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PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE OF THE HERITAGE
LANGUAGE THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL READING IN THE L1

by

Ruth A. Aldrich
Bachelor of Arts, Northwestern College, 1992

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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This thesis, submitted by Ruth A. Aldrich in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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To my mother Blanche M. Aldrich
and Aldrich Family

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ABSTRACT

Cultural diversity is not a new concept for the United States. In recent years a demographic shift has taken place so that the “language minority” has become the majority in many urban schools. Educational researchers actively seek innovative ways to acculturate new arrivals into North America. They observed that one way to strengthen acculturation is by affirming the heritage languages and cultures. This study involved three educated Afghan-Minnesotan parents reading heritage storybooks to their children at home. Through promoting heritage literacy, I hypothesized that an intergenerational reading program would enhance children’s attitude and behavior toward heritage language and culture while they acculturate to North American culture.

The results of the study indicated that parents’ attitudes regarding Dari transmission were pivotal to the success of the intergenerational family-centered reading program. Parents with higher positive attitudes towards Dari transmission and frequent contact with relatives living in non-English speaking countries had more success in Dari transmission than those whose attitudes were less positive. Additional factors were the children’s readiness to learn Dari and their individual responses to the family-centered reading program.

Ongoing research is needed to understand participants’ expectations and to select appropriate material taking into consideration language dialect, orthography, reading material, and educational method.

Future studies are needed on how Dari oral skills and literacy are traditionally transmitted in Afghanistan. Another question is whether involving parents in material development workshops could facilitate parents taking ownership in Dari intergenerational reading.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Afghan people are acquainted with indescribable grief, loss, and survival against staggering odds. During the recent 22 years of war, first against the Russians from 1979 to 1989, then with the civil war from 1992 to 1996, and finally under Taliban control from 1994 to 2001, wave after wave of Afghans have been uprooted from their homes and families.

In one family,¹ the parents were preparing a meal in their kitchen when a rocket struck their living room, annihilating a grandmother, four children and a niece. The shock and devastation was unbearable. Broken, grief-stricken and empty-handed the parents made a treacherous journey through frontline fighting to Pakistan in search of safety and refuge. When a political solution did not come and life-threatening pressures intensified, Afghan families such as this one were forced to consider political asylum in other countries. It is not unusual to hear similar heart wrenching stories from other Afghan families, often with at least six family members killed during the seemingly never-ending years of war. They were forced to make the choice of leaving everything behind to save their lives and family or to risk death.

Afghanistan is a landlocked country slightly smaller than Texas with stark contrasts. The majestic snow capped Hindu Kush Mountains stretch from the Northeast to Southwest to vast North and Southwestern plains encompassing arid to semiarid climates, with cold winters and hot summer weather conditions. Afghanistan's major religion is Islam at 99 percent Muslim. Of these, 85 percent are Sunni and 14 percent are Shi'a. Other minority religions are also found in

¹ This family did not participate in the study but their story illustrates the human loss caused by 23 years of war in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan. Although there are 47 different living languages in Afghanistan, two National languages are taught in school; Dari and Pushtu (Gordon 2005). The urban literacy rate is 25.9 percent (35.5 percent male; 14.8 percent female) for children six years old and older, in contrast to rural areas where the literacy rate is only 8.8 percent (15.7 percent male; 0.6 percent female, in some provinces 0.1 percent) (AllRefer 1997).

The Afghans' first place of refuge was neighboring countries including Pakistan, Iran, India, and countries north of Afghanistan. Their flight also extended into Europe, where they were the third largest asylum-seeking group in Europe, according to the United States Committee of Refugees and Immigrant 2001 report. The top four countries of asylum in Europe were Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Austria.

Not only did Afghans flee to neighboring countries in Europe, many immigrated to the United States. In 2000, the United States Census Bureau recorded 53,709 foreign-born Afghans were living in the United States. The ten states with the largest populations are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Top ten States for Afghan Immigrants

State	Population	State	Population
California	25,112	Texas	1,046
New York	7,760	Colorado	783
Virginia	7,266	Illinois	737
New Jersey	1,858	Pennsylvania	599
Maryland	1,109	Washington	570

Minnesota's 2000 census recorded 467 foreign-born Afghans living in the state (United States Census Bureau 2000).

The Minnesota Afghan population is small, and there are no significant outside programs and community to stimulate heritage language and culture maintenance. In such cases the responsibility rests more on individual households to promote language learning than on the organized efforts in the heritage community. A person's identity conveys value in who they are and how they fit into their society. I presume many immigrants forfeit their heritage identity either consciously or subconsciously as they assimilate to the host country's values and lifestyle.

This leaves individuals in an identity flux during adaptation to a new culture. Skuttnab Kangas (2000) would claim identity problems continue ever after.

In this chapter I first present the challenge Afghan immigrants encounter in maintaining their heritage identity while simultaneously acculturating to a new host country. Acculturation means to adapt or blend the strengths from two cultural values together. Secondly, I present my research goals: to gather information on parents' language attitudes, parents' perception of their children's language attitudes and behaviors and to study the effects of a family-centered intergenerational heritage reading project for transmission of heritage language and culture to the next generation.

1.1 Previous research on acculturation

America is a country with a continual influx of new nationalities. Over 90 percent of recent immigrants come from non-English-speaking countries (CAL 2005). Many come from non-European countries where they use different writing systems than Roman and do not practice Judeo-Christian religion. Although cultural diversity is not new to the United States, Paratore (1999) has observed a demographic shift. In urban schools, the majority of students are from the so-called "language minorities". Educational researchers on the issues of diversity in North America have begun to focus on the best way to integrate new arrivals to the States.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) describe adaptation to a new culture. They state that the most effective approach towards acculturation for immigrant families is for parents and children to engage in both host culture and heritage culture traditions. This is done by learning the American culture and language while maintaining their heritage language and culture through actively participating in their ethnic community. "Acculturation is the first step of the adaptation process where both parents and children learn the ways and the language of their new country" (1996:240). Portes and Rumbaut's typology of acculturation across generations is given in Appendix A to illustrate the five possible acculturation choices immigrants can make.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996:247-251) also outline what happens when a healthy cultural

adaptation does not happen. Such a family follows one of four models. In the first model children acculturate before their parents in language development, resulting in a loss of parental authority and a parent-child role reversal, influencing children to draw their identity from their peers rather than family. In the second model, family ties rupture as children leave the heritage community, seeking acceptance from the host country at a great cost of self-identity. They found that in the third model parents and children pursue host language and culture at the expense of losing their heritage language and culture. The fourth model is that families are isolated within their ethnic community with limited contact with the host country.

When Afghan parents and children adopt their language and culture from both Afghanistan and the United States, a positive adaptation to their new language and culture develops. The Afghan participants in this study use Dari to communicate in the home, and selected Dari for the heritage reading program. Literacy using both Dari and English could be an effective resource to develop vocabulary, fluency and to assure a healthy adaptation. With regards to literacy among Iran Persian speakers Soheil (1998), who participated in Warner and Wittner's 1998 research on "Gatherings in diaspora", perceived that, "Once people stop reading and writing that language, that's the end of the story" (1998:89). Soheil found when parents participate in literacy activities in both Persian and English they place value on both cultures.

Writing about family literacy, Paratore (1999:8) concluded, "...evidence documenting a relationship between children's early success and parents' own reading behavior has led many educators to seek educational interventions that address the family as a whole rather than the child alone". Family reading programs have been one of the most effective methods for preparing children for school. However, immigrant children living in the United States often are not exposed to a rich reading environment in the home in either the heritage language or the English language. Paratore (1994:195) presents a study of 367 families enrolled in literacy classes, representing 28 different countries, in which "two hundred and thirty-two parents reported either rarely or never reading to their children in their first language prior to participating

in the study”. Saunders’ (1983) research stressed adults and children should first learn to read in their primary language (the language they use most) and then in a second language. While it is not feasible to offer heritage language classes for every immigrant language group in the public schools, perhaps there is another solution through intergenerational reading in the heritage language in the home.

Paratore (1994, 1999), Saunders (1983), and Portes and Rumbaut (1996) all document the importance of heritage language maintenance efforts and family reading programs before children enter public school. Since the number of immigrants in the United States is rising, the next section considers the possible identity loss immigrant families face if they lose their heritage language and heritage culture.

1.1.1 Language Maintenance and Language Transmission versus Language Loss

Imagine a scenario in which the first generation Afghans arrive in the United States, study English and maintain their heritage language. However, heritage language transmission to their children takes lower priority with all the other adjustments the children need to make. The third generation receives even less heritage language input than the second generation did.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) advocate that parents model language transition, heritage language maintenance and bilingualism for their children by maintaining their heritage language, culture and acculturating to their American culture. They stress that when parents and children value both languages they make a smoother transition to the new host culture. The question is: what strategies can help parents effectively transmit their heritage language and culture to their children? Younos (1998) shares his insights in his research.

