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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
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# A PSYCHO-PRAGMATIC STUDY OF SELF-IDENTITY OF EFL LEARNERS IN KURDISTAN REGION

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BY

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October 2018

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## Dedication

To

My lovely wife, Sebar,

Our adorable daughter, Honey,

Our cute son, Yanni,

I dedicate this humble work.

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## Abstract

Increasing attention has been paid to the relation between language and human's thought and identity in recent years. Uncertainty has often existed over this relation. On one hand, some argue that language largely shapes human's thoughts and identity. On the other hand, some argue for the universality of human's conceptual system. This controversial relation can be true for the relation between a foreign language and its learners' identity. It has been uncertain whether or not foreign language learning can reshape or change the identity of its learners who have already developed their self-identity and conceptual system. The present study is an attempt to clarify this uncertainty and find out whether or not foreign language learning affects Kurdish learners' identity.

It is hypothesized that the self-identity of Kurdish students is actually affected by learning English as a foreign language. These changes can occur in terms of confidence in expressing their opinions, personal behavior and interaction with the opposite gender, and as a result, the entire process of thinking changes. A psycho-pragmatic approach has been taken in conducting this study by using a blended version of Pragmatic Identity Theory by Carr-Chellman and Levitan and Identity Structure Analysis by Peter Weinreich.

After investigating the theories related to the area of language and identity, a case study of 150 EFL learners in Kurdistan has been conducted. The study focuses basically on EFL learners and their feedback on the 'changes' of their 'personal' identities after learning the language. It targets undergraduate learners at various universities to put into perspective the differences that might happen in the learners' identity during and after learning a foreign language.

Various data collection instruments such as questionnaire, focus group and interviews with the language learners are used. The purpose here is to triangulate the collected data and see the possible variables in this regard. After the process of data collection, a thematic approach has been used to analyze the collected data.

The statistical analysis of the results has shown the influence of EFL on the self-identity of Kurdish learners and the validity of the adopted hypothesis.

The study ends up with a number of conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies based on the findings of the study.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Problem

There has been a kind of uncertainty as whether or not learning a foreign language (FL henceforth) influences the concepts of the learners and their self-identity. On one hand, some believe that foreign language learning (FLL henceforth) is limited to linguistic concepts. For them, learners' identity and personal concepts are already formulated as a result of their first language acquisition. On the other hand, some believe that FLL can considerably reshape the learners' personality and self-identity due to the influence of the cultural context through which the FL items are presented. This uncertainty leads to an obvious need to tackle this phenomenon and find clear answers to this controversy. The present study aims at finding out the extent to which FLL influences the self-identity of Kurdish university students.

### 1.2 The Research Questions

This study targets the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between FLL and the self-identity of learners? How? Why?
2. How deep a language learning process might go in terms of affecting the personality of EFL learners?
3. Does learning a new language always give learners a new identity? Or does it take away their already established identity?
4. Does learning a new language affect the self-esteem of EFL learners? Is it in a positive or negative way?

5. How does learning a new language such as English affects the psychological and social condition of the learners?

### **1.3 The Aims**

This study aims at:

- 1- investigating the impact, if any, of FLL on Kurdish learners,
- 2- revealing the psychological changes that might happen as a result of learning a new language,
- 3- exploring the self-identity of EFL learners and the effect of learning a new language on the personality of EFL learners,
- 4- questioning the conventional perspective of identity as either a psychological or a social issue and arguing for the flexibility of identity and the possibility of having more than one identity at the same time by EFL learners,
- 5- discussing the dependency between language learning and the identity of the language learner.

### **1.4The Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

- 1- language learning affects the self-identity of EFL learners.
- 2- language learning influences the personality of Kurdish EFL learners in a positive manner.
- 3- Language learning gives more than one identity to EFL learners at the same time.

## **1.5 The Scope**

The investigation of this study is limited to the influence of EFL on the self-identity of fourth year Kurdish EFL students at three universities in Kurdistan: University of Sulaimani, University of Salahaddin and University of Duhok, for the academic year 2017-2018. The sample of the study consists of 150 students whose native language is Kurdish. They have been randomly selected from the three universities mentioned above. Three different data collection tools are used for the purpose of data collection for this study.

## **1.6 The Procedure**

The steps below are taken in this study:

1. presenting a theoretical framework of the main theories of self-identity analysis.
2. adopting a blended version of Pragmatic Identity theory by Carr-Chellman and Levitan and Identity Structure Analysis by Peter Weinreich as the theoretical model for the study.
3. selecting a sample of Kurdish EFL university students.
4. collecting data by a questionnaire to be constructed by the researcher, focus groups managed by the researcher as well as direct interview with some students.
5. statistical analysis of the collected data.
6. drawing conclusions based on the findings of study.

## 1.7 The Value

The value of this study lies in its novelty. Studying identity in relation to language learning is a new subject of research in Kurdistan Region. This study employs a blended version of two very important theories related to identity investigations, viz. pragmatic identity theory and identity structure analysis. This study suggests a new way to understand identity which can be called a psychco-pragmatic linguistic identity perspective.

The study is significant for those interested in the psycholinguistic reality of EFL. The findings of the study can also be useful for EFL teachers who are in real contact with the learners. The findings can help them better understand the psychology of their students. Furthermore, textbook writers can also make use of the findings of the study in the process of designing ELT programs.

Finally, it can be stated that this study will be a building block for a new theory in the field of investigating the relationship between language learning and self-identity of language learners. The theory takes the role of foreign language in various aspects such as its culture, worldview, and heritage into account whilst investigating the self-identity of EFL learners.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical Framework: Language, Self and Identity

#### 2.1 Introduction

It is generally agreed upon that language is one way to express people's identities. The two terms seem to be interrelated in a complicated way. Studying identity in relation to language is a contemporary field of study. Some studies scrutinize the connections between language and identity. They focus either on a specific context, certain groups of bilinguals or the correlation between language and social identity. This research, however, investigates the influence of learning a new language, taking English as an example, on the learners' self-identity. It is worth mentioning that very few researchers have touched upon studying the impact of learning English as Foreign Language on EFL learners' self-identity. Therefore, conducting an investigation into unpacking the impacts, if any, of learning English on Kurdish EFL learners is thought to be revealing.

To do so, many key terms and theoretical concepts in the area of language, self, identity, language learning and identity, and foreign language learning and identity are critically discussed. This chapter starts with defining the term 'psycho-pragmatics' which is the variable used in this study. Then, the term 'identity' as a core concept of the study is defined in some respects. First, some commonsense and general definitions are given to understand the basic and general meaning of the concept of 'identity' in multidisciplinary areas. Then, 'self' and 'identity' as a social and psychological concept has been explained. After that, theories of identity, including psychological identity theory, social identity theory and pragmatic identity theory are discussed. The chapter continues with outlining the various approaches to comprehend 'identity' as studied by some key scholars in the field. Next, the classifications, characteristics and the functions of 'identity' are

illustrated in separate sections. Finally, this chapter ends with showing the relationship between language and ideology to pave the way to the next chapter, which will be about language learning and identity.

## 2.2 On Defining Psycho-pragmatics

Psychology as a field of study has a considerably long history. It starts with Wundt, a German physician, physiologist, philosopher, and professor, in the late 1800s. However, the psychological questions have a much deeper root dating back to the time of Plato. Wundt (1879, cited in McLeod, 2008) defines psychology as ‘the science of behavior and mental processes.’ It should be mentioned that this is regarded as the first definition of the term psychology. However, later on, this definition has been modified and enriched by many psychologists such as James (1890, cited in McLeod, 2008).

Psycholinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and mind. Levelt (1992, 290) defines it as the ‘study of the mental processes and skills underlying the production and comprehension of language, and of the acquisition of the skills.’ The major concern of psycholinguists is to focus on how people process language in their brain. How people comprehend, acquire and produce language are of great importance to psycholinguists.

Regarding the term pragmatics, it dates back to the American philosopher, Peirce (1839-1914) who coined the term ‘pragmatism’ (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2012). Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as ‘the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)’. Basically, it deals with using and interpreting language based on the context of its usage.

As for the term psycho-pragmatics, it was coined by Dascal in a lecture he delivered in a conference in Tel Aviv in 1978/9. He states that he coined the word for ‘the branch of pragmatics

that deals not with the social uses of language such as communication (a task reserved for ‘socio-pragmatics’) but with the mental uses of language’ (Dascal, 1983). He stresses that the focus is on dealing with the mental use of language as a reflection of both psycholinguistics and pragmatics as two subfields of linguistics. Through this term, the connection between mental uses of language to express self-identity of foreign language learners in Kurdistan region, which is a major concern of this study, is investigated.

## **2.3 On Defining Identity**

Despite the fact that the term ‘identity’ is originated from a Latin word ‘idem’ which means ‘sameness’ or ‘oneness’, many scholars attempted to define the word, each from a different angle. The word has been used in English since the sixteenth century. Erik Erikson, a psychologist, is considered to be the one who revived the investigation into the concept of identity through his studies about identity crises in adolescences and made the term ‘identity’ popular (Schwartz, 2001). In this section, some definitions, few as common and many as specialized, of the word ‘identity’ are presented and critically reviewed.

### **2.3.1 Commonsense and General Definitions**

Macmillan Dictionary (2016, online) defines identity as ‘the qualities that make someone or something what they are and different from other people.’ Similarly, Oxford English Dictionary (2016, online) states that identity is ‘the fact of being who or what a person or thing is; the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is.’ It is interesting to realize that the focus in these two definitions are on the qualities of someone or something, which makes it/him/her different from the rest of the group. This would give some sort of uniqueness to the person/object amongst others, even if they relate to the same or similar family. It is worth bearing in mind that

the focus here in this paper is on human identity, not any other materialistic objects such as the identity of animals or certain machines.

Some scholars, from various perspectives, provide very general definitions of what identity is. Abrams & Hogg (1988, 2) define it as ‘people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others.’ This definition focuses on two important issues: how people think of and define themselves, and their sense of belonging to a certain group of people. Furthermore, Jenkins (1996, cited in Fearon, 1999) states that identity ‘refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities’. Here, not only individual identity makes one different from another, but group identity matters as well. Group identity refers, according to this definition, to the features that makes one group to be different from another.

According to Thornborrow (1999), ‘identity, whether at an individual, social or interactional level is something that we constantly build and negotiate throughout our lives and through our interaction with each other’. It can be seen that identities, whether individual or collective, as stated in this definition, are in continuous change and reformation. Therefore, it is very hard to assign a certain identity to an individual and/or a group in a static way. On the contrary, Wendt (1992, 397) states that identities are ‘relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self.’ Wendt here argues that identities are somehow stable and more personal. In this way, identity can be considered, partly, as how people understand themselves.

Regardless of the generic nature of the above-mentioned definitions, it can be understood that identities are the qualities ascribed to an individual or a group. Another issue is about the stability of identities over time. Some scholars strongly argue that identities do change from time to time;

however, few others believe that identities are somehow static. The following sections present some very specific definitions of the term identity according to various fields of study.

### 2.3.2 Psychological Definitions

Psychology is regarded as the first field of study that touched upon the issue of identity in modern times. Erik Erikson is believed to be a pioneer in discussing the issue of adolescents' identity and the concept of 'identity crisis'. To Erikson, (1950 & 1963) identity 'is a feeling based on two observations: the observation of a consistency and continuity of the self, and the observation, that others recognize this continuity and consistency too.' Psychologically, Erikson connects identity to the 'consistency and continuity of the self' as well as other's recognition of that sense. Similarly, Katzenstein (1996, 59) defines identity as 'references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other.' Here, the emphasis is on the images of both the 'self' and the 'other' in terms of explaining what identity is.

According to Sherif (1982), identity is 'the individual's psychological relationship to social category systems.' Moreover, McAdams (1995) argues that identity is 'a unified, purposeful aspect of self and hence is only part of the self-concept.' These two definitions stress the psychological aspect of an individual's feelings, either to a social system or his/her image of the 'self'.

It can be concluded that psychologists define identity in terms of the feelings that one has about him/herself. The way(s) people feel and consequently act upon those feelings are the major concerns to psychologists when talking about identity.

### 2.3.3. Pragmatic Definitions

It can be stated that defining identity from a pragmatic perspective is somehow challenging. A major reason is that the study between language use in context, which is pragmatics, and identity from a scholarly linguistic viewpoint is not an obvious area in itself. Carr-Chellman and Levitan

(2016) argue that to understand identity from a pragmatic standing point is to look at ‘...identity as relational, multifaceted, and holistic concept that runs through an individual.’ They maintain that looking at identity from a pragmatic perspective would provide answers to these vital questions such as whether one can have one or more than one identity, or is identity static or changeable, or do identities pre-exist or people build them over time.

One major area in which the relationship between these two concepts, viz. pragmatics and identity, can be seen is looking at the process of language learning process as part of an individual experience. The more we know about ourselves and about the world around us, the more we become aware of our identity (Norton Peirce, 1995; James, 1890). To show the strong connection between pragmatics and identity, linguists show their relationship in a theory called ‘Pragmatic Identity Theory’ (which will be explained in detail in later sections) which is rooted in a wider school known as ‘American Pragmatism’ (Carr-Chellman and Levitan, 2016).

### 2.3.4 Sociological Definitions

Sociologists have been deeply involved in analyzing the term ‘identity’. They are interested in exploring the relationship between the self and the society: how the act of individuals affects the image of a society or vice versa. Herrigel (1993, 371) defines social identity as ‘...the desire for group distinction, dignity, and place within historically specific discourses (or frames of understanding) about the character, structure, and boundaries...’ Moreover, Wendt (1992, 395) states that social identities are ‘sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object’. It can be understood from the two definitions that social identity is about attributing one’s self to a certain social group based on some characteristics. It is through a certain society that sometimes an individual identifies him/herself. Sociologists argue that as long as humans live inside a society, therefore, the society has some impacts on how they identify themselves.

### 2.3.5 Linguistic Definitions

Linguistically, identity can be explained in terms of language use by an individual in relation to a group. Most of the scholars agree that it is through language use that sometimes one reveals his/her identity. By preferring one variety of a language rather than another, one manifests, whether directly or indirectly, his sense of belonging to a certain group.

Sung-Yul Park (2012, 1) states that linguistic identity ‘may refer to a sense of belonging to a certain community as mediated through symbolic resources of a language’. It can be understood that by selecting a certain variety of a language, or avoiding a certain dialect, one reveals many things about his or her identity. By using that variety, the user shows his/her attachment to the group who use the same variety. Butts (2012) argues that the culture of a person may not be as informative as his/her language about one’s identity.

Therefore, it can be concluded that language is an important way to understand, or to express, one’s identity. The connection between language use and identity seems to be very strong as the choice of a certain dialect, mostly, represents one’s sense of belonging and consequently his/her identity. Using language as a tool to understand individual’s identity is a major concern of this study.

### 2.3.6 Pedagogical Definitions

The connection between the influence of learning a new language and identity was not a major concern until very recently as scholars began to investigate how learning a new language is not only learning the language systems of that language, but also taking on a new identity. Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that ‘learning a new language is sometimes said to mean acquiring a new identity’. This definition emphasizes the strong relationship between learning a new language and obtaining a new identity

Norton (2013) defines identity, in an educational context, as ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, and how that relationship is structured across time and space...’ It can be argued that one way to build connections with the world is through learning a new language.

As a result, when people try to learn a new language, not only do they want to widen their connections with their surroundings, but also, they take a new identity. This new identity may be in accordance or in conflict with the already-established identity of the individual (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). That is why a key question of this study is to find out the possibility of the influence of learning a new language on the identity of the learners either just by partially affecting or by changing their identities.

## **2.4 Self and Identity**

In common usage, the term ‘self’ is used to denote anything about an individual. This includes both terms: ‘I’ as an actor who does something as well as the term ‘me’ as an object that something has been done to (Oyserman et al., 2004). Therefore, in modern psychology, this term is used as an umbrella word to reference both ‘I’ and ‘me’.

The study of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ can be traced back to James (1890) in his research in social psychology. Back then, the term ‘self’ was used to mean ‘self-reflection’ and the term identity as ‘one’s behavior’ (Owns, 2006). However, as a scholarly field of study, the investigations into the relationship between self and identity started in the mid of 20<sup>th</sup> century with Erikson’s study on identity crisis of adolescence. Through reading the literature about the development of how psychologists and sociologists approach the term ‘self’, it can be stated that there is a fluctuation in understanding the term. There is psychological understanding of the term when it came into existence by James (1890). Studying the meaning of ‘self’ was somehow ignored until 1950s (Swann and Bosson, 2010). Sociologists and social psychologists revived studying the meaning of

‘self’ pioneered by Goffman (1959). The study of ‘self’ in its original sense gained attention from 1972 onwards more than ever before (Swann, 2005).

Despite the fact that James (1890:330, cited in Owns, 2006) states that defining selfhood is ‘the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal with’ there has been many papers to describe the meaning of ‘self’ from a psychological point of view. To start with the term self, Owns (2006, 206) provides a compelling, yet complex, definitions of the term self as ‘a process and organization born of self-reflection’. Here, the focus has been put on how one perceives him/herself is what is known as ‘self’ to that person. It should be mentioned that for many researchers ‘self’ has been considered as a pure individualistic perception.

To understand what identity means, it has been defined in many ways in previous sections (See 2.2.1 to 2.2.6). As for the relationship between ‘self’ and ‘identity’, it has been generally accepted that James (1890) established a base on which the relationship between the two terms seem to be in complementary. James (1890) argues that one person may have many positions and titles within the society, which respond to the concept of ‘selfhood’. This is exactly where identities enter to the world of ‘selfhood’ (Stets and Bruke, 2003). What is meant is that the positions and titles held by the individual within the society will inevitably be part of that person’s sense of ‘selfhood’. According to Stets and Bruke (2014:30), who define identity as ‘an internalized positional designation’, the overall image of ‘selfhood’ consists of multiple identities depending on the position of the person in the society. The self as a brother is an identity, similar to the various positions of the same person as a father, uncle, son, classmate and bosom friend. Therefore, it can be understood that identities are the roles that an individual may have in the society.

By now, the distinction should be somehow clear that identities are the roles one has or claims to have in a particular context within a group of people. However, self is the general picture, description and qualities that one attributes to him/herself.

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) are considered as founders of the theory of self and identity. They state that ‘people tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities’. It can be understood that there is a fundamental connection between the self, as the owner, and the behaviors of people as the reflection of what they claim to be.

Furthermore, to have a deeper understanding about the term ‘self’ in relation to ‘identity’, one has to understand what is meant by self-representations and self-schema. Through representing what one believes, the identity of that individual comes to be known. Gale (2008) states that how we define ourselves in relation to people around us has a huge impact on how we think, feel, and behave, and ultimately forms our identity. The following section deals with explaining what self-representation means.

#### 2. 4.1 Self-representations

The philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910) initiated the idea of ‘self’. He classifies ‘self’ into two parts; the ‘I self’ which means the actions or things that a person does in the real world such as eating and writing. The second part is ‘Me self’ which refers to the description that some individual attributes to him/herself such as being smart and helpful (Gale, 2008). To understand the true meaning of ‘self’, one has to bear in mind that ‘self’ is represented in both abstract as well as concert ways.

Oyserman (2012:75) states that ‘both self and identity are mental concepts.’ He argues that ‘self’, the physical as well as abstract part of a person along with the person’s ‘identity’, has a mental construction. Here, one can give an example of a little kid who can recognize his/her physical appearance to be part of the physical part of ‘self’. In a social context, a teenager has his/her own mental representation of his/her attitudes and behaviors. When acting in a certain context, the teenager is believed to act upon what s/he already constructed in his/her mind as part of him/herself.

In order to understand how self is represented, one has to bear in mind that this representation could be mental to mean abstract idea that one has about him/herself, or the acts upon those beliefs in a social context. Swann and Bosson (2010:4) maintain that self ‘refers to a representation or set of representations about oneself, parallel to the representations people have of other individuals.’ There are two important points in this definition to focus on. First, self-representation could be personal from one to him/herself. Second, the way you perceive yourself and others perceive you through your interactions with them is regarded as another part of self-representation.

Self-representation can be realized better by categorizing it into two main types; namely, self-schema and self-image, which are explained in the following sections.

#### **2.4.1.1 Self-schema**

Markus (1977) is regarded as the founder of what is known as the ‘schema theory’. The schema as an organizing structure of the self is the core of Markus’s theory. She defines self-schemata as ‘cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information’ (ibid: 64).

It is widely accepted that an important part of self-representation is self-schema. Newen and Fiebich (2009) define self-schema as ‘the unconscious part of the self’. They call it an implicit self-

model or non-conceptual self-model. Gallagher's (2005, 24) body theory illustrates what is meant by self-schema by stating that a body schema 'involves certain motor capacities, abilities, and habits that both enable and constrain movements and the maintenance of posture'. So, the abstract unconscious things, which motivate us to do or constrain us from doing something, are known as our schemas.

Self-schema is 'the characteristic example of a first relatively stable self-model' (Newen and Fiebich, 2009). As long as they are implicit and non-conceptual, they are known as 'self-schema'. As a result, it can be deduced that anything related to the unconscious part such as walking under a short tree without bumping your head to the tree is part of one's self schemata.

#### **2.4.1.2 Self-image**

Self-image is regarded as the conceptual tangible part of the self (Newen and Fiebich, 2009). The ideas that individuals have about themselves as well as about others are known as self-image. Gallagher (2005, 24) defines self-image as 'a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one's own body'. The conceptual ideas that one has about him/herself such as describing one as clever, helpful or cooperative is part of what is known as self-image. Self-image is conscious awareness that one has about him/herself (Newen and Fiebich, 2009).

It is argued that even self-image is somehow abstract just like self-schema. However, the clear-cut difference between them, for many psychologists, is that self-schema is the non-conceptual part of the self that are generally taken for granted without anyone forcing them. Whereas self-image is the conceptual description, mostly dependent on one's experience or interaction, of one's self or from one to another person (Gallagher, 2005).

Finally, it can be stated that through combining both self-schema and self-image, which are widely used in the world of psychology, one can understand what is meant by self-representation, which is the core for understanding one's identity.

## **2.5 Theories of Identity**

Identity theory is formed by combining two sets of ideas. One of them is called 'symbolic interactionism' pioneered by moral philosophers such as Smith (1966) as its core ideas. However, the name 'symbolic interactionism' comes from Blumer, one of Mead's Students (Bruke and Stets, 2009). This perspective relies on the symbolic meaning that people develop and rely upon in the process of social interaction (Crossman, 2007). According to this theory, people live in a world that is mainly socially constructed. In particular, the meaning of objects, events, and behaviors comes from the interpretation people give them, and interpretations vary from one group to another (Bruke and Stets, 2009).

The second set of ideas which identity theory relies on is perceptual control theory that is regarded as the theory of behavior initiated by Powers (1973). The core of the theory is that 'people (and other organisms) act on their surroundings, the environment; so as to control the effect the environment is having on them' (Powers, 1973, 1). This theory goes against the conventional idea that individuals respond to the environment. Here, the role is somehow vice versa (Bruke and Stets, 2009).

In brief, the two above mentioned sets of ideas are regarded as triggers to what is now known as the theories of identity. Identity theory suggests that a person may have multiple identities because of having different roles in the society and taking part in various socially structured relationships (Simon, 2004).

Later on, psychologists, sociologists, psycho-sociologists, and linguists developed various types of theories to understand identity. It is worth mentioning that each type of identity theory focuses on a particular area. Due to the nature of this study, psychological identity theory, pragmatic identity theory and social identity theory are discussed in the coming sections.

### 2.5.1 Psychological Identity Theory

For psychologists, identity is ‘a set of behaviors, emotions, and thought patterns that are unique to an individual’ (Peck, 1997). Moreover, the famous German psychologist, Peter Weinreich (1939-2016) defines identity as ‘the totality of one’s self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future’ (Weinreich, 1986). It can be understood that identity is how one defines him/herself. This definition may be related to past, present or future. Most psychologists focus on self and personal attitude. For them how one acts is based on what s/he believes is an essential part of one’s identity.

For psychologists, the answer to a question like ‘who are you?’ is a crucial part of one’s affiliation and consequently his/her identity. An example can be given as one might answer as ‘I am a teacher’ in one particular context, and ‘I am a father’ in another situation. Affiliating the person to his/her job, or his/her social status is part of what psychologists believe to be part of one’s identity. Therefore, to have a better understanding of the psychological part of identity theory, one has to focus on what psychologists say about the identity as a concept.

Psychological theories of identity typically differentiate between an individual’s identity (personal identity) and group or collective identity (social identity) (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). For psychologists, individual identity refers to how someone defines him/herself as a unique person, whereas collective identity or social identity is meant to be how someone describes him/herself as

a member of a group (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). One has to bear in mind that the description of one's individual identity with the same person's collective identity may sometimes overlap. For example, when someone suffers from heart disease, this may give a particular identity to that person in the personal level. However, in a different situation, the same person might see him/herself as only one person among those who suffer from heart disease. As a result, it will be part of the collective identity in the latter situation (Simon, 2004).

To understand the psychological aspect of identity, one has to outline how psychologists approach this issue. The first thing to bear in mind is the difference in the terminology to describe the same idea. For North-American psychologists (e.g. Markus, 1977), the term 'self' has been used to describe the traits of an individual. Therefore, for them, self is more individualistic in a way that it focuses more on one's personal attributes. As for the same person's intergroup features, it is regarded as another part of the individual identity, together with other attributes, the unique identity of the person is constructed (for a detailed description of this issue see Simon, 2004).

On the other hand, European psychologists and social psychologists (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) tend to use the term 'identity' in a more common way in comparison with the term 'self'. This emphasis can be related to their belief of the role of the group membership and the social dimension of the person rather than the interpersonal feeling of the individual (Simon, 2004).

Despite the differences in terminology, namely 'self' (used by North-American psychologists), and 'identity' (used by European psychologists and social psychologists), both schools of thought share a fundamental belief which admits the role of social-cognitive understanding of one's identity (Simon, 2004). Finally, it should be stated that the role of society and the social role of an individual in the society play a significant role in shaping one's identity. That is why the next section focuses more on the social aspect of identity and the role of society in defining one's identity.

## 2.5.2 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory originates from the British social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. Social identity theory ‘proposes that a person’s sense of who they are depends on the groups to which they belong’ (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Based on this theory, an individual does not have only one selfhood, but s/he enjoys to have different identities based on the group they related themselves to (Trepte, 2006). Contrary to the groups which show one’s affiliation, which are known as in-groups, there are other cases in which an individual does not want to be attached to a certain group, which is known as outer-group. Therefore, according to social identity theory humans have an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality (Miller, 2005).

Social Identity theory emphasizes the role of the group in the individual’s life (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Accordingly, part of a person’s self-concept is defined by the group they show affiliation to. Therefore, ‘membership [in a group] and alongside the values placed on it’ is known as social identity (Trepte, 2006, 255). Here, one can realize that the emphasis has been put on the social group rather than the individual to show the identity of a person. To have a better understanding about social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1987, cited in Trepte, 2006) illustrate four basic elements of the theory, which are briefly outlined below:

- 1- **Social categorization:** This looks at the way in which people put others (and ourselves) into categories. We label one another based on interest, ethnicity, gender, occupation and other factors. When we call someone a teacher, a student or a footballer, it is here when we do this social categorization. One should bear in mind that this categorization could be positive or negative. It is not assigned only in one way or the other. In any ways, it is considered as part of the identity of an individual on a personal level and the identity of a group on a collective level.

