the older Azeri/Persian bilinguals of this study tend to read more books written in the Azeri language when they are compared to the other two groups in ages

(20-30) and (31-40). Regarding the next column (item 9), we can find out that most of the respondents in this age group, (69%), speak Azeri a lot during the day, while (30%) contradicted this statement.

As can be seen in this bar chart, item (14), i.e. "I usually speak Azeri when I am with my Azeri-speaking friends", has received (100%) positive answers. More presiecely, 46 percent have strongly agreed, 31 percent have agreed, and 23 percent have somewhat agreed with this statement. From the interestingly noticeable result elicited from this column, we can find out that the percentage of the positive attitudes towards using the Azeri language in private places is very high among the oldest Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this study. Considering item (17) in the next column, the percentage of positive responses given by these participants is (61). Compared with the percentage of negative answers given by this group to the same item - (38%) - we can assume that the respondents between ages 41 and 50 maintain positive attitudes towards the Azeri language. Therefore, their positive attitudes lead them to often use Azeri in writing letters and emails.

Finally, the item regarding the use of Azeri language rather than Persian by these speakers in private places, namely home with their family members, has received 82 percent of positive responses by this group. Yet, 16 percent of them have strongly disagreed, agreed and somewhat disagreed with this claim.

3.4.4 Effects of age on the Azeri speakers' viewpoint about the instituitional supports they recieve in Tehran

The last column in Figure 7 illustrates the average score referred to the viewpoint of the participants about the Azeri language's institutional support in Tehran. The respondents are between ages 20 and 50 which are divided into three groups: (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50). As shown through the statistics in this bar chart, we can assume that the average score in older participants (between ages 41 and 50) is (3.95); However, the score in respondents between ages (31-40) and (20-31) is (3.26) and (3.17) in the same component.

This time for more detailed data and comparing different age groups, we put the percentage of responses given by participants to the items separately in graphs next to each other.
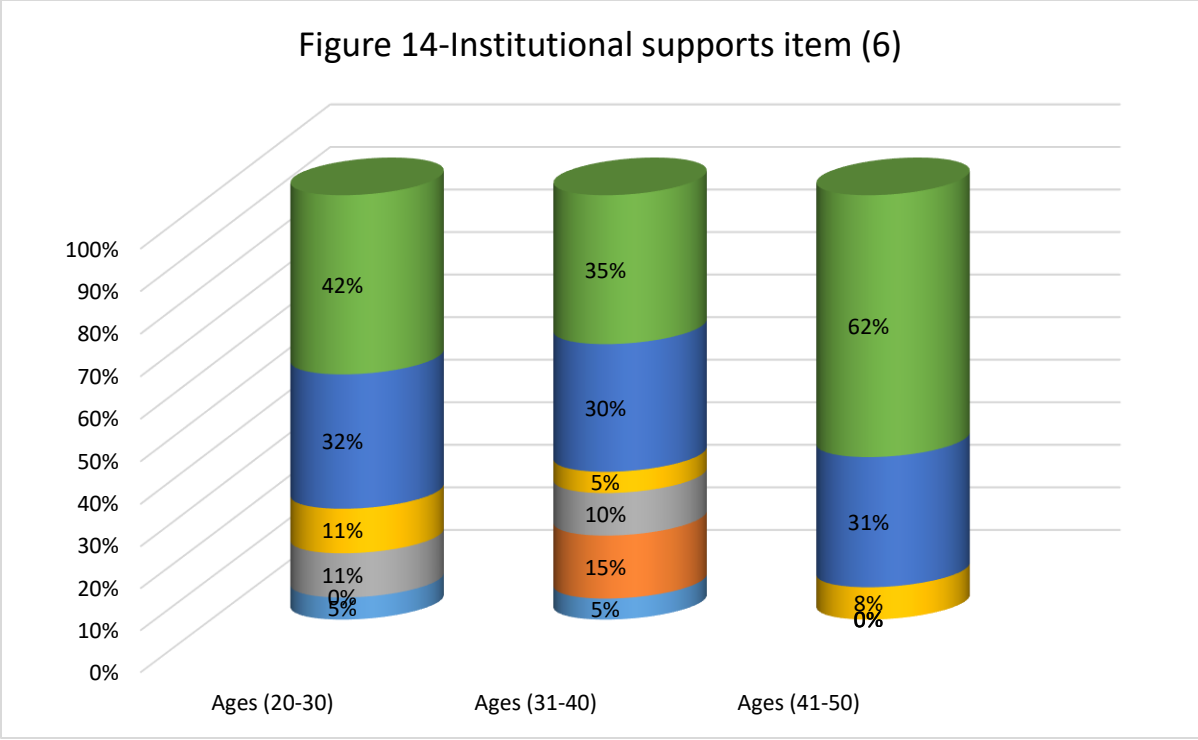
Figure 14-Institutional supports item (6)

Figure 14-Item 6-Institutional supports- different ages

Figure 14 represents the percentage of the responses given by participants in groups of (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50) ages to the item (6): "In Tehran, there are events where Azeri speakers can share their ethnic culture of food, music, and art with other groups." Generally, as reported through statistics in all three columns, we can find that the positive answers given by the oldest group of the respondents have the highest share in the bar chart (100%). In other words, Azeri/Persian bilinguals between ages 41 and 50 gave entirely positive responses regarding the statement about facilities and conditions created by the community for the Azeri speakers who could share their ethnic cultures with other groups in Tehran society.

On the other hand, the youngest members among the participants (ages 20-30), with (85%) of positive answers, are the second group with the highest proportion of positive answers to the same question. The percentage of the positive responses given by this group is 42 percent "strongly agree", 32 percent "agree", and 11 percent "somewhat agree". While (5%) and (11%) of the answers given by them are "strongly disagree" and "somewhat disagree", respectively.

Finally, participants between ages 31 and 40 gave (70%) of positive answers to item (6). More specifically, out of 70 percent of this group, (35%) have strongly agreed, (30%) have agreed, and (5%) have

somewhat agreed with the statement. However, 30 percent of the responses given by this age group is negative: (5%) "strongly disagree", (15%) "disagree", and (10%) "somewhat disagree".
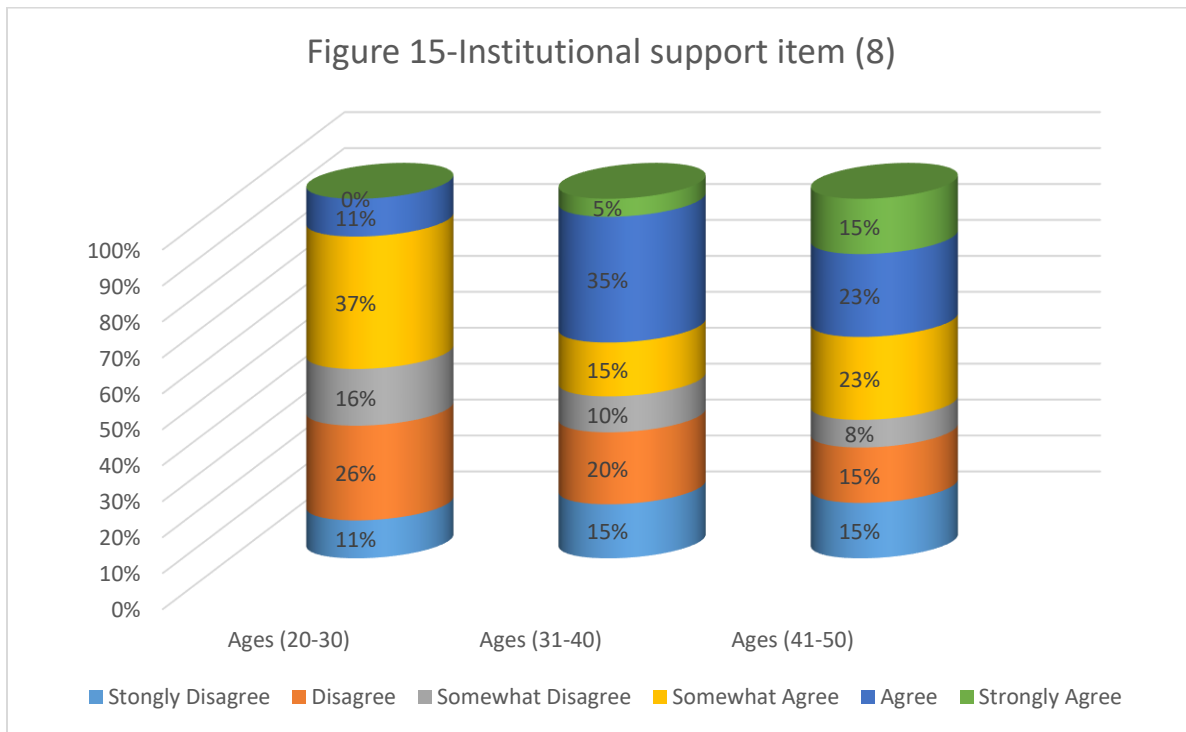