California has a large Afghan population and Younos (1998) studied three Afghan families. Younos stressed that weekend schools were not enough to help Afghans maintain their heritage language. He found more needed to be done in the area of Dari education for the children, but this was difficult because there were limited resources and Dari was not recognized as a language

which should be taught in public schools. "...the participants voiced their concerns for loss of language, loss of family connection, loss of cultural identity, lack of belonging in the Afghan community, and the sense of inferiority in the mainstream culture" (Younos 1998:56). Although extended Afghan families offer environments to promote heritage language use, Younos felt Dari transmission was improbable due to both a lack of heritage educational materials and because children were not learning the Dari alphabet. Even in California, with over 25,000 foreign-born Afghans, Younos found parents sensed a need for their children to learn how to read and write their heritage language to strengthen their children's identity.

Saunders (1983) advocated that parents take the responsibility to start a family-centered literacy program for heritage language transmission before the child enters school. He recommends when possible, that bilingual children first develop second grade reading skills in their primary language, and then develop reading skills in their second language.

Williams and Snipper (1990) found that, like speaking, reading and writing are social actions, too. They concluded that learning to read and write their heritage language helps children define who they are and how they fit into their society. Wei (2000) observed some bilingual learners struggle with the school curriculum, but concluded that the cognitive, social, cultural, intellectual and economical advantage bilingualism brings the children makes the effort well worthwhile.

As noted by Warner and Wittner (1998), learning to negotiate cultural mores and values are important steps in selective acculturation for immigrants. For example, Muslims living in North America benefit from three factors living in a Judeo-Christian society: their North American society promotes religious freedom, their Abrahamic origin helps them share similar religious ideologies, and their individual achievement is not based on religious affiliation. Therefore Muslims can advance financially and socially without deserting their religious faith. When immigrants make healthy linguistic and cultural transitions to a new country, everyone benefits from the adaptation.

In summary, if immigrant children find their identity in both their heritage and American

cultures, they make a healthy “selective acculturation” including both the heritage culture and the new host culture (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

1.1.2 Heritage Language Transmission

In this study, ‘heritage language transmission’ refers to parents passing on their heritage language to following generations. Often immigrants feel they only have restricted opportunities to use their heritage language in their new host country. They respond to the need to learn English in America but are rarely affirmed in their use of the heritage language. However, heritage language transmission is important for the development of their children’s identity and academic achievements.

A study of Spanish speaking immigrants conducted by Paratore and Krol-Sinclair (1996) affirmed heritage language use and intergenerational storybook reading as a bridge for parents’ involvement in their children’s formal education. Paratore and Krol-Sinclair observed immigrant parents’ lack of self-confidence in approaching the children’s teachers and actively participating in their children’s education and performance. In order to help children and parents meet the literacy needs, a program was designed to invite immigrant parents to the classroom to read storybooks to the children. Although some parents had limited fluency in English, they were invited to read in English or Spanish; both languages were taught in the elementary school participating in the study. The parents first read a book of their choice at home with their child and later brought the book to the school to read with a class of schoolchildren. Some of the parents read in Spanish, others read in English. There were clear procedures to guide the pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities. As a result the reading program included immigrant parents in school activities and opened communications between parents and teachers. It built the parents’ self-confidence and put equal value on their heritage language and on English as they interacted with the teachers and the children in the reading program. Paratore affirmed the parents’ heritage language literacy by inviting the parents to choose which language to do the

book reading in, fitting family reading into the formal educational program.

Paratore and Krol-Sinclair (1996) found that promoting English and heritage language transmission and heritage language literacy were effective ways to involve parents in their children's education and build confidence in the parents.

1.1.3 Literacy transmission

Promoting heritage language literacy is a viable way to advance language maintenance and culture to the next generation. The written heritage language is a stable form of a language and carries within the text a great deal of cultural information.

Soheil, a native Persian speaker, emphasized that immigrants' traditions will not last if reading is not promoted because "...once people stop reading and writing that language, that's the end of the story" (Warner and Wittner 1998:88-89).

In a study of parents and children sharing in literacy, Paratore (1994) looked at the parents' involvement in the children's reading activities. She encouraged more active parental participation in children's educational activities, "...based on the premise that an intergenerational approach to literacy would not only extend adults' own uses of literacy, but would also enhance the ways they support their children's school learning" (1994:194).

In general, children that excel in school have supportive parents reading to them in the home. As Williams and Snipper (1990) and Adams (1990) say, literacy activities develop children's cognitive and verbal learning ability. Therefore, whether parents read to their children in their heritage language or in English, they are developing cognitive and verbal skills in their children which help the children excel in academics. Often, however, immigrant parents who desire to read to their children in their heritage language face a major challenge in locating appropriate heritage reading material outside their homeland.

1.1.4 Attitudes

Both parents' and children's attitudes are of key importance to successful transmission of parents' heritage language and culture to their children. Rubin (1968) stressed that a positive attitude towards the heritage language promotes heritage language maintenance, even if the host language is a prestigious language. At the same time, a positive attitude towards the host language inspires language learning and use of the host language, thus assisting in language shift from the old to the new language. Negative attitudes towards the heritage language tend to accelerate language replacement of the heritage language by the host language. This language shift is further increased when not only is there a negative attitude towards the heritage language but there is also a positive attitude towards the host language. A negative attitude towards the host language, however, produces a resistance towards learning the host language. Thus, if negative attitude towards the host language is combined with a positive attitude towards the heritage language, it is more probable the heritage language will be maintained and a limited amount of the host language learned.

Healthy, positive attitudes towards heritage language and host language learning enhance the ease of learning another language and empower self-identity (Warner and Wittner 1998). In this research I look for such healthy, positive attitudes in Dari-speaking Afghans towards both their heritage language and the host English language, with the families maintaining and learning both languages.

Barron-Hauwaert (2004:113) gives ten advantages and nine disadvantages parents perceived their children acquire by growing up bilingual. The advantages the research revealed are:

- 1) A better start in life;
- 2) Good job/study prospects for the future;
- 3) More freedom to be mobile and work in several countries;
- 4) An increased tolerance in the world towards other languages and cultures;

- 5) An understanding of other foreigners' needs;
- 6) That learning two languages simultaneously from birth is better than later acquisition;
- 7) A good ear for language learning in the future;
- 8) Increased intelligence and meta-awareness;
- 9) An ability to have a dual-cultural heritage; and
- 10) An ability to communicate with other family members.

Most of the parents perceived disadvantages for their children were external pressures as opposed to internal benefits, and "hard work" was repeated most often (2004:115).

- 1) Hard work, determination and effort are needed;
- 2) Not being a 'normal' family;
- 3) The child never reaching 'native speaker' level;
- 4) Explaining the family situation to monolinguals;
- 5) Their child being bullied or 'picked on' at school for being different;
- 6) Worry about language development and mixing/code-switching;
- 7) Having to frequently translate or ask for translations;
- 8) Having to invest time to teach child at home to keep both languages by visiting family;
and
- 9) Potential misunderstandings and chaos of having two languages at home.

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) emphasized that although maintaining a heritage language is not easy, parents' attitudes towards their children's bilingualism is of key importance. Rubin (1968) predicted that both parents' attitude and children's attitude clearly affect language transmission to the next generations.

In summary, Paratore (1994), Saunders (1983), Portes and Rumbaut (1996), William and Snipper (1990) and Younos (1998) emphasized the importance of heritage language literacy as a process of learning a heritage language. Parents' attitude toward heritage language transmission is central towards future generation's heritage language literacy and speaking. When parents

place a high value on their children's bilingualism and biliteracy this influences their children's attitudes towards heritage language.

1.2 Goals

Younos (1998) suggested further research was needed on immigrant parents' attitudes towards heritage language transmission. The goals of this research are to 1) evaluate parents' attitudes and perceptions of their children's attitudes and behavior towards heritage language by providing heritage reading material for Afghans living in the United States; and 2) to study the effectiveness of a family-centered heritage language intergenerational reading program for language and culture transmission. Parents' attitudes are a crucial influence on a child's heritage language learning. If the parents' attitude regarding Dari transmission is positive, it is more probable they will regularly read heritage language books to their children and find additional ways to transmit their heritage language and culture on to their children. In addition to stimulating a positive attitude in their children, reading heritage material may stimulate reflective conversations about the homeland and culture. Maintaining both the heritage language and host language will probably enhance the family's acculturation, blending the old culture and the new culture.

Although I was considered an outsider by this relatively closed Afghan community, as a result of living in Southwest Asia for 19 years I was able to communicate in either Dari or English. Oftentimes when working with Afghans we would begin in Dari and eventually switch to English. In addition to having fluency in spoken Dari, I read Dari at a fourth grade level.

As I visited the Afghan families, parents most often spoke about their war experiences in Afghanistan. I observed Afghan parents' fond childhood memories often were clouded over by tragic war memories. I theorize that reading traditional Afghan stories could stimulate parents' personal childhood stories and fond memories of Afghanistan. Storybook reading may facilitate a process in which literacy learning moved to heritage language and culture learning. I hypothesize

that an intergenerational, parent-child, Dari reading program will improve the children's attitudes regarding learning Dari and Afghan culture and make healthy acculturations between the heritage culture and the host country.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

A six-month family-centered intergenerational reading program was conducted with Afghan immigrants living in Minnesota focusing on heritage language transmission. The parents in this research had previously achieved an average or below average English fluency during their years in the United States. Their children were fluent in English, in relation to their age and grade level. The purpose of this study is to measure attitudes regarding transmission of heritage language and culture to the next generation in three main areas.