- 2- **Social comparison:** People compare themselves and their groups with other groups, seeing a favourable bias towards the group in which they belong. Nowadays, we see younger people dividing themselves into social groups or subcultures based on clothing, the music they listen to or other interests. Examples of this are rappers and hoodies. Through these comparisons, part of the identity of an individual or a group can be revealed.
- 3- **Social identity:** Once a social identity is identified, people will choose to associate with certain groups. A group or individual that poses as a threat to your in-group is called the out-group. Examples of this would be an outside family member, a new member to class, someone from a different ethnic background, or closer to home, or somebody from the other side of the social area. People generally feel more comfortable to show the link to the in-group and depart from an outer-group.
- 4- **Self-esteem:** A major reason behind an in-group identity is to reach the level of self-esteem. The more one has a positive self-evaluation, based on a particular group they assign themselves to, the more they have self-esteem or the other way around (Abrams and Hogg, 1988). When one reaches this level, s/he is quite happy to identify him/herself with that social group.

It can be understood that the social identity theory, as the name suggests, focuses on the role of the society in shaping the identity of individuals. However, the individual viewpoint plays an important role in reflecting on the society's opinion on them.

### 2.5.3 Pragmatic Identity Theory

It can be stated that pragmatic identity theory, or understanding identity from a pragmatic standpoint, can be traced back to the school of American pragmatism (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). American pragmatists maintain that '... identity (or self-concept), like everything in human

experience, is contingent, relational, and in constant process' (ibid, 3). This gives the impression that pragmatists see identity to be in continuous construction and subject to change.

Charles Peirce (1869), a renowned American pragmatist, started talking about the relationship between identity and learning. Contrary to what was claimed by Descartes (1998), Peirce argues that the 'internal world' of an individual is well affected by the 'external world' and there is no such distinction as separating the internal world from the external world (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). Peirce suggests that there is a continuous interaction between the outside world and the individual's internal world, which, for him, is an important source of learning.

William James (1890) approaches the issue of self and identity from a slightly different way. He makes a distinction between what he calls 'self-conscious and self-identity'. For James, the more one is aware of making mistakes and correcting those mistakes, which comes from 'self-conscious', the more one learns and consequently can shape his/her self-identity (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). Therefore, similar to Peirce, James argues that self-identity is coming from the 'self-conscious.'

W.E.B Dubios (1903) is another American pragmatist who focuses on the role of the society in shaping one's identity (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). Dubios argues that it is important to see yourself from the eyes of someone else who is not you. This perspective of the society may be negative or positive, and it will affect the individual's self-identity.

Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) argue that Pragmatic Identity Theory is another important gate through which we can understand the concept of identity. The two conventional, and probably most common, ways to explain identity has been from either a psychological standpoint or a sociological perspective. However, according to Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) a third way, which is based on Dubios and Vygotsky along with the viewpoints of American pragmatists, is

quite possible. This is where Pragmatic Identity Theory comes in to explain identity from a pragmatic point of view.

Pragmatic Identity Theory comes to existence when a third option is quite likely, other than the psychological or sociological analysis of identity. Pragmatic Identity Theory looks at identity as ‘an integrated, dynamic conceptual framework, effectively bridging the social and internal origins of identity’ (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016, 4). Pragmatic Identity theory looks at identity developments as a learning process.

The basic pillar of Pragmatic Identity Theory, according to Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, (2016), is that identities are in ‘complex relationships’. The complexity is both inside one person and with the outside world. One has to bear in mind that based on Pragmatic Identity theory relation is very important emotionally, cognitively and physically. That is probably why this theory can be regarded as a bridge between a pure psychological view and a pure sociological view of identity.

Based on Pragmatic Identity Theory, identities are regarded as ‘a plastic (in the sense of malleable but not fluid) and semi-explicit part of experience that touches all aspects of human life’ (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). It can be understood that identity, for pragmatic identity theorists, is a mixture of two parts in anyone’s life. One part is affected, constructed, reshaped and changed in an individual’s life. The other part is fixed in anyone’s life; things that are unseen and kept personal to any individual.

According to Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016), Pragmatic Identity theory is based on the following four major premises:

- 1- Identity is constructed through the synthesis of three influences: a) self-concept, b) the responsive subconscious, and c) societal meanings or the collective understandings of identity.

Based on this premise, identities are the result of these three influences. It should be mentioned that the order is subject to change. To explain this premise, the first impact on identity is self-concept. Stets (2014) define self-concept as ‘set of meanings attached to the self.’ This self is regarded as ‘the individual’s cognitive awareness that ‘this’ person is distinct in perceptive access (i.e. burning this hand hurts but burning that stick does not) than other aspects of the environment (Peirce, 1998; Heidegger, 1927; cited in Wu et al., 1996). Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) argue that self-concept ‘is learned overtime’. Self-concept does not only mean understanding ourselves, but it may be part of what we own, possess or the feelings that we have.

The second impact on identity is the responsive subconscious, which is the part of the identity that defines who we are and we come to know it every now and then (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). It is like an inner voice that tells us what we have to do and how we should do it. This part is very personal and individual based. It may include emotions or actions that we take in our lives. This inner voice can be a motivation to do something or a constrain to be away from it.

The third influence is the role of the society in shaping one’s identity. Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) maintain that we cannot discuss identity in isolation. As long as humans live inside a group of people, the culture and the societal view play some role in the identity of the individuals. This is a major focus of the social identity theory.

- 2- An individual’s identity is made up of many sub-identities that have different levels of salience, prevalence, and longevity that manifest in different contexts (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

The second premise for identity, based on pragmatic identity theory, focuses on the concept of identity itself. Identity consists of multiple ‘sub-identities’ which are different based on the time and situation. According to the above-mentioned premise, the level, the accessibility and the length of a sub-identity varies from one context to another. To explain it, one may claim a certain identity

in a specific situation, but the same person may claim a different one in another context. That is why, it can be said that context plays an important role in the identity of an individual.

- 3- Inherent in identity is an emotional affect (Stets & Trettevik, 2014; DuBois, 2007) and physical embodiment. The value individuals and others place (or do not place) on the characteristics that make up their sub-identities affect individuals' self-concept, efficacy, mobility, access to social goods, and overall wellbeing.

Based on this premise, it is almost impossible to separate identity from emotions or the other way around. Wilson (2004) emphasizes the cognitive part of identity. However, Carr-Chelkman & Levitan (2016) argue for the central role of emotions in the influence they have on sub-identities and consequently they influence self-identity. Due to a certain emotional reaction, one may claim his identity to be attached with or similar to a certain group for quite some time.

- 4- Identities and Identity values can be fluid, but certain parts of identity are stable and difficult to change.

Based on Carr-Chelkman & Levitan's (2016) interpretation of this premise, each person has what they call 'identity value', which is the values one has for him/herself, and identity. Certain parts of identity, which are known as master identity and personal identity (which will be explained in 2.7.1.1 and 2.7.1.2), are very difficult to change, whereas there are other parts, such as the social part, that are flexible and changeable based on time and context.

As a result, Levitan et al. (2017) argue that pragmatic identity theory 'helps to uncover explicit and implicit identities. They state the pragmatic identity theory can be regarded as a 'narrative research methodology and analytical lens to facilitate the process of uncovering individual's identities...' That is why this approach is used in this study to reveal the influence of learning a new language on the self-identity of the EFL learners.

## 2.6 Approaches to Identity: Some Key Models

Simon (2004) states that ‘identity is a multifaceted phenomenon’. Therefore, it is not surprising that scholars from different fields are still interested in understanding what identity is. Their ideas are somehow similar and can be said are complementary. It should be mentioned that the central focus of each scholar is somehow different. However, they share one key idea that an individual’s identity cannot be understood free from the social influence on constructing or reshaping his/her own identity (Park,2015). One has to remember, as mentioned earlier in section 2.4, that the American school of thought preferred to use the term ‘self’ much more than the term identity, which is very common in the European school of thought. This section presents the core arguments of five influential scholars, namely Mead, Erikson, Vygotsky, Pierce and Weinreich in the field of analyzing and understanding identity. They are arranged based on the chronological order, not the order of influence or any other factor.

### 2.6.1 Mead’s Model

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) was an American sociologist, known as the founder of American Pragmatism. Mead is famous for his theory of ‘self’. The core of Mead’s self-theory, according to Crossman (2017), is that the way people perceive themselves and the personal image that they have of themselves is constructed based on their interaction with their surroundings. Mead’s theory can be regarded as a contradiction with what is known as ‘biological determinism’, which argues for having a self-existence with the birth. Mead argues that self is constructed and reconstructed through communicating with others (Simon.2004).

For Mead, according to Simon (2004), the self he talks about consists of two elements: ‘I’ and ‘me’. For Mead, ‘me’ represents the attitudes that one has with reference to the ‘generalized others’, which meant to be the viewpoints of the people surrounding the individual. When a person views

him/herself from the others point of view and satisfied with it, this can be called one mechanism for the social control. Therefore, in the 'me' part, Mead argues that the way how an individual perceives him/herself from the viewpoints of others constructs an important part of the 'self'.

As for the 'I' part, Mead argues that it follows the 'me' part. 'I' is the part that follows 'me' based on the social interaction and perspectives of the society. It can be said that the 'I' part is the subject part of self and the 'me' part is the 'object' part of the self (Crossman, 2017).

For Mead, there are three driving forces for the construction of the self (Simon,2004). The first one is language, which is when a person takes a new role and others symbolically, or verbally, respond to it. The second one is play. Here, Mead talks about the importance of role- playing of the others through which one can measure the expectations of the surroundings to his/her own actions. The last one is game. What is meant here is that an individual must understand his/her role in the game, meaning in the social context that they are playing in to find out the expectations of the others to him/her.

Mead's theory of self can be regarded as one of the building blocks for understanding the relationship between self and society, and the society's influence on the self. For Mead (1934), as cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan (2012), self is 'the product of the mind, which is created during interactions with social institutions.' This is well reflected in his now famous theory in sociology known as 'symbolic interactionism' (Simon, 2004).

### 2.6.2 Erikson's Model

Erik Erikson is regarded as one of early theorists who studied identity. He did not start from scratch, though. It has to be mentioned that researchers trace back Erikson's ideas to Freud's Id theory (Schwartz, 2001). However, Erikson is thought of as an ego theorist as he emphasizes the role of culture, the society and self-conflicts inside one's personality as important factors in

developing one's identity (McLeod, 2017). Erikson (1959) developed a theory known as 'stages of identity development' in which he suggests eight different stages throughout one's lifespan to develop his/her own identity. The following table (adopted from McLeod, 2017) summarizes Erikson's stages of identity development.

*Table 1 Erikson's Identity Development*

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy ( 0 to 1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood ( 1 ½ to 3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age ( 3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age ( 5 to 12)
5	Ego identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult ( 18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood( 40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity ( 65+)

For Erikson, completion of each stage successfully will result in accomplishing a healthy individual, and failure to do so produces an unhealthy person. Erikson can be regarded as one of the theories who suggested a model for discussion rather than a theory. He himself admitted that the aim behind these stages of identity development was to initiate a scientific discussion rather than theorize identity development in a completed theory (McLeod, 2017).

### 2.6.3 Vygotsky's Model

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a prominent Soviet psychologist. His original writings are written in Russian, and they were translated in 1960s. Therefore, his ideas were not obvious on the world stage until the translation of his works into English. Similar to Mead's interpretations to identity, Vygotsky (1978) argues for the social role of an individual in forming the identity (Park,

2015). For him, identity is constructed because of social practices. Here, as it is stated in Mead's theory, the role of the society is emphasized on. One has to mention that Vygotsky focuses on ideas about personality development, not directly talking about identity, but his ideas fit into the description of self and identity (Nogueira, 2014). Vygotsky maintains that life experiences have influences on the personal development of an individual (ibid).

Vygotsky is famous for his socio-cultural theory of learning. His ideas, even though translated later on into English, has had a great influence on the theoretical framework of learning (Cook, 2008). Vygotsky's major claim in his theory is that learning mainly takes place through interaction with others. From a sociocultural perspective, learning is thought to be turning a collaborative mental process into a personal one (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Therefore, one can deduce that the more ability that an individual has to shift the 'inter-mental' process into 'intra-mental' one, the better he or she will be in learning.

To connect Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory for learning into identity, one has to bear in mind that interaction with the surrounding is a key point in his theory. Based on Vygotskian perspective, people recognize their identities through their daily activities (Park, 2015). The sociocultural perspective considers that self-consciousness arises not from the individual, but from social relations with others as he states, 'the individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary' (Vygotsky, 1979, 30). Therefore, it can be understood that identities, based on this theoretical framework, are constructed and formed based on living experiences of individuals. As a result, it can be said that people recognize their identities and the identity of others through interactions with family, peers, organizations, institutions, media and other connections they make in their everyday life.

Finally, it can be said that, based on Vygotsky's point of views, identities are constructed and reconstructed through communicating with others. This interaction is basic to how we identify ourselves by ourselves and how we identify ourselves in relation to the people around us.

#### 2.6.4 Peirce's Model

Charles Peirce (1839-1914) is a well-known American Pragmatist. He establishes a mixed model of relationship between identity and learning. Peirce maintains that people do not have an external world separated from their internal world (Carr-Chellman & Leviatn, 2016). For him, the more we interact with others, question things around us and test what we know, the more we become aware of who we are and learn more about ourselves. This viewpoint to understand identity is known as what is called 'practical identity' as it based on the practical interaction with the surrounding. Practical identity is defined as 'the singular shape acquired by a human being in the complex course of its practical involvements, its participation in the array of practices in and through which such a being carries out its life' (Colapierto, 2006). Clearly, this definition focuses on the 'practical involvement' of the individual for shaping the identity of the person.

It can be stated that Peirce's understandings of the complexity of identity has been reflected in a later on established theory of Pragmatic Identity Theory (See section, 2.5.3). The role of experience and continuous interaction is crucial for learning and identity development (Levitan et al., 2016).

From Peirce's point of view, similar to what is suggested by Vygotsky in his socio-cultural theory; identity development is the result of a continuous interaction with the surrounding.

After presenting the basic arguments of Mead, Erikson, Vygotsky and Peirce's models, it should be mentioned that there are two major factors in forming the identity of an individual, also known as self-identity, which is the role of self-internalization as well as the role of interaction

with the surrounding in revealing, shaping and reconstructing one's identity. It is worth mentioning that the Pragmatic Identity Theory draws on almost all the arguments mentioned in these models (Carr-Chellman & Leviatn, 2016) without focusing too much on psychological or sociological aspect of the self-identity.

### 2.6.5 Weinreich's Model

Peter Weinreich (1939-2016), a famous German social psychologist, explains the meaning of identity as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present. He 'expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future' (Weinreich, 1986). From his perspective, identity is not a static thing. It is a subject to change. He argues that self-conception of one starts from his past, continues to now and extends to the future.

Weinreich is considered as the founder of Identity Structure Theory, which is considered as 'a powerful and uniquely innovative approach to analyzing and understanding identity formation and development' (Stapleton, 2016). His theory has been put forward for the sake of analyzing the self-identity of someone. The core of Identity Structure Analysis is that people's identity is in a continuous change based on their experiences in their daily lives. For Weinreich, every new experience in one's live affects his/her own identity (Weinreich, 1986). So, based on this theory, it can be said that identity is seen as 'active, ongoing process of appraisal and sense-making, through which the individual continually defines and redefines his/her own location within the social nexus, but simultaneously retains a sense of subjective continuity across socio-biographical contexts' (Stapleton, 2016). What is meant here is that an individual's identity is both personal as well as social. The social part is in an ongoing change because of the social factors and the personal part could be affect by the person's experience in daily life.

It is worth mentioning that a software has been designed particularly for the application of this theory. The software is called 'Ipseus' which is used worldwide (Stapleton, 2016). The major focus of this theory, along with the software designed for it, is to reveal the structure of the identity of an individual (Stapleton, 2016). What is meant by identity structure is that it 'refers to the structural representation of the individual's existential experience, in which the relationships between self and other agents are organized in relatively stable structures over time, but which become further elaborated and changed on account of new experiences' (ibid). Therefore, the major focus in the analysis is to understand the changes that has happened or could happen on the self-identity of an individual.

Due to the relevance of this analysis in revealing self-identity, this theory has been used in part of this study. However, the software, as it is somehow complicated one, is not used in its electronic version, but its content has been converted into a paper version for the sake of clarity.

## **2.7 Classifications of Identity**

Thornborrow (2004, cited in Thomas & Wareing 2004) states that 'Identity, whether on an individual, social, or institutional level, is something that we are constantly building and negotiating throughout our lives through our interaction with others'. Psychologists and social psychologists have classified identity in many ways. One way is to give two general categories, namely personal and social identity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). It should be mentioned that personal-identity and self-identity are used in literature interchangeably. Moreover, social identity is also known as collective identity (Hogg, 2003).

It has to be mentioned that there are various classifications of identity by different scholars. Below is an account for these classifications.

## **2.7.1 Tracy's Classification of Identity**

One of the most comprehensive classifications of identity is given by Tracy (2002) who mentions four types of identity: master identity, interactional identity, personal identity and relational identity. The following sections explain what is meant by each of these types as explained by the scholars in the field.

### **2.7.1.1 Master Identity**

Tracy (2002, cited in Cook, 2007) defines master identity as 'stable and unchanging, such as gender, ethnicity, age, national and regional origins.' Cook (2007) argues that master identity influences the way in which people speak and how the receivers perceive them. For her, these qualities of master identity presuppose many things about an individual. For instance, based on gender, females are expected to speak, act, behave and interact in certain ways. This is true for ethnical as well religious groups when they interact with others.

Master identities include age, nationality, gender, and religious background. It should be mentioned that in modern society, gender does not have a fixed interpretation. Moreover, people may change their nationalities and convert their religions. Therefore, it is hard to state that these identities are solid and entirely unchangeable.

Gee (2004), an American psycholinguist and educational researcher, calls this type of identity as 'natural identity'. He argues that individuals do not have control over such types of identity such as being male or female (Andrews, 2010). However, the perception to how a female is looked at is entirely context and cultural dependent (Gee, 2004).

### **2.7.1.2 Personal Identity**

According to Tracy (2002, cited in Cook, 2007) personal identities are expected to be relatively stable, unique and reference ways in which people talk and behave toward others: as hotheaded,

honest, forthright, and reasonable. However, Oslo (2015) states that ‘personal identity deals with philosophical questions that arise about ourselves by virtue of our being people’. It can be seen that the second definition focuses on the personal perception that a person has about him/herself, whereas in the first the focus has been put on how others describe a person. Therefore, in literature, both ways of looking at the characteristics of an individual is quite common.

Personal identity is sometimes referred to as ‘self-identity’. One has to mention that the self is more commonly used by psychologists to refer to beliefs that people have about themselves (Noonan, 2004). In any ways, personal understanding can be regarded as part of personal identity (ibid).

#### **2.7.1.3 Relational Identity**

Tracy (2002, cited in Cook, 2007) states that relational identities ‘refer to the kind of relationship that a person enacts with a particular conversational partner in a specific situation, these identities are negotiated from moment to moment and are highly variable’. Moreover, Sluss and Ashforth (2007) define relational identity as ‘the extent to which one defines oneself in terms of a given role-relationship.’ This type of identity changes based on the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. For instance, a person is expected to have a certain way of communication with his father in comparison to the interaction of the same person with his kids. This type of identity mostly depends on the social hierarchy in society and culture could play a role as well in forming this type of identity (ibid). For this reason, a person is said to have multiple identities based on the social interaction with others (Trepte, 2006).

#### **2.7.1.4 Interactional Identity**

Tracy (2002, cited in Cook, 2007) states that interactional identities ‘refer to the roles that people take on in a communicative context with specific other people’. Obviously, individuals do not live alone and they live within a society. Here, according to Cook (2007), an individual has

more than one identity based on his/her role in society. Revealing the person's identity may depend on both the social context and whom the person is interacting with. For example, a teacher's interaction with his/her students inside a classroom is different from the same teacher's interactions with his/her colleagues in the teaching staff room. The reason for this difference, according to Tracy (2002), is that the first situation both the context and the people whom the teacher is interacting with is different from the second situation.

## **2.7.2 Other Types of Identity**

Despite the fact that there are different classifications of identity, finding a classification that is comprehensive and agreed upon is almost impossible. After presenting Tracy's (2002) classification, which is regarded as a major one by some scholars (e.g. Cook, 2007), Ramarajan (2014) mentions many other types of identity. Almost all the following types of identity are mentioned by Ramarajan (2014). However, one should be careful that Tracy's classification includes most of the following types under different generic titles.

### **2.7.2.1 Linguistic Identity**

Linguistic identity is considered as identifying oneself in relation to his/her language. Park (2012) defines linguistic identity as 'the sense of belonging to a community as mediated through the symbolic resource of language, or to the varying ways in which we come to understand the relationship between our language and ourselves'. It can be understood that through language one may give a linguistic identity to him/herself. This may be used to show a sense of belonging to that certain community or used to depart from another particular group. Joseph (2006) maintains that linguistic identities are double-edged swords because, while functioning in a positive and productive way to give people a sense of belonging, they do so by defining an 'us' in opposition to a 'them'. Furthermore, Hozhabrossadat (2015) argues that one way to show the membership of a group is through using the language of that group.

Therefore, it can be said that one way to show the identity is through using the language of a particular group. Furthermore, through using the language of a certain group, one shows a sense of belonging to that group.

#### **2.7.2.2 National Identity**

Ashmore et al. (2001) define national identity as one's identity or sense of belonging to one state or to one nation. Guibernau (2004) states that national identity may refer to the subjective feeling one shares with a group of people about a nation, regardless of one's legal citizenship state. If the individual shows a positive attitude towards his/her national identity, this is called 'patriotism'. However, this may turn into 'chauvinism' if one feels superior in comparison to others (Ashmore, 2001).

National identity, according to Anderson (1991), is not an inborn character, but it is rather socially constructed. Tajfel and Turner (1986) put national identity under what they call 'self-categorization' which means one classifies him/herself with a group of people or show attachment to a nation as a way to categorize themselves.

#### **2.7.2.3 Professional Identity**

As the name suggests, professional identity is more occupation-related. It is defined as 'one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences' (Ibarra, 1999). This definition focuses on the ideas, principles and experiences in the professional live to identify an individual. Furthermore, professional identity is 'the concept, which describes how we perceive ourselves within our occupational context and how we communicate this to others' (Neary, 2014). Here, professional identity has been extended not only to the personal perception of him/herself in the context of the occupation, but as part of how we perceive ourselves, as professionals, form the eyes of others around us.

Scholars focus on both self-conception and the social part of professional identity. For instance, Slay and Smith (2011) state that professional identity 'is an individual's image of who they are as a professional'. Here, the basic part is the self-image of the person when considering him/herself as a professional person. In addition, professional identities 'can also be seen as a social identity since identifying with a profession allows individuals entrance into a particular community comprised of individuals who share a common approach to a particular type of work' (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984). In this definition, the meaning of professional identity takes a collective meaning based on the occupation of a group of people.

#### **2.7.2.4 Gender Identity**

Ghosh (2015) defines gender identity as 'a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither)'. Furthermore, according to American Psychology Association (2015), gender identity refers to 'a person's deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender [...] that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics. Since gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others'. From these two definitions, one can deduce that a person's inner feeling about his/her sex is considered as his/her gender identity.

It has to be mentioned that the conventional way to assign gender identity is to categorize them as a binary male/ female person (Kalbfleisch & Cody, 1995). However, this perception has been changed in many countries in recent years (Carson, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that based on the new perception, one's biological sex cannot be regarded as a sign of the person's gender identity.

## 2.8 Major Characteristics of Identity

It can be stated that the concept of identity is regarded as a bridge between any social structure (society) and a social person (self) (Simon, 2004). It cannot be denied that the world nowadays is in more interaction than ever before. Therefore, this interaction has had some impact on the members of the society and society in general. As this study deals with English language learners at university level, the targeted population can be regarded as part of the modern society.

Here, some major characteristics of the identity in modern era based on Stryker & Burke (2000) are briefly mentioned. In modern societies, identities are relational. They are the reflection of the various positions of an individual with another. Second, identities are socially constructed. This means that identities are affected by, or may change due to, the interaction between two individuals. Third, identities are socially structured. What is meant here is that identities change based on the social hierarchy of the individual and the social relationship between them. Fourth, people generally have multiple identities. This depends of the roles and positions of the individual in the society. This has become clearer in the modern society, as people tend to play different and multiple roles throughout their lives (Simon, 2004). Fifth, identities have consequences. To explain this, one need to give an example of a modern person who may have multiple identities and each one has its own impact of the individual's life.

As part of the modern society, English learners in Kurdistan may well reflect all, or some, of the characteristics of the identity in the modern era. One should not be surprised that due to the social structure of Kurdish society and Kurdish culture, people may feel the burden of their identities in Kurdish society.

## **2.9 Functions of Identity**

It is generally accepted that when one takes an identity, (s) he feels a kind of existence. Simon, (2004: 66-67) presents some functions of identity, only those relevant to the current study are mentioned here. The first function of identity is providing a sense of belonging. This helps the individual to feel that s/he is part of a larger group (social issues research center, 2007). This is true even for collective identity as the group gathers together to perform a certain ritual or social event.

Second, identities can be a source for respect. Due to the entitlement to a certain identity one may feel pride or enjoy some respect from the surroundings (Bird, 2004). This type of entitlement is sometimes self-made or inherited from the ancestors. For example, professional identity is one thing that might be a source of pride to someone and it is a self-made one. However, in other cases just been born to a high-class family, socially or politically, may grant this type of identity which is inherited (ibid).

Third, identities give a certain degree of security. Because of having a particular identity, one may count on help from others and hence feel more secure (Bird,2004). This more reflected when a person is affiliated to a certain group. When someone considers him/herself as a member of a powerful group, this would be a source of relief to that person in terms of feeling more secure.

## **2.10 Identity, ideology and language**

It seems that there is a complex relationship between identity and ideology in a way that it is almost impossible to draw a clear-cut difference between the two. As already mentioned in previous sections, identities are considered as self-perceptions of oneself, in the personal level, and shared attributes that can combine a group of people under a certain title (Wendt, 1994; Herrigel, 1993). Whereas ideology is defined as ‘the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members’ (Van Dijk, 1998). One can understand that how an individual thinks and wants to represent him/herself,

which is literally his ideology, is an essential way to identify him/herself or to be identified by others. It is the same thing for a group ideology and social identity, based on Van Dijk's (1998) definition. Therefore, ideology, which is taken as thoughts that a person or a group holds, is a crucial part of the identity of an individual or a group.

As a result, it can be said that ideology, in the thinking sense, is strongly related to one's identity. In order to understand the process of thinking, and possibly the ideology of a person or a group of people, language plays an important role. The reason is that language is considered as a tool to express what we think (Jack Lam, 2001). Therefore, a connection can be made which is ideology is a vital part of how we identify ourselves or others identify us, language seems to be a way to present our thoughts. So, there seems to be a very close relationship between language and identity (which is the major concern of the next chapter).

To have a better understanding about the impact of language on our thought, ideology, and possibly our identity, one has to discuss an influential theory in this regard known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The relevance of this theory to this research lies in the idea that whether people with different languages think differently and have different perceptions of reality or not (Peek, 2006). This connection is important to know if the thinking process of Kurdish EFL learners have been affected by learning a new language such as English. If the thinking process, which is part of ideology of the learners, have been affected, then one can say that their identities have been affected as well (Van Dijk, 1998).