Figure 15-Item 8-Institutional supports- different Ages

Figure 15 shows the percentage of the answers given by Azeri/Persian bilinguals who participated in this study to item (8): "In the recent years, more media and TV programs are prepared for Azeri audience." According to the general statistics represented in all three columns in this bar chart, we can understand that similar to the results in Figure 14, our oldest respondents in this survey gave the highest percentage of positive answers, (61%), to the statement. More precisely, within the members between ages 41 and 50, 15 percent have strongly agreed, 23 percent have agreed, and 23 percent have somewhat agreed with the statement about the improvements in TV programs conducted for the Azeri-speakers' audience. However, the data shows that (37%) of negative answers were given by this group to the same statement. The percentage of negative responses illustrated in the bar chart is (15%), (15%), and (8%) respectively given to "strongly disagree", "disagree", and 'somewhat disagree".

The second column in this barchart illustrates the percentage of the answers given by the second age group of respondents (ages 31-40), who gave (55%) of positive responses: "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree" as (5%), (35%), and (15%), respectively. At the same time, within the (45%) of the

other respondents, 15 percent chose "strongly disagree", 20 percent "disagree", and 10 percent "somewhat disagree" as options to answer the item (8).

On the other hand, the youngest Azeri/Persian bilinguals showed the lowest percentage of positive answers regarding the item (8). More precisely, (53%) of participants between the ages 20 and 30 have strongly disagreed, disagreed, and somewhat disagreed with the statement, while only 48 percent of them show their agreement by giving 11 percent "agree" and 37 percent "somewhat agree" responses.
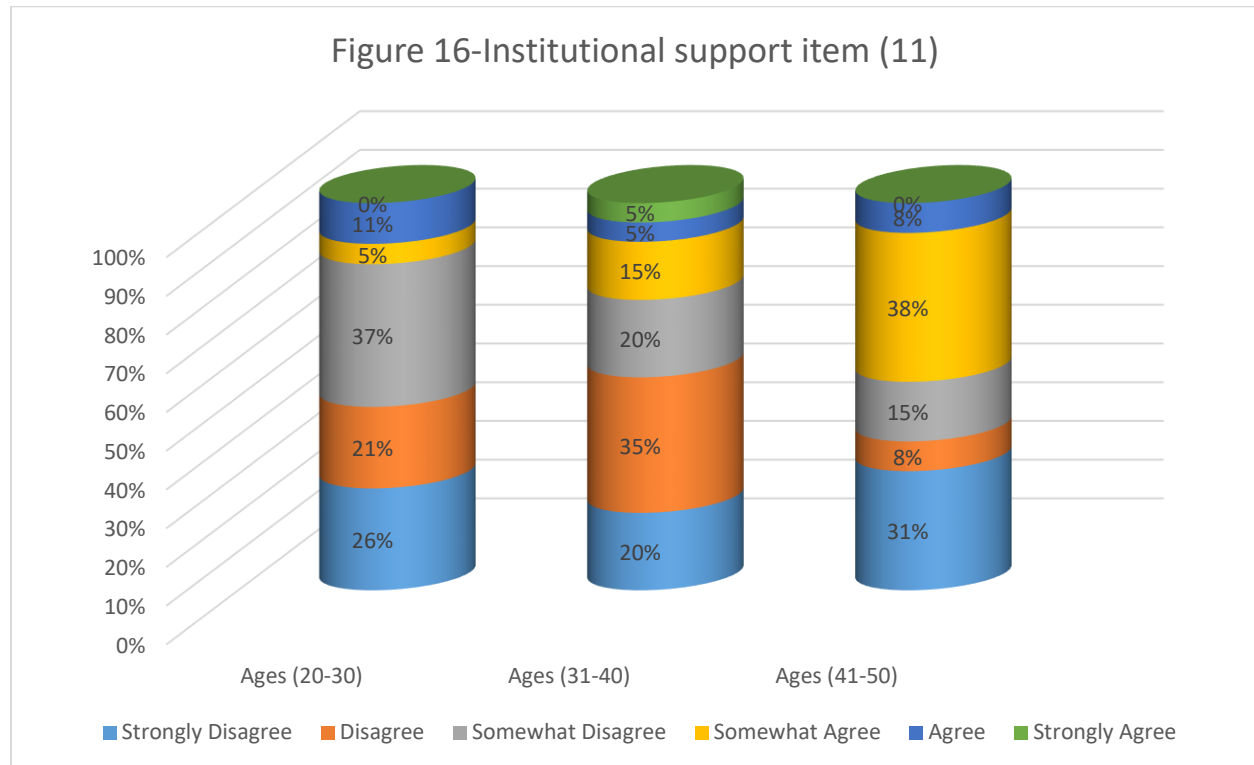
Figure 16-Item 11-Institutional supports-different ages

Figure 16 illustrates the percentage of our participants' responses to item (11) given by the groups of (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50) ages. According to the data gathered in this bar chart, the percentage of the negative responses given by all three group members to the statement "In Tehran, they use Azeri words to name streets and places" , is high. Conforming to the first column of the bar chart, 84 percent of the participants between ages 20 and 30 gave negative responses to this item. To be specific, (26%) of the answers are "strongly disagree", (21%) are "disagree", and (37%) are "somewhat disagree". While only 16 percent of the answers given by this group are positive: 11 percent "agree" and 5 percent "somewhat agree".

The second column of this figure shows the percentage of responses by the second age group participants (between ages 31 and 40) to the same statement. As can be seen, 75 percent of the responses are negative: (20%) "strongly disagree", (35%) "disagree", and (20%) "somewhat disagree". However, their positive answers corresponded to 5 percent of "strongly agree", 5 percent of "agree", and 15 percent of "somewhat agree".