The three areas in which attitudes were studied were: parents' attitude regarding Dari transmission, parents' perception of their children's attitude regarding learning Dari, and parents' perception of their children's behavior regarding their use of Dari. Two methods were used to gather data: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires provided an objective evaluation, and the interviews allowed for a subjective evaluation regarding attitudes regarding Dari transmission. We will see how parents' attitudes and parents' perception of their children's attitudes influence Dari transmission.

In sections 2.1 and 2.2, I introduce the participants and present the reading material used in the reading program. Then in 2.3, I present the two research methods used to gather data. Finally, in section 2.4, I present the actual reading activities carried out by the participating families.

2.1 Participants

Three Afghan families living in Minnesota participated in the intergenerational literacy project in Dari, their heritage language. Each family received an invitation directly or via a

family member to participate in the research. Although I preferred to involve six to eight families in the project only three consented to participate. To minimize variables differences between the families both spouses were Afghan. Therefore, neither mixed marriages (an Afghan married to an American) nor widows were included in this study. Although there were additional potential families that could have participated in the study, there appeared to be at least two reasons more families did not participate. First, extended family dynamics influenced which families were invited to participate and I was dependent on their invitation to others. Second, the Afghan community is a relatively closed community. For example, if there was a temporary breakdown of communications between family members, those families did not receive an invitation via other Afghans to participate in the reading program. Overall, as noted above, I speak and read Dari, but in general I sensed people were also cautious in trusting me as an outsider.

The parents in this study had completed twelfth grade or higher, were fluent in speaking, reading and writing Dari, spoke English, and some spoke other languages as well. Besides participating in the family-centered Dari reading program, they responded to questionnaires and interviews regarding their attitudes and their perception of their children's attitudes in Dari transmission. Each family in the project was asked to read to their children for 30 minutes three times a week from the Dari storybooks.

The parents in this study demonstrated high language abilities with strong literacy skills. Their strong literacy skills are not a true representation of the average literacy rate in Afghanistan. For example, in a 1997 report the overall literacy rate among Afghans living in Afghanistan was estimated at 29.8 percent (45.2 percent males; 13.5 percent females) of an estimated population of 27 million people (AllRefer 1997). However, due to these parents' highly developed language skills, it is an advantage to build on their rich academic background to facilitate their children's integration to a new culture.

The three families involved have a total of eight children. In all three families, the parents selected the youngest children (preteens to adolescent) to participate in the reading project.

Demographic information was gathered at the beginning of the project. The parents evaluated their own language fluency and gave their perception of their children’s language fluency and patterns of use. Table 2 presents the Afghan parents’ language fluency and reveals the strengths they brought to the reading project. The shaded rows indicate data on the parent that most often read to the children during the study and responded to the questionnaire and interviews.

Table 2: Parents’ Language Fluency

Age	Years of Education	Dari		English		Other Afghan languages		Other non-Afghan languages	
		Verbal	Literacy	Verbal	Literacy	Verbal	Literacy	Verbal	Literacy
45>	University	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	0
45<	University	4	4	3	2	3	2	—	—
45>	University	4	3	3	2	4	3	1	1
45<	High School	4	4	2	2	0	1	—	—
45>	High School	3	3	3	2	—	—	1	—
45>	High school	3	2	1	1	—	—	—	—

4= Very Well, 3= Well, 2= Somewhat, 1=Very little, 0= None, and — =Not Applicable

Each participant represented by a shaded row brought strong heritage verbal and literacy skills to the research program. All parents were middle-aged, spoke and read in at least two languages to some degree; some had learned a third and even a fourth language. All participants had at least a twelfth grade education, and half had gone on to complete university studies.

Table 3 presents the parents’ perception of their children’s language abilities. The shaded rows indicate data on the children involved in the program.

Table 3: Children’s Language Fluency

Age	English		Dari		Other non-Afghan languages
	Verbal	Literacy	Verbal	literacy	
Young adult	4	4	3	—	3
Young adult	3	3	2	—	—
Young adult	4	4	1	—	3
Adolescent	4	4	1	—	3
Adolescent	3	3	2	—	2
Preteen	3	2	2	—	—
Preteen	3	2	2	—	—
Preteen	4	3	2	—	—

4= Very Well, 3= Well, 2= Somewhat, 1=Very little, 0= None, and — =Not Applicable

The children from the three families ranged from preteens to young adults. Like their parents, they brought highly developed language abilities to the study. Three young adults and one preteen were toddlers when they came with their families to the United States. These children are making good progress in acquiring English language skills. In Afghan culture, high value is placed on a good education and that value appears to have been transferred to the next generation as well. A few of the children had studied a third language and received high compliments from their teachers. For example, one teacher told the student's parents that perhaps the reason the child has learned a foreign language taught in school without an accent is because the family speaks a language other than English in the home and the child already has had practice in learning a second language (English).

It is also valuable to observe in which circumstances the participants' children use Dari. The families and relatives offer some opportunities for the children to speak Dari. On the other hand, a high percentage of their days are filled with English schools, English-speaking friends, or English-speaking cousins.

Table 4 presents parents' assessments of the domains in which their children used Dari and English. Each column indicates the target language the children used to respond to their mother, father, relatives, or peers and the necessary language adjustments they competently made. The shaded area indicates the children selected by the parents as participants in the reading program. Parents commented on all the children and their Dari usage patterns inside and outside the home.

Table 4: Children's Domain of Language Use

Age	Mother	Father	Mother's relatives	Father's relatives	Peers			
					Siblings	Afghan	Neighbor	School
Young adult	D	E & D	D	E & D	E	E	E	E
Young adult	D	E & D	D	E & D	E	E	E	E
Young adult	E & D	E	E & D	D	E	E & D	E	E
Adolescent	E & D	E	E & D	D	E	E & D	E	E
Adolescent	D	E & D	D	E & D	E	E	E	E
Preteen	E & D	E & D	D	D	E	E & D	E	E
Preteen	E & D	E & D	D	D	E	E & D	E	E
Preteen	E & D	E & D	D	D	—	E	E	E

E= English, D= Dari and — =Non Applicable

The children predominately use English with some Dari inside the home and use English outside the home. Any Dari outside the home with Afghan peers is most often a matter of preference versus necessity. According to the parents' perception, although the children are surrounded by English-speaking peers at school and at home, they are influenced by hearing and speaking Dari inside the home and with relatives.

In summary, these families bring highly developed language skills to this research.

2.2 Materials

There are two officially recognized languages in Afghanistan, Dari and Pushtu. The participants in this study read the Dari books to their child because they all spoke Dari in the home. Wahab (2004) noted that 50 percent of Afghans speak Dari and 90 percent of them understand Dari. Dari is an Indo-European language with an alphabet based on the Arabic alphabet with an additional four modified letters. Several Dari dialects are found in Afghanistan, known as Hazaragi, Kabuli, Tajiki, Herati, Panjshiri, Aimaqi and others. These different Dari dialects are similar enough for speakers to understand each other. Dari, Farsi, Persian and Tajiki refer to the same language used in three different countries. In Afghanistan, Dari or Farsi are used interchangeably to refer to one language; in Iran, Farsi or Persian are spoken; and in Tajikistan Tajiki is spoken. Both Afghanistan and Iran use the modified Arabic alphabet. On a broader scale there are slight pronunciation and dialect variations between the language as spoken in Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan. Only Tajiki is written in a Cyrillic script.

One key difference between Dari and Persian is that Dari has more Arabic words due to Islamic influence. Gordon (2005) notes that Afghan Dari and Iranian Persian are more or less mutually comprehensible. The variations between Dari and Persian are often compared to European French and Canadian French. Dari holds more to the traditional vowel sounds while in Persian the traditional vowel sounds have been lost. The "phonological and lexical differences between Iran and Afghanistan cause little difficulty in comprehension. Most Afghan dialects are

closer to literary Persian than Iranian dialects are to literary Persian” (Gordon 2005). There are two forms of Dari, one form for literature, and one form for the home. The form for literature is called *adabi* or high Dari and the form at home is called *estalaai* or low Dari.

For this project a collection of books produced inside and outside of Afghanistan were made available to each family. A list of the books used in the reading is found in Appendix B. For easy reference the books can be divided into five sets of reading materials according to their source. In addition, a parent assigned all the books to one of six levels according to reading difficulty. It did not appear that the parent used any specific criteria to determine reading levels for the books.

The first set of books includes twenty-four *New Home New Life* books produced by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). These books are admired among Afghans living inside and outside Afghanistan. The BBC books, printed in Pakistan, are published in two levels of Dari. One level is the formal dialect or literacy high Dari. The other level is an informal or vernacular low Dari. On average, each book is 25-30 pages long, with high quality colorfully illustrated stories. One book included simple addition and subtraction math problems for the reader to solve. The BBC books can be divided between the first five reading levels; low Dari is used for the earlier reading levels and high Dari was used in the more advanced levels of reading.