It has to be mentioned that this hypothesis, also known as Whorfian hypothesis, has two versions, linguistic determinism and linguistic relativism. For the sake of illustrating the influence of language and thought, ideology, which could affect both self-identity or group identity, the following sections explain both versions of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

### 2.10.1 Linguistic Determinism

The first scientific investigation into showing the relationship between language and thought was conducted by an American linguist called Benjamin Lee Whorf in the 1930s (Perlovsky, 2009). The core argument of linguistic determinism is that ‘language determines the basic categories of thought [therefore] speakers of different languages think differently’ (Wolff & Holmes, 2010). The root of this idea can be traced back to the German scholar, Humboldt, who maintains that ‘language completely determines thought and thought is impossible without language’ (Mills, 2000). Whorf makes such a strong claim that the thinking process of two people will be different if they have two languages. It has to be mentioned that these studies were conducted on native language speakers (Wolff & Holmes, 2010).

This idea of language determining thought has been criticized by many scholars as they thought Whorf’s hypothesis is a kind of too strong (Hansen, 2009). Pinker (2003) argues against linguistic determinism by saying that to say language determines how we think is an over-generalization for some reasons. The first reason is that Pinker believes that thinking process and worldview is much wider than linguistics (Hansen, 2009). Another reason for criticizing this extreme version of this hypothesis is translation. Based on this version, translation from one language would be almost impossible as each language has its own worldview (Hunt & Franca, 1991). Perhaps a stronger criticism comes from Aircat (2016) who states that ‘language is a reflection of thought, not the other way round.’ If this statement were true, then this version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis would be refuted.

However, there are some studies to support this version of the hypothesis. A major research on whether the language people speak shapes the way they think was conducted by Boroditsky, assistant professor of cognitive science. In their study, Winawer et al. (2007) investigated English native speakers with Russian, Korean and Greek native speakers. they concluded that English

native speakers have a different perception about time, space, color and object in comparison with other native speakers.

Regarding whether learning a second language would ever affect the thinking process, it remains somehow unclear. The reason for this vagueness is that if the first language really determines the thinking process of someone and his/her perception of reality, then how learning a second and/or a foreign language would change any of the thinking process (Lucy, 2016). There are some evidence to prove that learning a second and/or a foreign language would have some influence on, thoughts of the learner and consequently his/her worldview (Lucy, 2016). Clearly, this evidence can be regarded as a counter argument to linguistic determinism because by the time the learner starts learning their second or foreign language native language must have shaped their thoughts and their worldview.

Therefore, it can be stated that by almost all measures, linguistic determinism is considered as an extreme version to show the relationship between one's language and his/her thoughts. That is why this version has been modified under a new title known as 'linguistic relativity'. The following section explains what is meant by linguistic relativity.

### 2.10.2 Linguistic Relativism

Linguistic relativism, or linguistic relativity, is another version of what is known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Linguistic relativism is considered as a softer version and probably more acceptable version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which argues for the influence of language on thought (Peek, 2006). Pinker (2007) argues that there are enough evidence to show that language does influence thought. Zlatev and Blomberg (2015) concur with Pinker that language seems to affect thought. Therefore, the support for this version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is more widespread and mostly psychologists and linguists agree upon this version (Hansen, 2009).

There are many examples given to show how language influence one's thinking process. For instance, in English, you can say 'it rained last night' regardless of whether you yourself experienced the action or just not. However, Turkish language has two different past tenses for the same situation under different conditions. If you yourself have experienced this event, you have one way to talk about it, but if you just woke up in the morning and you see it is wet outside, you have a different way for talking about this situation (Wolff & Holmes, 2010). Obviously, this can be regarded as the influence of the language on the thinking process of Turkish people.

Another example to show the influence of language on thought can be represented through colors. In English, the word 'blue' represents one color. For the different versions of 'blue' in English, adjectives like 'dark' and 'light' are added. However, in Russian, there are different words for 'dark blue' and 'light blue' (Wolff & Holmes, 2010). It can be deduced that language has some influence on the thinking process of people.

As a result, it can be stated that language has some impacts on the thinking process of individuals. Furthermore, thinking process is mainly the shape of one's ideology. Therefore, one can say that language influences ideology in one way or another. As it has been stated that ideology has a strong connection with identity (Van Dijk, 1998). Finally, it seems fair to say that language affects both ideology and identity. More details about the connection between language and identity and the impact of learning a new language on the self-identity of learners are given in the following chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Language Learning and Self-Identity

#### 3.1 Introduction

It seems that there is a strong relationship between language and identity. Some scholars argue that language is one of the major features of one's identity. Others claim that language is just one of the many instruments to express someone's identity. In order to investigate the relationship between language and identity, this chapter reviews relevant literature to pave the way to understand the influence, if any, of learning a foreign language on the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners at university level.

The chapter starts with showing the relationship between language and identity. Then, to be more specific, how native language as connected with the self-identity of native speakers is reviewed. Later on, the impact of learning a second and/or a foreign language learning on the self-identity of learners is highlighted. Here, it is interesting to find out whether learning a foreign language would change the identity of the learner or not. Learners are divided into five categories in relation to changing or keeping their self-identity. To this end, one section is devoted to the impact of learning a foreign language on changing the self-identity of EFL learners.

The second part of this chapter focuses on EFL learners. First, the major factors that influence the self-identity are accounted for. To do so, two major classifications of factors by Argyle (2008) and Howorth (2010) are outlined. Then, to connect the factors with EFL learners, a section is devoted to discuss what is known as the 'imagined community' and self-identity of language learners. In another section, the types of language learners' identities are mentioned. It is worth mentioning that scholars in the field have classified learners into three major groups. The first

includes learners whose identities are changed; the second is known as division-identity learners. The last group includes learners who experience no change in self-identity. This general categorization of self-identity division, which is widely used around the world, will be followed in this study. Finally, a brief account of the research on language learning and self-identity of EFL learners is given.

### **3.2 Language and Identity**

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

One must be aware that there are two basic approaches to interpret self-identity. First, how do we define ourselves and second how do others define us? Goffman (1963) states that ‘personal identity is defined by how others identify us, not how we identify ourselves’. The counter argument is that we define who we are and we give identity to ourselves (Hoffman, 2009). It has to be mentioned that this controversy has not been settled yet.

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

As individuals tend to identify themselves in many ways in the modern world (Lewicki et al., 1998), it is crucial to find out the similarities and differences between the languages people use in their communication and their identity. To this end, the following sections are devoted to show the relationship between mother tongue and the identity of a person. Then, the impact of learning a new language on the identity is focused on. Finally, whether or not this new language changes the identity of the person in any way, which is the major concern of this study, is discussed.

### 3.2.1 First language and Self-identity

Language is considered as a major vehicle to express one’s identity. Spolsky (1999) argues that ‘language is a central feature of one’s identity’. It can be understood that language here is regarded as a symbol to one’s identity. It is through language that one converts his/her ideas into verbal utterance and communicate with the surroundings (Tsoi, 2010). Starks (2005) considers language as ‘identity-maker’. Not only at the individual level, but also at the group level. Language is considered as a tool for expressing social attitudes of a group of people (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Ochs, 1996).

It can be said that language has a huge role in expressing one’s identity. For instance, how one speaks, the accents and vocabulary, reveal part of one’s self-identity (Spolsky, 1999). People generally express themselves better through using their mother tongue rather than any other

language because this language is an important part of one's experiences (Brown, 1994, cited in Al-Ghazali, 2006). As first language is the language people use from their birth, many feelings and emotions are attached to it. Therefore, as natural as the first language (Brown, 1994) the way in which one express him/herself with that language seems to be natural as well.

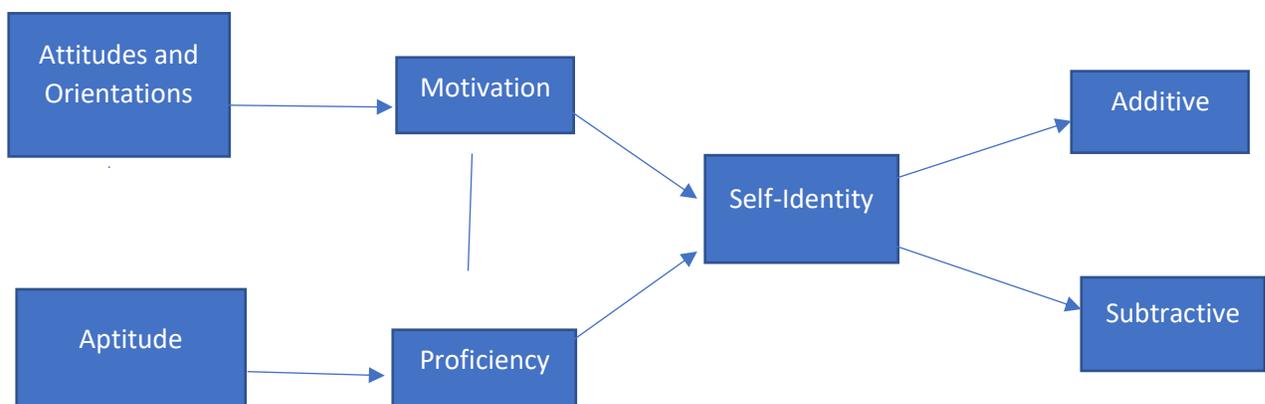
It seems that for some learners, the first language may have a huge influence on their foreign language (Saville-Troike, 2006). Due to this language interference, one's foreign language could be affected. Perhaps, that is why some learners face a kind of split identity as they find it very difficult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

### 3.2.2 Foreign Language Learning and Self-Identity

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

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

Lambert strongly argues that learning a second language will have implications on the identity of the language learner (Lambert, 1981). In Lambert's model, aptitude and attitude play a huge role in motivating someone towards learning a new language (Goa et al., 2007). Language aptitude can be defined as one's natural inborn ability to learn a language (Tellier, 2013). Whereas, attitude is regarded as the personal viewpoint on the language, whether positive or negative (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). Both of them trigger motivation and with the extent to which one is successful in learning the foreign language the self-identity will be affected. This influence can be called 'additive' or 'subtractive'. The following diagram illustrates Lambert's socio-psychological model for self-identity of a foreign language learner.



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

### 3.2.3 Foreign Language Learning and Self-Identity change

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

To explain how this change occurs in identity due to learning a foreign language, Norton (2006, cited in Dema, 2015) highlights some major themes to reflect this change. As initiated by Vygotsky, these themes are based on the sociocultural perspective of learning a foreign language, and the possible changes in the identity of the language learner. The themes are briefly outlined in the following points:

- 1- Identity is considered as something changeable overtime. Transition from one point into another is an indicator of that change. In case of foreign language learners, the same process is true as learners continuously redefine themselves to cope with the new situations they may encounter in their lives.

- 2- Identity is a ‘complex, contradictory, and multifaceted’ notion, as opposed to a simplistic understanding of identity (Norton, 2006). So many factors affect the identity of foreign language learners (which will be explained in later sections in detail) which makes their identity complex and contradictory in some situations.
- 3- ‘Identity affects language use and is affected by language’. Language affects the identity of foreign language learners in a way that changes their behavior, attitudes and worldview. Similarly, the identity of an individual may frame the way in which people use language in their daily communications.
- 4- ‘Educational practices impact identity formation’. Norton argues that it is important to learners become aware of who they are and how they acquire knowledge through the usage of the foreign language. The practices, such as social or cultural, will have some impact on the language learners’ identities.

Therefore, it can be understood that language learning generally affects the self-identity of the learner. However, the extent to which this influence can be seen varies depending on certain factors. A major way to realize and possibly measure the change of the self-identity of the learner is a model developed by Goa (2007), which is based on Lambert’s (1974) Socio-Psychological Identity Model, in which learners are classified into different categories. Goa et al. (2007) suggest the following classification to measure the impact of learning a foreign language on the self-identity of the language learners. For each section, they have asked a set of questions to check the categories that they have put. The following is the classification given by Goa et al. (2007):

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

self-confidence can be regarded as a psychological change in the mentality of the learner which is an indicator of a change in the self-identity of the learner.

2- **Additive change:** This change refers to the co-existence of two different sets of values in the mind of the learner. This happens when a learner can easily adapt him/herself with using his/her first or foreign language. In this section, some questions are put to check the learners' abilities to cope with the new behavior, values, cultural and ideological issues related to the foreign language without ignoring the norms of his/her first language. This type of change is regarded as an asset to the learner.

3- **Subtractive change:** This type of change refers to the replacement of the native values, behaviors and cultural norms of the first language by the foreign language. This type of change occurs when the language learner feels that s/he is more powerful with the foreign language and more attached to it. Here, a set of questions will be asked to check the extent to which learning the new language influenced the core beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, cultural norms of the language learners. This can be checked easier by focusing on the contradictions between the native language and the foreign language. However, one has to bear in mind that these changes might not be 100% in all the areas. Furthermore, personal judgement plays a huge role here, and acting upon those new sets of beliefs remains to be seen in the real life.

4- **Productive change:** This change refers to the appreciation of the native language values, behaviors and cultural norms after learning a foreign language. It means that after learning English, Kurdish EFL learners more appreciate the cultural norms, behaviors and their worldview in Kurdish. This is quite possible when the language learner compares the foreign language with his/her own native language. To check this type of change, a set of questions will be asked to judge between the beliefs, behavior, cultural norms and the

worldview of English in comparison with Kurdish. This is regarded as a positive reinforcement of the native language values due to learning a foreign language.

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

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

It has to be mentioned that many researchers have used these categories to realize and measure the impact of learning a foreign language on learners in different places. For instance, Goa et al. (1997) used it for Chinese EFL learners. Furthermore, Zare-ee & Matin (2014) used the same measurement for Persian EFL learners. Due to its wide usage and relevance, the same criteria will be used to check the changes, if any, in the self-Identity of Kurdish EFL learners due to learning English. However, the questions will be adapted in a way to be appropriate to investigate Kurdish EFL learners' self-identities from a psycho-pragmatic perspective.

### 3.3 Language Learner's Self-Identity

Scholars state that there are several factors affecting an individual's self-identity. In this section, two major classifications of the factors by Argyle (2008) and Howorth (2010) are highlighted. Then, to connect these factors affecting the self-identity of a person with the self-identity of language learners, another section is devoted to explain what is meant by 'imagined community', in which this particular study is considered as English native speakers, and the self-identity of EFL learners. The last section highlights the role of motivation for learning a foreign language on the change of self-identity of EFL learners.

The aim here is to show the type of factors that might affect the identity of EFL learners and how EFL learners relate and identify themselves as part of English language community. Then, the role of motivation for learning and consequently on changing the self-Identity of EFL learners is discussed. The first part outlines the factors that affect the self-identity of an individual while the second part shows the connection between the 'imagined community' and language learner's self-identity. Finally, the way motivation influences language learning and self-identity of EFL learners will be scrutinized.

#### 3.3.1 Factors affecting Self-identity

Self-identity is used to 'refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates or perceives him/herself' (Argyle, 2008). As stated earlier, self-identity is a psychological as well as a social issue. Psychologists and sociologists, distinguish many factors that affect one's self-identity. Two major classifications of these factors are given: one is by Argyle (2008) and the other is by Howorth (2010).

Argyle (2008) states four major factors that affect one's self-identity. They are:

1- **The Reaction of Others:** According to Argyle (2008), the reaction one receives from the people around him/her has a huge impact on the self-identity of the individual. When a positive reaction is received from the surrounding people such as people paying attention to you, respecting you, perhaps flattering you or listen to you, this will create a good self-image and consequently affects your self-conception. However, when a negative reaction is received from the others, this will also have a negative impact on the self-conception of the individual.

2- **Comparison with Others:** What is meant by comparison with others is that individuals tend to compare their appearances, properties, personal status, family relationships and success with the people around them. When a person realizes s/he is more successful, happier, and more attractive and has a better personal status, this will affect their self-identity in a positive way. On the other hand, if the comparison leads to feel inferior, this will have a negative influence on the self-identity of the person. Argyle (2008) argues that the same comparison is true at the group level. Even when one considers him/herself to be a member of a group and the group is better than the other groups, it will positively affect the person's self-identity.

3- **Social Roles:** As people live inside a society, social roles are considered as very important factors on the identity of individuals. The social role may include the type of job that one has, membership in a certain group, or even the social status of the individual. The more prestigious the social role, the more enhancement it gives to the self-identity of the individual. On the contrary, the less social role individuals have in society, the less they appreciate themselves and consequently feel good about their self-identity. The same issue is possible even on the group level (as a collective identity). When a certain group feels that

they have a better social role, they have positive attitudes about themselves and feel better about their self-identities.

4- **Identification:** This is considered as a personal description of one's self. How one identifies him/herself is said to have a crucial role in the self-identity of the individual. This can be better explained when one does not consider him/herself as part of a family, social group or certain community because s/he feels that this attachment undermines his/her personal identity. Therefore, how one identifies him/herself is considered as an important factor affecting the self-identity of a person.

Having presented the core of the factors that affect the self-identity by Argyle (2008), which can be regarded as somehow generic in nature, Howorth (2010) gives a more detailed account of those factors. Howorth (2010) lists the factors that can influence an individual's self-concept as education, media, appearance, culture, abuse, relationships, gender, income and age.

1- **Education:** The educational level of an individual is said to have an important role in the self-identity of a person. The more one is educated, and the more potential (s)he has to find a good job due to his/her educational qualifications, the more positive and better image (s)he thinks of him/herself.

2- **Media:** Media is regarded as a crucial player in how one identifies him/herself. For instance, showing celebrities and people who are good looking, underweight and wealthy, reflects on the image of self within the society. Therefore, media can affect positively or negatively the self-identity of individuals.

3- **Appearance:** Appearance has a huge impact on how one sees him/herself. This influence can be positive or negative mainly depending on the age of the person as well as the culture. For example, teenagers generally pay more attention to their appearance than

the elderly people do. In addition, the image of an attractive person changes from one culture to another.

**4- Culture.** Culture affects one's identity through shaping the beliefs and values that they have. Culture plays an important role in setting the beliefs at individual as well as group level. The things that one's culture values have some role on the person's worldview.

**5- Abuse.** Abuse can be emotional, physical or sexual; any type of abuse that one suffers from will leave some impact on his/her personality. Therefore, when one suffers from a physical abuse, this will affect his/her appearance and affects his/her self-identity. The same impacts might happen due to emotional abuses as well.

**6- Relationships.** The type of personal and social relationships that one has can influence the person's self-identity. For instance, when one has a supportive family and friends on whom s/he can count on, s/he feels stronger and has a better self-image, which positively affects his/her self-identity. The same issue is quite likely when a person does not have good relationships and cannot count on others; (s)he will have a negative feeling and may develop a bad self-image, which will affect personal identity in a negative way.

**7- Gender.** Despite the fact that gender conventionally has a binary division, being male or female, the social role of male and female in terms of having a better job and being paid more in comparison with the counter gender will have a huge impact on the self-identity of individuals. One has to mention that in modern society, people entitle themselves to various other types such as bisexual, transgender, gay or lesbian. The binary division of gender is no longer applicable in many modern societies.

**8- Income.** Income is considered as an important factor in shaping one's identity. For example, when a person has a lower income and cannot afford his/her life, s/he cannot pay the rents and live a decent life. This will have a negative impact on the self-identity of that

person. On the contrary, the more income you have the more independent you feel. This has a positive impact on the self-image of the person.

9- **Age.** Age plays an important role in the way one identifies him/herself. When one feels good about his/her age and enjoys his/her lifestyle, this will create a positive self-image and his/her self-identity. The same but opposite choice is true when one feels bad about his/her age.

After outlining two major classifications of the factors affecting the self-identity of an individual, it is crucial to relate these factors with the core of this study, which is investigating the role of learning a foreign language in the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners. To make that connection, the following section discusses what is known as the ‘imagined community’, which is regarded as the native speaker community, and the self-identity of EFL learners. Through this connection, one can see to what extent EFL learners align themselves with English native speakers.

### 3.3.2 Imagined Community and Language Learners’ Self-identity

Imagined community is a term coined by Anderson (1983) to talk about nationalism. Imagined community is regarded as a group of people who consider themselves connected not through blood connection, but rather through language usage (Anderson. 2006). It is called ‘imagined’ as it is not possible, according to Anderson, even for a small nation to know or meet each other (Anderson, 2006). Later on, this concept was taken to the field of second language learning (Norton, 2001). The way the connection can be made is that the second language learners consider themselves as a part of the community in which the language is used. This sense of belonging to the community is by imagining themselves to be related to the native speakers (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

By establishing this relationship with the community through language, some language learners identify themselves as part of the imagined community (Norton, 2001). The reason why this connection is important is that language learners consider themselves as a member of the imagined community (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). It has to be mentioned that not all language learners may have this feeling. However, for some other learners, being part of this imagined community gives them a sense of relief and probably escape from their original community (Anderson, 2006).

Wenger (1998) feels that Anderson (1983) talks about the field of identity and self-recognition. Based on Wegner's ideas, people, through imagination, show their sense of belonging, which is an important part of their identities. Lave and Wenger (1998) take the concept of 'possible selves' in psychology into Anderson's imagined community. They argue that people may have various reasons to show attachment to a group and depart from another.

Pavlenko & Norton (2007) conducted a research on a group of EFL learners to test the idea of 'imagined community' with their identities. They have given some general ideas to a group of learners to check in which way they consider themselves as part of 'imagined English community'. They concluded that English has been seen as a global language that gives the prospect of a better future career, enhancing their social connection, feeling more liberated, especially female learners, and have more rights as an individual. This sense of belonging, despite the fact that these learners live in non-English language communities, gives those learners a sense of belonging to their imagined community and depart from their real community. As a result, this has some impact on their self-identity (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

As stated earlier, this sense of belonging and feeling attached to the imagined community is not equal among all language learners (Norton, 2001). That is why EFL learners are generally

divided into three major groups; one group shows a huge amount of change in their identity because of learning English as a foreign language, the second group is somewhat divided between their attachment to the real community and the imagined community. The last group is considered as those learners who do not relate themselves to the imagined community and still identify themselves in relation to their original real community (for details see 3.4). One possible reason for this division could be the level of achievement of EFL learners in the foreign language learning. One way to understand why EFL learners might be different could be considering their motivation for learning the new language.

### 3.3.3 Language Learner's Motivation and Self-Identity Change

There have been numerous researches on the role of motivation in learning a foreign language. In the last two decades, the role of motivation in language learning and its influence on self-identity of EFL learners has been investigated by many researchers. Goa et al. (2007) conducted a research on Chinese EFL learners' motivations for learning English and its impact on the self-identity of the learners. Zare-ee & Matin, (2014) carried out a similar research on Persian EFL learners. Furthermore, Boonchum (2010) and Teer (2013) had the same experiment with Thai EFL learners. It has to be mentioned that all these studies concur that there is a strong role of motivation in learning a new language and possibly changing the self-identity of EFL learners.

It is worth mentioning that these studies mention many types of motivations, which might not be relevant to explain them in detail in this study, and their influence on learning English. Interestingly, those EFL learners who are highly motivated to learn English are those learners whose identities are affected because of learning it (Teer, 2013 & Boonchum, 2010). It is worth noting that internally motivated learners seem to be more open to change their identities because

of learning English in comparison with others (Goa et al., 2007). What is meant by internal motivation is a personal feeling or tendency to learn English for personal reasons.

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

### **3.4. Types of Language Learners' Self-Identities**

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

#### **3.4.1 Change in Learner's Self-Identity**

Goa et al. (2007), Boonchum (2010) and Zare-ee & Matin's (2014) studies of EFL learners confirm that many learners feel that their self-identities have changed due to learning English. It is worth mentioning that Goa et al.'s study investigated Chinese learners, Boonchum's study investigated Thai EFL learners and Zare-ee & Matin's study was conducted on Persian learners. All confirmed that learning English has changed the self-identities of many EFL learners.

Interestingly, all studies report a significant change in the self-confidence of EFL learners because of learning English. Participants state that they feel more confident after learning English.

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

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

It has to be mentioned that there are so many socio-biological factors behind this change of self-identity of EFL learners in these studies (Goa et al., 2007, Boonchum, 2010, & Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). Gender, for instance, is an important factor. Male participants seem to be more flexible and open to change because of learning English in comparison with female participants. One reason could be the society's view on female in these places. For instance, Persian female participants report that it is very challenging for them to act upon their new beliefs that they have after learning English because of the social restrictions on them (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014).

Therefore, even if any change occurs in the self-identity of EFL learners, they might not be able to reflect on them because of the social or biological restrictions.

One major difference that can be seen in the above-mentioned studies is that they included English major EFL learners as well as English non-major ones. Researchers state that English major EFL learners are more open to change after learning English in comparison with non-majors (Goa et al., 2007). This has been interpreted by the researchers as a factor that English major EFL learners may be more influenced as they are deeply engaged with the language (Boonchum, 2010).

Another reason for having more tendency to change the self-identity of EFL learners in those studies is the age of exposure to English (Goa et al., 2007). Researchers mention that the participants who were exposed earlier in their life to English are more subject to change in comparison with others. This could be due to psychological or personal factors as those EFL learners were not under the huge impact of the cultural values in their society when they were just children. Therefore, the years of studying English and early exposure have an influence on the change of self-identity of EFL learners.

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

### 3.4.2 Division in Learner's Self-Identity

After learning a new language, some learner's self-identities split between their real community and their imagined community. One way in which this split can be realized is through uttering native language words while speaking with English (Teer, 2013). Several researchers (e.g. Goa et al., 2007, & Boonchum, 2010) argue that this stage could be temporary as learners develop in their learning process. However, for some learner, this division continues even after learning the

language. One reason could be learner's hesitation as to follow which cultural norms in his/her society (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). For instance, there might be many normal things in English culture, but Persian EFL learners may not be able to do the same due to the nature of their society (ibid). Therefore, it can be stated that the similarities and differences between the two cultures have a huge impact on reflecting upon ideas that might be changed due to learning English.

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

It can be said that religious background is another factor of creating this division in the self-identity of EFL learners. For example, Persian learners who come from more religiously or socially conservative places find it very hard to switch between their identities when using the foreign language (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014).

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

### 3.4.3 No change in Learner's Self- Identity

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

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

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

A final factor could be the specialty of the EFL learners. Those EFL learners who study English as their specialty are more likely to be more influenced by the language in comparison with English non-majors. Both Boonchum (2010) & Teer (2013) reported that Thai learners who will be specialized in English are nearer to none in witnessing no change in their self-identity in comparison with English non-major ones.

It should be mentioned that generally the number of EFL learners who fall into this category are the least in comparison with the two previously mentioned categories. This number remains to be checked and compared with other categories in relation to Kurdish EFL learners.

### 3.5 Major Previous Studies on Language Learning and Self-identity

The relationship between language and identity has been the topic of many studies. The controversy over whether language is merely a tool to express one's identity (Ochs,2008) or it is the maker of the identity (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) has not been quite settled yet. This section highlights some of the major works which investigated the connection between learning a new language and the self-identity of the learner.

A prominent work in this area is Tylor's (2013) *Self and Identity in Adolescent Foreign Language Learning*. This book explains the relationship between self and identity among adolescents when they are learning a new language. It touches upon a vital issue which is the confusion felt by EFL learner in terms of expressing their self-identity. For Tylor, adolescents who learn a foreign language encounter the question of which language seems to be more effective in expressing their identity. The reason adolescents are addressed could be traced back to Erikson's (1950s) work who addressed the same issue.