Finally, looking at the last column of the bar chart, we can understand that, as expected, the oldest members among the participants have given the lowest percentage of negative responses to item (11). Indeed, 54 percent of the answers given by this group is negative, as (31%) were "strongly disagree", (8%) were "disagree", and (15%) were "somewhat disagree". On the other hand, the remaining 46 percent of the answers given by this group correspond to 8 percent of "agree" and 38 percent of "somewhat agree" responses.
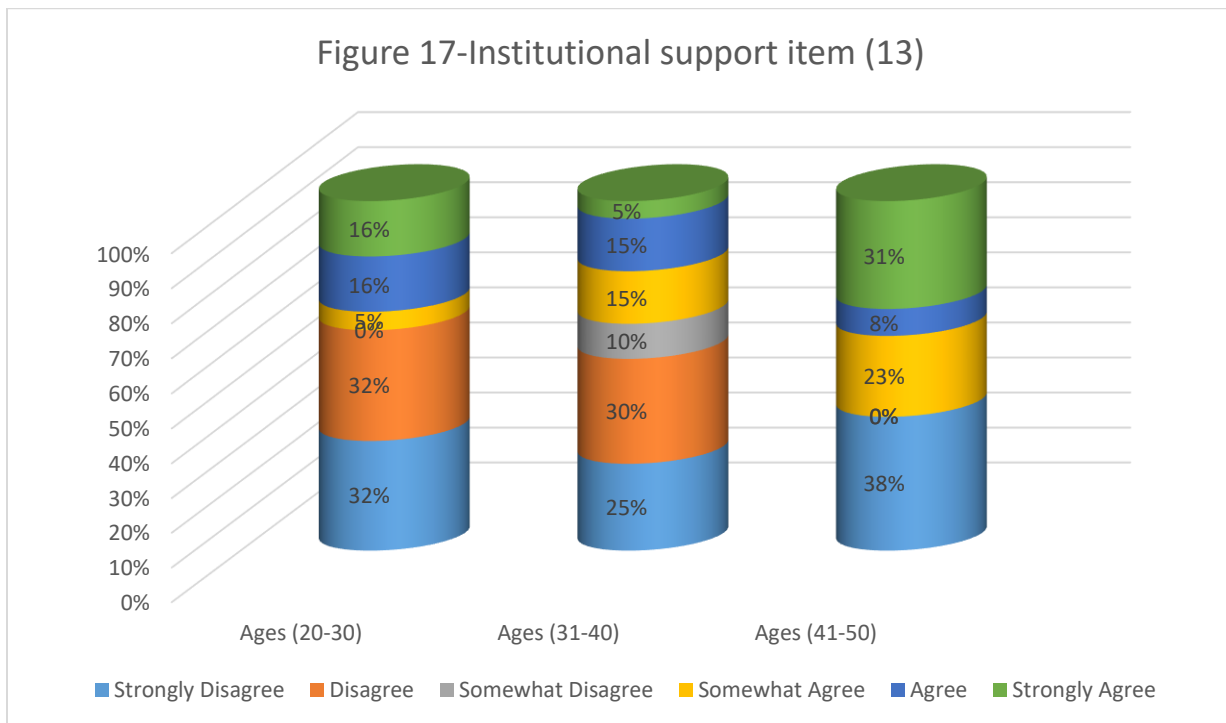
Figure 17-Item 13-Institutional support-different ages

The figure above (Figure 17) represents the percentage of responses to item (13): "The Azeri language is being taught along with the Persian language at school." As we can see through the first column of this bar chart, participants between ages 20 and 30 gave (64%) of negative answers to this statement. Specifically, 32 percent of them have strongly disagreed, and 32 percent have disagreed with this claim. In

contrast, only (37%) of the members in this age group gave positive answers, as 16 percent strongly agreed, 16 percent agreed, and 5 percent somewhat agreed.

The second column of the bar chart shows the percentage of the answers given by the Azeri/Persian bilinguals between ages 31 and 40 to the same statement. From the statistics provided in this bar chart, we find that 25 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed, 30 percent disagreed, and 10 percent somewhat disagreed with the statement. Generally, (65%) of answers given by this group to item (13) are negative. However, 35 percent of the answers given by the same group to this statement corresponds to 5 percent of "strongly agree", 15 percent of "agree", and 10 percent of "somewhat agree" responses.

On the other hand, the oldest group of participants in this study gave (62%) positive answers to this item. To put it another way, within the respondents who fall in ages of 41 to 50, 31 percent chose "strongly agree", 8 percent "agree", and 23 percent "somewhat agree" to answer item (13). At the same time, 38 percent of this group of participants strongly disagreed with the same statement.
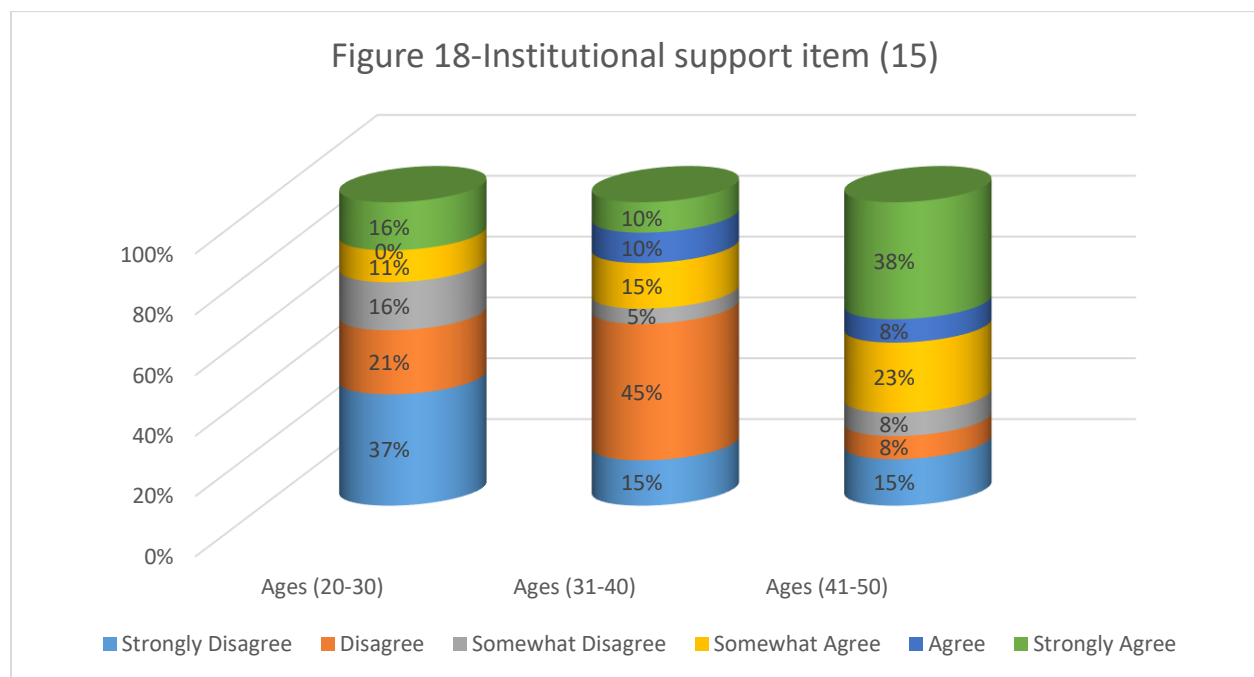
Figure 18-Item 15-Institutional supports-different ages

Figure 18 shows the percentage of the answers given by Azeri/Persian bilinguals in different age groups to item (15): "There are courses about the Azeri language and literature that people can choose to take at universities in Tehran." From the statistics provided in the first column of this bar chart, we can find that (74%) of the respondents between ages 20 and 30 gave (74%) of negative answers to this statement.