The second set of books included two very popular Ladybird English books translated into low Dari and a third book translated to high Dari by the Central Asia Development Agency (CADA): *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pinocchio*, and *The Worried Sparrow*. These colorfully illustrated books are printed on high quality paper. The three Afghan mothers in the project expected their children to enjoy these books the most because they were English books translated to Dari. These books belonged to reading levels three and four.

The third set of books included high Dari schoolbooks from grades 1-12 and Islamic high Dari schoolbooks from grades 1-3 presently used in Afghanistan. The first grade Dari schoolbooks introduced the Dari alphabet and simple high Dari stories for the beginner reader to

practice reading. The remaining Dari schoolbooks, grades 2-12, include 610 stories one to two pages in length in increasing levels of high Dari. These schoolbooks were printed in black-and-white inexpensive paper, each containing a few illustrations. The schoolbooks ranged from reading levels three to six.

The fourth set of books contained two beginning reading books, *Beginner's Dari*² and *Your first 100 words in Persian*.³ Both books are recent printings in the United States which were added to the collection during the fifth month of the research. The authors use three alphabets in the lessons, the Dari alphabet, pronunciation helps, and English transliteration in Roman alphabet. For the children to develop word recognition skills, *Your first 100 words in Persian* included games and matching puzzles in each lesson. Although this book was attractive with many activities, the Iranian Persian vocabulary created some language interference since 27 of 100 words were not used in Dari. In the first three chapters, 17 of the 36 words introduced were not Dari. However, this book could easily be modified for Dari speakers by using Dari words so they can confidently use the book with their children. *Beginner's Dari* introduced sentences in both high Dari and some low Dari and was organized in a user-friendly style so that English speakers could begin reading Dari sentences. Each chapter has a homework section. One Afghan parent recommended these two books for level three.

The fifth set of books included a variety of advanced reading material: *Traditional Dari Stories*, *Men's Promises*, and *Forty Tales of Korasan*. *Traditional Dari Stories* is a collection compiled from Afghanistan storytellers and printed by Afghans living in Germany. *Men's Promises* is the most well-read book of Dari short stories from Afghanistan. *Forty Tales of Korasan* is an Iranian Persian book including popular stories for the more advanced reader. These books were level four and level six.

² Wahab, Shaista. 2004. *Beginner's Dari*. New York, NY. Hoppecrene.

³ Wightwick, Jane. 2003. *Your first 100 words in Persian*. New York, NY. McGraw.

The reading material was divided by one parent into six reading levels from easiest to more difficult as follows:

- 1) Level one: thirteen BBC storybooks.
- 2) Level two: five BBC storybooks.
- 3) Level three: a Dari grade 1 schoolbook, two CADA books, two BBC books, one *My first 100 words in Persian*, and one *Beginner's Dari* book.
- 4) Level four: one Dari grade 2 schoolbook, one *Traditional Dari Stories*, one CADA book, and two BBC books.
- 5) Level five: two BBC books and one Dari grade 3.
- 6) Level six: the remaining Dari schoolbooks from 4-12 grades, *Forty Tales of Korasan*, and *Men's Promises*.

Overall, the BBC books were most popular, although, in one family, the schoolbooks were preferred due to their use of high Dari which was considered more proper for literacy.

I handled the research books as a mobile library. At the beginning of the project I had one set of the Dari BBC books, four sets of grade 1-3 schoolbooks and religious books, one *Traditional Dari Stories* book, one Persian *Forty Stories from Khorasan*, and two *Dari Men's Promises*. The families could check out three BBC books and three schoolbooks at a time. After I received the full supply of books four months into the project from Afghanistan, the families could check out seven or more books at a time.

2.3 Questionnaire and interview analyses

I used two methods to evaluate the research: a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire contained a total of twenty-six statements. Parents indicated levels of agreement with each statement using a four point scale. The responses to the questionnaire provided objective data to measure changes during the study. The interview questions provided subjective information to complement the responses to the questionnaire.

A brief pilot test on the research material was carried out with four adults: a Peruvian, a Haitian, a Korean and a Russian. All four adults confirmed that the statements and questions were clearly presented. Some however, commented that two statements did not seem relevant to Dari transmission:

- 1) I think my son should marry someone from my homeland.
- 2) I think my daughter should marry someone from my homeland.

These comments were confirmed while administering the pre-research questionnaire, and so these statements were dropped from the questionnaire. Two additional statements were also dropped in the final research evaluation:

- 1) I think my children prefer watching South Asian videos than Western videos.
- 2) My children want to visit my homeland.

The above first statement was covered in more detail during the interviews and parents indicated a one time attitude assessment. The second statement was covered in parents' perception of their children's attitude regarding learning Dari and this statement did not accurately represent parents' perception of their children's behavior. In the end a total of four statements were dropped from the questionnaire.

Two families, Families 1 and 3 filled out the questionnaire on their own. Family 2 requested that we read the statements together and the family member responded to them. Sometimes we discussed the statements in Dari, checking for clarity. Families 1 and 3 also responded to the interviews in English. Family 2 responded in both Dari and English. The parents had their own copy of the interview questions but they requested that I record their responses as they felt freer to discuss their attitudes than they did to write them down. I took notes and discussed their responses with them during the interviews to assure I was clearly documenting their attitudes. I documented their responses to interview questions more fully when I returned home or the next day. I also included notes on observations made during the meeting time that were relevant with regard to parents' attitudes and their perception of their children's attitudes regarding Dari

transmission. In general each meeting time was six hours following south Asian protocol: visiting, drinking tea or eating a meal, before covering the research questionnaire/interview and observing the intergenerational reading activities.

Two consent forms were prepared for use in this research: a general consent form for research participants and recording consent for research participants. The first, general consent form covered the family's consent to participate in this study. The second, recording consent form, requested permission to audio record and/or video record the interviews and reading times. All three families consented to participate in the study, but clearly communicated their reluctance for any audio or video recording to take place. This underscored the general suspicion that the Afghan community has regarding outsiders. Even though I speak Dari and these three families agreed to participate in the project, they did not want to be recorded in any form.

The parents responded to the questionnaire three times: once before the research began, in the middle of the research, and again at the end of the research period. Interviews were structured around a series of open ended questions. Family 1 and Family 3 filled out the questionnaire and handed it back to me. Family 2 and I read the questionnaire together and she asked me to fill in her responses. With all three Families I was present when they filled out the demographic and questionnaires. The parents responded to the interview questions during the second month and fifth month of the research. An exception was made for Family 2; due to family reasons the second interview was delayed until the sixth month. The interview questions provided subjective information to complement the responses to the questionnaire. I documented any additional meeting times and included that information in the interview evaluations. The use of the various methods enabled me to cross-check parents' responses. Observations also proved helpful in evaluating comments made by the parents.

Both the questionnaire and the interview focused on the same three main research questions:

- a) What are the parents' attitudes regarding passing on Dari to their children?
- b) What are parents' perceptions of their children's attitudes towards learning Dari?

c) What are parents' perceptions of their children's behavior with regards to learning Dari?

Generally, for each family the same parent responded to both the questionnaire and interviews, although occasionally their spouse would participate in the conversations and interviews.

2.3.1 Questionnaire

Of the twenty-six statements, six were related to research question 1, twelve to research question 2, and eight to research question 3. To ensure that parents did not uniformly agree or disagree with the research questions, some of the statements were phrased to reflect positive attitudes and behavior regarding Dari, while others reflected negative attitudes and behavior regarding Dari. During the administration of Family 3's pre-research questionnaire, their child commented on the last sixteen statements as found in Appendix C. This input appeared to increase Family 3's positive perception regarding their child's attitude regarding reading Dari as reported in section 3.3.2. In the following section I will present the statements grouped according to my three main research questions.

The following statements explored the first main research question: "*What are the parents' attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?*"

S1-1) I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language and English at the same time.

S1-2) I think it is easy for my children to speak my homeland language and English at the same time.

S1-3) I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language once they go to school.

S1-4) I think my grandchildren will speak my homeland language.

S1-5) I think a father should speak primarily homeland language with his children.

S1-6) I think a mother should speak primarily homeland language with her children.

These six statements probe the parents' language use in the home, the parents' perspective on

their children's likelihood of learning Dari, and the likelihood of transmission of Dari to future generations. Statements S1-1 through S1-3 indicates parents' attitudes regarding bilingualism in their children. For example, agreement with statements S1-1 and S1-3 indicate negative attitudes regarding bilingualism, emphasizing a child's inability to learn two languages at the same time. A parent that agrees with these statements believes it is difficult for their child to learn two languages at the same time and they presume Dari language transmission will be unlikely. Statement S1-4 tests parents' perception on the likelihood of their children's transmitting Dari to the next generation. Finally, statements S1-5 and S1-6 tests parents' attitudes and behavior towards transmission of Dari. There are two possible reasons for parents to speak primarily Dari in the home. The first reason is to model Dari use to their children. A second reason that parents might speak Dari in the home is because another member of the family cannot speak both languages fluently. Regardless of the reason, I assume actively bilingual parents encourage the development of bilingualism in their children.