Another significant book to learn about learning a foreign language and self-identity is *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* edited by Dornyei & Ushioda (2009). This book contains several articles on the role of motivation in learning a foreign language and how learners possibly express themselves with the foreign language they just learned. One interesting point in this book, among others, is that the role of English in technology, especially social networking, can influence the self-identity of EFL learners.

Many studies in form of journal papers (e.g. Goa, 2007, Boonchum, 2010, Zare-ee & Matin, 2014) show a strong relationship between learning English, self-identity and self-confidence of EFL learners. Goa (2007) investigates Chinese EFL learners. To him, learning English positively affects the self-confidence of EFL learners. Goa conducted a research on University level Chinese

EFL learners in five Universities in China. He concluded that learning English, for most of EFL learners, has a positive impact on their self-confidence. Another point worth mentioning is that few learners felt that there is a zero influence on their self-identity and self-confidence due to learning English.

Boonchum (2010) investigates whether learning English affects the self-identity and self-confidence of Thai EFL learners. Boonchum concludes that the need to use the language motivates the learners the most to learn English. Similar to Goa's (2007) study, Boonchum finds out that learning English increases the self-confidence of Thai EFL learners. Regarding the self-identity of EFL learners, Boonchum states that, based on EFL learners feedback, learning English has changed the perceptions of Thai EFL learners.

Zare-ee & Matin's (2014) study concerns Persian EFL learners in some language learning institutes and universities. They have found that learning English enhances the self-confidence of Persian EFL learners. Based on this paper, Persian EFL learners feel a great deal of change in their personality as a result of learning English.

This chapter and the previous one discussed the key terms and theoretical background to this study. This was all to provide an in-depth analysis of the theories around which this dissertation has been conducted. The following chapter covers the methodology utilized in this study. The last two chapters are devoted to data presentation and its analysis as well as discussing the findings.

# Chapter Four

## Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the description of the procedure followed in the practical part of this study. It sheds light on the adopted model, the process of sample selection, and the tools used in the study. The processes of data collection and data analysis are also discussed.

### 4.2 The Selected Model

Theorists distinguish two major approaches to defining and conceptualizing identity: psychological and pragmatic. Identity structure theory relies on psychological concepts of self, individualism, and social interaction. According to psychologists, social roles assumed by individuals underpin identity formation and reconstruction due to new social discourse experiences (Stryker, 2007). Thus, social structures perform the function of either facilitators of human interactions and establishment of organized networks or barriers to a unity of individuals. In the conducted study, the aspect of membership is a significant determinant of EFL learners' identity. Most respondents show their intention and readiness to use English for communication and other social purposes to enhance their vision of the self.

The psychological assumption about socially-construed identity applies to the related research as well since scholars assume either a psychological stand based on seminal works of Weinreich and Erikson or a pragmatic position defined by Peirce and James. For instance, Jenkins (2004) argues for the presence and relevance of both identity domains: collective and individual, which implies his affiliation with pragmatic identity theory that highlights the role of self-concept and responsive subconscious. Indeed, two of three identity constructs identified by pragmatists refer to

the individual order – the way a person views him/ herself in the world, including the associated emotions, feelings, and behavior (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016).

The founder of American pragmatism, James (2013) claims that the purpose and role of thinking are for doing, which means that thought precedes any action. To him, ‘people are pragmatic reasoners, sensitively attuned to the contextual affordances and constraints in their immediate surroundings, though not necessary to the source of these influences or their judgments and behavior’ (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012, p. 70). However, an individual’s response to contextual cues is not immediate but mediated and moderated by the effect produced on a person by those cues. The present study produced sound evidence of new socio-cultural values adopted by EFL learners after their exposure to English language and culture. Most respondents believe that their EFL course they took part in affected their worldviews and behavior.

The very phrase ‘learning English has been an experience that has affected my entire life’ echoes theoretical premises of pragmatism and psychology simultaneously. Indeed, the former underlines the value of learning in the life-long construction and reconstruction of identity, while the latter points out to the impact of a new experience on one’s identity. Along with learning, pragmatists recognize the contribution of society to the development of identity (Jenkins, 2004). The admitted split of identity into individual and collective counts for the assumption of psychologists that the membership in a group of people structures one’s thought and behavior (Stevens et al., 2017). Therefore, pragmatic and psychological theories of identity share a belief about the critical role of the affiliated relation of the self to others.

Pragmatic identity theory distinguishes three elements of identity: self, responsive subconscious, and social meaning of identity (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016), whereas identity structure analysis theory outlines six kinds of change such as change in self-confidence, additive

change, subtractive change, productive change, split change and zero change (see section 3.2.3 for details) (Goa et al., 2007). However, both theoretical perspectives have much in common, which proves their reciprocity. For instance, the psychological concept of self-confidence change refers to the effect produced in oneself by learning a foreign language. In turn, pragmatism claims the presence of self-consciousness of a learner in the process of learning, which results in the learner's recognition of the occurred change in personality, values, and behavior. In other words, EFL pragmatics stresses the awareness of EFL learners of socio-pragmatic variables of a foreign language, such as socio-cultural rules governing behavior in a foreign culture (Al-Rubai-ey, 2016).

This study produced sound evidence of both psychological and pragmatic assumptions concerning identity development and reconstruction due to learning a foreign language. Besides, the discussion of research findings with the theoretical literature is constantly moving back and forward between identity structure concepts and pragmatic identity constructs. For instance, the discussion of a reported change in self-confidence of learners preceded the analysis of the indicated recognition and understanding of the change occurring in ideas and behavior, i.e. a type of change in learners' personality dependent on their consciousness and reflection of the impact of learning English. The observed blending of psychological and pragmatic approaches to conceptualizing identity confirms the reciprocity of those views of identity. While laying the ground for a theory of human nature, which later informed the formulation of pragmatic identity theory, James pioneered experimental psychology. Indeed, that pragmatic philosopher analyzed the question of habit using psychological concepts (Lawlor, 2006).

Pragmatic identity theory is thus already a blending of pragmatism and psychology, where the conscious and unconscious are viewed within a social context. Tapia, Rojas, and Picado (2017) illustrated the strong link between psychology and pragmatism in their study of communication and language as influential factors of identity formation and development. They argue that

communicative pragmatics implies the awareness of semiotics of psychology, which indicates a psychological aspect in the pragmatic theory of identity. The obtained findings prove the psycho-pragmatic nature of identity among EFL learners. The observed integration of networks of psychological and pragmatic concepts allows assuming a conceptual blending theory of identity (Ren & Li, 2015).

### **4.3 Selection of the Sample**

It is widely accepted that a piece of research cannot include each and every one of the people to whom the research is related (Milles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Punch, 2006). That is why it is logical to take samples bearing in mind the time scale and representativeness of the research (Punch, 2006). Furthermore, O'Hara et al. (2011) believe that the way the samples are collected heavily depends on the extent to which the researcher claims generalisation of the findings. They argue that as long as the findings are not generalised, the researcher can decide on how the samples are collected.

This study investigates the impact of EFL on the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners in Kurdistan universities. This type of sample is called 'purposive sampling'. Maxwell (1997, cited in Teddlie & Yu, 2007) defines it as a type of sampling when 'particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices' (p. 87). Kurdish EFL learners at university level are the selected group of people here as the research is closely related to them.

The selected sample consists of 150 EFL learners who took part in the process of data collection. All of them filled in a 30-item Likert questionnaire. Three major universities in Kurdistan Region have been selected: Sulaimani University, Salahaddin University and Duhok University. After filling in the questionnaire, 45 EFL learners, 15 at each university, have been

asked to take part in a short focus group discussion. It is worth mentioning that the participants of the focus group discussion are from the respondents of the questionnaire. Finally, 15 participants in the focus group, 5 from each university, have been asked to be interviewed. The reason why the participants of the focus group and the interviewees from the same group is to confirm the results of the questionnaire. It has to be mentioned that data, which is presented and discussed in the coming chapters show consistency to a great extent regardless of the data collection tool.

#### **4.4 Data Collection Tools**

In this study, the instruments used for data collection are a questionnaire, focus group and interviews. Firstly, Hennink et al. (2011) argues that people who are involved in a questionnaire are called ‘respondents’, for an interview they are called ‘interviewees’ and for focus groups they are referred to as ‘participants’ as they take part in a focus group discussion. For the sake of distinction, these terms will be used consistently throughout this research. This section highlights the advantages and disadvantages for each data collection tool.

##### **4.4.1 Likert-Questionnaire**

The first instrument used for collecting data is a questionnaire. Thomas (1998, 162) defines a questionnaire as ‘a series of questions people answer about their life condition, beliefs, or attitudes’. It is vital to specify the objective(s) of a questionnaire. When designing a questionnaire, the researcher should think about how the obtained data can be analysed as it has been planned for. To this end, an instrumental test has been carried out and the questionnaire has been tested on ten respondents (details are provided in the coming sections).

There are generally two types of questions used in questionnaires: closed and open-ended. Closed questions are very structured, whereas, open-ended questions are not very structured and allow the respondents to write what they want (O’Hara, 2011). In closed questions, it is easy to

obtain some quantitative data while in open questions qualitative data can be collected. Therefore, in this study a mixed method of obtaining data has been used: it is logical to use a mixture of both types of questions. The questionnaire is known as Likert-questionnaire as the answers are scaled from 1 to 5.

Questionnaire is a conventional means of data collection in quantitative research, which allows obtaining large volumes of numerical data in a time and cost-effective manner. Survey method is beneficial for collecting data from a large number of sources and studying attributes, patterns, or features of a given phenomenon (Fowler, 2014). Typically, survey relies on a standardized or highly structured questionnaire comprised of a list of close-ended statements complemented by predefined answer options. This study utilizes a survey protocol embracing 30 statements related to EFL learners' experiences about learning and speaking English. The questionnaire content is consistent with the reviewed evidence to contribute to credibility of survey findings. The survey questionnaire is based on a five-point Likert scale, where '1' was an equivalent to 'strongly agree,' '2' to 'agree,' '3' to 'I do not know,' '4' to 'disagree,' and '5' to 'strongly disagree.' Thus, participants have been merely required to rate their agreement with 30 statements in correspondence with the scale.

The constructed survey questionnaire addresses EFL learners' emotions attributed to their experience. For example, 'I feel more confident when speaking English,' or 'I feel embarrassed when speaking English.' Then, it asks about changes occurring in learner's personality and recognizes it as positive. For instance, 'I can express my opinions better by using English rather than Kurdish,' or 'After studying English, I feel that I should be more proud of myself as a Kurd.' The next portion of survey statements refers to no impact produced by learning English. 'I think learning English has not affected my personality,' or 'No matter if I speak English or Kurdish, I

feel like I am the same person.’ Overall, the set of 30 statements are broad enough to study respondents’ views of the impact made by learning English on their personality.

In relation to the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires, Thomas (1998) believes that questionnaires seem to be reliable, presenting honest results as they are anonymous, they are time and money saving and it can be answered at a convenient time for respondents. However, the main disadvantage of questionnaires is the possibility of respondents not returning them and often they are completed in a hurry. It should be mentioned that almost all the distributed questionnaires for this study have been returned. However, in 3 of them the respondents chose one answer for all the 30 questions. Therefore, those three questionnaires have been entirely ignored and their results are disregarded (to view the questionnaire in full, see Appendix A)

#### 4.4.2 Focus Group

In order to have some follow up questions and obtain some specific answers, a chain of 3 focus group discussions have been held. Fifteen participants took part in these discussions, each one from a different university. Part of the data obtained through the discussions is presented in the next chapter. The other part, which is in the form of speeches and quotes are integrated with the interview answers for the sake of convenience. Focus group discussion, which is a type of interview, is a common method of data collection in qualitative research, which allows gaining an insight into the issue through personal communication with social actors exposed to the studied reality (Klenke, 2016). The face-to-face contact with interviewees enables the researcher to capture both verbal and non-verbal information reported by interviewees consciously (by speech) or unconsciously (by body position, gestures, facial appearances, and so on). In this respect, interview requires building a rapport between a researcher and interviewees to encourage sharing of ideas or disclosing some sensitive information. Besides, the active researcher’s involvement in the process of data collection provides interview research with a high level of flexibility and adaptability to the

situational context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). While taking benefits from the researcher's position, it is essential to consider risk of researcher bias during personal collection of data. To reduce researcher's subjectivity, interview researches commonly use a structured questionnaire to provide a general guidance to the process. It presents a list of open-ended questions supported with a list of possible answers for an interviewee's choice.

A structured interview questionnaire based on the reviewed evidence related to the problem has been used as an instrument in the conducted focus group interview. Since this research part addresses a sample of 45 participants (15 per each university), it contains only five questions to ensure that the interviewing process would not last more than half an hour. First, it asks about the perceived changes attributed to the undergone course in English language. Second, it inquires about the impact of learning English on individual's behavior. Third, it welcomes participants to indicate the most prominent area affected by learning English. Fourth, it addresses the perceived value or importance when speaking in English compared to Kurdish. This question has been applied only to those respondents showing uncertainty about the occurring changes. Fifth, it asks for reasons for the absence of any changes in those respondents feeling no personality impact after learning English. The developed five-question protocol has been useful in obtaining perceptions of EFL learners and offering them an opportunity to provide details (to see the list of the focus group questions, see appendix B).

#### 4.4.3 Individual Interviews

The other instrument used for collecting data is interviews (Punch, 2009). Cohen et al. (2011) explain the research interview as a conversation, mostly initiated by the interviewer between two people in order to obtain some information relevant to the research in an attempt to answer research questions. Unlike the daily conversation, interviews should have specific purposes behind preparation by the interviewer (Neuman, 2000).

Neuman (2000) mentions three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. In this study, the semi-structured interview is used. Here, the focus of the subject is decided by the interviewer with giving scope to the interviewee to talk about his/her feelings and opinions (Wengraf, 2001). The rationale behind choosing this type is to give the opportunity to the learners talk about their feelings and opinions on the impact of learning a foreign language on their self-identity.

To consider the advantages of interview, Thomas (1998) argues that the researcher can achieve in-depth information and rephrase the question in case the interviewee finds it confusing. However, interviews could be subject to bias by putting words in the mouth of the interviewee. That is why this point has been taken into consideration while designing the questions for interviews in this study. It should be mentioned that the interviewees were from the same group of EFL learners who have answered the questionnaire and took part in the focus group discussion. The reason behind holding these interviews and focus group discussions is to obtain some data that was not possible to have from the questionnaire (to see a sample of questions of the interview, see appendix C).

#### **4.5 Multiple Methods and Triangulation**

It is widely accepted that combining multiple ways of data collection have become more widespread in recent years. Using a mixture of methods is called ‘triangulation’. Flick (2006) defines triangulation as ‘going beyond the limitations of a single method by combining several methods and giving them equal relevance’ (p.24). This combination increases the validity and reliability of the research (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). Furthermore, many researchers, such as Punch (2009) and Cohen et al. (2011) recommend following triangulation as it gives a more completed picture of the subject under scrutiny as it investigates the issue from various perspectives.

For all these reasons, a triangulation approach has been followed as both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have been mixed in this study. However, it could be argued that keeping the balance between using both approaches is not an easy task and could be regarded as a point that needs more attention and improvement.

#### **4.6 Pilot Study**

Piloting a questionnaire is considered to be crucial to gaining accurate results. Cohen et al. (2011) believe that it increases validity, practicability and reliability. Thomas (1998) argues that by piloting a questionnaire, one can improve the weaknesses of the questions. Therefore, the questions for both the questionnaire and interviews have been piloted before implementing them. For this purpose, the questionnaire has been piloted in two ways. First, through sending it to some distinguished scholars such as Norton Pierce, a very famous scholar in the field of EFL, and Levitan, one of the inventors of Pragmatic Identity Theory, who are renowned scholars in this field. Both have offered some modifications and their comments have been considered in the final version of the questionnaire. This is in addition to the supervisor's continuous guidance and valuable comments.

Second, an instrumental test has been carried out to check the analysability of the data. For this purpose, prior to the process of data collection, 10 EFL learners have been intentionally selected. The EFL learners selected for this test were from various levels at different universities. It should be mentioned that the results of this pilot study have been used to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and whether or not the collected data meet the targets that they are set for. However, the results of this instrumental test is disregarded in the final results as the questions have been modified and the targeted learners were known to the researcher.

#### **4.7 Validity and Reliability**

It is essential for any academic research to be valid and reliable otherwise it lacks a basic criterion of a research (Davis, 2004). Brown (1997) defines validity as ‘the degree to which the results can be accurately interpreted and effectively generalized’ (Brown & Rodgers 2002: 241). This idea concurs with what Cohen et al. (2011) suggest on the meaning of validity.

On the other hand, reliability is defined as ‘the degree to which the results of a study are consistent’ (Brown & Rodgers 2002: 241). What is meant here is that if the obtained data is ‘re-analyzed’ it should produce a similar or exact result under same circumstances.

Mostly validity and reliability are interlinked. However, having one in a research does not necessarily prove the existence of the other (Hernon, 2009). To ensure validity and reliability, a mixed method of research has been used in this study because Punch (2005) believes that it increases the validity of the research as both types of qualitative and quantitative data have been used. For the sake of reliability, three different data collections have been used and the results show consistency to a great extent regardless of which tool has been used.

#### **4.8 Data Analysis Method**

The data has been analysed by using a specially designed program very widely used for statistical purposes known as JMP. It is a software created in the end of 1980s by John Sall, a co-founder of SAS (Statistical Analysis Software). Its name comes from John’s Macintosh Program (JMP). For this study, JMP version 13.1 has been used. It is a program based on coding. Most of the data are analysed by an expert in the field of statistical data analysis based on the instructions given by the researcher. This study, by using JMP software, can be regarded a breakthrough from using the conventional SPSS program. The logic behind using this software, which is not available for free, is that it is more advanced in terms of providing better results (Brinkley, 2013).

Furthermore, finding deviations and having easy ways in form of equations to correct them is another important feature of this programme.

The aim here is to find out the impact of EFL on the self-identity of Kurdish learners. For this purpose, four variables have been created. 'Motivation' to learn English as a dependent variable and 'changing self-identity' 'no-change in self-identity' and 'divided self-identity' as three independent variables. The logic behind this classification is to divide learners into various types. Motivation to learn English is a dependent variable as it has a direct connection with the attempt EFL learners make for learning English and the possible impacts of learning English on the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners.

The first stage of the analysis is presenting the questions separately divided by the four sub-categories. The ranking of the items per category has been presented. Then, leniency between the variables are illustrated in form of tables. After that, a multiple learner regression between each dependent variable against the independent variable has been shown. Another important part of the data analysis process in the correlation coefficient between the variables. Here, the correlation between the variables are illustrated.

After presenting the questionnaire results, the data collected from the focus group discussion is illustrated in charts and the answers of the individual interviews have been integrated as they are presented in form of quotes.

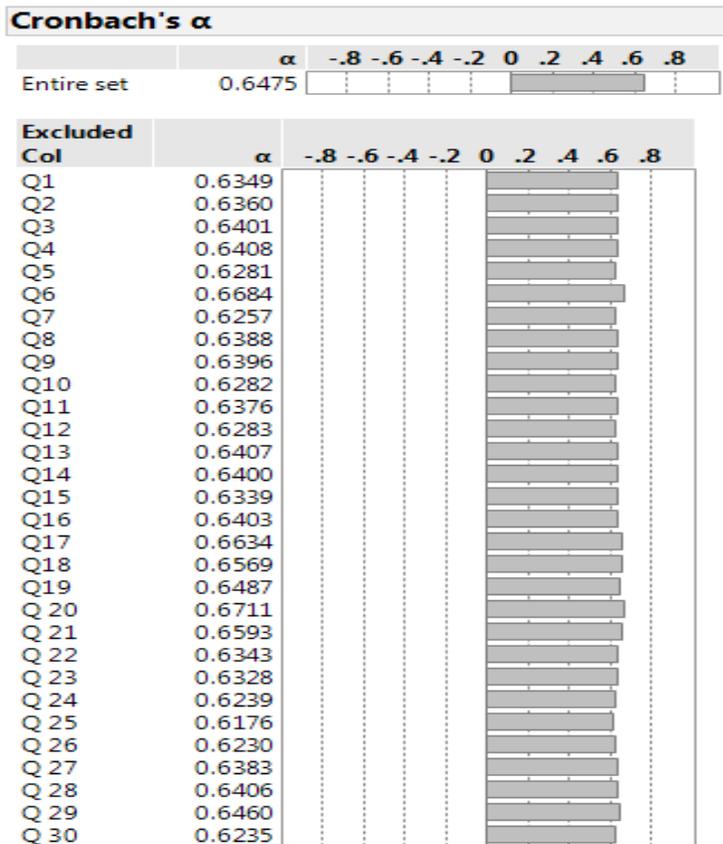
# Chapter Five

## Analysis of Data

### 5.1 Reliability of Data

The first step of data analysis is to check the efficiency and reliability of the collected data. Based on the instructions of the statistical program, which is called JMP version 13.1, used in this study typically if the data ranges between 0.6 to 0.7 in the positive direction, it is considered as acceptable and efficient for scientific purposes.

Figure 1 The value of the reliability and co-efficiency for the internal consistency of each question



Based on Figure 1, the data seems to be reliable and efficient for all study variables as it lies between the acceptable range, and the data is eligible for statistical analysis and scientific research.

The main purpose of this section is to present the details of data obtained by a questionnaire as well as the focus group discussion regarding learning English and its impact on the self-identity of EFL learners in Kurdistan. For the sake of data analysis, the questionnaire is divided into four main variables, a dependent variable (motivation to learn English), and three independent variables (change in the self-identity of the learner, no change in the self-identity of the learner, and division in the self-identity of the learner).

A five-point Likert-type scale questionnaire has been used for rating the answers of the questions in which 1 is used to show 'I strongly agree' to the lowest weight which is 5 to 'I disagree'. Between these two weights, there are three others: 2 to 'I agree', 3 to 'I do not Know', and 4 to 'I strongly disagree'. The reason why the rating is done in this way is intentional as it will prevent learners from giving the same number to all questions. This will make the respondents read every question as some of them contradict others. Based on the results, the values of the arithmetic averages reached by the study will be solved to interpret the data as follows:

*Table 2 The scope of each item in the questionnaire*

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

The above table shows the range for each point in the questionnaire. If the *mean* of the answer lies between 1 and 2, it is understood to be in high agreement with the question. The same measurement is true for other options. It should be mentioned that *mean* is the average.

As it has been stated earlier, the data analysis starts with analyzing the questions individually and, then, the correlations between the variables are presented. After that, the impact of each variable on the other is analyzed and explained.

### 5.1.1 Statistical Analysis of Questionnaire Data

This section presents the data collected from the 150 respondents through a 30-item 5-scale Likert-questionnaire.

#### 5.1.1.1 Statistical Analysis of the Questions Per Variable

The arithmetic weights and standard deviations of the responses obtained show the following:

##### 5.1.1.1.1. Variable number 1: Motivation to Learn English

The following questions in the questionnaire aim at finding the motivation behind learning English by Kurdish EFL learners.

*Table 3 Statistical Analysis of Dependent Variable Motivation to Learn English*

Variables	Questions	Answers of Sample Members					Weighted Mean	Statistical Indicators		
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Standard Deviation	p-value	Ranks
Motivation to Learn English	I study English because I like English culture, songs and movies	47	62	12	8	21	2.2933	1.3389	<.0001*	3
	I feel more confident when I speak English	62	59	15	6	8	1.9267	1.0750	<.0001*	1

I think learning English affects my personality and behavior in a positive way	49	70	18	6	7	2.0133	1.0166	<.0001*	2
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The above table shows the following:

1. The weighted mean of the question ‘I feel more confident when I speak English’ is (1.9267) with a standard deviation (1.0750), and it is in rank 1 which indicates that students highly agree with this question. It is worth mentioning that 121 respondents out of 150 say that they either strongly agree or just agree with this statement. This shows that %80.6 of respondents say that learning English has given them more confidence and this might be one way to show the impact of learning English on the personality of the EFL learners in Kurdistan. Interestingly, only 14 out 150 learners show their strong disagreement or disagreement with this statement.

2. The weighted mean of the question ‘I think learning English affects my personality and behavior in a positive way’ is (2.0133) with a standard deviation (1.0166), and it is in rank 2 which indicates student’s agreement is at the moderate level. In other words, students believe that learning English influences their personality and behavior in positive manner. The number of learners who said they do not know is more than the strongly disagree and disagree together. This indicates that very few learners state that learning English does not affect their personality in a positive way. This can be regarded as a motivation which triggers learning the language.

3. The weighted mean of the question ‘I study English because I like English culture, songs and movies’ is (2.2933) with a standard deviation (1.3389), and it is in rank 3 which indicates that students moderately agree with this question. They want to study English because they like to be

familiar with English culture, songs, and movies. Surprisingly, this might be the least at the level of motivation among the ones mentioned in the questionnaire.

It can be understood from the above variable that learning English affects the confidence and the personality of the learners in a positive way. Learning about the culture, songs and movies is not considered as a strong motivation only for %19.3 of the learners. The highest disagreement is at this question bearing in mind that %72.3 of learners either strongly or just agree with this statement. Therefore, it could be said that understanding English culture, movies and songs is another trigger to learn English by Kurdish EFL learners. It should be mentioned that the order of these points is based on the weighted mean of each question in each variable.

#### 5.1.1.1.2 Variable number 2: Change in the Self-identity of the Learner

The following questions in the questionnaire aim at checking whether learning English affects the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners.

Table 4 Statistical Analysis of Independent Variable Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner

Variables	Questions	Answers of Sample Members					Statistical Indicators			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value	Ranks
Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner	I have, somehow, two different personalities after learning English.	42	61	27	7	13	2.2533	1.1712	<.0001*	2

I can express my ideas and talk about my feelings better in English.	27	54	42	11	16	2.5667	1.1839	<.0001*	6
When I speak English, I feel I am thinking differently.	30	66	31	6	17	2.4267	1.1891	<.0001*	5
I can express my opinions better in English rather than in Kurdish.	17	44	30	19	40	3.1400	1.3904	<.0001*	14
When I speak with my classmates, I prefer to use English for interaction.	25	63	33	10	19	2.5667	1.2174	<.0001*	6
I think learning English has been a new experience which has affected my entire life	49	65	21	4	11	2.0867	1.1109	<.0001*	1
After learning English, I began to reject some ideas, such as my opinion about the equality between man and women	31	42	33	20	24	2.7600	1.3545	<.0001*	11
It is somehow challenging for me to agree on many cultural norms in Kurdish society after learning English such as arranged marriage	12	60	49	18	11	2.7067	1.0268	<.0001*	8

After learning English, I take some issues such as Global Warming more seriously	20	52	52	8	18	2.6800	1.1488	<.0001*	7
I believe learning English gives me a new identity in the sense that I have a different opinion about myself.	32	70	29	8	11	2.3067	1.0927	<.0001*	3
I feel I am socially more attached to English society after learning English.	40	63	24	5	18	2.3200	1.2442	<.0001*	4
I think the more I learn English and know about its culture, the more I feel a change in my personality.	24	63	22	15	26	2.7067	1.3338	<.0001*	8
I think even if I speak in Kurdish, my personality and behaviors change after learning English.	19	57	24	11	39	2.9600	1.4184	<.0001*	13
It is easy for me to convert (change) my thoughts and behaviors when I speak English.	22	56	34	19	19	2.7133	1.2334	<.0001*	9

I find it more comfortable to speak about socially sensitive issues such as homosexuality using English rather than Kurdish.	33	60	31	12	14	2.4267	1.1891	<.0001*	5
I think learning English has affected my religious beliefs in the sense that I am more open to communicate with people from a different religion	28	44	28	21	29	2.8600	1.3952	<.0001*	12
I believe I am more aware of political issues and my political views have changed as a result of learning English	24	54	30	20	22	2.7467	1.2911	<.0001*	10

The above table shows the following:

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

2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question ‘I have, somehow, two different personalities after learning English’ is in the second-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.2533, standard deviation 1.1712, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In some way, students believe that they have two different characters after learn English. This could lead into having a divided personality by EFL learners.