The percentage of negative answers given by this group is 37 percent "strongly disagree", 21 percent "disagree", and 16 percent "somewhat disagree". On the other hand, (28%) of positive answers by this group correspond to 16 percent "strongly agree" and 11 percent "somewhat agree". That is to say, most of the youngest participants of this study do not consider that the Azeri language receives much support from the universities in Tehran.

Comparing to the first group, the second age group of the respondents (between ages 31 and 40) also have agreed with the same situation. That is to say, (65%) of the answers given by this group were negative. Therefore, out of this 65 percent of participants, 15 percent of them have strongly disagreed, 21 percent have disagreed, and 5 percent have somewhat disagreed with item (15). While (35%) of them chose "strongly agree", "agree", and "somewhat agree" answers for this statement.

On the other hand, the oldest group of Azeri/Persian bilinguals in this survey has given different responses to statement (15) compared to the other two groups. More specifically, (69%) of participants gave positive answers. The positive answers broke down by this group are 38 percent "strongly agree", 8 percent "agree", and 23 percent "somewhat agree".

Looking at the responses in the third column in this figure, we can understand that, compared to the other groups, the oldest members in this study gave fewer negative answers. The percentage of negative answers given by the Azeri/Persian bilinguals in the third age group are: (15%) strongly disagreed, (8%) disagreed, and (8%) somewhat agreed.

3.5 Ethnicity

In this part of the study, we decided to divide this study's Azeri/ Persian bilinguals into two groups of Azeri mother tongue and Persian mother tongue. By doing so, we aim to study (1) the attitudes of each group towards the Azeri language, (2) their viewpoint about the status of the Azeri language in Tehran, (3) the use of the Azeri language by both groups in different contexts in Tehran society, and (4) their viewpoint about the institutional support the Azeri language receives in Tehran.
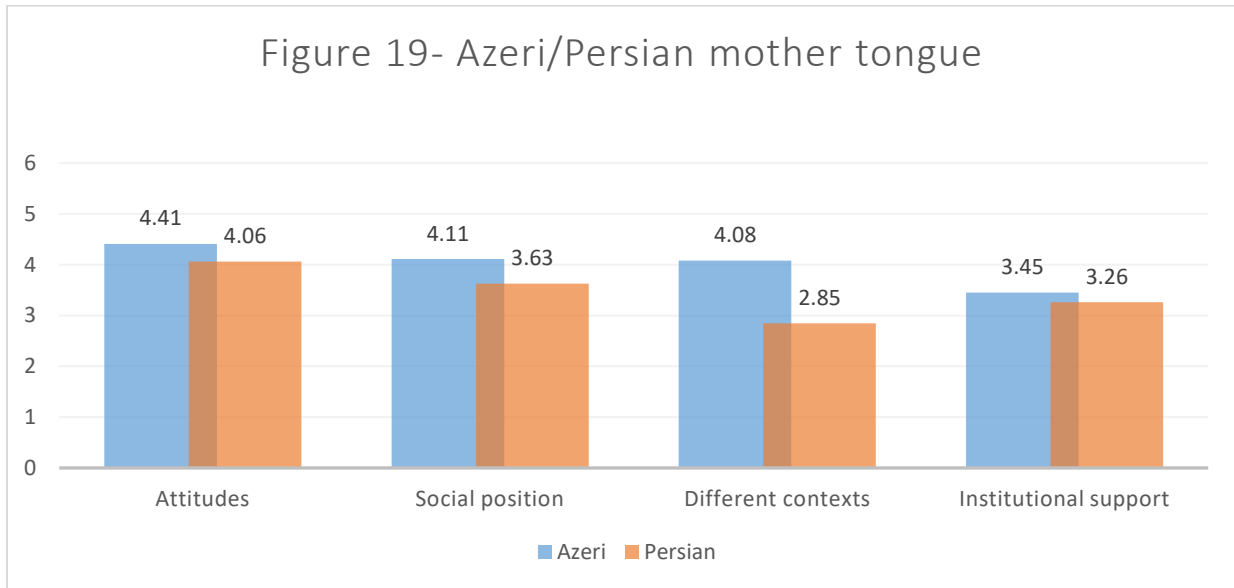
Figure 19-Azeri and Persian mother tongue participants

Figure 19 illustrates the average score given by two groups of participants, the Azeri and Persian mother-tongue speakers, to the different components of this study. According to the statistics in the first column, the average score of the Azeri mother tongue speakers' attitude towards the Azeri language is (4.41), while the participants who are Persian mother tongue speakers show a different average score, (4.06). From the data represented in the second column regarding the social position of the Azeri language in Tehran, we can find that Azeri and Persian mother tongue speakers have an average score of (4.11) and (3.63), respectively.

The third column of the bar chart shows the Azeri mother tongue members' average score, (4.08), in using the Azeri language in different situations. In contrast, the average score in the Persian mother tongue group is (2.85). Looking at the last column of this bar chart, we can see that the average scores

gathered from Azeri and Persian mother tongue participants are (3.45) and (3.26) in the institutional support they receive in Tehran respectively.

To reach more specific data concerning the responses given by these two groups of participants to the different items, in the following we will study the percentage of the answers separately.

3.5.1 Mother tongue (Azeri/Persian) and the attitudes towards the Azeri language

Azeri Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 5	7%	0%	10%	29%	12%	43%
Question 10	36%	14%	14%	14%	10%	12%
Question 12	7%	10%	14%	21%	17%	31%
Question 16	2%	0%	0%	2%	17%	79%
Question 18	5%	10%	5%	19%	19%	43%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	11%	7%	9%	17%	15%	41%

Table 24- Azeri mother tongue-Attitudes

Table 24 shows the percentage of the responses given by Azeri mother tongue participants regarding their attitudes towards the Azeri language. The answers are given to the items (5), (10), (12), (16), and (18). According to the statistics represented in the table regarding the item (5), "Between Azeri and Persian, Azeri is more important to me.", (84%) of the answers are positive; while, only (17%) of the participants gave negative responses. More precisely, the positive responses given by the Azeri native speakers are: 12 percent of "strongly agree", 12 percent "agree", 29 percent "somewhat agree". At the same time, 7 percent of the participants have strongly disagreed, and 10 percent have somewhat disagreed with this statement.

As can be seen, item (10), "I like the Persian language more than Azeri", is quite the opposite of the sentence in item (5). Interestingly, the percentage of the negative responses given by the participants to the item (10) is high (64%). More specifically, 36 percent of the respondents have strongly disagreed, 14 percent have disagreed, and 14 percent have somewhat disagreed with the statement about preferring the Persian language to Azeri. Contrarily, (36%) percent of the answers given by this group is positive: 12 percent "strongly agree", 10 percent "agree", and 14 percent "somewhat agree".

Item (12) "Speaking Persian with the Azeri accent is sweet." has received 31 percent of "strongly agree", 17 percent of "agree", and 21 percent of "somewhat agree" answers by Azeri mother tongue members of this study. To put it another way, (69%) of these respondents gave positive answers to this item. However, (31%) of them have strongly disagreed, disagreed, and somewhat disagreed with this statement.

According to the data gathered in the table, item (16), "I think Azeri is a lovely and respectful language", received the highest percentage of positive answers (98%). More precisely, 79 percent of the answers are "strongly agree", 17 percent are "agree", and 2 percent are "somewhat disagree". While only 2 percent of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

Finally, looking at the last item, the statement "I like to choose Azeri names for my children." , we can understand that within the (81%) of positive responses given by Azeri mother tongues of this survey, 43 percent is "strongly agree", 19 percent is "agree" , and 19 percent is "somewhat agree". In contrast, 5 percent of the participants have strongly disagreed, 10 percent have disagreed, and 5 percent have somewhat disagreed with item (18).