Twelve statements were used to gather information on the second research question: "*What are parents' perceptions of their children's attitudes towards Dari?*"

- S2-1) I think my children like to speak the homeland language at home.
- S2-2) I think my children like to speak my homeland language.
- S2-3) I think my children would like to use only English in the home.
- S2-4) I think my children prefer to speak English outside the home.
- S2-5) I think my children would like to visit my homeland.
- S2-6) I think my children like hearing stories in my homeland language.
- S2-7) I think my children like hearing stories from my homeland.
- S2-8) I think my children like hearing stories in English.
- S2-9) I think my children would like to learn how to read my homeland language.
- S2-10) I think my children would like to learn how to write my homeland language.
- S2-11) I think my children like Afghan celebrations.

S2-12) My children want to speak my homeland language in the United States.

These twelve statements were used to evaluate parents' perception of their children's attitudes regarding language use, and the children's interest in Afghan heritage. Statements S2-3, S2-4 and S2-8 reflect negative language attitudes regarding Dari and positive attitudes regarding English. These statements seek information regarding what language attitudes parents perceive their children most exhibits. Statements S2-1, S2-2, S2-6, and S2-7 focus on the parents' perception of their children's attitude towards hearing and speaking Dari. For example, if the children prefer to use English all the time, both inside and outside the home, equal time is not shared by heritage conversation. Statements S2-9, S2-10 and S2-12 focus on the parents' perception of their children's attitudes towards learning how to read, write and speak Dari. Finally, statements S2-5 and S2-11 focus on parents' perception of children's interests in Afghan culture. In both situations the children are exposed to Dari sociolinguistic environments.

The final eight statements focused on the third main research question: *“What are parents' perceptions of their children's behavior with regards to learning Dari?”*

S3-1) My children ask me to tell them stories about my homeland.

S3-2) My children ask to have Afghan celebrations.

S3-3) My children write in my homeland language.

S3-4) My children read my homeland language.

S3-5) My children use homeland language when they play with their Afghan cousins.

S3-6) My children have dreams in my homeland language.

S3-7) My children think homeland stories are fascinating.

S3-8) My children use English when they play with their Afghan cousins.

These eight statements focus on behavior with regard to heritage, language, and literacy. Statements S3-1, S3-2 and S3-7 test parents' perception of their children's behavior regarding Afghan culture. Statements S3-3, S3-4, S3-5, and S3-6 evaluate parents' perception of their children's behavior in verbal Dari or Dari used in reading. Finally, statement S3-8 assesses

negative behavior regarding Dari and positive behavior in relation to English.

These twenty-six statements were presented to parents in random order to minimize the effects of answers on each other. The parents responded to the questionnaires by assigning a number value of 1-4 to each statement. In these examples, 4 means 'strongly agree'; 3 means 'agree'; 2 means 'disagree'; and 1 means 'strongly disagree'. In analyzing the data I followed two steps to compute an average score for each of the three research questions. The first step was to reverse the number value for statements indicating negative attitude to coincide with the majority of statements which indicated a positive attitude and positive behavior towards Dari. Thus, high numbers consistently indicate positive attitudes and positive behavior regarding learning Dari. For example, statements S1-1, S1-3, S2-3, S2-4, S2-8, and S3-8 all indicate negative behavior towards Dari. Therefore, their scores are inverted so 4 becomes 1, 3 becomes 2, 2 becomes 3, and 1 becomes 4. Then the scores are totaled and the sum is divided by the number of statements in that section.

The three research questions parents responded to in this study can be restated as the following three statements:

- a) My children will probably learn and use Dari.
- b) My children's attitude towards Dari is positive.
- c) My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.

The response to the twenty-six statement questionnaire gives an objective evaluation of each family's language attitudes toward each of these statements. For example, an average score of 3.5 to S1-1 and S1-3 would indicate the parents disagrees with statement (a), while a score of 1.5 would indicate parent strongly agrees with it.

2.3.2 Interviews

The second method used to gather information was a set of interviews conducted during the second and fifth months of the study. The interview allowed greater freedom for the parents to

comment on the same three research questions. Each interview was structured around twenty-eight questions, giving parents ample time to discuss their responses as found on Appendix D. The following eight questions focused on the first main research question: “*What are the parents’ attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?*”

- Q1-1) What obstacles do you perceive your children will face in learning Dari and English at the same time?
- Q1-2) What are your attitudes towards the inevitable shift from Dari to English?
- Q1-3) What are your ties to Afghanistan?
- Q1-4) How would you describe your bilingual fluency in Dari and English?
- Q1-5) What are your leadership responsibilities in your community?
- Q1-6) What cultural ties do you have with regards to your job/jobs?
- Q1-7) Do you think your children will pass Dari on to their children?
- Q1-8) Do you think your grandchildren will speak Dari?

Questions Q1-1 and Q1-2 assess the hurdles parents perceive their children faces in Dari learning and Dari maintenance, while questions Q1-3 through Q1-6 relate more to the parents’ language maintenance and fluency in Dari and English. Finally, questions Q1-7 and Q1-8 relate to the parents’ perception of their children’s attitude and ability with regard to transmission of Dari to their children. The parents answered the first three questions during the first interview and the last five questions during the second interview.

The following six questions dealt with the second main research question: “*What are parents’ perceptions of their children’s attitudes towards learning Dari?*”

- Q2-1) Do you think your children would like to visit your home country?
- Q2-2) How do you think your children feel about using Dari inside the home?
- Q2-3) How do you think your children feel about using Dari outside the home?
- Q2-4) What language do you think your children prefer to use when playing with English-speaking children?

Q2-5) What language do you think your children prefer to use when they play with Afghan friends and relatives?

Q2-6) What friends do you think your children prefer playing with, Dari-speaking children or English-speaking children?

Question Q2-1 focuses on their children's cultural interests in someday visiting their homeland, while questions Q2-2 through Q2-6 deal with parents' perception of their children's preferred language and interactions in all domains. The parents responded to the first two questions during the first interview and the last four questions during the second interview.

The following fourteen questions focused on the third main area of study: "*What are parents' perceptions of their children's behavior towards learning Dari?*"

Q3-1) What language do your children like to speak in the home?

Q3-2) Do your children prefer to speak only English in the home?

Q3-3) What language do your children speak outside the home?

Q3-4) In what setting do you hear your children using Dari?

Q3-5) Do your children read Dari?

Q3-6) Do your children plan on visiting Afghanistan?

Q3-7) Do your children write in Dari?

Q3-8) Do your children ask to have Afghan celebrations?

Q3-9) Do your children use Dari to communicate to distant friends and relatives?

Q3-10) Do your children use Dari to get messages from print, audio, and video sources?

Q3-11) Do your children use Dari while playing games, or drawing pictures?

Q3-12) Do your children talk about dreaming in Dari?

Q3-13) When your children are upset or very angry, do they use Dari?

Q3-14) Do your children introduce their English-speaking friends to Dari-speakers in Dari first and then in English?

Questions Q3-1 through Q3-3 focus on the parents' perception of which language their children

prefer to use both inside and outside the home. Questions Q3-5 and Q3-7 focus on parents' perception of literacy skills their children learned during the six month study, while question Q3-6 and Q3-8 concentrate on their perceptions of their children's behavior in relation to Afghan culture. The remaining questions, Q3-4 and Q3-9 through Q3-14, focus on when and where they see their children using Dari. The parents answered the first seven questions on the first interview and the last seven questions on the second interview.

2.4 Actual Activities

The six month intergenerational heritage reading ran from October 2004 though April 2005. Table 5 indicates what reading activities each family engaged in during the project. The reading activities are broken down by family and books read.

Table 5: Reading Activities

Books Read by Family	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
BBC Books	3 low Dari books	5 low Dari books	18 low Dari books 5 partially more high Dari books
Schoolbooks	Grade 1 Dari Alphabet Grade 3 Dari 3 sections Religious Dari Grade 1, 2, 3 books		Grade 1 Dari Alphabet
<i>Traditional Dari Stories</i>	2 short stories		
CADA Books			2 CADA books translated from English to Dari, and partially read the 3 rd CADA book.
Reading & Writing			The first month their child orally memorized the Dari alphabet, and learned to write his name. In the fourth month F3a attempted to read Dari Grade 1 book.
<i>My first 100 words in Persian</i>			Their child completed 2 chapters; each chapter had four activity pages

Two families, Family 1 and Family 3, assessed their children's average Dari reading comprehension to be from 50 to 60 percent. Family 2's mother said after reading a BBC book,

her child translated the story back to her to demonstrate comprehension of the reading material, but she did not estimate comprehension in percentages.

All three families entered the reading project with great enthusiasm and hopes their children would learn more verbal and literacy skills in Dari, and hopefully would pass Dari language and culture on to the next generation. They were willing to try this new family-centered literacy concept, although they expressed a preference to send their children to formal Dari classes. Family 3's mother commented that it is easier for her to make sure her child completes his homework than it is to direct his education. In one family the father was the reader, while in another family, the mother read to her children. In the third family the mother was the usual reader although occasionally the father also read to their child.