3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘ I believe learning English gives me a new identity in a sense...’ is in the third -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3067, standard deviation 1.0927, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. That means, English language provides a new identity to the learner.

4. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I feel I am socially more attached to English society after learning English’ is in the fourth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3200, standard deviation 1.2442 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. Therefore, English is greatly links learners to the English communities.

5. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the questions relating to ‘ When I speak English, I believe I am thinking differently’ and ‘I find it more comfortable to speak about socially sensitive issues such as homosexuality in English rather in Kurdish’ are in the fifth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the means of both questions 2.4267, standard deviations 1.1891 and their  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of these questions with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English makes

people have different ideas. It provides more comfortability to speak on the sensitive matters of the communities compared to Kurdish.

6. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the questions relating to ‘ I can express my ideas and talk about my feelings better in English’ and ‘When I speak with my classmates, I prefer to use English for interaction’ are in the sixth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the means are 2.5667, standard deviations (1.1839, 1.2174) respectively, and their  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of these questions with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, students believe that English is an easier language to express the ideas and interact with others. It is understood, for these learners, English is preferred language for communication.

7. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘After learning English, I take some issues such as Global Warming more seriously’ is in the seven -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.6800, standard deviation 1.1488 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English Language takes its learners to the whole worlds, and gives more information and knowledge regarding global issues around the world.

8. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the questions relating to ‘ It is somehow challenging for me to agree on many cultural norms in Kurdish society after learning English such as arranged marriage’ and ‘I think the more I learn English language and know about its culture, the more I feel a change in my personality’ are in the eighth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the means are 2.7067, standard deviations (1.0268, 1.3338) respectively, and their  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of these questions with

a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, students believe that English greatly influences their personality.

9. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘It is easy for me to convert (change) my thoughts and behaviors when I speak English’ is in the ninth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.7133, standard deviation 1.2334 and its  $p$  –  $value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. That means, English Language facilitates of shifting the ideas through a conversation.

10. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I believe I am more aware of political issues and my political views have changed as a result of learning English ‘ is in the tenth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.7467, standard deviation 1.2911 and its  $p$  –  $value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. Thus, English Language provides more information about politics, international relationship, and gives people some chances to be a great and real politician.

11. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘After learning English, I began to reject some ideas, such as my opinion about the equality between man and women’ is in the eleventh -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.7600, standard deviation 1.3545 and its  $p$  –  $value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English Language increases the abilities of people against weird and controversial issues related to the culture.

12. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I think learning English has affected my religious beliefs in the sense that I am more open to communicate with people from a different religion’ is in the twelfth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.8600, standard deviation 1.3952 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English language makes most of the targeted people to be more tolerant about religious differences and respect the others on the different faiths.

13. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I think even if I speak in Kurdish, my personality and behaviors change after learning English’ is in the thirteenth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.9600, standard deviation 1.4184 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. Even though, Kurdish is the native language of the learners, the effect of English on the attitude of the learner cannot be stopped after learning English.

14. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I can express my opinions better in English rather than in Kurdish’ is in the fourteenth -place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.1400, standard deviation 1.3904 and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students disagree with the content of this question with a high level of degree of the negative direction. In other words, Kurdish learners can better express their opinions in their own language rather in English.

### 5.1.1.1.3 Statistical Analysis Variable Number 3: No-change in the self-identity

The following questions aim at checking the possibility of no-change in the self-identity of Kurdish EFL learners.

Table 5 Statistical Analysis of Independent Variable No.3 No-Change in the Self-Identity of Learners

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

Table 5 shows the following:

1. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘ No matter if I speak English or Kurdish, I feel like I am the same person’ is in the first-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.8133, standard deviation 1.4396, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, Kurdish learners of English language do not feel any deficiency during speaking in English.
2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I find it very hard to change my thinking and behavior just because I studied English’ is in the second-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.1800, standard deviation 1.3663, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students disagree with the content of this question with a high degree of negative direction. This means that for these learners English cannot really change the personality and behavior of this group of learners.
3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I do not feel that my ideas or behaviors changed as a result of learning English’ is in the third-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.2267, standard deviation 1.3862, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating that students disagree with the content of this question with a high degree of negative direction. Therefore, English language makes some learners to feel no change in attitudes.
4. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘I feel embarrassed when speaking English’ is in the fourth-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 3.3733, standard deviation 1.4025, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that

students disagree with the content of this question with a high degree of the negative direction. In other words, these EFL learners feel a shamed when speaking English

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

Despite these figures and numbers, one has to compare this variable with the previous one in terms of the agreement and disagreement with the content of the questions.

#### 5.1.1.1.4 Statistical Analysis of Independent Variable Number 4: Divided-Identity

The following questions aim at finding out whether learning English creates a state of divided-identity for Kurdish EFL learners.

Table 6 Statistical Analysis of Independent Variable No Divided-Identity of the Learner

Variables	Questions	Answers of Sample Members					Statistical Indicators			
		Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	P-value	Ranks
Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner	Sometimes speaking in English makes me have a different view from most of the people around me	29	63	41	7	10	2.3733	1.0590	<.0001*	2

After studying English, I feel that I should be prouder of myself as a Kurd	59	51	14	9	17	2.1600	1.3163	<.0001*	1
After studying English literature, I have a better understanding of Kurdish literature	33	46	27	9	35	2.7800	1.4649	<.0001*	3
I feel like I am a kind of lost in terms of how I think after learning English	7	34	46	20	43	3.3867	1.2467	<.0001*	5
I get confused between English and Kurdish culture when I act with a foreigner	15	39	41	14	41	3.1800	1.3515	<.0001*	4

Table 6 shows the following:

1. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘After studying English, I feel that I should be more proud of myself as a Kurd’ is in the first-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.1600, standard deviation 1.3163, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English language makes some Kurdish learners feel pleased and proud of their mother tongue.

2. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘Sometimes speaking in English makes me have a different view from most of the people around me’ is in the second-place of

agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.3733, standard deviation 1.0590, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. In other words, English Language makes these learners think in different direction compared with the rest of the people.

3. The arithmetic mean and its ranking of the question relating to ‘ After studying English literature, I have a better understanding of Kurdish literature’ is in the third-place of agreement by the sample members, in which the mean is 2.7800, standard deviation 1.4649, and its  $p - value = 0.0001$  less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that students agree with the content of this question with a moderate degree of the positive direction. This means, these English learners believe that there are some relationships between English and Kurdish Languages at least in terms of literature.

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

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

## 5.2 Multiple Linear Regression

This section presents the leniency between the variables in the study.

Figure 2 Predicted plot

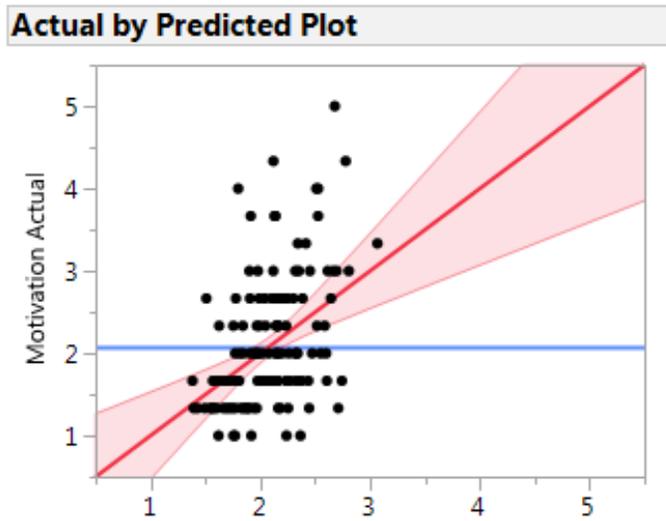


Figure 2 shows how the predicted and the real values of the response variable 'Motivation' are related to each other. Furthermore, it illustrates that the predicted variables 'Change in Self-Identity, Divided Self-Identity, no change in Self-Identity' are linearly related to motivation.

Table 7 Summary of Fit

<b>RSquare</b>	0.191594
<b>RSquare Adj</b>	0.174983
<b>Root Mean Square Error</b>	0.70629
<b>Mean of Response</b>	2.077778
<b>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</b>	150

In Table 7,  $R^2$  shows the amount of variance of  $y$  explained by the changes in  $x$ . In this case, the variables (Change Self-Identity, No-change in Self-Identity, Divided Self-Identity) altogether explain 19.16% of the variance in motivation, and the remaining 80.84% of the variation of motivation is presumed to be due to random variability or some other variables which are not related to our study. On the other hand, Root Mean Square Error ( $MSE = S = 0.70629$ ), indicating that within every combination of these variables, the standard deviation of Motivation is about 0.71. It is also notable that the mean of motivation is 2.08, and total observation number is 150.

Table 8 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio
Model	3	17.261231	5.75374	11.5341
Error	146	72.831362	0.49884	Prob > F
C. Total	149	90.092593		<.0001*

Analysis of Variance is used to test whether or not the means of predicted variables are equal, and all equal to zero.

$$H_0: \mu(\text{Self\_Identity}) = \mu(\text{Div\_Self\_Identity}) = \mu(\text{No\_Self\_Identity}) = 0$$

$H_1$ : at least one of the means is not equal to zero

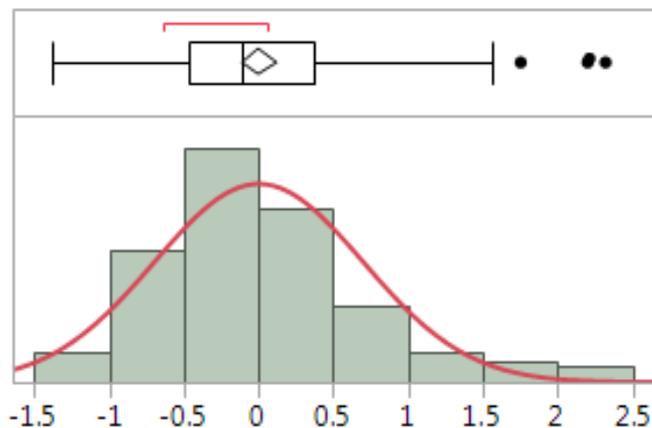
While P-value = 0.0001, and it is less than = 0.05, the mean of the predicted variables is not equal which indicates that at least one variable has affected motivation.

Table 9 Parameter Estimates

Term	Estimate Beta	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob> t
Intercept	0.3583825	0.454348	0.79	0.4315
Self-Identity	0.6217117	0.123365	5.04	<.0001*
No-change in Self-Identity	0.0060388	0.075857	0.08	0.9367
Divided Self-Identity	0.0296554	0.098316	0.30	0.7634

In table 9, since the P-values of variable (*Self – Identity* = 0.0001) are less than ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), this variable is significant, while the others are not. However, these results cannot be concentrated before testing the normality of the residuals of the response variable (motivation).

Figure 3 Residual Normality Plot



— Normal(7.3e-17,0.69914)

Figure 3 is the graph of normality. Even though, the residual of motivation has (Mean = 7.3 e-17 =0) and (Variance = 0.69914), the plot does not look like that the data comes from a normal distribution.

Table 10 Goodness-of-Fit Test

Shapiro-Wilk W Test	
W	Prob<W
0.948369	<.0001*

Note: Ho = The data is from the Normal distribution. Small p-values reject Ho.

While the ( $Prob < W$ ) = 0.0001, and it is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the fit of the residuals does not come from a normal data. Thus, the data need to be transformed for normality, then refitting the model again.

Figure 4 Box-Cox Transformations

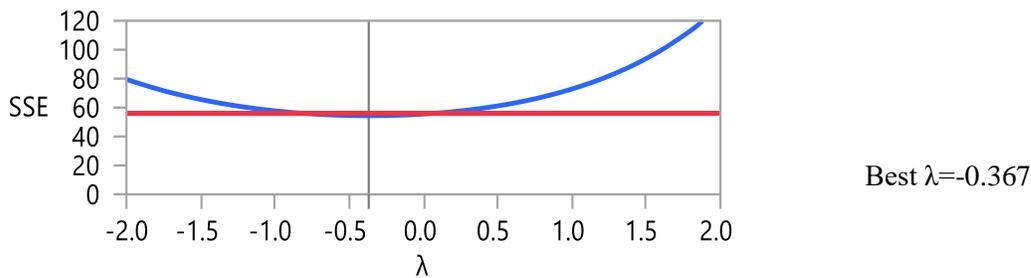


Figure 4 is the Box-Cox Normality method is used to select the best Lambda ( $\lambda$ ) to transform the response variable of the data (*Motivation*) with the following formula:

$$y'_\lambda = \frac{y^\lambda - 1}{\lambda (\bar{g})^{\lambda-1}} \quad \text{While } \bar{g} = \text{Geometric Mean} = \sqrt[n]{y_1 * y_2 * \dots * y_n}$$

Figure 5 Residual Normality Plot after Transforming the Data

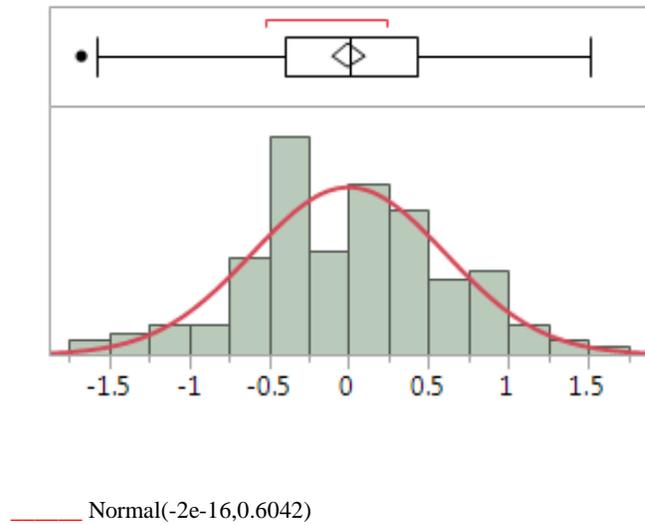


Figure 5 now looks like a symmetric plot, and the data come from normal distribution with (Mean = 0) and (Variance = 0.6042). To confirm the normality of the data, it should make Goodness of Fit Test as shown below:

Table 11 Goodness-of-Fit Test After Transform the Data

Shapiro-Wilk W Test	
W	Prob<W
0.992893	0.6667

Note: Ho = The data is from the Normal distribution. Small p-values reject Ho.

In table 11, while the ( $Prob < W$ ) = 0.6667, and it is bigger than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , there is no evidence to reject the normality of the residuals. Thus, the fit of the residuals of the response variable (motivation) comes from a normal data.

Table 12 Summary of Fit after Transforming the Data

<b>RSquare</b>	0.193605
<b>RSquare Adj</b>	0.177035
<b>Root Mean Square Error</b>	0.610377
<b>Mean of Response</b>	1.436509
<b>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</b>	150

Table 12 shows the summary of fit after the transform which indicates that there are almost the same results of the fit with a little bit of the changing in  $R^2$  from 19.16 % to 19.36 %, and Root Mean Square Error decreased to 0.610377. Furthermore, the mean of response (mean of motivation) changes from 2.077778 to 1.436509

Table 13 Parameter Estimates after Transforming the Data

<b>Term</b>	<b>Estimate Beta</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>t Ratio</b>	<b>Prob&gt; t </b>
<b>Intercept</b>	-0.114964	0.392649	-0.29	0.7701
<b>Change in Self-Identity</b>	0.543257	0.106612	5.010	<.0001*
<b>No-change in Self-Identity</b>	0.0150915	0.065556	0.23	0.8183
<b>Divided Self-Identity</b>	0.0320805	0.084965	0.38	0.7063

Table 13 shows the parameter estimates after transforming the data, and it shows the same results in which only Self-Identity variable is significant because of its small p-value = 0.0001. On the other hand, the estimated beta of change in Self-Identity is 0.543257 which shows the positive relation between change in the self-Identity of the learner and motivation to learn English. In other words, with increasing every unit of Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, the motivation to

learn English increases by 54.33 %. Furthermore, the variables of No-change in Self-Identity, Divided Self-Identity are not significant while their p-values = (0.8183, 0.7063) respectively and are both greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that these two variables do not have any influence on the (motivation to learn English).

Thus, the linear regression equation will be:

$$\text{Motivation to Learn English} = -0.114964 + 0.543257 (\text{Change in the Self-identity of the Learner}) + 0.150915 (\text{No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner}) + 0.0320805 (\text{Divided Self-Identity of the Learner})$$

## 5.3 Simple Linear Regression

### 5.3.1. Simple linear Regression between Self-Identity and Motivation

Figure 6 Fit of Motivation by Self-Identity

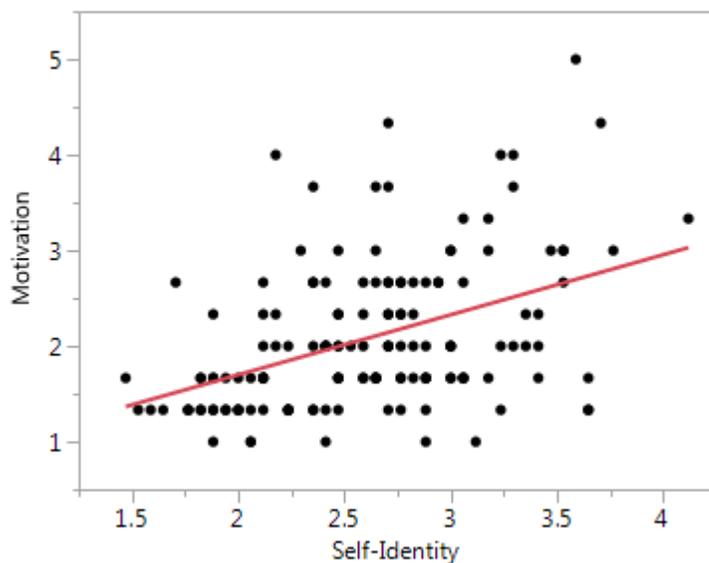


Figure 6 shows the linear relation between self-identity and motivation, and it looks like there is somewhat linear association between change in the change in self-Identity of the learner and motivation to learn English.

*Table 14 Summary of Fit Motivation by Self-Identity*

<b>RSquare</b>	0.190918
<b>RSquare Adj</b>	0.185451
<b>Root Mean Square Error</b>	0.701795
<b>Mean of Response</b>	2.077778
<b>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</b>	150

Table 14 illustrates that  $R^2 = 0.190918$  and it is almost the same result of the multiple regression model  $R^2 = 0.193605$ . This indicates that almost all the variances of motivation to learn English are explained by change in the self-identity of the learner. This means that the other two variables (No-Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, and Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner) do not have any role in learning English.

*Table 15 Parameter Estimates of Fit Motivation by Self-Identity*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Estimate beta</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>t Ratio</b>	<b>Prob&gt; t </b>
<b>Intercept</b>	0.4442603	0.282295	1.57	0.1177
<b>Self-Identity</b>	0.6278971	0.10625	5.91	<.0001*

In Table 15, the estimate beta value of the self-identity is 0.6278971. It is increased compared to the estimate value of beta of multiple regression, which is 0.543257. The decreasing value of the

self-identity estimator in the multiple regression relies on the lack of importance of the other two variables on the motivation to learn English. Individually, fit, as (Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner) increases one unit. The motivation to learn English increases by 62.79% while with multiple regression model increases by 54.33%. Here, the regression equation becomes as below:

$$\text{Motivation to lean English} = 0.44 + 0.63 * (\text{Change in the Self - Identity of the Learner})$$

### 5.3.2. Simple linear Regression between No Change in Self-Identity and Motivation

Figure 7 Fit of Motivation by No-Self-Identity

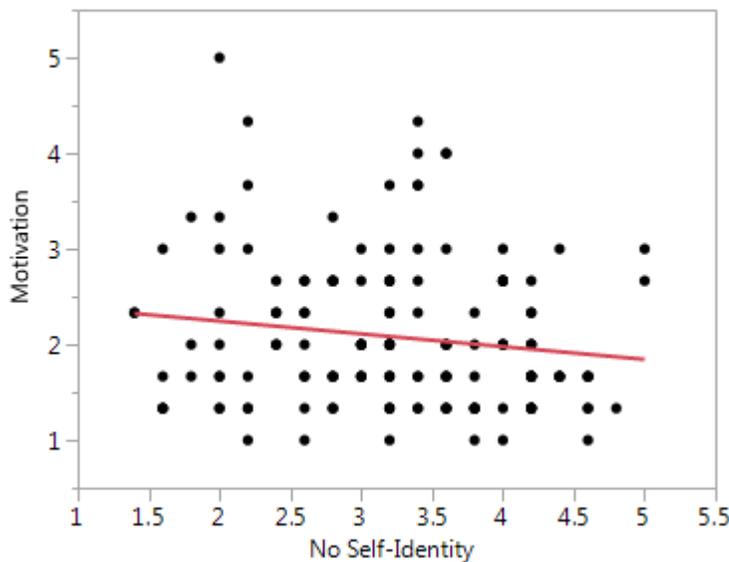


Figure 7 shows the linear relation between No- change in Self-Identity and Motivation. It does not seem that there is any linear relation between No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner and Motivation to Learn English.

Table 16 Summary of Fit Motivation by No-Self-Identity

<b>RSquare</b>	0.021659
<b>RSquare Adj</b>	0.015048
<b>Root Mean Square Error</b>	0.771718
<b>Mean of Response</b>	2.077778
<b>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</b>	150

In Table 16,  $R^2$  is 0.021659. This indicates that the variable No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner explains only 2 % of the variance in Motivation to Learn English. It is evident that the variable No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner does not have any influence on Motivation to Learn English.

Table 17 Parameter Estimates of Fit Motivation by No-change in Self-Identity

<b>Term</b>	<b>Estimate</b> <b>Beta</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>t Ratio</b>	<b>Prob&gt; t </b>
<b>Intercept</b>	2.511925	0.247986	10.13	<.0001*
<b>No Self-Identity</b>	-0.133447	0.073724	-1.81	0.0723

Table 17 shows the same results of the Table 11 that variable No-Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner does not have any effect on the Motivation to Learn English because of its big p-value =0.0723 which is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### 5.3.3. Simple linear Regression between Divided Identity and Motivation

Figure 8 Fit of Motivation by Divided Self-Identity

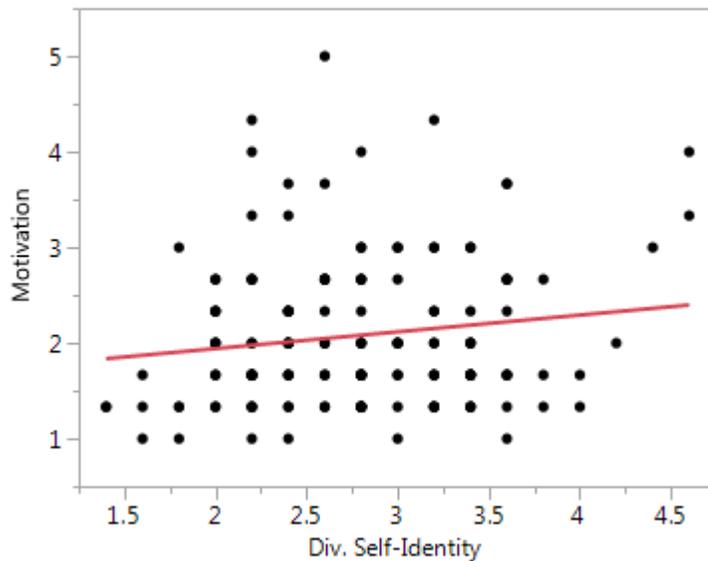


Figure 8 shows the linear relation between Divided Self-Identity and Motivation. It does not seem that there is any linear relation between Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner and Motivation to Learn English.

Table 18 Summary of Fit Motivation by Div. Self-Identity

<b>RSquare</b>	0.020948
<b>RSquare Adj</b>	0.014333
<b>Root Mean Square Error</b>	0.771999
<b>Mean of Response</b>	2.077778
<b>Observations (or Sum Wgts)</b>	150

In Table 18,  $R^2$  is 0.020948. This indicates that the variable Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner explains only 2 % of the variance in Motivation to Learn English. It is

evident that the variable Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner does not have any effect on Motivation to Learn English.

Table 19 Parameter Estimates of Fit Motivation by Div. Self-Identity

Term	Estimate Beta	Std Error	t Ratio	Prob> t
Intercept	1.5902636	0.281115	5.66	<.0001*
Div. Self-Identity	0.1756175	0.098688	1.78	0.0772

Table 19 shows the same results of Table 13 that variable Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner does not have influence on Motivation to Learn English because of its high p-value =0.0772 which is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## 5.4 Correlation Coefficient

This section presents the correlation between the variables in the study.