Persian Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 5	40%	40%	10%	0%	10%	0%
Question 10	0%	10%	20%	10%	10%	50%
Question 12	10%	10%	0%	20%	50%	10%
Question 16	0%	0%	0%	10%	20%	70%
Question 18	20%	0%	0%	50%	20%	10%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	14%	12%	6%	18%	22%	28%

Table 25-Persian mother tongue-Attitudes

Table 25 illustrates the percentage of the responses to the items given by Persian mother tongue participants regarding the attitudes they hold towards the Azeri language. Item (5) shows the opposite results from the one in (Table 24) given by the Azeri mother tongue participants. As reported by the statistics in this table, (90%) of the Persian mother tongue respondents disagree with the statement about considering the Azeri language more important than the Persian language. Specifically, 40 percent of them have strongly disagreed, 40 percent have disagreed, and 10 percent have somewhat disagreed with item (5), while only 10 percent agreed with this sentence.

Looking at item (10) in this table, we can find that (70%) of Persian mother tongue participants like the Persian language more than Azeri. Responses given to this item are 50 percent "strongly agree", 10 percent "agree", and 10 percent "somewhat agree". In contrast, (30%) of the answers are negative: 10 percent "disagree" and 20 percent "somewhat disagree".

On the other hand, item (12) received (80%) of positive and (20%) of negative responses by Persian mother tongue respondents. Specifically, the percentage of positive responses correspond to 10 percent of "strongly agree", 50 percent of "agree" and 20 percent of "somewhat agree" answers to the statement about considering sweet to speak Persian with an Azeri accent. However, 20 percent of the answers are "strongly disagree" and "disagree" (10 percent each).

As can be seen, item (16) in this table has received the highest percentage of positive answers from this group of respondents. Our Persian mother tongue participants gave (100%) of positive responses to the statement about the Azeri language being lovely and positively evaluated.

Finally, item (18) in the table represents the attitudes of Persian mother tongue participants towards choosing Azeri names for their children. According to the data in this table, most of these respondents gave positive answers (80%) to this item. More precisely, 10 percent "strongly agree", 20 percent "agree", and 50 percent "somewhat agree". While only (20%) of the answers are "strongly disagree".

3.5.2 Mother tongue (Azeri/Persian) and the viewpoint about the status of the Azeri language in Tehran among its speakers

The table below shows the percentages referred to the answers given by Azeri mother tongue speakers about the level of the Azeri language in the Tehran community (see Table 26).

Azeri Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	17%	17%	7%	17%	17%	26%
Question 4	33%	33%	12%	7%	12%	2%
Question 20	12%	14%	14%	12%	24%	24%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	21%	21%	11%	12%	17%	17%

Table 26-Azeri mother tongue-Social status

Table 26 represents the answers given by Azeri mother tongue participants to the items (1), (4), and (20). According to the statistics provided in this table, (60%) of the responses are favorable to item (1) "It is an honor to speak Persian with the Azeri accent in Tehran." The percentages within the positive answers given by this group is 26 percent "strongly agree", 17 percent "agree", and 17 percent "somewhat agree". However, within (41%) of negative answers, 17 percent is "strongly disagree", 17 percent is "agree", and 7 percent is "somewhat agree".

On the other hand, the percentage of the positive answers given by this group to item (2) is (21%). That is to say, the statement "In Tehran speaking Azeri in not very prestigious" received the lowest share of positive answers, as 2 percent "strongly agree", 12 percent "agree", and 7 percent "somewhat agree". Contrarily, (78%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, and somewhat disagreed.

Looking at the last item in the table, we can understand that (60%) of the respondents gave positive answers to the sentence about speaking Azeri in Tehran. Item (20), "Speaking Azeri has brought me dignity and respect in Tehran", received 24 percent of "strongly agree", 24 percent of "agree", and 12 percent of "somewhat agree" answers. On the other hand, (40%) of the answers given by this group to the same item are negative, as 12 percent are "strongly disagree", 14 percent "disagree", and 14 percent "somewhat disagree" responses.

Persian Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 1	10%	10%	30%	0%	20%	30%
Question 4	30%	20%	20%	0%	20%	10%
Question 20	20%	30%	10%	30%	10%	0%
Number (N)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	20%	20%	20%	10%	17%	13%

Table 27-Persian mother tongue-Social status

Table 27 represents percentage of the responses given by Persian mother tongue participants to the items regarding the Azeri language social position in Tehran. As can be seen, the percentage of the answers given to item (1) is different compared with the results in Table 26. That is to say, the percentage of negative and positive answers given by the Persian mother tongue speakers to the sentence about speaking Persian with the Azeri accent in Tehran is equal to (50%). Specifically, 30 percent of the participants have strongly

agreed, and 20 percent have agreed with the statement. At the same time, 10 percent of them have strongly disagreed, other 10 percent have disagreed, and 30 percent have somewhat disagreed with item (1).

As can be seen, the percentage of negative responses (70%) to item 4, which is concerned with the lack of prestige associated to speaking Azeri in Tehran, is also higher than the positive answers (30%). Indeed, 30 percent of the Persian mother tongue speakers strongly disagreed, 20 percent of them disagreed, and 20 percent of them somewhat disagreed with this sentence. However, 20 percent of these participants agreed, and 10 percent of them strongly agreed.

Looking at the last item (20) in the table, we can find that the higher percentage of answers given by this group of participants is negative, (60%). The negative answers given by them are 20 percent "strongly disagree", 30 percent "disagree", and 10 percent "somewhat disagree". While out of (40%) percent of positive answers to this statement, 30 percent is "strongly agree" and 10 percent is "agree".

3.5.3 Mother tongue (Azeri/Persian) and the use of the Azeri language in different contexts by its speakers

Azeri Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 2	14%	31%	5%	19%	12%	19%
Question 3	5%	12%	5%	43%	19%	17%
Question 7	12%	19%	7%	38%	10%	14%
Question 9	12%	7%	7%	19%	21%	33%
Question 14	2%	12%	2%	14%	14%	55%
Question 17	21%	36%	5%	12%	10%	17%
Question 19	7%	0%	0%	12%	14%	67%
Number (N)	7	7	7	7	7	7
Mean	11%	17%	4%	22%	14%	32%

Table 28-Azeri mother tongue-Azeri in different contexts

Table 28 illustrates the percentage of the answers given by Azeri mother tongue participants to the items about the use of Azeri language in different contexts. According to the data concerning item (2), "While sending text messages via cellphone, I use Azeri", we can see that the percentage of positive and negative answers is equal to (50%). More precisely, 19 percent of the positive answers are "strongly agree", 12 percent are "agree", and "19 percent are "strongly agree". At the same time, 14 percent of the participants

have strongly disagreed, 31 percent have disagreed, and 5 percent have somewhat disagreed with the same sentence.

The next row in this table shows the percentage of the answers to item (3). According to the statistics provided in this table, most Azeri language mother-tongue speakers (79%) gave positive responses to the sentence about watching TV and programs that are in the Azeri language. To be precise, 17 percent of them strongly agreed, 19 percent agreed, and 43 percent somewhat agreed with item (3). However, within the remaining (22%) of participants, (5%), (12%), and (5%) have chosen the responses "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "somewhat disagree", respectively.

Looking at the data broke down in the table regarding item (7), we can see that, out of the 62 percent of Azeri mother tongue respondents, 17 percent strongly agreed, 10 percent agreed, and 38 percent somewhat agreed with the statement about reading books that are written in the Azeri language. While (38%) of them chose the answers "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "somewhat disagree".