The number of meetings I had with each family was determined by health issues, work commitments, children's academics commitments, and other family commitments. I met with Family 1 seven times and with Family 2 four times. In both families, the parents basically read to their children on their own time and reported back to me. I met with Family 3 twenty times and often reading was done in my presence. Family 3 met with me the most times and read the most books, Family 1 met with me fewer times and read less books, and Family 2 met with me the least and they read the least books. There appears to be a positive correlation between the number of meetings and the amount of material read (as reported in Table 5). Perhaps the accountability of our meeting together motivated parents to read to their children.

The most popular reading material among the mothers was the colorful BBC books. Some of the stories the parents already knew, but several were new and interesting. The first time the parents saw the books they excitedly flipped through them. Two of the parents read the story to themselves. Family 3's mother, however, decided to read the storybooks to her child without first reading them to herself. On average, reading one BBC book took 30 minutes. This included explanations during the reading time. Three of the parents read the books straight through and discussed the content of the books with their children at the end. This enabled them to carry the

Dari rhythm throughout the reading. Once they finished the book they allowed the child to ask questions or they asked the child questions. One parent read the books and stopped after each page, checking back to make sure her child was following the meaning of the story. Parents brought different styles to the reading process.

In summary, I presented the background information on the participants, the reading material, the research methods, and actual reading activities parents engaged in during this research. In the following chapter I present the research results by individual family.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of the research by family. Within each family, the results gathered by the questionnaires as described in section 2.3.1 and the interviews as described in section 2.3.2, are organized and presented in terms of the three main research questions. As I progress through the families, I will make observations and give summaries on each family's reading results.

Each family member is given an identity code. For example, Family 1 father is referred to as "F1father;" Family 1 mother is referred to as "F1mother;" and Family 1 children are referred to as "F1a;" "F1b;" "F1c;" "F1d" and so forth depending on the number of children in the family.

3.1 Results for Family One

Family 1 has three children, F1a, F1b, and F1c. The parents read to the youngest child, F1c. When F1father answered the questionnaires and interviews, he sometimes included all the children, as they are one household. Therefore, some comments F1father made reflect the role models his older children are presenting to the youngest sibling. The two older children were toddlers when they came to the United States, probably giving them a higher exposure to Dari in the early years.

I made a total of seven visits and more than ten phone contacts with Family 1 during the six month period. F1father preferred to read the high Dari literature, although he did read three low Dari BBC books. Early in the reading project F1father tried to introduce F1c to the Dari alphabet. F1father felt the most beneficial script for his children to read Dari in was the Dari script because this is what is used in Afghanistan and it is based on the Arabic script.

F1father enjoyed scrutinizing any book I brought to the home. He looked at spelling, grammar, and writing styles. As he assessed the reading material he critiqued the Dari schoolbooks for the ideology portrayed, and he also commented that many of the BBC books were written in an informal literature style. He insisted proper literature must be in a formal style. F1father gave two examples, one example in English and one example in Dari, for justifying use of high Dari, not low Dari, in writing. In the English example spelling differences were stressed, in the second, a Dari example used a spoken sentence that is not syntactically correct:

1) High English=for the word “easy”

Low English=for the same word would perhaps be spelt “ezee”

2) High Dari=as in [man ob menoshum] “I drink water.”

Low Dari=as in [man aw mekhorum] “I eat [*should be drink*] water.”

He argued that just as there is a proper way to spell English words, there is a proper form for Dari sentences. F1father was concerned that if his children learned to read in low Dari first they would make spelling or grammar errors later.

Although F1father stressed the importance of teaching high Dari to his child, he admits the domains for high Dari conversation outside Afghanistan are limited to weddings, funerals, or other special functions. He observed that the second generation lacks the finesse of communicating in high Dari. For example, an Afghan ethnic radio announcer raised in the United States did not communicate in the traditional high Dari during the broadcasts.

One additional environment using high Dari not mentioned by F1father is at the university level in Persian studies. For example, the University of Minnesota’s Persian course set does not start at a beginner’s level so pre-literacy studies are necessary. If parents taught their children to read and write Dari, their children could more easily enter university level Persian classes.

In the three following sections I present results for Family 1 from the questionnaires and interviews arranged according to the three main research questions.

3.1.1 Family 1 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

In this section I present the data from Family 1 related to the first main question: “*What are the parents’ attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?*” I present the data from the questionnaire followed by the data from interviews.

Table 6 presents the responses to the six statements regarding parents’ attitudes regarding transmission. In general, responses reflect negative attitudes. The two statements with responses reflecting any positive orientation regarding the possibility of transmission are shaded.

Table 6: Family 1 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

Statements	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language and English at the same time.	3	4	3
2. I think it is easy for my children to speak my homeland language and English at the same time.	2	2	2
3. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language once they go to school.	4	2	3
4. I think my grandchildren will speak my homeland language.	2	2	1
5. I think a father should speak primarily homeland language with his children.	2	2	2
6. I think a mother should speak primarily homeland language with her children.	3	2	2

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

Responses to statements 1 and 3 indicate Family 1’s significant misgivings regarding their children’s ability to learn Dari and English at the same time.⁴ Although in the mid-research there is a positive response to statement 3, it does not significantly influence the overall score. In the pre-research, Family 1 agreed with statement 6, again it does not significantly influence the overall score because in the mid-research and post-research, Family 1 disagreed with this statement.

As explained in section 2.3.1, average scores can be determined by inverting the number value for statements 1 and 3, totaling each column and dividing the total by 6. These average scores, given in Table 7, express parents’ overall attitudes towards the general statement, “It is

⁴ Please note statements 1 and 3 are positive towards English and for analysis these numbers are inverted. Therefore, more positive attitudes are reflected in lower numbers for these questions.

likely that my children will learn and use Dari.”

Table 7: Family 1 - Parental Average Attitudes towards Transmission

Family 1	Pre	Mid	Post
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	2.00	2.00	1.83

As displayed in Table 7, Family 1’s score of 2.00 in the pre-research and mid-research responses indicate they disagree with the general statement. In the post-research Family 1’s score decreases slightly to 1.83, indicating the parents disagree slightly more with this statement. It is difficult to determine the reason for this slight decrease regarding transmission of Dari to their children. But overall, Family 1 expresses a negative attitude regarding the likelihood of Dari transmission to future generations.

Consider now the comments Family 1 made to the first seven questions in the interview.⁵

In response to Q1-1 regarding the obstacles parents perceived their children face, Family 1 felt the major obstacle their children face in learning Dari is the constant English environment their children live in. They attend English school, watch English TV, listen to English music, play with English-speaking friends, and the family often communicates in English.

In response to Q1-2 regarding parents’ attitudes regarding the inevitable shift from Dari to English, F1 mother said she desired to learn more English so she can communicate with her future grandchildren assuring she is not left out of family conversations. Family 1 also said they did not know how they could stop this language shift from Dari to English in their home.

In response to Q1-3 regarding family ties to Afghanistan, Family 1 indicated few. Most of their family has moved to English-speaking countries; very few family members remain in Afghanistan and other non-English-speaking countries.

In response to Q1-4 the parents described their bilingual fluency in Dari and English; Family 1’s self-evaluation of their language ability on Table 2 indicates a broad range of fluency in Dari

⁵ Family 1 gave no response to question 6 of the interview.

and English for both the mother and father. The father completed university studies, with an average fluency in English and average to below-average fluency in two other languages. The mother completed high school, with an average to below-average fluency in English. During the interview F1father felt he was equally bilingual in Dari and English. F1mother felt English was difficult for her, but indicated she could read and write English better than she can speak English.

In response to Q1-5 regarding Family 1's leadership responsibilities in their community, their main responsibilities are to organize the extended family social events.

Finally, in response to Q1-7 and Q1-8, Family 1 indicated it was unlikely their children would pass on Dari to the next generation. They noted that other second generation Afghan families also speak mostly English in the home. In families in which one spouse is American, Dari is not spoken in the home at all. In addition, since F1father and F1mother find they are losing their Dari fluency, they cannot expect their children to maintain Dari fluency. F1father indicated that even though their children know Dari, their children's marriage choice will strongly influence the likelihood of Dari language being transmitted to the next generation.

Overall, Family 1 does not have much hope that the next generation will speak Dari. Family 1 indicated by both their responses to the questionnaires and in interviews that they felt successful transmission of Dari to their children is unlikely. They stressed the challenges their children face learning Dari in a predominately English-speaking environment, and indicated their ties to Afghanistan are minimal.

3.1.2 Family 1 - Parental Perception of Children's Attitudes

In this section I present the data related to Family 1's responses to the second main research question: "*What are parents' perceptions of their children's attitudes towards Dari?*" First consider the questionnaire results followed by the interview results.⁶ Once again, statements with

⁶ Statements 3, 4 and 8 reflect an orientation negative towards Dari and positive towards English.

responses reflecting any positive orientation are shaded.