Table 20 Correlation Matrix Between Variables

	Motivation	Self-identity	No_Self_Identity	Divided_Self_Identity
Motivation	1.0000	0.4369	-0.1472	0.1447
Self-identity	0.4369	1.0000	-0.3648	0.2755
No_Self_Identity	-0.1472	-0.3648	1.0000	0.1640
Div_Self_Identity	0.1447	0.2755	0.1640	1.0000

Figure 9 Scatterplot Matrix of the Correlation Between the Predictor Variables

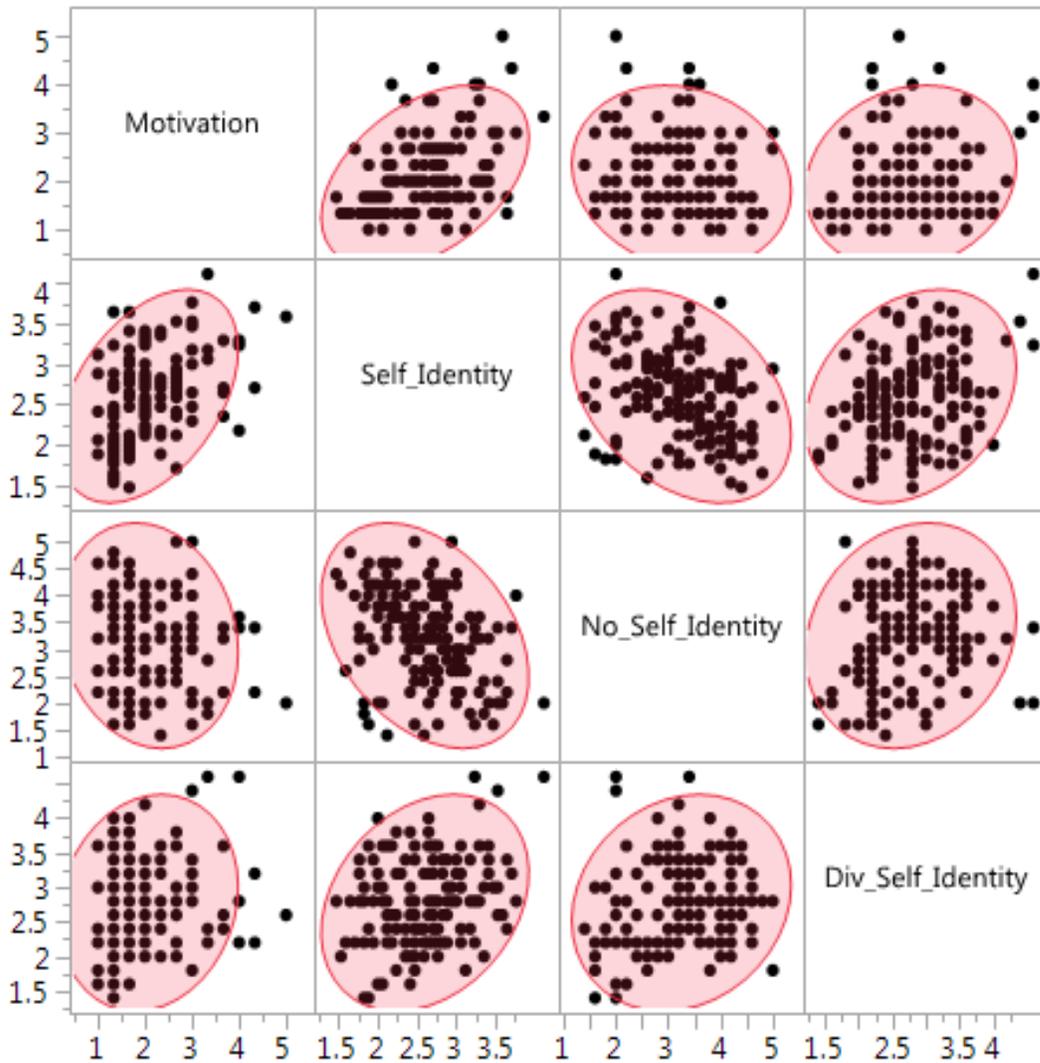


Table 20 and figure 9 show the power of correlation between the variables. The correlation between ‘Motivation to Learn English’ and ‘Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner’ is about 0.44, which indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between these two variables. In other words, as the variable of ‘Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner’ increases, ‘Motivation to Learn English’ also increases. Furthermore, the correlation between ‘Motivation to Learn English’ and ‘No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner’ is about -0.15. The relationship between these two variables is weak and negative, which indicates that, as ‘No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner’ increases ‘Motivation to Learn English’ decreases. Also, there is a weak

positive correlation between ‘Motivation to Learn English’ and ‘Divided Change Self-Identity of the Learner’ which is about 0.14.

On the other hand, the results show that the correlation between Change in Self-Identity of the Learner and No Change in the Self-Identity of the learner is moderately negative. It is about -0.36, which indicates that as Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner increases, or the answer goes to the level agreements, the variable No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner decreases, or the answer goes to level disagreements. The results also show that there is no high correlation between predictor variables (Self-Identity, No Self-Identity, Div. Self-Identity). It is evident that there is no collinearity problem in the data.

Figure 10 Strength and Direction of Correlation Coefficient

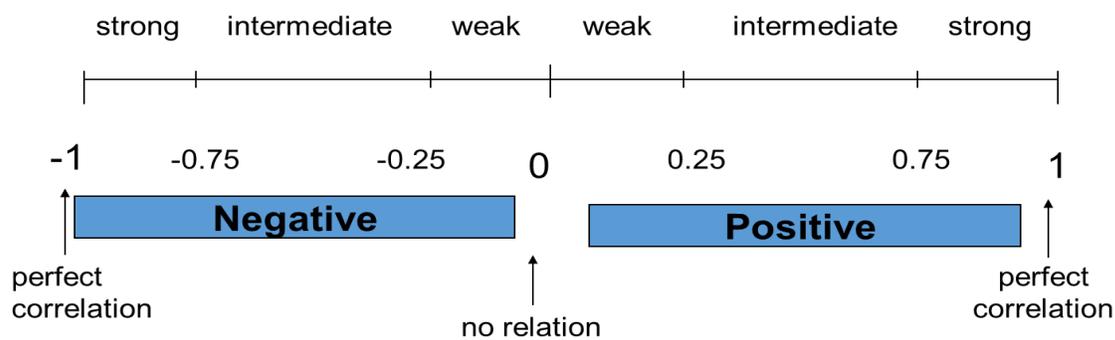


Table 21 The Pairwise Correlation

Pairwise Variables		Correlation	Count	Confidence Interval of Correlation		P-value (Significant Probability)	Plot Correlation
Variable	by Variable			Lower 95%	Upper 95%		
Self-Identity	Motivation	0.4369	150	0.2975	0.5581	<.0001*	
No Self-Identity	Motivation	-0.1472	150	-0.3003	0.0134	0.0723	
No Self-Identity	Self-Identity	-0.3648	150	-0.4961	-0.2173	<.0001*	
Div. Self-Identity	Motivation	0.1447	150	-0.0159	0.2981	0.0772	
Div. Self-Identity	Self-Identity	0.2755	150	0.1206	0.4174	0.0006*	
Div. Self-Identity	No Self-Identity	0.1640	150	0.0039	0.3160	0.0449*	

Table 21 shows the pairwise correlation values in one side, and hypothesis test to know whether there is any correlation in the population '4th-grade students of the universities in Kurdistan Region' between pairwise variables on the other side. That is to say:

$H_0: \rho = 0$  , means there is no linear correlation in the population

$H_1: \rho \neq 0$  , means there is some linear correlation in the population

Since the p-values of the pairwise variables No Self-Identity, Motivation, and Div. Self-Identity, Motivation are greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , there is no evidence to reject *null hypothesis* ( $H_0$ ), and their correlation statistically are not significant. In other words, there is no linear correlation between these pairwise variables in the population (4th-grade students of the universities in Kurdistan Region). On the other hand, there is some correlation between Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner and Motivation to Learn English in the population because of its small p-value = 0.0001. Also, there is some correlation between pairwise of No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, and Divided Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner, No Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner in the population because of small p-values.

In Table 9, the interpretation of the confidence interval is that the real correlation between Self-Identity and Motivation in the population of all 4th-grade students of the universities in Kurdistan Region is between 0.2975 and 0.5581. In other words, there is 95% confidence that  $[0.2975 \leq \rho \leq 0.5581]$ . This true for each pairwise variable: (No change in Self-Identity, Self-Identity), (Divided Self-Identity, Self-Identity), and (Divided Self-Identity, No-change in Self-Identity). In contrast, the lower levels correlation of the pairwise of No Self-Identity,

Motivation), and (Divided Self-Identity, Motivation) are negative (-) and the upper levels are positive (+), and the value between these two levels is zero. This indicates that the correlation between these variables might become zero. That is why these factors are not significant.

Figure 11 Color Map on Correlation

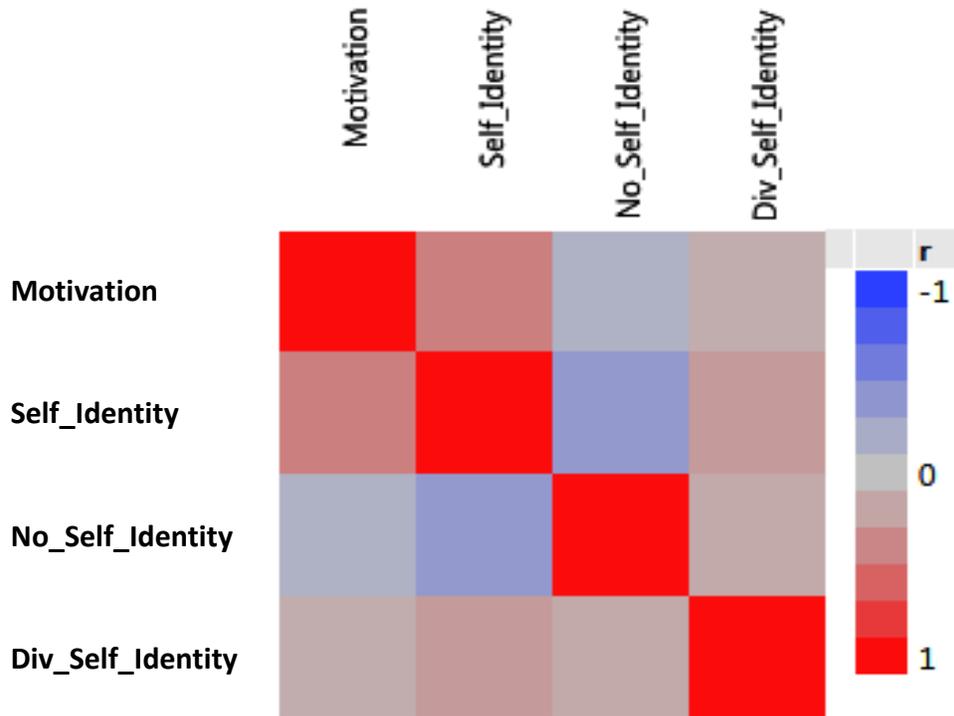
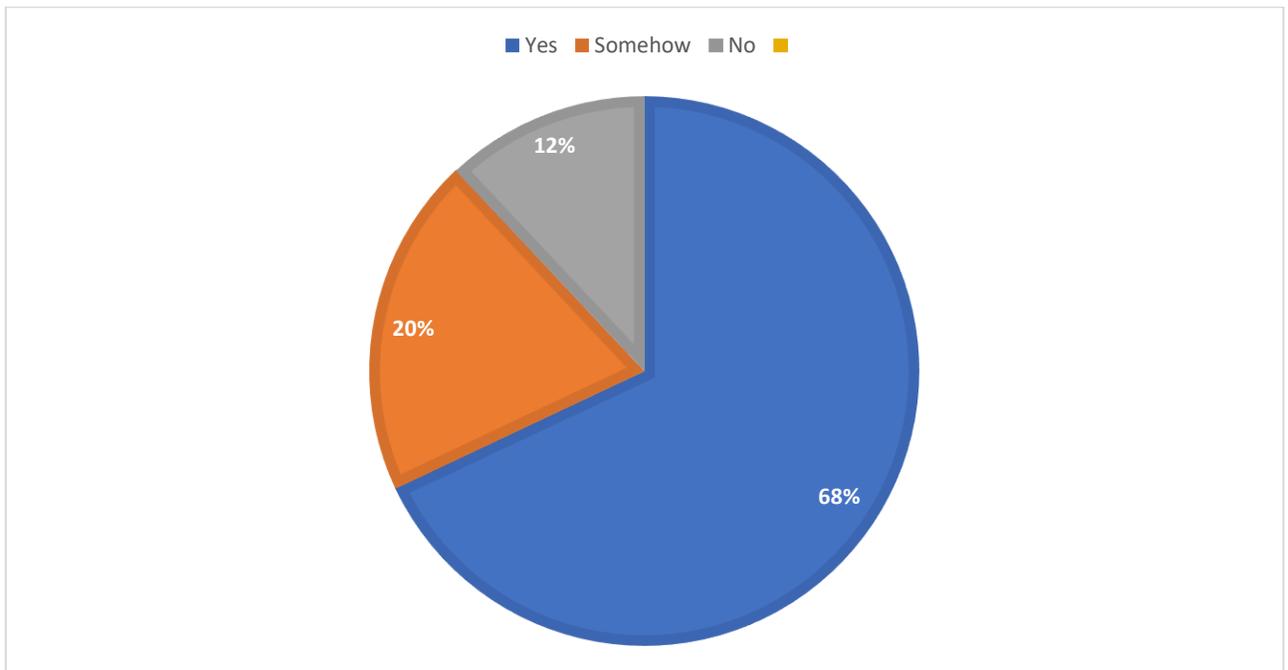


Figure 11 shows the color maps of correlation. It is clear that the correlation between Change in the Self-Identity of the Learner and Motivation to learn English is light red color which means there is a moderate positive correlation between them. On the other hand, the light blue color between Change in Self-Identity of the learner and No Change in the Self-Identity of the learner indicates that there is a moderate negative correlation between them

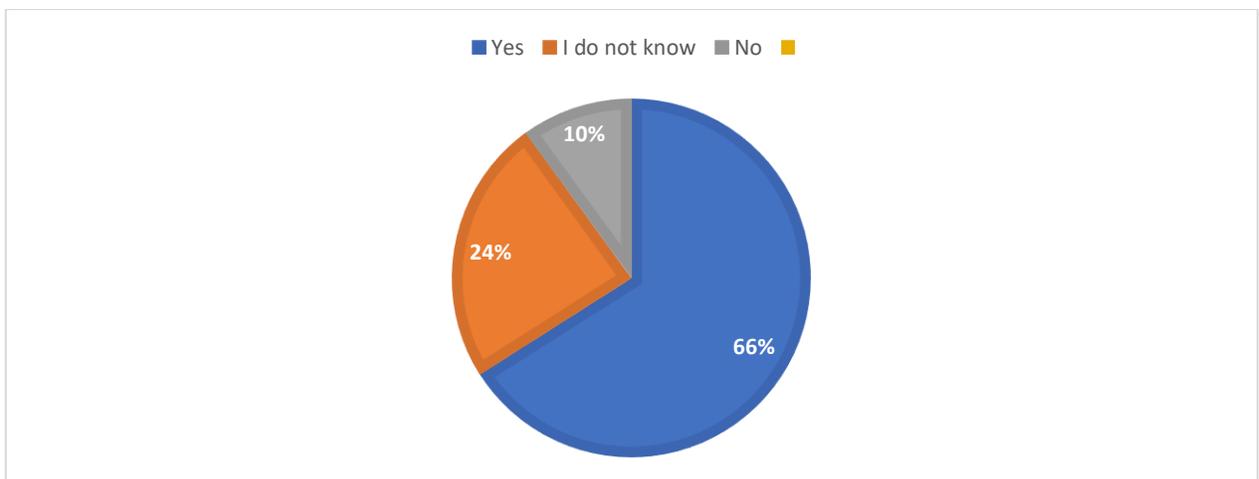
## 5.5 Focus Group Data

This section presents the data collected from the focus group discussions which included 45 participants, 15 at each university.

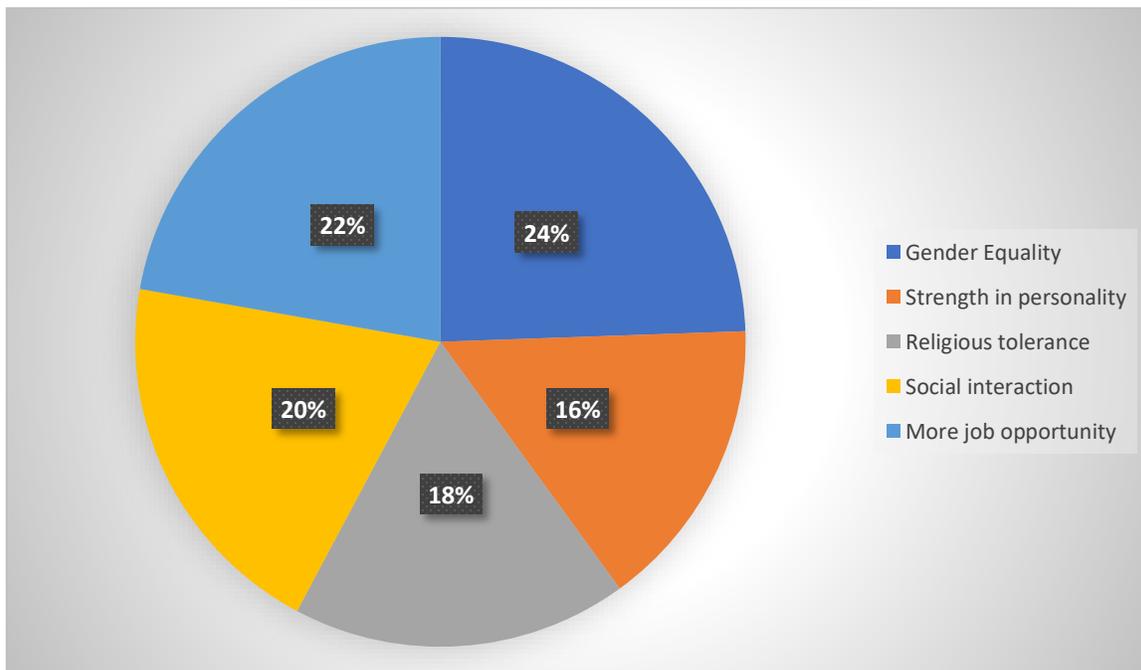
### 1- Do you feel any change in the way how you think about the world after learning English?



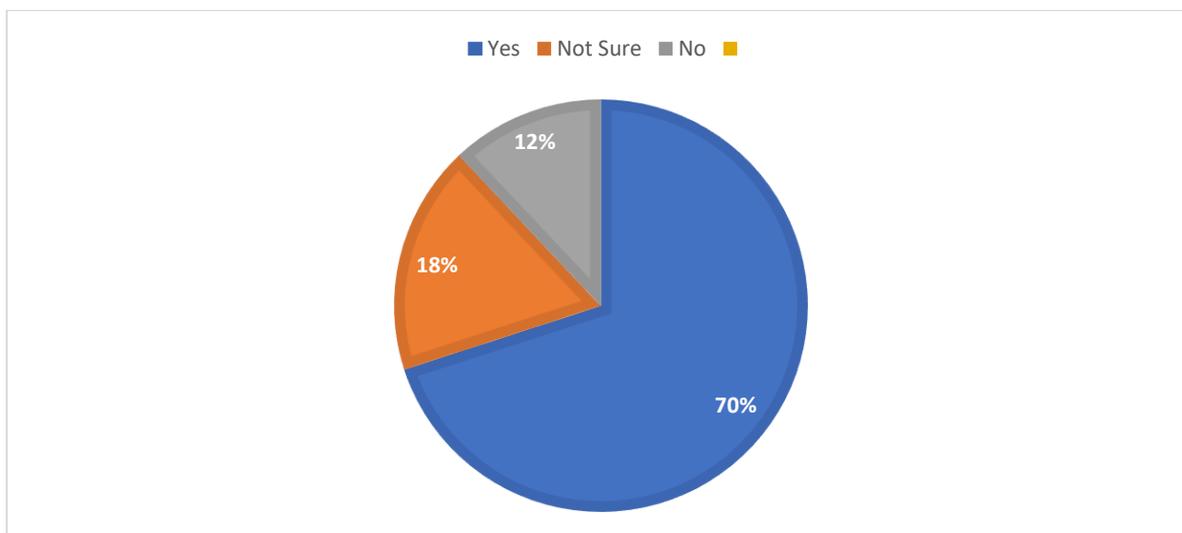
### 2- Do you think your behaviors changed in any way after learning English?



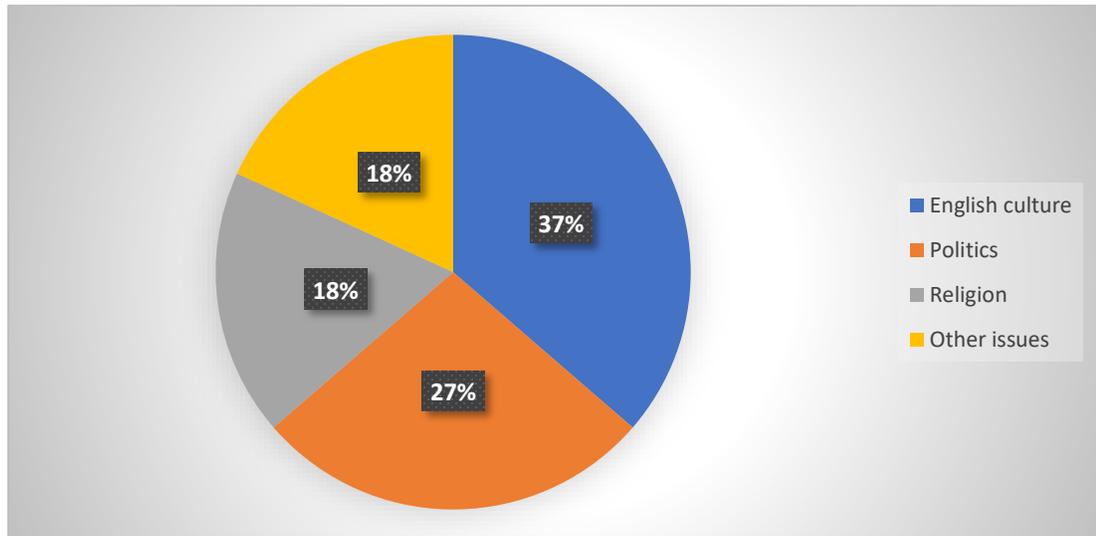
3- Tell us the most prominent area which is changed in your personality after learning English?



4- This question is only for those people who feel they are not so sure about they change in their personality after learning English. Do you think you feel more important when you speak in English in comparison with Kurdish?



5- This question for those who do not feel any change in their personality after learning English. Can you be more specific about the factors from the given list as to why you do not feel any change in your personality after learning English?



## 5.6 Sample of the data collected from individual interviews

This section is devoted to a sample of the data collected from the individual interviews in form of quotes. The individual interviews included 15 participants, 5 at each university. The reason why a sample is given is that the interviews involved lengthy discussions and most of the answers are used in the discussion of the data section on the next chapter. There were some follow up questions, but the overall answer is given here. Intentionally, the answer of two participants are chosen, one who experienced many changes and one who felt almost no change in their personality after learning English.

**Question 1: Can you describe your feeling while you speak about some socially or religiously sensitive issues?**

**Participant 1:** well, I think English is not just a language to communicate [sic], but it is learning about a new culture as well. As a person who grown [sic] in a somehow conservative society, well, talking about socially sensitive issues is never easy, but I think my thought on what is sensitive is changed after learning English. Now, I think I can talk about some controversial issues only by using English. Talking about the same issue in Kurdish would be almost impossible. For example, talking about issues like homo people is not easy in Kurdish, but when you talk about it in English, you find it easier. The same is true for religious topics as well. That is why I think I feel much more comfortable talking about social abnormal things or forbidden things. I think this can be related to the nature of society as these issues are more common in other societies.

**Participant 2:** I feel very uncomfortable. I do not want to talk about sensitive issues. I am a person who has his own rules. I study English to learn another language not to change my personality. I do not want talk [sic] about any sensitive issues as I am confused when I start talking about them.

**Question 2: Do you think you are a different person in terms of how you think when you use English for communication?**

**Participant 1:** umm, I think it is hard to consider myself as a totally different person when I speak in English. But I think I am somehow different now after learning English. For example, my ideas about male-female equality changed a lot after studying English. My mentality about environment changed greatly after studying English. I think I was someone who did not care a lot about environmental issues that much before studying English, but I think differently now.

**Participant 2:** No, I don't I think I am same [sic]. No different at all [sic]. I use English to communicate and talk about what I think. I think English is just a language to speak with, nothing else.

**Question 3: Do you think that your behaviors changed after studying English? Can you give an example?**

**Participant 1:** oh, yes, I can say for sure. For example, I learned a lot about English culture and that affect [sic] my life. Before coming to English department, I felt I am not a confident person and it was very hard to say what I think, but now I think I can have my own say in many issues and feel more confident. I remember, I was very shy and did not like to talk that much about things as I do now. I am more open to listen and accept difference compared with when I did not come to college.

**Participant 2:** No, I don't think so. I think I have the same behavior. I don't have anything wrong with my behavior, why should I change it? I think what I learned from my parents are good things and there is no need to change.

**Question 4: Do you think that learning English has turned your life to a better one? How?**

**Participant 1:** I can say for sure that I am a better person now compared with before coming to college. I think studying English literature opened a new door for me. I learned a lot from the novels and poems I studied. I see life in a different way now compared with before. My thoughts are different and my behavior is different in many ways now.

**Participant 2:** As I said, I was good even before studying English. English gave me one good thing. To talk about my ideas and what I think with another language. I see English is just a tool for communication and I don't like people what change because of just learning English.

## Chapter Six

### Findings and Discussion

#### 6.1 Introductory Remarks

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the current research findings in compliance with the reviewed theoretical and scholarly literature regarding identity conceptualizations. Among the existing approaches to defining and explaining identity, one can distinguish two major schools of thought: psychological and pragmatic. The psychological perspective on identity relies on seminal works of Markus (1977), Weinreich (1986), and Spencer-Oatey (2007). It emphasizes the continuous development of identity through day-to-day experiences. In this respect, psychological definitions focus on the evolving recognition of the self and the other, where an individual considers one's psychological association to patterns of the social system (Sherif, 1982; McAdams, 1995). Human interactions and daily experiences are thus the principal drivers of the identity development.

The pragmatic perspective on identity relies on writings of Norton Peirce (1995) and James (1890) and stresses the flexible nature of identity continually changing in response to new knowledge. The central premise of pragmatism in conceptualizing identity refers to self-consciousness, the ability of an individual to separate oneself as a thinker from the experienced thoughts to produce an awareness of the self and identity (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016). In this vein, learning is a mechanism or means of the identity development and is embedded in experience. Given the evidence cited above, two approaches to defining identity are different in their focus: psychologists study individual identity against collective identity or one's interactions with society, while pragmatists focus on changes in identity as a life-long learning process inherent to all exposed to various opportunities for learning (experiences).

At the same time, psychological and pragmatic views share the belief about the social nature of a person and self, which gave rise to the value attributed to language and linguistic experiences of an individual in the context of the identity development (Herrigel, 1993; Wendt, 1994). Language is a means of both sharing and articulating one's worldview to others and gaining access to ideas, thoughts, and positions of others. Accordingly, linguistic experiences, during which a person interacts with the world and studies it, affects identity. Based on these psychological and pragmatic assumptions, this chapter analyzes research findings obtained through a survey, focus group and interview regarding the generated change in EFL learner's identity after studying English as their specialty in college for almost four years.

The current research project embraces three research stages (survey, focus group interview and individual interview) to produce a comprehensive picture of the perceived impact on identity of EFL Kurdish students. The first one was useful for studying different patterns associated with motivation and change caused by language learning, whereas the second and the third ways allowed deepening the understanding of learners' perspective through trustworthy and open discussion. Besides, the reliance of focus group interview on standardized questionnaire enabled generalizing learners' attitudes and evaluations of their language learning experiences regarding the impact on identity. By these combined research procedures, the project illustrated the relevance of both psychological and pragmatic approaches to defining identity and exhibited the psycho-pragmatic nature of the self. The following sections classify learners into three categories.

## **6.2 Language Learning and Change in Learner's Identity**

The research findings show evidence supporting the role of language and linguistic experiences in forming one's identity as assumed by Sapir-Whorf (cited in Peek, 2006). The hypothesized influence of language on thought found support among theorists and empirical

scholars giving an explicit account of language as a collective identity. Thus, language embeds cultural traditions, linguistic patterns, societal norms shared by a group of people (Wolff & Holmes, 2010). This approach to studying an individual identity against a collective identity is consistent with the psychological view of identity frequently referred to as identity structure analysis. However, both research instruments used the term 'learning English,' which emphasizes the concept and process of learning as underpinning change in identity. This concept is consistent with pragmatic identity theory that underlines the linear association between learning and change (Colapierto, 2006; Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016). Therefore, the dominant agreement of interviewees with the question about a changed worldview after language learning (68%) proved both theoretical stances.