Item (9), "I speak Azeri a lot during the day", has received (73%) of positive responses and (26%) of negative responses by this group. To be more specific, within the Azeri mother tongue respondents, 33 percent chose "strongly agree", 21 percent "agree", 19 percent "somewhat agree". In contrast, 12 percent of the participants strongly disagreed, 7 percent disagreed, and 7 percent somewhat disagreed with the sentence.

As we can see, the percentage of positive answers given by this group to item (14) is very noticeable. Strictly speaking, out of (88%) of positive responses, 55 percent of the participants in this group strongly agreed, 14 percent agreed, and 14 percent somewhat agreed with the sentence "I usually speak Azeri when I am with my Azeri-speaking friends". On the other hand, (16%) of the responses are negative. The negative answers given by Azeri mother-tongue speakers to this statement are 2 percent "strongly disagree", 12 percent "disagree", and 2 percent "somewhat disagree".

Looking at item (17), "When writing a letter or sending an email, I use the Azeri language", we can find that the participants in this group gave (39%) of positive answers, that is the lower percentage if we compare it with the negative responses to the same item. Indeed, 21 percent of the negative answers are "strongly disagree", 36 percent are "disagree", and 5 percent are "somewhat disagree".

Finally, the last item in this table is item (19), "I speak more Azeri rather than Persian when I am home with my family". According to the statistics represented in this table, the higher share is the percentage of positive answers given to this item. While only 7 percent of the participants have strongly

disagreed, out of (93%) of the positive responses, 67 percent are "strongly agree", 14 percent are "agree", and 12 percent are "somewhat agree".

Persian Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 2	40%	30%	10%	0%	20%	0%
Question 3	40%	10%	0%	40%	10%	0%
Question 7	20%	30%	10%	30%	10%	0%
Question 9	30%	20%	20%	30%	0%	0%
Question 14	10%	10%	0%	30%	10%	40%
Question 17	50%	0%	20%	20%	10%	0%
Question 19	20%	30%	10%	30%	0%	10%
Number (N)	7	7	7	7	7	7
Mean	30%	19%	10%	26%	9%	7%

Table 29-Persian mother tongue-Azeri in different contexts

Table 29 represents the percentages that refer to the answers given by Persian mother-tongue speakers in this study regarding the different situations where they use the Azeri language. Comparing them with the percentages that refer to the answers given by Azeri mother tongue participants in Table 28, we can find that Persian mother tongue respondents have given different answers to the questions of this component. According to the statistics provided in this table about item (2), the Persian mother-tongue speakers gave (80%) of negative answers to this item. With regard to the statement about using the Azeri language while sending text messages via cellphone, the percentages of the options chosen by this group are 40 percent "strongly disagree", 30 percent "disagree", and 10 percent "somewhat disagree". At the same time, only 20 percent of the respondents in this group have agreed with this sentence.

Item (3), which concerns watching TV and programs in the Azeri language, has received an equal percentage (50%) of positive and negative responses by this group. More precisely, (40%) and (10%) of the negative answers are "strongly disagree" and "disagree", respectively; while, (10%) and (40%) of the positive answers are "agree" and "somewhat agree".

Looking at item (7) in the table, we can understand that most Persian mother-tongue speakers in this survey (60%) gave negative responses to the sentence about reading books in the Azeri language. The percentage of the negative options chosen by this group are 20 percent "strongly disagree", 30 percent

"disagree', and 10 percent "somewhat disagree". However, (40%) of the answers given by them are "strongly agree', "agree", and "somewhat agree".

As can see in the table, item (9) with only (30%) of "somewhat agree" responses is among those items that received a different percentage of responses by Persian mother tongue participants than by Azeri mother tongue respondents. At the same time, Persian mother-tongue speakers gave (70%) of negative responses to this item. More precisely, 30 percent of them have strongly disagreed, 20 percent have disagreed, and 20 percent have somewhat disagreed with the statement about speaking Azeri a lot during the day.

Item (14) in both tables (Table 28 and Table 29) represents a high percentage of positive answers given by the participants. According to Table 29, (80%) of the Persian mother-tongue speakers gave positive answers to the sentence about speaking Azeri with Azeri-speaking friends. More precisely, 40 percent of them chose "strongly agree", 10 percent "agree", and 30 percent "somewhat agree". However, (20%) of the respondent gave negative answers to this item. The percentage of the negative answers given by this group is 10 percent "strongly disagree" and 10 percent "disagree".

On the other hand, item (17) in this table received a higher share of negative responses (70%). To be more specific, 50 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed and 20 percent somewhat disagreed with the statement about using the Azeri language when they write a letter or send an email. At the same time, within the remaining (30%) of respondents, 10 percent chose the "agree" and 20 percent the "somewhat agree" option.

Finally, looking at item (19), we can understand that most Persian mother-tongue speakers (60%) disagreed with the statement about speaking more Azeri than Persian when they are home with their family. To be more specific, 20 percent of the answers given by this group are "strongly disagree", 30 percent are "disagree", and 10 percent are "somewhat disagree". On the other hand, (40%) of this group agreed with this sentence. The percentages of the positive answers given by this group are 10 percent "strongly agree" and 30 percent "somewhat agree".

3.5.4 Mother tongue (Azeri/Persian) and the viewpoint about the institutional supports they receive in Tehran

Azeri Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 6	2%	7%	10%	10%	31%	40%
Question 8	12%	24%	10%	24%	24%	7%
Question 11	26%	26%	21%	17%	7%	2%
Question 13	26%	26%	2%	10%	17%	19%
Question 15	19%	31%	10%	14%	5%	21%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	17%	23%	10%	15%	17%	18%

Table 30-Azeri mother tongue-Institutional supports

Table 30 represents the percentages that refer to the answers given by Azeri mother-tongue participants to the items (6), (8), (11), (13), and (15). According to the data provided in this table, most of the participants (81%) gave positive responses to item (6). Strictly speaking, (40%) of the answers are "strongly agree", (31%) are "agree", and (10%) are "somewhat agree". However, (19%) of these participants gave negative answers regarding the same statement. The percentages of the negative answers given by these respondents are 2 percent "strongly disagree", 7 percent "disagree", and 10 percent "somewhat disagree".

On the other hand, participants gave (55%) positive answers to item (8). More precisely, 7 percent of them have strongly agreed, 24 percent have agreed, 24 percent somewhat agreed with the sentence "in the recent years, more media and TV programs are prepared for Azeri audience". While (46%) of the answers given by this group are negative: 12 percent "strongly disagree", 24 percent "disagree", 10 percent "somewhat disagree".

Conforming to the statistics provided in this table about item (11), we can see that the percentage of the negative responses given by Azeri mother-tongue speakers is (73%); while (26%) of the answers are positive to this item "In Tehran they use Azeri words to name streets and places". Specifically, the percentages of negative answers given by Azeri mother-tongue speakers are (26%), (26%), and (21%) of "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "somewhat disagree", respectively. On the other hand, the percentages of the positive responses to the same statement is 2 percent "strongly agree", 7 percent "agree", and "17 percent "somewhat agree".

Item (13), "Azeri language is being taught along with the Persian language at schools", has received (54%) of negative answers, while (46%) of the answers given by these participants are positive. More precisely, the percentage of the negative responses are 26 percent "strongly disagree", 26 percent "disagree", 2 percent "somewhat disagree". At the same time, 19 percent of the respondents strongly agreed, 17 percent agreed, 10 percent somewhat agreed with item (13).