Table 8: Family 1 - Parental Perception of Children's Attitudes

Statements	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think my children like to speak the homeland language at home.	1	1	2
2. I think my children like to speak my homeland language.	1	2	2
3. I think my children would like to use only English in the home.	4	3	3
4. I think my children prefer to speak English outside the home.	4	4	4
5. I think my children would like to visit my homeland.	3	3	3
6. I think my children like hearing stories in my homeland language.	3	2	2
7. I think my children like hearing stories from my homeland.	3	2	1
8. I think my children like hearing stories in English.	4	3	4
9. I think my children would like to learn how to read my homeland language.	2	2	2
10. I think my children would like to learn how to write my homeland language.	1	1	2
11. I think my children like Afghan celebrations.	3	2	2
12. My children want to speak my homeland language in the United States	1	2	2

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

Pre-research responses to statements 5, 6, 7 and 11 indicated positive perceptions of their children's attitudes regarding learning more about Afghan heritage. Agreement with statement 5 remained constant the duration of the research. However, agreement with statements 6, 7 and 11 decreased in the mid-research and agreement with statement 7 decreased again in the post-research.

Table 9 shows the average scores for these twelve statements.

Table 9: Family 1 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Attitudes

Family 1	Pre	Mid	Post
My child's attitude towards Dari is positive.	1.75	1.83	1.83

Throughout the research Family 1 disagreed with the overall statement. Comparing results in Table 9 with those in Table 7, we see that both the parents' attitude regarding transmission and the parents' perception of their child's attitude regarding speaking Dari were negative.

Family 1's perception that their children had a negative attitude regarding Dari was also

reflected in their responses during the interviews.⁷

In response to Q2-1, F1father knew F1a was interested in visiting Afghanistan, F1b was not interested and F1c was open to visiting Afghanistan, but the family does not have the money to send any of them.

In response to Q2-3 regarding how the children feel about using Dari outside the home, F1father's focused more on his children's ability in a specific situation than on their attitudes. He commented that while F1a is able to interpret for F1mother at the doctor's office, F1b has more difficulty interpreting medical terms for F1mother than F1a, and F1c has even more difficulty interpreting medical terms, not having the vocabulary to interpret medical terms in either Dari or English.

In response to Q2-4 through Q2-6 it was assumed the children prefer to speak English with both English-speaking and Dari-speaking friends. At the same time, F1father supposed his children are equally comfortable socializing in both English-speaking and Dari-speaking friends.

There was no indication that F1father's children try to speak Dari other than when it is necessary with a non-English-speaking relative. English has become the prestigious language to communicate in and only when required do the children speak Dari.

3.1.3 Family 1 - Parental Perception of Children's Behavior

In this section I present Family 1's responses on the third main research question: "*What are parents' perceptions of their children's behavior towards learning Dari?*" These results reflect parent's perception of their children's behavior and attitudes in engaging in Dari-related activities. In Table 10 the three shaded statements reflect the only positive attitudes regarding their children's behavior.

⁷ Family 1 gave no response to question 2 during the interview.

Table 10: Family 1 - Parental Perception of Children's Behavior

Statements	Pre	Mid	Post
1. My children ask me to tell them stories about my homeland.	3	2	2
2. My children ask to have Afghan celebrations.	3	2	2
3. My children write in my homeland language.	1	2	1
4. My children read my homeland language.	1	1	1
5. My children use homeland language when they play with their Afghan cousins.	1	2	2
6. My children have dreams in my homeland language.	1	2	2
7. My children think homeland stories are fascinating.	3	2	2
8. My children use English when they play with their Afghan cousins.	4	3	4

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

In the pre-research the responses to statements 1, 2, and 7 indicate F1father agreed his children's behavior was favorable regarding Afghan language and culture. In responses in the mid and post-research agreement with these statements decreased with F1father disagreeing with all three statements for the remainder of the study.

Table 11 shows the average score of these eight statements.

Table 11: Family 1 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Behavior

Family 1	Pre	Mid	Post
My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	1.75	1.88	1.63

The results in Table 11 indicate that Family 1 consistently disagreed during the research with the statement that their children's behavior was positive.

Family 1's responses to the interview questions also indicated they felt their children did not exhibit positive behavior regarding Dari.

In response to Q3-1 through Q2-3, F1father said his children speak both English and Dari with him, but mostly English. They speak Dari with F1mother and they speak English between themselves. Both F1father and F1mother felt their children preferred to speak English in the home. Outside the home, F1father perceived his children speak English unless they are communicating with non-English Dari speakers who struggle when communicating in English.

In response to Q3-4 and Q3-9, F1father finds that their children use English first to communicate and then switch to Dari when necessary. Family 1 perceived that, when necessary,

their children speak Dari to non-English-speaking relatives.

In response to Q3-5 and Q3-7, F1father said his children do not read or write Dari.

In response to Q3-6, F1father felt F1a desires to visit Afghanistan and to help the people for a set time; F1b is not interested in visiting Afghanistan; and F1c is also interested in visiting Afghanistan when he finishes school.

In response to Q3-8, F1father indicated the children do not normally ask for Afghan celebrations because the celebrations are not national holidays in the United States. The parents need to remind their children about Afghan celebrations.

In response to Q3-10, F1father felt his children are not interested in Asian movies. He felt that at Afghan celebrations the children like Afghan music, but that they were mostly listening to the beat and not the lyrics.

In response to Q3-11, F1father said his children may have used Dari for playing games or drawing pictures when they were little, but they do not use Dari in these areas now.

In response to Q3-12, F1father said his children never talk about dreaming in Dari. He sensed his children are more interested in American ways and they desire to put away the old family traditions.

In response to Q3-13, F1father felt his children respond in English whether they were happy or sad.

In response to Q3-14, F1father was not sure which protocol his children used when they are introducing American friends to Afghan friends. He had not observed which language they use first, Dari or English, and whom they introduce first.

Family 1's perception was their children are interested in visiting Afghanistan and they think that if their children visit Afghanistan this will strengthen their Dari fluency. Although the children can speak Dari, Family 1 perceived they predominately speak English.

3.1.4 Family 1 Summary

Table 12 shows the average results to the questionnaire in all three areas.

Table 12: Summary of Family 1 – Parental Average Perception of Positive Attitudes towards Dari

Family 1	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	2.00	2.00	1.83	1.94
My child's attitude towards Dari is positive.	1.75	1.83	1.83	1.80
My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	1.75	1.88	1.63	1.75

Family 1 consistently disagreed with the statement that their children's attitudes or behavior regarding Dari were positive. Although Family 1 exhibited strong language ability, significant Dari transmission did not occur during this time. F1father consistently emphasized that English was the language of prestige for all communications.

Some conflict of expectations regarding teaching and learning surfaced between F1father and F1c during the study. F1father's educational ideal is a disciplined classroom with children giving undivided attention and respect to their teacher. It is likely that F1c's attention and motivation to learn in school were improved by his public school teacher's creativity and innovation. F1father exhibited many positive teaching qualities and F1c showed aptitude in learning a foreign language in school, but even with those strengths the reading program did not crystallize for them.

3.2 Results for Family Two

Family 2 has four children, referred to as F2a, F2b, F2c, and F2d. F2mother involved the two youngest children, a preteen and an adolescent, in the research. The two oldest children had other academic commitments. The oldest child was a toddler when the family moved to the United States, possibly exposing the child to more Dari language and culture in the early years. F2mother reported on F2a and F2b's interest in language and culture during the mid-research and post-research interviews.

F2mother regularly assists her youngest children in their daily homework assignments and

was the Dari reader for this study. F2father works outside the home and works a significant amount of overtime. F2mother also works outside the home but manages the home affairs. Family difficulties hindered regular reading times with the children.

A total of four visits and at least four phone contacts were made with Family 2. F2mother read five BBC books to her children. After the first reading, F2mother reported F2c translated the BBC book word-by-word from Dari to English as they reread the story, to demonstrate Dari fluency.

When F2mother assessed the reading material she was particularly fascinated by the BBC books. Each time we discussed the reading project F2mother enthusiastically examined the books. F2mother thought her children might prefer the two CADA Dari books over the other storybooks because they were books translated from English. Nevertheless, she did not read the CADA books to her children to verify her perception. F2mother selected the BBC books for the reading project over the black-and-white printed schoolbooks and other similar reading material. Unfortunately, F2mother noticed her children quickly lost interest in listening to her read the BBC Dari reading books.

F2mother enjoyed reading the BBC storybooks but preferred not pushing the books on her children. She pursued an alternative way to stimulate the children's exposure to oral language and culture--a weekly Saturday morning breakfast in which Dari was used and traditional Afghan food was served.

3.2.1 Family 2 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

Table 13 indicates responses of Family 2 to the first main research question: *What are the parents' attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?* The statements with responses that indicate positive attitudes regarding Dari transmission are shaded.