According to Norton (1972) (cited in Sacchi, 2014), learning a foreign language goes beyond the purpose of acquiring a new channel for communication and implies a continuous rearrangement of the self and relation to others. In other words, as Lightbown and Spada (2006) asserted, learning a new language entails learning or acquiring a new identity. In support of this theoretical assumption, the survey results show a high level of support given to the statement about the effects produced on the entire life of EFL learners. Moreover, the interview findings confirm the assumption as well with 66% respondents agreeing on the change in behavior after language learning. Therefore, the research procedures show evidence that linguistic experiences play a vital role in forming and changing an individual's perception of the self and identity against the dominant collective identity.

As already noted above, humans are social actors reciprocally connected with one another and the entire world. The internal world of a person has a strong relation with the external world (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016). Consequently, individual's interactions with the world (other people) convey social meanings of various phenomena and events thus affecting individuals'

worldview and behavior (Goa et al., 2007). While admitting change in behavior occurring after language learning, many participants in the study agree on giving preference to English when communicating with peers, for instance participant 1 in the interview (for the script, see the interview answers on page 115). This finding is another piece of support for the suggested link between the self and identity (Owns, 2006). Indeed, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) asserted the emotional coloring given by one's understanding of the self and behavior as the latter is merely a reflection of identity. The changes can be better understood through the following points:

### 6.2.1 Self-Confidence Change

The conceptual framework of identity structure analysis distinguishes four categories of change enforced by language learning: self-confidence change, additive change, subtractive change, and productive change (Goa et al., 2007). The psychological construct of self-confidence change refers to the learner's awareness and recognition of the impact produced on the level of self-confidence by a new language. Hence, language learning influences self-confidence of learners which leads to change in self-image and self-identity (Boonchum, 2010, Zare-ee & Matin, 2014; Morsunbul, 2015). This category of change as an outcome of EFL learning is subjected to three statements in the survey of the present study and the first question of focus group interview questionnaire. Indeed, by admitting change occurring in worldviews after learning English, interviewees have illustrated the presence of self-confidence change.

The survey findings complement that learners' general awareness and recognition of the change occurring in identity. Thus, the most agreed on statement about learning English being an experience that affects the learner's entire life signifies the relevance of self-confidence change. In other words, this finding does not only prove a theoretical premise but also outlines the role of the

learner's recognition of change in the identity development. Although the concept of self-confidence change is a psychological construct, it echoes pragmatism's requirement for the ability of a thinker/learner to separate oneself from thoughts (James, 1890). Since a learner realizes how language learning has affected his/her mind and self-image, one is conscious and creates an awareness of identity.

Another survey statement providing support for the importance of the learner's consciousness about change enforced by language learning refers to the learner's belief in thinking differently when speaking English. Advocates of linguistic relativism argue that language affects self-image and identity because each language is unique. Though languages share many features in grammar, vocabulary, and style essential for translational practices, they have specific patterns reflecting social meanings of values, beliefs, and norms (Pinker, 2007; Zlatey & Blomberg, 2015). Hence, learning a new language with its embedded collective identity influences the learner's identity informed by another collective identity. A high level of agreement by the study participants with the assumed change in thinking after learning English confirms the theoretical assumption.

The study participants give moderate support for the statement pertaining to the feeling of change in a learner's personality resulting from learning English and its culture. According to Lambert (1972, 1981), EFL learning relies on a socio-psychological model where a learner is acquainted with foreign culture, traditions, and norms reflected in a language. As a means of social discourse, language conveys various cultural messages delivered to people using the language for communication (Ashforth, 2007). Thus, the observed finding indicates a relatively high value attributed to a foreign language in developing an identity by learners while confirming the fundamental role of the conscious recognition of change caused by the intensive exposure to a foreign language.

### 6.2.2 Additive Change

Another psychological category related to change in the learner's identity after language learning concerns additive change, where new linguistic experiences create a kind of new identity coexisting with the already established identity. As a result, additive change means that the internal world of the learner combines two different sets of values embedded in possessed languages. Such kind of change is beneficial for a learner as it enables a quick and relatively easy adaptation of one's language behavior to the situational context to use either mother-tongue or foreign language as necessary (Goa et al., 2007). The coexistence of two socio-cultural systems means the enrichment of the initial identity by adopting new values and views without destroying the original ones.

However, this consequence of learning a foreign language is hard to reach in real life as it requires establishing a balance between mother tongue and foreign languages. The developed measurement addressed this psychological aspect of change through a single statement ascertaining the presence of two different personalities after learning English. The survey respondents have given sound support for this argument which signifies the emergence of a new English-based identity to accompany the Kurdish one. Despite the proclaimed coexistence of English and Kurdish systems of values, further research found a significant difference between the existing views and opinions compared to those held earlier which disclosed a dominance taken by English culture over the Kurdish one in some issues.

### 6.2.3 Subtractive Change

The third category distinguished by psychologists when analyzing the impact of a foreign language learning refers to subtractive change when new values and beliefs replace native values, norms, and behaviors. This replacement occurs when a learner feels more confident and sturdy with a foreign language which results in a greater attachment to it. Subtractive change is easily detachable when analyzing contradictions between the native culture/language and a foreign

culture/language (Goa et al., 2007). Some scholars consider subtractive change being an outcome of self-identity (Tellier, 2013; Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). The likelihood of the replacement of native values by newly acquired ones depends on initially positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language. Since English is universal, one could assume a relatively high interest of Kurdish students in acquiring English language skills as an asset for future career building.

The measurement tools used in this study address this kind of change through eight survey statements and two interview questions. Precisely, most interviewees share the belief that their behavior changed after learning English which means that the acquired English values and norms replaced original Kurdish ones which caused a behavioral change in some contexts. Most participants in focus group interview have disclosed their agreement with the fact that an EFL learning experience affects their minds and behavior patterns. Moreover, interview participants have been required to indicate the mostly influenced areas of their worldviews after learning English selecting from the following list: gender equality, strength in personality, religious tolerance, social interaction, and more job opportunity. According to focus-group interview findings, learning EFL produces the most significant effect on gender-related beliefs of learners (24%).

Similarly, the survey findings show a substantial change in ideas concerning gender equality among Kurdish EFL learners. The survey respondents have shown moderate support for statements pertaining to cultural norms and traditions of the Kurdish nation. A considerable number of the survey participants have agreed that English learning enforces their rejection of some ideas about gender roles and rights in Kurdish society. Thus, many recognize the absence or the inadequacy of gender equality among Kurds. In other words, exposure to the western culture via EFL learning provides Kurdish students with an understanding of the equality between men and women as defined by international human rights rather than practiced in the community. This

finding is valuable within the framework of social identity theory. It implies an intertwined mixture of social categorization, social comparison, social identity, and self-esteem (Trepte, 2006). The change occurring in EFL learners' attitudes towards gender roles signifies a change in self-identity in the aftermath of linguistic experiences.

The second affected area as discovered by focus group interview is increased job opportunities that occur after learning English (20%). When conceptualizing identity, pragmatic theorists focus on the importance of individual's job and social status in forming one's self-esteem and defining identity (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Therefore, this interview finding allows interpreting EFL learners' commitment to studying English as a way of strengthening their self-esteem and improving self-identity. Although the survey questionnaire has not addressed this issue directly, it has investigated the impact of EFL learning on critical thinking and communication critical for the present-day employment. Thus, many survey respondents have indicated a preference of using English for interaction with peers. According to Dascal (1983), Spolsky (1999), Ashforth (2007), and others, the use of language for social purposes reflects individual's understanding of the self and identity.

Typically, people prefer using their mother-tongue language because of the strong association with the lived experiences and emotions (Ghazali, 2006). Thus, finding that Kurdish students prefer English in daily communication with classmates indicates a positive emotional coloring of EFL learning experiences. A native language is something innate, inherent to the culture of a community, where one spends his or her early years (Tsoi, 2010). Most of the survey participants have reported that English is more useful in expressing ideas and thoughts compared to Kurdish. This finding is another confirmation of the changed identity of Kurdish learners EFL as the choice of language reflects a social affiliation of a person. However, one has to aware that the respondents meant the context of the university not necessarily in daily communication.

Both interview and survey results display the impact of learning English on social interaction. In focus group interview, 20% of participants have voted for this aspect as the most affected area by the exposure to a foreign language and its culture. The survey results show that the most obvious determinant of that change is evident in the statement concerning the shift in the social attachment felt by learners after learning English. The survey respondents have shown strong support for an increase in the social attachment to English society when learning English. In other words, learning EFL is a process of learners' assimilation with English culture, values, and societal norms. In this respect, pragmatists like Spencer-Oatey (2007) and psychologists like Goa et al. (2007) echo one another in the argument for the cultural shift occurring in EFL learners' identity because of the intensive exposure to a foreign culture.

Social attachment to English culture has resulted in the change in some of learner's values and beliefs regarding sensitive and acute social issues. For instance, a relatively high number of EFL learners have admitted experiencing some emotional discomfort and objection to many cultural norms practiced in Kurdish society like an arranged marriage. In the western world, the concept of arranged marriage contradicts basic human rights and democratic liberties while in Kurdistan, the practice is somehow widespread in many places. The finding of the raised rejection of this social norm signifies the replacement of original values by foreign ones, which signals identity development. Vygotsky (1978; cited in Ochs, 1996) calls language a tool for expressing and distributing social attitudes towards various issues by a group of people. From this perspective, changed attitudes towards arranged marriage demonstrate a common change in their understanding of selves and identity.

The experience of EFL learning became a milestone in the identity development for most EFL learners included in this research project. Overall, EFL learning gives rise to the flexibility of learners' minds offering new angles of view on specific aspects. Specifically, the surveyed EFL

learners showed strong support for having more confidence and comfort when speaking about sensitive issues like homosexuality. Kurdish people are generally Muslims relying severely on the rule and law of Islam, which is well known for its radical opposition to homosexuality. Thus, the admitted comfort of engaging in the related debates is already a manifestation of the occurred shift in learners' mentality and identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

Another manifestation of the acquired flexibility of mind is subject to the survey statement concerning the perception of the global warming problem. Although scholars assert that global environmental change will produce the most substantial impact on developing economies, they lack the necessary economic and social resources for combating climate change (Wardekker, Peterson, & van der Sluijs, 2009). Instead, developing economies allocate their resources to manage poverty and poor living conditions. Accordingly, low-income nations show less concern for global warming and other sensitive issues compared to high-income economies because of the focus placed on more serious problems. The survey respondents have shown that global warming was not an important issue of their concern before learning English. The EFL experience changed learners' views on the matter of raising their awareness and understanding of the problem's severity and the necessity to address it. Hence, the exposure to English culture with a greater value attributed to the problem of climate change and affects the minds of EFL learners and their attitudes towards the issue, which reflected the assumed function of identity to provide a sense of belonging (Social Issues Research Center, 2007).

Humans are social actors as they are individuals but members of a community, which means that an individual is a part of a group (McSweeney, 2006). This sense of membership serves as a source of values, beliefs, and norms construed by individuals as customary law. Thus, the perceived affiliation with a group of persons informs one's awareness and understanding of the self and identity (Bird, 2004). The discussed shift in social views proves the point. Similarly, the initial

attachment to the Kurdish nation underpinned the social and political views of study participants. EFL learning gives rise to new ideas and thoughts not characteristic to Kurdish societal norms and cultural traditions. About half of respondents have reported becoming more aware of political issues and changing their political opinions after learning English. This finding supports the theoretical assumption that identity develops during learning when an individual comes to new knowledge and ideas and absorbs them in mind (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016).

At the same time, interview participants appreciated their exposure to English language and culture as a means of developing religious tolerance (18%). Like other Islamic nations, Kurds are mostly conservative in their views, which concerns various sensitive issues, political beliefs, and religious questions. English linguistic experiences affected minds of Kurdish students and streamlined a change in their perceptions of many problems while feeling the empowerment of personality (16%). Howrth (2010) argues for a complex nature of an individual's self -concept as construed and defined by multiple factors. Combinations of factors inform levels of self-confidence and identity that, in turn, determine behaviors. Therefore, the reported strength of personality is an outcome of the increased self-esteem, the change which entails a change in identity.

Overall, the concept of subtractive change after EFL learning has found representation in the studied sample of Kurdish students who underwent an English language course. This kind of change reported by most study participants shows a shift in values, beliefs, and views following the exposure to English language and culture. While illustrating the impact produced by learning a foreign language, this study represents a solid proof of the role of language in reflecting and forming one's identity.

#### 6.2.4 Productive Change

While subtractive change refers to a case when a new language achieves dominance over a mother-tongue language and the reflected culture, productive change concerns the continuous

commitment of an individual to original values, beliefs, and norms. In this case, the exposure to foreign culture and values during language learning contributes to strengthening native language values and behaviors. In productive change, the effect of learning a foreign language is reversed; a learner experiences a boost in one's attachment to societal norms and cultural practices inherent to his or her native community (Goa et al., 2007). This kind of change found a practical demonstration in this study in the distribution of survey participants' responses in three statements.

The assumed resistance to new ideas and behaviors can be seen in the shared disagreement on the statement that the acquired English language skills enforce a preference of using English rather than Kurdish to express one's opinions. A few respondents recognize English as a more suitable and appropriate way of articulating one's ideas and perceptions. Instead, they prefer the mother-tongue in situations requiring an individual to express an opinion. Psychological theorists attribute a high value to thought as a precursor of individual's emotions and behavior (Weinreich, 1986; Simon, 2004; Spencer-Oatey, 2007). In turn, James (1890) claims that the conscious separation of the self from thoughts is one's understanding of self-identity. Based on those theoretical premises, one may interpret this research finding as a conscious resistance to values and norms which are very common by English culture reflected in the English language to preserve one's original identity.

Another showcase of productive change is a statement regarding a change in personality and behavior after learning English. The majority of the survey respondents have rejected the idea of thinking in English when speaking Kurdish. Neither they have agreed on a change in thought and reaction caused by the intensive exposure to a foreign culture during a language course. As Spencer-Oatey (2007) claim, individual's identity stands against collective identity as any person is a part of a group of people sharing common values, beliefs, and norms. Correspondingly, some

EFL learners maintain their attachment to and affiliation with Kurdish society after learning English instead of adopting new values and views.

Along with the general commitment to Kurdish culture, the survey respondents have opposed the idea of changing their religious views after learning English. Similarly, 18% have voted for adjusting their religion as a factor for not changing their identity. According to the scholarly literature, religion is another determinant of membership. It plays a vital role in defining individual's perception of the self and identity (Cook, 2007; Andrews, 2010). Hence, the observed stability of religious views among EFL learners demonstrates a productive change's effect after learning English.

To sum up, the study findings provide sound evidence of four categories of change and effects on learner's personality and behavior caused by the intensive exposure to a foreign culture through language learning. Additive and Substantive change are the most widespread case among EFL learners, which indicates the power and influence of English on thought and self-esteem of learners. As for other kinds of change as defined by identity structure analysis, the study findings recall some concepts and ideas of pragmatism, which highlighted the reciprocal relationship between these two approaches to conceptualizing and explaining identity.

#### 6.2.5 Self-Concept

When formulating pragmatic identity theory, Carr-Chellman and Levitan (2016) determined three identity constructs, such as self-concept, the responsive subconscious, and social meanings of identity that produce their influences at different times. These elements are connected to one another but not in a fixed manner. Self-concept refers to the way individuals see themselves by attaching meanings, values, and characteristics of the self. This conscious and perceptive distinction of the self from the rest of the world is a central theme of the pragmatic perspective on

identity as a multidimensional notion. Another feature of self-concept is its evolving nature as an individual learns and develops the perception of the self over time under the influence of the lived experiences and emotions. Hence, self-concept is a part or product of one's explicit understandings of one's possessions, social status, or family membership. Since perceptive access is time-consuming, change in self-concept is not immediate (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016).

When applied to the current study, self-concept occurred as a part of EFL learners' knowledge, possessions, or perceptions of the self. Many survey respondents have supported the assumed presence of two personalities after learning English and the rise of a new identity developed after the exposure to English language and culture. Though self-concept is a part of pragmatic identity theory, psychologists refer to it as well when defining identity. For instance, Sherif (1982) emphasizes the psychological aspect of the self – feelings and emotions experienced by an individual in response to the construed image of the self. In the conducted research, this theoretical point found confirmation with a high level of agreement among survey respondents concerning their belief in thinking differently when speaking English.

Similarly, the survey findings show that most participants share the belief that learning English is a new experience which affects their different opinions about the self. This finding justifies the pragmatist position pertaining to a relational, contingent, and ever-changing process of identity (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). Based on works by Pierce (1869) and James (1890), pragmatism asserts that identity is a continuous construction and subject to change through learning experiences. The observed change in EFL learners' perceptions of the self is a vivid manifestation of the evolving nature of identity and the role of learning played in the development process.

Another piece of evidence to illustrate instability and flexibility of identity is the statement concerning the change felt in personality following the experience of studying English. Since the

majority of survey respondents have disclosed their agreement on the issue, one can insist on the influential power of learning on one's perception of the self and identity. The suggestion that self-concept embraces sets of meanings attributed to the subjective image of the self explains the detected change in EFL learner's thoughts and feelings about themselves (Stets & Trevettevik, 2014). The acquired knowledge and skills in English language enforced learners to revise their perceptions of the self to consider and integrate a new characteristic in the image of the self.

Moreover, some EFL learners even admitted change in political views after learning English, which was another part of substantiation of identity as a developing process. The reported specification of change occurred due to the exposure to English language and culture. This finding is consistent with the psychological affirmation that self-concept is a life-long process that starts from the past, continues to now, and extends to the future (Weinreich, 1986). Hence, identity structure theory's premise that identity is subject to continuous change in response to daily life experiences supports the pragmatic stipulation about the evolving nature of self-conceptualization (Levitan et al., 2017). Accordingly, one may assert the blend of two theories achieved in the conducted research studying self-identity perceptions by EFL learners.

Pragmatic identity theory assumes that self-concept is the influence that contributes to the way a person views oneself and defines his or her identity. The value attributed to individual's characteristics by a person and society underpins individual's emotions and perceptions about the self and informs one's self-concept (DuBois, 2007; Stets & Trettevik, 2014). In other words, each person has the so-called identity value based on the individual's attitudes towards the possessed knowledge, skills, or abilities. The present study illustrates this theoretical premise vividly when almost each EFL learner 'updates' the image of the self to give credit to the acquired knowledge. The surveyed learners have demonstrated a clear understanding and appreciation of their linguistic experiences as an asset for their identities.

In the current study, EFL learning is a part of professional identity as the attained English proficiency contributes to individual's attractiveness for potential employers. Since English is a universal language (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), the global labor market attributes high value to the possession of English language skills. Thus, Kurdish students who have undergone a course in the English language are in advantageous position among local workforce. Indeed, professional self-concept depends on attributes, motives, values, beliefs, and experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Neary, 2014). The obtained experience in English learning improves the value of EFL learners as perceived by themselves and in the minds of peers. Therefore, research findings provide strong support for the developed notion of self-concept as a process of constant development and change through learning. Furthermore, pragmatic theory assumes that self-concept affects other elements of identity thus shaping the latter through several ways (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016).

#### 6.2.6 Responsive Unconscious

The second identity construct – responsive subconscious – refers to semi-conscious impulses that influence individual's emotions, feelings, and perceptions. In this vein, some scholars define this domain of the self as adaptive unconscious, where individual's awareness of the self is fluid and embraces conscious and unconscious (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016). Hence, the responsive subconscious is a dimension of identity accountable for the core self, the most evolving parts of the self, revised and analyzed by a person from time to time. This aspect of the self places an individual into a state of feeling 'real self.' It integrates physical, cognitive, and emotional elements of one's biological existence that are subject to continuous discovery and creation by an individual during one's search for the self (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016).

In the current research, the aspect of responsive subconscious is subject to study through emotions and actions regarded by EFL learners as outcomes of English learning. For instance, many respondents have ascertained their ability and intention to express their ideas, feelings, and

opinions in English rather than Kurdish. When formulating the concept of the self, James (1890) distinguished two domains: where ‘I self’ which refers to actions and activities taken by a person when dealing with the world, and ‘Me self’ which concerns the description of the self, based on the attributed characteristics and meanings (Gale, 2008). That premise explains decisions and actions reported by EFL learners after completing a course in the English language. Upon integrating a new language attributed to their images of themselves, EFL learners have displayed eagerness and confidence in using English for expressing ideas and feelings. In other words, ‘Me self’ drove responsive subconscious of EFL learners reflected in their ‘I self’ manifestations.

Accordingly, most respondents have agreed on the fact that learning English affects their entire lives. Specifically, some participants have conveyed a change in their views of socially sensitive issues, politics, or religious affiliation. The regular and intensive interaction with English culture during English language classes affects EFL learners’ attitudes towards homosexuality, arranged marriage, gender equality, political views, and respect for religions other than Islam. The change occurs subconsciously as EFL learners do not make any specific actions to revise the related ideas and thoughts. Nevertheless, the surveyed respondents have shown awareness of the occurring change, which depicts the blend of the conscious and unconscious (Gallagher, 2005; Newen & Fiebich, 2009). Indeed, the abstract unconscious serves as motivation determining individual’s behaviors, while the conscious accounts for the cognitive and intellectual analysis of those actions. In turn, responsive subconscious gives a kind of hint to a person to enable one’s understanding of the experienced change in self-concept or an emerging new identity.

#### 6.2.7 Social Meaning of Identity

The final aspect contributing to the concept of identity is the social meaning of identity which refers to the way others see an individual and how those perceptions affect individual’s identity. This pragmatic concept echoes the psychological postulate about the reciprocity between

individual's self and collective identity (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). This point of pragmatic identity theory stresses the related nature of identity which indicates that subjective perception of the self is not solely inherent; it is constructed depending on the context (Carr-Chellman & Levitan, 2016). Like identity structure analysis framework, pragmatism recognizes the presence and importance of the social domain in identity. The individual's self-affiliation with a group is a part of one's self-concept. The impact of the membership depends on the value attributed to it by a person (Trepte, 2006).

While constructs of self-concept and responsive subconscious refer to the subjective image of the self and the generated self-schema of behavior, the social meaning of identity underlines the impact of the external world on the internal perception of identity and appreciation of the possessed attributes, skills, and abilities (Newen & Fiebich, 2009). This pragmatic aspect of identity reflected in several survey statements regarding socialization practices of EFL learners to illustrate the impact of the context on individual's self-concept. A significant number of survey respondents have agreed on preferring the use of English to communicate and interact with classmates. Both pragmatist and psychological schools of thought urge for the social purpose served by language since a person is always a part of a group. As a result, collective identity construed by individual identity influences individual's self-conceptualization (Lawlor, 2006).

However, while psychologists focus on the social use of language for communication, pragmatists stress the mental use of language to integrate some extent of consciousness in the process (Dascal, 1983). The cited survey finding provides support for this theoretical framework. It shows that new learning experiences encourage a person to re-consider one's identity reflected in actions and behavior, including routine communication with peers. It seems that the undergone course in the English language equipped Kurdish students with additional language skills. In the context of socialization, the attained English abilities provide EFL learners with an opportunity to

choose which language to use for communication. The reported manifestation of the conscious (preference given to English in daily interactions) signifies the awareness and understanding of EFL learners of change in their identity.

Moreover, by showing eagerness to present and demonstrate a new attribute to others, EFL learners have indicated high value attributed to the acquired knowledge in English. Besides, the intention to use English instead of Kurdish for communication reflects the impact of collective identity on individual learner's self-concept, where English proficiency is regarded as an asset. Hence, this finding justifies the argument of Mead that self is subject to construction and reconstruction through communication with others (Simon, 2004). In the current case, the use of English to interact with classmates allowed EFL learners to exhibit their newly acquired skills and to have confirmation of the value associated with the attribute through others' reaction to such language choice. This observation takes its roots in the social learning theory of Vygotsky (1979), who insists on the principal role of socialization in cognitive, psychological, and intellectual development of people.

Another manifestation of the social meaning of identity is the priority given to English language through the disclosed social attachment to English society. Society and culture are two fundamental elements of social hierarchy that influence identity (Trepte, 2006; Ashforth, 2007). In line with pragmatism, psychological theory of identity considers social status as a part of one's self-concept and image. Accordingly, Argyle (2008) and Howrth (2010) argue for the impact of social roles, both assigned and self-perceived, on individual's identity. The social part may take the form of the occupied job, membership in a specific group, or the individual's social status. The more prestigious a given social role, the more satisfaction and improvement it gives to the self-concept and identity as construed by an individual. Since the United State of America and the United Kingdom, where English is a native language there, are developed countries, English is

associated with high-income economy, good living conditions, and multiple social advantages. Compared to English, the Kurdish nation lacks that level of economic, social, and political development as well as the international recognition. The contrast between Kurdish and English cultures is significant. It explains the subconscious pursuit of social attachment to a foreign yet prosperous culture among the surveyed EFL learners. Given the collective perception of English society, Kurdish learners are ready and eager to adopt a new social role to enhance their identity, both subjective and social ones.

Apart from the economic advantage, English culture is viewed as more flexible, open to new ideas and concepts, and dynamic in its development. By contrast, Kurdish culture is characterized by conservatism rooted in Islam which implies the focus on the traditional distribution of social roles and practices. Therefore, it seems that Kurdish culture follows the global trend of debates over homosexuality or global warming. A substantial number of study participants have agreed on changing their views of these problems which entails recognizing their importance and the necessity to manage them. According to respondents' estimate, the developed ability to speak English boosted their interest and concern for these issues which occupy much of the agenda of policymakers, the public, and scholars worldwide. In other words, the changed perspectives on homosexuality and global warming indicate the subconscious association of themselves with English society and its values, norms, and morale. Again, many EFL learners perceive English language skills as a means of enhancing their self-concept and identity at both individual and social levels (Simon, 2004; Argyle, 2008; Howrth, 2010; Park, 2015).

To sum up, the discussion of research findings in compliance with the earlier reviewed theoretical and scholarly literature related to change in identity enforced by language learning is an explicit showcase of the interchange between pragmatic and psychological views of identity. Identity structure theory categorizes four kinds of change occurring in a language learner's identity

and understanding of the self, while pragmatic identity theory distinguishes three constructs of identity that influence one another in a non-predictable manner. Although using different terms and approaches to define identity and change in it, both pragmatism and psychology insist on the evolving nature of identity, which is an ever-changing process. Besides, both perspectives echo one another when determining the role of society and culture in individual's vision of the self and identity. This interchange between pragmatic and psychological theories is vivid in the rise of terms and seminal works of one school when justifying other school's premises by obtained research findings.

### **6.3 Language Learning and Partial Change in Learner's Identity**

While stressing the powerful influence of language on individual's identity, theorists admit cases of a relatively fixed and stable identity, unsusceptible to the effect of language learning or using (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). In this case, learning a new language does not result in producing a new identity or changing the existing one because of the conflict that occurs between an emerging and the already-established identity. Then, language learners experience a partial influence on their identity rather than adopting new values, thoughts, or ideas. The disparity in the influence of language learning results from the multifaceted nature of identity construed by many factors categorized into socio-demographic, emotional, and cognitive domains (Boonchum, 2010; Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). The varying causality between these factors may underpin the complexity and contradictory nature of identity (Norton, 2005). Besides, a learner must be aware of the acquired knowledge and outcomes of language learning reflected in the social usage of a new language. The multiplicity and reciprocity between factors account for different effects produced by learning a foreign language on identity formation.