Finally, looking at the data provided in this table, the item (15) "there are courses about the Azeri language and literature that people can choose to take at universities in Tehran" has received (60%) of negative responses; while (40%) of the answers are positive. The percentage of the negative responses given by Azeri mother-tongue speakers are 19 percent "strongly disagree", 31 percent "disagree", and 10 percent "somewhat disagree". In contrast, 21 percent of respondents strongly agreed, 5 percent agreed, and 14 percent somewhat agreed with this sentence.

Persian Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Question 6	10%	0%	0%	0%	30%	60%
Question 8	20%	10%	20%	30%	20%	0%
Question 11	20%	10%	40%	20%	10%	0%
Question 13	50%	10%	10%	30%	0%	0%
Question 15	40%	10%	10%	20%	10%	10%
Number (N)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	28%	8%	16%	20%	14%	14%

Table 31-Persian mother tongue-Institutional supports

Table 31 shows the percentages that refer to the answers given by Persian mother-tongue speakers to the items regarding the institutional support that the Azeri language receives in Tehran. Looking at the first row in this table and the data represented about item (6), we can understand that most Persian mother-tongue speakers (80%) gave positive answers to the sentence about the Azeri events in Tehran. More specifically, 60 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 30 percent of them agreed. While only 10 percent of them strongly disagreed with the statement.

The next row in the table shows the statistics about item (8). Both the positive and negative answers to the statement about TV programs conducted for Azeri audience are equal to (50%). The positive answers are 20 percent "agree" and 30 percent "somewhat agree". At the same time, out of 50 percent of the negative answers, 20 percent are "strongly disagree", 10 percent are "disagree", and 20 percent are "somewhat disagree".

As we can see from the data provided in this table, item (11) shows similar results to the answers given by our Azeri mother-tongue speakers. That is to say, the percentage of the negative answers given by Persian mother tongue respondents to this item is (70%), which is higher than the percentage of positive answers (30%) given by the same group to this item. To be more specific, the data shows that out of 70 percent of the Persian mother-tongue speakers, 20 percent have strongly disagreed, 10 percent have disagreed, and 40 percent have somewhat disagreed with the sentence about using Azeri words to name streets and places in Tehran. On the other hand, 10 percent of these participants have agreed, and 20 percent have somewhat agreed with this sentence.

In agreement with the statistics provided in this table, item (13) has received (70%) of negative answers to the statement about the Azeri language being taught along with Persian at school. To be more specific, out of 70 percent of negative answers given by Persian mother-tongue speakers, a noticeable (50%) of the answers are "strongly disagree", (10%) are "disagree", and (10%) are "somewhat disagree". At the same time, 30 percent of the participants have somewhat agreed with this item.

Finally, item (15), which was concerned with the presence of courses about the Azeri language and literature at the universities in Tehran, received (60%) of negative answers from this group of participants. To be more specific, 40 percent of the answers are "strongly disagree", 10 percent are "disagree", and 10 percent are "somewhat disagree". In contrast, (40%) of the answers given by these group of participants are positive, as 10 percent chose "strongly agree", 10 percent "agree", and 20 percent "somewhat agree".

3.6 General Discussion

This thesis set out to reach a more specific understanding of (1) Azeri/Persian bilingual's language attitudes towards the Azeri language, (2) the social position and the level of the Azeri language among its speakers, (3) the amount of the Azeri language use in different contexts in Tehran by its speakers, and (4) the amount of institutional support that Azeri speakers receive in Tehran.

In this part of the study, the main results of the study will be presented and discussed, taking into consideration different variables such as gender, age, and mother tongue.

Research question one

As was confirmed in Figure 6, there is a slight difference in the average score of the attitudes towards the Azeri language obtained from male and female participants. From the statistics represented in this figure, we found that the female respondents in this study show more positive attitudes towards the Azeri language compared to the male participants. However, this difference is relatively marginal. As we mentioned before, different reasons such as psychological characteristics among men and women or gender socialization and traditional attitudes (Beverly, 2012) can be the possibilities for the difference between men and women's attitudes.

Observing the general data gathered from the different age groups of participants in this study - (20-30), (31-40), and (41-50) - we can say that, among all three age groups, the Azeri/Persian bilinguals between ages from 41 to 50 belong to the group with the highest percentage of positive responses to the questions concerned with attitudes towards the Azeri language (see figures 8-10). We can say that older respondents in this study are more traditional and have more favorable attitudes towards the Azeri language.

Finally, looking at the results gathered in Figure 19 concerning the ethnicity of our participants, we can say that there is a remarkable difference in the average score of the two groups as far as the questions related to attitudes towards Azeri are concerned. In order to understand the results broken down by the Azeri/Persian bilinguals about their attitudes towards the Azeri language in more detail, we decided to look at the percentage of their positive and negative responses to the various individual items that form the attitudes component. Conforming to the statistics in Table 24 and Table 25, we assumed that, compared to the Persian mother tongue participants, the Azeri mother tongue speakers in this study hold more positive attitudes towards the Azeri language. Such a results might be considered as an expected result. However, we need to take into the consideration that, in some cases, individuals do not always hold favorable attitudes towards their native language, especially when it is a minority language. As a matter of fact, positive

attitudes towards the language spoken by the majority instead could be instrumental to receive social acceptance (Baker, 1992).

Research question two

In agreement with the findings in Table 6, it was confirmed that the general percentage of positive answers given by all participants about the level of the Azeri language in Tehran is high. To reach a more specific understanding regarding this matter, we decided to calculate the average score of the answers given by our male and female participants to the items related to this component. According to the statistics broken down in Figure 6, there is a remarkable difference between the average score obtained from the answers given by men and the average score obtained from the responses given by our female participants. As we mentioned before, there are different reasons regarding the disagreements between male and female participants concerning the level of the Azeri language in Tehran. One reason might be related to the social interactions between men and women that are effective in their social and cultural beliefs (Brian.W, 2004).

Conforming to the statistics in Table 12 and Table 13 in this study, male and female participants have almost the same mentality about speaking Persian with an Azeri accent. However, compared to our male participants, women respondents gave more negative answers to the sentence about speaking Azeri in Tehran not being prestigious. Another finding representing the disagreement between male and female participants in this study is the answers to the sentence regarding the respect and dignity for the Azeri speakers. According to the data represented in the tables, we found that most male participants agree that the Azeri language has brought them dignity and respect; while, a high percentage of women respondents disagreed with this sentence.

Considering the age variable, the average scores in the questions regarding the status of the Azeri language in Tehran have considerable fluctuation (See Figure 7). To get to a more specific understanding regarding the results, we also studied the percentage of the answers given by all age group members. As we were expecting, compared to the first and second age groups, (20-30) and (31-40), the oldest participants (ages 41-50) gave a higher percentage of positive answers to the items regarding the social position of the Azeri language (See Table 21 and Table 22).

Finally, considering participants' mother-tongue, we reached very interesting results. As we reported in Figure 19 , with regard to the questions pertaining the level of the Azeri language in Tehran, we found that the average score obtained by only considering the Azeri mother-tongue speakers is (4.11), while the average score obtained from the answers given by Persian speakers is (3.63).

To reach more detailed information, the percentages referred to the answers given by Azeri and Persian bilingual respondents to every item regarding the level of Azeri language in Tehran is represented in Table 26 and Table 27. Looking at the statistics provided in these tables, we can see that, compared to the Persian mother-tongue participants, the percentage of positive answers given by Azeri mother-tongue speakers to the sentences related to dignity and respect for the Azeri language is higher.