The psychological school of thought addresses the case of partial influence through the concept of split change (Goa et al., 2007). This kind of change refers to situations of conflict between the original identity and an identity informed by a foreign language. Split change implies a contradiction between a native language of a learner and a foreign language. In this respect, identity structure theory suggests some sort of hesitation regarding the set of values and beliefs a language learner should act in compliance with and cultural norms one should follow. Consequently, split change arouses a kind of struggle experienced by the learner, which challenges his or her decisions in many situations.

The suggested conflict or confusion experienced by a language learner is apparent in two survey statements. First, some survey participants have agreed on being confused between English and Kurdish cultures when interacting with a foreigner. It means that these learners hesitate about the way of treating foreigners: as a global citizen speaking English and being aware of western values and norms or a member of the native community proud of the national culture and traditions. These respondents lack confidence in their perceptions of the self and social roles. The uncertainty reflects a conflict between the original roles and impulses enforced by the attained linguistic and cultural knowledge.

This finding contradicts the pragmatic perspective on identity development formulated by Mead (cited in Crossman, 2017). According to that American sociologist, communication with others is the primary means and instrument of identity construction and reconstruction (Simon, 2004). Thus, confusion experienced by many EFL learners after learning English in communication with foreigners serves as a barrier to identity development. Instead of adopting new values or confirming commitment to the already-established view, learners suffer from internal conflict, which impairs the progress in their exploring and understanding of the self.

Another statement confirming the argument of Norton (2005) about the contradictory identity in situations, where the original identity collides with a new one, refers to learner's uncertainty about the way they were thinking after completing a course in the English language. The reported feeling of being lost indicates the confusion of EFL learners about their conceptualizations of the self. While accounting for the impact of the experienced learning, the survey participants were at the crossroads of which set of values to follow. On the one hand, they adopted Kurdish culture and social norms during childhood and adolescence to affiliate oneself with the group. On the other hand, learning English introduced new values, ideas, and beliefs, which found a kind of response in their minds and gave rise to a new identity. According to Norton (2005), a foreign language identity is subject to the influence of numerous factors and may arouse internal contradictions to challenge the learner's perception of the self. In other words, the described situation exhibits the case when English learning has neither strengthened one's commitment to the native culture nor proved the advancement of a foreign one.

Out of five statements addressing the issue of split change, these two received the least support among EFL learners. A potential interpretation of this finding is that although split change took place in the studied sample of EFL learners, the experienced internal conflict was moderate. Again, Norton (2005) assumes that combinations of factors produce different effects on the formation of a foreign language identity, which challenges predicting the extent of the generated change or conflict. For instance, Zare-ee and Matin (2014) indicates that gender is a contributing factor in examining identity change after learning a foreign language, whereas Boonchum (2010) stresses the role of the psycho-emotional state of a person exposed to a foreign culture in determining the effect on self-concept. In other words, split change investigated in the sample of Kurdish students resulted from a low level of contradiction between English language and Kurdish language.

Partial change does not, however, mean that learner's identity remains almost unchanged. Self-conflicts experiences during split change enforce development of identity. In his seminal work, Erikson (1959) places psychological crisis in the center of one's identity formation. Furthermore, the psychologist distinguishes eight stages of identity transformation, where each stage refers to a certain period of life. For adolescence and young adulthood, Erikson (1959) attributed conflicts between ego identity and role confusion and intimacy versus isolation. Based on the virtue of fidelity, persons aged 12-18 years are likely to display a commitment to native identity and a kind of opposition to a foreign language identity resulting in split change (Schwartz, 2001; McLeod, 2017).

In line with the viewpoint, many respondents have shown the feeling of a moral obligation to be prouder of themselves as Kurds. In this case, learners' introduction to a new culture with the inherent values and norms invoked comparison with the native culture and identity, where the latter gained an advantage over the former. In their position, the surveyed learners have shown awareness and understanding of linguistic experiences. Their choice of the original identity was a kind of conscious defined as responsive subconscious by pragmatists (Carr-Chelkman & Levitan, 2016). EFL learners felt the necessity of being proud of their cultural affiliation though lacked a strong rationale for that.

Similarly, the statement about an enhanced understanding of Kurdish literature after learning English has received a relatively high level of support among EFL learners. This finding signifies giving a subconscious preference to the native culture after the intensive exposure to a foreign one. Apart from psychological and pragmatic theoretical insights, one is likely to be confused with such an argument that the English language streamlined understanding of the native culture. However, both theoretical approaches to defining identity give a clear explanation of

motives underpinning the increase in EFL learners' commitment to Kurdish literature and culture (Goa et al., 2007; Levitan, 2017).

The research findings give evidence for split change reflected in divided identity. Many EFL learners have agreed on perceiving and treating surrounding people in a different manner when speaking English. In other words, the developed new identity is not powerful in replacing original sets of values and views but occupies a certain portion of learner's self. The use of English is a trigger to allow a foreign language identity to enter into force, while the remaining time, EFL learners give priority to native identity. This finding is consistent with Power theory of behavior assuming that human behavior is situational. People behave in the surrounding environment in a way to control the effects produced by that environment on them (Powers, 1973). In this respect, the acquisition of English language skills give rise to a new identity enacted during the use of English. Likewise, the use of Kurdish brings to power the native identity based on Kurdish culture, values, and social norms. A person possessing skills in several languages can easily switch between identities by choosing a given language.

Since this study embraces different instruments of data collection, survey questionnaire is not the only tool addressing the aspect of split change. In focus group interview, participants, who hesitated to admit a change in personality, were to evaluate the perceived importance of themselves after learning English. The majority of respondents have agreed on an increase in self-value following the EFL experience (70%). In line with the theoretical literature, they were somewhat divided in their attachment hesitating about the real community and the imagined one (Norton, 2001). While denying the occurring change, EFL learners show a high value attributed to the experience and the understanding of the self after learning English. One may claim the conflict between the conscious and unconscious, which reflects EFL learners' confusion and hesitation. To sum up, partial change is a frequent outcome of learning a foreign language when the native identity

struggles against a new identity for dominance. This subconscious process implies the complex and contradictory understanding of the self and identity. The applicability of both psychological and pragmatic concepts to explain the divided identity is another piece of evidence of the combined nature of identity.

#### **6.4 Language Learning and No Change in Learner's Identity**

Norton (1995) argues the impossibility of treating identity and language use as fixed notions since they are dynamic, time and place-dependent. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) assert the multiple and diverse nature of identity affected by experiences and other factors influencing individual's contact with the world. In this respect, identity and language are in a reciprocal relationship producing mutual effects. While being subject to the effects of language learning, identity influences the process of learning as well (Dema, 2015). Thus, in some contexts, a learner's identity may appear stable, fixed, and unsusceptible to change after learning a foreign language. For such cases, identity structure theory uses the term 'zero change' applied to language learners feeling no change from attaining skills in a foreign language. Regardless of the used language, the learner behaves in the same way without adopting a new personality (Goa et al., 2007).

The survey results provide substantial support to this premise of the learner's resistance to influence after learning a foreign language. The most agreed on statement concerns the preserved perception of the self and identity, non-affected by the acquired knowledge about new language and culture. Some Kurdish EFL learners have shown experiencing no effect of using either English or Kurdish on identity. Because of some factors, the personality of these learners remained fixed to the set of values, opinions, and behavior norms accepted in Kurdish society. The so-called master identity based on unchangeable factors of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, and regional origin plays a pivotal role in identity and the way individuals speak and act as well as viewed by others

(Cook, 2007). Such stability elements produce the core of one's identity, which influences individual's perception of the experienced events and the generated change.

The survey participants were quite homogeneous in admitting difficulty to change after learning English. For them, knowledge about a foreign language and culture is not a decisive factor in determining identity. Neither it encourages the formation of a new identity which is able to compete against the already-established one. Instead, these EFL learners experience a kind of resistance to the lived linguistic experienced expected to promote new ideas, thoughts, and behavior patterns. Like psychologic theory, pragmatism prescribes an element of identity that remains fixed under various circumstances. According to Carr-Chelkman and Levitan (2016), identity consists of two parts: one is affected, reshaped, and changed, while the other is stable. If the latter dominates, individual's identity development lacks dynamics and stays unchanged regardless of the produced impulses.

This theoretical stipulation gained visibility in the survey results concerning the changes in ideas and behavior due to learning English. Thus, many respondents have rejected feeling such change after the undergone course in English and introduction to its culture. This finding gives credit to the psychological assumption that identity is 'relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self' (Wendt, 1992, p. 397). Accordingly, individual's understanding of the self and identity are somewhat conscious, where a person decides on the degree of impact produced by newly studied sets of values, ideas, and norms. When applied to the current research results, this suggestion explains the intentional resistance of EFL learners to follow the influence of English and its culture and revise their views on some issues and behaviors.

Sometimes, zero change has clear reasons that challenge the adoption of a new system of beliefs and consequently the development of identity. Identity structure theory underlines the

crucial role of the psychological aspect in the process of the identity formation and evolution. McAdams (1995) emphasizes that individual's feelings about the self and identity contribute to his or her perception of various experiences. Individual's reliance on feelings in judgments is fluid and varies from person to person, which causes disparity in identity development after learning a foreign language. In the context of this study, feelings contributed to the impact on personality generated by learners' exposure to English culture. Specifically, some EFL learners disclosed feeling embarrassed when speaking English, which means that their emotional attachment to Kurdish and its culture provokes a feeling of guilt when using a language other than mother tongue for communication. That emotionally-colored commitment to the cultural origins drove EFL learners in their perceptions of the lived linguistic experiences.

Both psychological and pragmatic theories point out the mediating role of thought in identity formation and development. Either daily experiences or learning affect individual's views, which underlies motives to some behavior patterns (Peck, 1997; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Vygotsky (cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Cook, 2008) sees learning as thought, where a collaborative mental process turns into a personal one. This theoretical idea entails that learning contributes to the rise of self-conscious, which informs reactions to new knowledge and skills (Park, 2015). In line with this perspective, a few survey respondents share the belief that no impact is produced on personality by learning English. The use of the phrase ' I think' implies the self-conscious evaluation of the completed course in the English language. In other words, the surveyed EFL learners in this category have denied the effect of learning English on personality and change in their worldviews consciously.

Goa et al. (2007) explain zero change by the impact of personal, social, linguistic, psychological, ethical, or religious factors that serve as a barrier to the identity development underpinning its stability. In the conducted focus-group interview, the respondents were to specify

the reason of their identity's stability by choosing from the following list: English culture, politics, religion, and other issues. The majority of interviewees have agreed that English culture is the principal barrier to the adoption of a new identity after one's exposure to a foreign language and culture (37%). It is a well-established fact that English and Kurdish cultures differ in some critical domains. English society is a representative of the western world characterized by democratic rights and beliefs, consumerism, and capitalism, whereas Kurdish society is rooted in Eastern worldview defined by obedience and family values.

Earlier studies showed the incompatibility of English culture and those of the Islam world like Persian culture (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). Boonchum (2010) & Teer (2013) analyzed experiences of Thai learners of English and found the same difficulty in accepting sets of values and norms reflected in the English language. As a result, EFL learners have to struggle to understand English culture which minimizes the impact produced on learners' identity. The second reason for staying fixed in one's self-concept after learning English is politics (27%). According to identity structure theory, a sense of belonging contributes to the formation of identity. The point applies to individual's affiliation with a social class, political group, religious confession, or another formal or informal network of people (Bird, 2004; Simon, 2004).

In line with this theoretical postulate, religion occupies the third position in EFL learners' rating of barriers to change in personality due to learning English. In his psycholinguistic approach to identity conceptualization, Gee (2004) asserts that although religion can be subject to conversion, it is a rather stable than a dynamic notion. In terms of the current study, the critical disparity in religious views between English and Kurdish cultures prevents the emergence of a new identity. Given the evidence cited above, the category of zero change is a baseline for measuring other kinds of change that occur due to foreign-language learning (Goa et al., 2007). It defines the initial reaction of a learner to change following one's exposure to a foreign language and its culture.

Zero change is a base for a detailed assessment of the effect made on the learner's perception of the self and identity after learning English.

## **6.5 Motivation to Language Learning**

When it comes to the identity evolution and linguistic identity, one needs to consider the aspect of motivation to language learning as affects self-related outcomes. When defining the component of responsive subconscious within pragmatic identity theory, Carr-Chellman and Levitan (2016) point out its highly personal and individualized nature. It is an inner voice commonly underpinned by emotions or actions already taken in life. In some cases, responsive subconscious can serve as motivation to do something. Motivation is a point of concern in the psychological school of thought as well. Lambert (1981) attributes a vital role to motivation in learning a foreign language and developing a new identity. While determining one's commitment to acquiring new language skills, motivation affects the learner's self-identity. According to Lambert (1981), a learner adopts new behavior patterns after learning a foreign language, which reflects the taken connection to a new language and culture.

From this perspective, motivation is a two-fold construct comprised of aptitude and attitude, where the former refers to one's natural ability to learn a new language, and the latter is a personal viewpoint on a new language, either positive or negative (Goa et al., 2007; Tellier, 2013). Aptitude and attitude are two triggers of motivation to learning a foreign language and thus contributors to the emergence of a new identity (Zare-ee & Matin, 2014). The survey questionnaire included three statements formulated to examine motivation of Kurdish students to EFL learning and the common reaction to creating a new identity. The highest level of agreement among respondents aroused the suggestion about greater confidence associated with speaking English. This finding confirms the emotional coloring of motivation, where the use of a foreign language contributes to one's self-

concept. The strong support given to the statement illustrates a high value attributed to possessing English language skills before one's involvement in an EFL course. It means that positive attitudes towards English learning informed learners' decision and active participation in the EFL program with responsive subconscious intention to contribute to one's self-identity. In other words, most Kurdish students initially perceive learning English as a means of enhancing their social role and status in the eye of others (society).

Motivation always occupies a significant place on the agenda of the psychological research as a precursor, indicator, or determinant of an individual's reaction to a given situation. With the grown interest in linguistic identity, motivation has experienced a new wave of researchers' address. While theorists like James (1890) and Lambert (1981) assume a connection between concepts of motivation and identity, empirical researchers illustrated this link. Thus, Goa et al. (2007) examined the impact of EFL learning on the identity of Chinese students to prove the contribution of motivation to the arousal of a new identity giving a feeling of attachment to English language and culture.

Likewise, Boonchum (2010) and Teer (2013) observed a linear association between positive attitudes towards EFL learning among Thai learners and their adoption of some English values, beliefs, and behavior patterns. Zare-ee and Matin (2013) reached similar results in their study aimed at Persian EFL learners' experiences in developing a new identity after the intensive exposure to English language and culture. All the cited studies targeted nations, cultural traditions and norms of which differed from English ones considerably. Based on this, it is assumed that for Kurdish students, motivation plays a vital role in their perception of the acquired skills and self-concept as well. The survey results give evidence of the contribution of motivation to EFL learners' appreciation of their linguistic experiences and reconstruction of identity.

Many participants have explained their decision to study English by positive attitudes towards English culture, songs, and movies. Learning a foreign language, in their case is a means of deepening their understanding of the culture they like and achieving a closer connection to English society. From this standpoint, responsive subconscious shape expectations and aspirations of most EFL learners. Consequently, the initial perception of an opportunity to study English plays a crucial role in EFL learners' reaction to the experience reflected in a change in personality. According to the survey findings, the EFL learner's belief in changed personality and behavior is a popular theme among study participants. The surveyed EFL learners have given a positive evaluation of changed occurred in self-concept and behavior after learning English. This finding underlines the value of positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language for the project's success (Lambert, 1981). To sum up, motivation is a highly influential factor on EFL learners' attainment of English language skills and adoption of values, cultural beliefs, and social norms reflected in language.

## **6.6 Summary**

This chapter is a discussion of the study findings in alignment with the reviewed theoretical and scholarly literature concerning the psychological and pragmatic views on identity and its development after learning a foreign language. In line with the general categorization of EFL learners, the chapter is organized into three sections to address a major change in learners' personality caused by English learning, partial change, or no change. Each aspect is subject to discussion from both psychological and pragmatic perspectives to illustrate evidence to each theoretical standpoint which frequently results in the interchange of different theoretical underpinnings. The section considering motivation confirms the reciprocity between the two theories and the assumed psycho-pragmatic nature of EFL learner's identity.

## Chapter Seven

# Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Studies

### 7.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1- There is a high coefficient relationship between the process of learning EFL and the self-identity of Kurdish learners.
- 2- For most EFL learners, English language learning gives them a new worldview and a new identity.
- 3- Kurdish EFL learner experienced a psychological change, such as their self-esteem, as a result of learning English.
- 4- Based on the first three points, the first and second hypotheses adopted in this are verified.
- 5- Some Kurdish EFL learners were proved to have more than one identity at the same time. Accordingly, the third hypothesis adopted in the study is verified.
- 6- Few Kurdish EFL learners have developed a split identity as a result of learning English.

### 7.2 Recommendations

In the light of the study findings, the following recommendations can be put forward:

1. Textbook writers should seek compromise in deciding the number of cultural items to be introduced into the textbook. They should achieve a balance between the foreign and native cultures.

2.EFL teachers should try their best to ensure that the new FL values and beliefs acquired by the learners are limited only to positive ones.

3. EFL teachers should also try to reflect the positive native cultural values inside the class to encourage students to preserve them in their future identity.

### **7.3 Suggestions for Further Studies**

As this study tackles a psychological as well as a pragmatic perspective of self-identity among Kurdish EFL learners, it is recommended to conduct further studies in the social aspect of EFL learners. Furthermore, conducting a further study in the area of linguistic changes in the mother tongue of EFL learners as a result of learning a foreign language is thought to be very revealing.

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## Appendices

### Self-Identity Questionnaire

#### Appendix A

Dear Respondent,

Please be informed that the result of this questionnaire will be used for a PhD dissertation. Below, please find 30 questions about your experience learning and speaking English. Please offer your most honest answer.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1- I study English because I like English culture, songs and movies.	1	2	3	4	5
2- I feel more confident when speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
3- I have, somehow, two different personalities after learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
4- I can express my ideas and talk about my feelings better in English.	1	2	3	4	5
5- When I speak English, I believe I am thinking differently.	1	2	3	4	5
6- I feel embarrassed when speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
7- Sometimes speaking in English makes me have a different view from most of the people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
8- I can express my opinions better by using English rather than Kurdish.	1	2	3	4	5
9- When speaking with my classmates, I prefer to use English for interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
10- I think learning English affected my personality and behavior in a positive way.	1	2	3	4	5
11- I think learning English has been a new experience which has affected my entire life.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
12-After learning English, I began to reject some ideas, such as my opinion about the equality between man and women.	1	2	3	4	5
13- It is somehow challenging for me to agree on many cultural norms in Kurdish society after learning English such as arranged marriage.	1	2	3	4	5
14- After studying English, I feel that I should be more proud of myself as a Kurd.	1	2	3	4	5
15- After learning English, I take some issues such as Global Warming more seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
16- After studying English literature, I have a better understanding of Kurdish literature.	1	2	3	4	5
17- I think learning English has not affected my personality.	1	2	3	4	5
18- I find it very hard to change my thinking and behavior just because I studied English.	1	2	3	4	5
19- I feel like I am a kind of lost in terms of how I think after learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
20- No matter if I speak English or Kurdish, I feel like I am the same person.	1	2	3	4	5
21- I do not feel that my ideas or behaviors changed as a result of learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
22- I believe learning English gives me a new identity in a sense that I have a different opinion about myself.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
23- I feel I am socially more attached to English society after learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
24- I think the more I learn English language and know about English culture, the more I feel a change in my personality.	1	2	3	4	5
25- I think even if I speak in Kurdish, my personality and behaviors change after learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
26- It is easy for me to convert (change) my thoughts and behaviors when I speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
27- I find it more comfortable to speak about socially sensitive issues such as homosexuality using English rather than Kurdish.	1	2	3	4	5
28- I think learning English has affected my religious beliefs in a sense that I am more open to communicate with people from a different religion.	1	2	3	4	5
29- I get confused between English and Kurdish culture when I act with a foreigner.	1	2	3	4	5
30- I believe I am more aware of political issues and my political views have changed as a result of learning English.	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank You Very Much for Your Time!**

## **Appendix B**

### **Focus group Question list**

- 1-** Do you feel any change in the way how you think about the world after learning English?
- 2-** Do you think your behaviors changed in any way after learning English?
- 3-** Tell us the most prominent area which is changed in your personality after learning English?
- 4-** This question is only for those people who feel they are not so sure about they change in their personality after learning English. Do you think you feel more important when you speak in English in comparison with Kurdish?
- 5-** This question for those who do not feel any change in their personality after learning English. Can you be more specific about the factors from the given list as to why you do not feel any change in your personality after learning English?

## **Appendix C**

### **Individual Interview Question list**

Question 1: Can you describe your feeling while you speak about some socially or religiously sensitive issues?

Question 2: Do you think you are a different person in terms of how you think when you use English for communication?

Question 3: Do you think that your behaviors changed after studying English? Can you give an example?

Question 4: Do you think that learning English has turned your life to a better one? How?

## المستخلص

لقد تم إيلاء اهتمام متزايد للعلاقة بين اللغة وفكر الإنسان وهويته في السنوات الأخيرة. حيث غالبًا ما يوجد هناك نوع من عدم الوضوح في ما يخص هذه العلاقة. فمن ناحية ، يجادل البعض بأن اللغة تقوم بصياغة أفكار الإنسان وهويته إلى حد كبير. ومن ناحية أخرى ، يشدد البعض على عالمية النظام المفاهيمي للإنسان. ويمكن أن تنطبق هذه العلاقة المثيرة للجدل على العلاقة بين لغة أجنبية ما وهوية المتعلمين. فما زال الامر غير واضحاً فيما يخص قدرة تعلم لغة أجنبية ما على إعادة تشكيل أو تغيير هوية المتعلمين الذين قاموا بالفعل بتطوير هويتهم الذاتية ونظامهم المفاهيمي من خلال تعلم اللغة الام. والدراسة الحالية هي محاولة لتوضيح عدم اليقين هذا ومعرفة ما إذا كان تعلم لغة أجنبية ما يؤثر على هوية المتعلمين.

وتفترض الدراسة تأثير الهوية الذاتية للطلاب الكورد فعليًا بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ومن الممكن أن تحدث هذه التغييرات من حيث الثقة في التعبير عن آرائهم والسلوك الشخصي والتفاعل مع الجنس الآخر ، ونتيجة لذلك ، تتغير عملية التفكير بأكملها.

وبعد استعراض النظريات المتعلقة بمجال اللغة والهوية ، تم إجراء دراسة حالة على 150 طالب جامعي من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كوردستان. وركزت الدراسة بشكل أساسي على متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتعليقاتهم على التغييرات التي حصلت على هوياتهم الشخصية بعد تعلم اللغة. وتستهدف هذه الدراسة طلاب من جامعات مختلفة من أجل الأخذ في الحسبان الاختلافات التي قد تطرأ على هوية المتعلمين أثناء وبعد تعلم لغة أجنبية

وتم استخدام أدوات جمع بيانات مختلفة مثل الاستبيان ومجموعة التركيز والمقابلات مع متعلمي اللغة. بغية الوصول الى بيانات معتمدة ورؤية المتغيرات المحتملة في هذا الخصوص. و بعد عملية جمع البيانات ، تم استخدام وسائل احصائية مناسبة لتحليل هذه البيانات .

وأظهر التحليل الإحصائي للنتائج تأثير اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على الهوية الذاتية للمتعلمين الكورد وصحة الفرضيات التي تبنتها الدراسة.

وتخلص الدراسة الى عدد من الإستنتاجات والتوصيات والاقتراحات في ضوء النتائج التي تم التوصل اليها.

## پوخته

لهم چند سآلهی دوايدا، گرنگی زیاتر به پهيوهندی نیوان زمان و بیرکردنهوه و ناسنامه دراوه. زوربهی جار ناروونی لهم پهيوهندیه دا بهدی دهکرتیت. له لایهکهوه، هندیک وای دادهنین که زمان بهزوری شیوهی بیرکردنهوه و ناسنامهی مروّف دیاری دهکات. له لایهکی ترهوه هندیکی تر داوکوی له جیهانگیریهتی سیستمی درکی مروّف دهکن. نهم پهيوهندییه مشتومرنامیزه نهکرتیت راست بیت بۆ پهيوهندی نیوان زمانی بیگانه و ناسنامهی فیرخواز هکانی. تانیستا نهوه روون نییه که نایا فیربوونی زمانی بیگانه ناسنامهی فیرخواز هکانی له قالب دهاتهوه یان دهیگوریت، لهکاتیکدا که نهو فیرخوازانه پیشتر ناسنامهی کهسی و سیستمی درکی خویانیان پهروپیداوه. نهم لیکۆلینهوه ههولیکه بۆ روونکردنهوهی نهو ناروونییه و زانیی نهوهی که نایا فیربوونی زمانی بیگانه کاریگهری لهسه ناسنامهی فیرخوازانی دهبیت یان نا.

گریمانهی نهوه کراوه که ناسنامهی کهسی فیرخوازانی کورد بههوی فیربوونی زمانی نینگلیزییهوه کاری تیدهکرتیت. نهم گۆرانکاریانه دهکرتیت لهرووی متمانه بهخوبونهوه رووبدهن له دهبرینی بیروراکاتیان، ههلسوکهوتی تاییهتیان یان مامهلهکردنیان لهگهّل رهگهزی بهرامیهر. له بهر نهجامیشدا کوی پرۆسهی بیرکردنهوه گۆرانکاری بهسهردا دیت.

دوای لیکۆلینهوه له تیورهکانی پهيوهست به بواری زمان و ناسنامهوه، لیکۆلینهوه له ۱۵۰ فیرخوازی کورد له زمانی نینگلیزی وهک زمانی بیگانه دهخوینن کراوه. لیکۆلینهوهکه له بهر هندا گرنگی دهکات به فیرخوازانی نینگلیزی وهک زمانی بیگانه و وهلامدانهویان بۆ نهو گۆرانکاریانهی که له ناسنامهی کهسییاندا رویداوه له دوای فیربوونی زمانی نینگلیزی. لیکۆلینهوهکه فیرخوازی قوناغی زانکوی له زانکو جیاواز هکاندا بهنامانج گرتوه بۆ نهوهی نهو جیاوازیانهی که لهوانیه رووبدهن له ناسنامهی کهسی فیرخواز هکاندا وینا بکات له ماوه و دوای فیربوونی زمانیکی بیگانه.

رینگای جیاواز بۆ کوکردنهوهی داتا له فیرخوازی زمان بهکار هینراوه وهک راپرسی و گفتوگۆی گروپ و چاوپیکهوتنی تاکه کهسی. مهپهستیش لیره دا تیکهّل کردنی داتاگان بووه بۆ دنیابوون و بینینی ههر جیاوازیهک لهم بارهتهوه. لهپاش پرۆسهی کوکردنهوهی داتاگان، شیوازی بیروکهیی بۆ شیتهلکردنی داتا کوکراوهکان بهکار هینراوه.

شیکارییه نامارییهکان کاریگهری فیربوونی زمانی نینگلیزی وهک زمانی بیگانه لهسه ناسنامهی کهسی فیرخوازی کورد نیشان دهکات. بهمهش نهو گریمانهیهی که لهم لیکۆلینهوه دا پشتی پین بهستراوه پشتراست دهبیتهوه.

نهم لیکۆلینهوه به هندیک دهر نهجام و پیشنیار بۆ لیکۆلینهوهی تر لهسهر بناغهی بهر نهجامهکان کوتایی دیت.