Contrarily, the negative statement about speaking Azeri in Tehran not being prestigious received a similar percentage of both groups' positive and negative answers. However, the highest share of the answers is negative to this item.

Research question three

As we confirmed in this study, most of the participants gave positive answers to the items relating to the use of the Azeri language in different contexts in Tehran. To better understand this matter, we calculated the average score of the answers given by male and female participants, which are presented in Figure 6. According to the data provided in this figure, we can say that there is a slight difference in the usage of the Azeri language by male and female participants in this study.

Considering participants' different ages, we can see a slight difference between the average score obtained from the responses given by participants between ages 20 and 30 and the one obtained from the respondents between ages 31 and 40. However, when we compared the results with the average score obtained by the oldest participants (ages 41-50), the differences in the results become more evident. Moreover, we decided to study more in detail the percentages referred to the answers given by these different age groups to the individual items concerned with using the Azeri language in different situations in Tehran. As a general result, the oldest respondents showed the tendency to give more positive answers than the participants of the other two age groups. At the same time, the sentence about speaking Azeri more than Persian at home with family members has received an equal percentage of positive answers by the youngest and the oldest participants. On the other hand, following the oldest respondents, participants between ages 31 and 40 gave the second-highest percentage of positive answers to the sentence about TV programs in Azeri, which means that, compared to the youngest group, they tend to watch more TV programs in the Azeri language.

Finally, looking at the results provided in Figure 19, it is possible to observe a noticeable difference in the average scores when we divide participants according to their native language. More precisely, the average score related to the usage of the Azeri language in different contexts in Tehran given by Azeri

mother tongue members is (4.08); while the average score obtained from the answers given by Persian mother tongue speakers is (2.85). Moreover, the percentages of the positive and negative answers given to the items related to this component show that most of the items received a higher proportion of negative responses by the Persian mother tongue speakers. (See Table 28 and Table 29).

Research question four

As we confirmed with the data in Figure 5 regarding the institutional support that the Azeri language receives in Tehran, the general percentage of negative answers given by our participants is higher than the percentage of positive ones. However, to reach more specific results regarding the fourth research question in this survey, we calculated the average scores for male and female participants. As a result, the average scores obtained by men and women respondents present a minimum difference (See Figure 6).

If we focus on participants' different ages, it is possible to see that the average score of responses given by the oldest members in this study (ages 41-50) is not far away from the average scores obtained by the other two groups. To reach more specific results about this part of the study, we can see the percentage of participants' positive and negative answers in different age groups (see figures 14-18). As a general result, the sentence about the events prepared for Azeri speakers to share their culture with other groups in Tehran has received a high percentage of positive responses from all the participants of different age groups. Nevertheless, respondents in ages (20-30) and (31-40) gave a higher percentage of negative answers to most of the items in this component. At the same time, most of the positive responses to these items are given by the oldest participants.

Finally, when we studied the answers given by participants according to their mother tongue, we found a noticeable difference in the average scores when it comes to the questions pertaining the institutional support that the Azeri language receives in Tehran. More precisely, the average score of the answers given by the Azeri and Persian mother-tongue speakers is (3.45) and (3.26), respectively (see Figure 19). However, when we studied the percentage of their positive and negative answers to the items related to this component, we saw that most of the items (except for items 6 and 8) received an higher percentage of negative responses by both Azeri and Persian mother-tongue speakers. At the same time, they gave a higher percentage of positive answers to item (6), which is concerned with the events organized for the Azeri speakers in Tehran. Moreover, item (8) - which is about the presence of the TV programs for the Azeri audience - received a high percent of positive responses by both Azeri and Persian mother-tongue speakers.

4. Limitations and future studies

We encountered a few limitations in this study. The limitations include both the number of participants and the method we used in this research. A small number of Azeri/Persian bilinguals were willing to participate in this study (52 people), and when we divided them into groups based on the variables in this survey, their number naturally decreased. This matter should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the results obtained from this investigation. Moreover, due to time limitations, we could not study the attitude of the participants through observation and indirect methods. Therefore, with the help of an online questionnaire, we were able to examine just participants' general and explicit opinions.

While the findings of this survey were interesting, further research could be added to this study to reach more specific findings regarding the Azeri/Persian bilinguals' attitude towards the Azeri language in Tehran. A similar project that could be developed is to conduct face-to-face interviews, which are used more in small-sample-size studies. Moreover, speakers' attitudes can also become more accessible using open-ended questions. Therefore, by adding a qualitative approach in this investigation, we might be able to better understand the reasons behind the answers given by our Azeri/Persian participants.

5. Conclusions

The goal of this thesis was to investigate: (1) the attitudes of Azeri speakers toward the Azeri language in the city of Tehran, (2) the social position and the level of the Azeri language among its speakers, (3) the amount of the Azeri language use in different contexts in Tehran, and (4) the institutional support the Azeri language and its speakers receive in Tehran. By analyzing the diglossic situation in Tehran and the information gathered from participants in this study, we found that the Azeri/Persian bilinguals hold a very positive attitude towards the Azeri language. However, when these participants are divided into different groups based on variables such as their gender, age, and mother tongue, their attitudes towards this language slightly change. That is to say, with a minimal difference, women have more positive attitudes compared to men in this study. Furthermore, it has also been found that the attitude towards the Azeri language is more positive for older participants. However, the most influential variable turned out to be participants' ethnicity. More precisely, the Azeri mother-tongue speakers showed more positive attitudes towards their mother tongue. This is an expected result, even though, as we mentioned before, minority language speakers do not always hold favorable attitudes towards their native language; it also might happen that they feel a sort of sense of inferiority, and have a worse perception of their native language

than the one that majority language speakers have. However, a similar sense of inferiority does not seem to be observable among the Azeri native speakers in this study.

On the other hand, with regard to the social position of the Azeri language in Tehran, we obtained mixed results. Men gave more positive answers compared to women in this study. At the same time, it has been concluded that the older Azeri/Persian bilinguals show that the Azeri language is a source of pride and dignity for them, while Persian mother-tongue speakers do not generally agree with this statement. Moreover, most of the Azeri and Persian mother-tongue speakers in this study gave negative answers to the items about the level of the Azeri language in Tehran. Another important finding in this study is about the use of the Azeri language in different contexts. Most Azeri mother-tongue speakers spend a high percentage of their daily lives speaking the Azeri language, and they do it more in private contexts than in public ones, which is typical of diglossic situations. On the other hand, Persian mother-tongue speakers use the Azeri language less often in all contexts.

Finally, regarding the institutional support that the Azeri language and their speakers receive in Tehran, it has been found that most participants feel that there is little support for the Azeri language on the part of the official institutions in Tehran. Most of the negative answers were given by respondents between ages 31-40 and by the Persian mother-tongue speakers. Therefore, we can conclude that the support towards the Azeri language in Tehran, especially in the educational system, is overlooked by the government in Tehran. However, other efforts such as organizing events to promote cultural diversity and enhancing TV programs for the Azeri audience are the steps that the volunteers in the community and the official institutions are taking to support the Azeri language in Tehran.

In conclusion, policymakers committed to supporting minority languages in Tehran society can finally bring people closer together by increasingly supporting the Azeri language in the education system. In addition, such an approach can help Azeri speakers to use their language in society along with Persian. In doing so, the Azeri-speaking ethnic group may introduce its culture and language to other members of society without fear of humiliation, and this ultimately may lead to a general cultural enhancement in Tehran society.

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