Table 13: Family 2 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language and English at the same time.	3	4	2
2. I think it is easy for my children to speak my homeland language and English at the same time.	2	2	2
3. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language once they go to school.	2	4	4
4. I think my grandchildren will speak my homeland language.	1	1	1
5. I think a father should speak primarily homeland language with his children.	3	3	2
6. I think a mother should speak primarily homeland language with her children.	4	2	4

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

Although Family 2 responded positively to statement 1 in the post-research, and positively to statement 3 in the pre-research, the responses do not significantly influence the overall score. F2mother did qualify these responses, saying Dari taught in school is more structured, more disciplined, more organized, so in a school environment the children are more likely to learn Dari and English at the same time. Family 2 agreed and strongly agreed with statements 5 and 6 regarding transmission of Dari in the pre-research. For statement 5, F2mother also agreed a father should speak primarily Dari in the home in the mid-research, although she disagreed with it in the post-research. She strongly agreed with statement 6 that a mother should speak primarily Dari in the home in the pre- and post-research, although she disagreed with it in the mid-research. Also in response to statement 1, F2mother gave her opinion that F2a's language attitude was positive learning Dari and English at the same time.

Table 14 shows the average score for these six statements.

Table 14: Family 2 - Parental Average Attitudes towards Transmission

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	2.50	1.66	2.10

As displayed in Table 14, Family 2's response of 2.50 in the pre-research was neutral, neither positive nor negative, towards the likelihood of Dari transmission to their children. In the mid-research Family 2's attitude falls to 1.66, but it increases slightly to 2.10 in the post-research. As mentioned earlier, Family 2 faced general difficulties between the pre-research and the post-

research visits, which may have influenced F2mother's attitudes regarding transmission of Dari to her children. It is understandable that language transmission was not their priority at that particular time.

Consider now the responses Family 2 made to the first seven questions in the interview.⁸

In response to Q1-1, on the obstacles parents perceived their children face, F2mother felt her children look for the easiest means of communication. She perceived her children are most comfortable in speaking English and they must force themselves to speak Dari. Her children push her to speak English, but she forces them to communicate with her in Dari.

In response to Q1-2 regarding parents' attitude regarding the inevitable shift from Dari to English, F2mother said that whenever possible Saturdays are Dari language mornings, to facilitate Dari transmission. She makes breakfast, the children and F2mother speak only Dari and sometimes they listen to Afghan music. F2mother realizes her children hear English all the time and this is one time she can expose them to the Afghan language and culture. This is also a time when her children ask her to tell them stories about Afghanistan.

In response to Q1-3 regarding family ties to Afghanistan, F2mother stated their main tie to the homeland was one immediate relative living in Afghanistan. They speak with this relative perhaps two or three times a year for around ten minutes. F2mother desires to visit Afghanistan again, but she was apprehensively aware of the memories that would surface on a return visit.

In response to Q1-4 regarding describing parents' bilingual fluency, F2mother assessed her verbal and literacy skills in Dari as above average, and her verbal and literacy skills in English as below average. F2mother said that using English on the phone at work is challenging. She acknowledged work offers situations to develop her English skills, even if it is challenging. F2father's verbal and literacy skills in Dari are average. His verbal skills are average in English, while his literacy skills in English are below average. Disagreement with statement 5 in the post-

⁸ Family 2 gave no response to question 5 on the interview.

research and statement 6 in the mid-research possibly reflect difficult times when the family assumed speaking English in the family protected them from miscommunications because their children understood English better than Dari. Although F2mother normally speaks Dari in the home, she commented in relation to statement 6, that, if possible, it is important for a mother to speak both Dari and English with her children.

Moving to responses during the interviews, in response to Q1-6 regarding cultural ties to one's your job, F2father works in a family business giving him contact with both Afghans and non-Afghan people. F2mother's work gives her contact with mostly non-Afghan people on a daily basis.

In response to Q1-7 and Q1-8 regarding the likelihood of their children passing on Dari to their children, F2mother thought her children will not pass on Dari to their children unless they visit Afghanistan. F2mother felt it was unlikely her children could transmit Dari to the next generation unless they had additional language input.

Family 2 values Dari spoken in the home but recognized the importance of bilingual fluency at certain times for clear communications. F2father often speaks in English with his children to ensure they get his point. F2mother, on the other hand, speaks in Dari with her children and when necessary she translates the meaning to English, or repeats it in a simpler way in Dari. F2mother's perception is that the Saturday morning Afghan breakfasts are an effective way to stimulate Dari use and transmission of culture. The younger children are at the age when their parents' heritage is not of interest, but oral stories do captivate their attention. Family 2 has a strong conviction that it is good for Afghan children to go to Afghanistan for one or two years of humanitarian service; this would also stimulate their Dari fluency.

3.2.2 Family 2 - Parental Perception of Children's Attitudes

In Table 15, four of the twelve statements indicate positive attitude to the second main research question: *What are parents' perceptions of their children's attitudes towards Dari?* The

responses to the shaded statements indicate a positive attitude regarding Dari.⁹

Table 15: Family 2 - Parental Perception of Children's Attitudes

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think my children like to speak the homeland language at home.	2	2	1
2. I think my children like to speak my homeland language.	3	1	2
3. I think my children would like to use only English in the home.	3	4	3
4. I think my children prefer to speak English outside the home.	3	4	3
5. I think my children would like to visit my homeland.	3	1	2
6. I think my children like hearing stories in my homeland language.	2	2	2
7. I think my children like hearing stories from my homeland.	3	3	3
8. I think my children like hearing stories in English.	4	3	4
9. I think my children would like to learn how to read my homeland language.	1	2	2
10. I think my children would like to learn how to write my homeland language.	1	2	1
11. I think my children like Afghan celebrations.	3	4	3
12. My children want to speak my homeland language in the United States.	2	2	1

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

The pre-research responses to statements 2, 5, 7, and 11 indicate positive perception of their children's attitudes regarding learning Dari. In the mid-research, responses to statements 2 and 5 showed strong disagreement with the claim that her children's attitude was positive regarding learning Dari. In the post-research F2mother disagreed with the same statements. Although the responses to these statements were not as negative as in the mid-research, they were still negative. Only responses to statement 7 and 11 indicated positive attitudes throughout the study regarding learning more about Afghan culture.

The responses in Table 15 refer to F2c and F2d. In addition, F2mother strongly agreed with statements 2 and 9 that F2a had a positive attitude regarding speaking and reading Dari. Again, in her response to statement 5 she indicated she felt that F2a and F2b have positive attitudes towards visiting Afghanistan. F2mother also strongly agreed with statement 12 for F2a, that is, that her oldest child's attitude towards speaking Dari in the American culture was positive. The older siblings' attitudes are important because their strong interest in heritage language and culture could influence the younger siblings' attitudes.

⁹ Statements 3, 4 and 8 reflect a negative orientation towards Dari and positive towards English.

Table 16 gives the average results of the 12 statements displayed in Table 15.

Table 16: Family 2 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Attitudes

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
My child's attitude towards Dari is positive.	2.08	1.92	1.83

F2mother's responses to the questionnaire indicated she felt her children's attitude was slightly lower than her own attitude toward Dari transmission. As displayed in Table 16, Family 2's response of 2.08 in the pre-research indicated they disagree with the general statement that their children's attitude regarding Dari is positive. This disagreement was even greater in the mid- and post-research. F2mother commented her household faced several family issues during this time; conceivably the growing disagreement was a mixture of family issues and her children's language attitudes. Information from the interviews gives us more insight to F2mother's thoughts.

As mentioned in the methodology section 2.3, Family 2's second month interview questions were delayed until the fifth month due to family issues. Thus the fifth month interview was completed in the sixth month.

In response to Q2-1, F2mother thought children F2a and F2b desired to visit Afghanistan, whereas F2c and F2d preferred the modern conveniences and modern technology available in the United States versus visiting Afghanistan. Her younger children assume that after over 22 years of war, Afghanistan lacks modern amenities which are important to them here in the United States.

In response to Q2-2, regarding how the children feel about speaking Dari inside the home, F2mother's perception was when conversations use daily home vocabulary her children do fine. They are challenged when talking about things outside the home or outside family conversations. F2mother was thrilled when F2a asked her to speak Dari in the home. F2a felt she was forgetting her Dari due to her academic studies.

In response to Q2-3, F2mother felt her children preferred using English rather than Dari outside the home.

In response to Q2-4 and Q2-5, F2mother commented that her children prefer to speak English with Afghan friends and relatives and to speak English with their English-speaking friends.

In response to Q2-6 regarding the children’s preferences of Afghan friends or English-speaking friends, F2mother thought it does not matter to the two younger children, but that F2b prefers to play with American friends.

F2mother made the important observation that parents should be bilingual, able to speak in both languages, but they should primarily speak Dari in the home to support Dari transmission. Overall Family 2 searches for stimulating ways to pass on Dari to their children.

F2mother felt more domains to use Dari inside and outside the home are necessary for Dari maintenance and transmission to her children.

3.2.3 Family 2 - Parental Perception of Children’s Behavior

Table 17 shows the responses to the questionnaire to the third main research question: *What are parents’ perceptions of their children’s behavior towards learning Dari?* The three shaded statements reflect F2mother’s perception of positive behavior regarding engaging in Dari-related activities.

Table 17: Family 2 - Parental Perception of Children’s Behavior

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
1. My children ask me to tell them stories about my homeland.	1	3	3
2. My children ask to have Afghan celebrations.	3	2	1
3. My children write in my homeland language.	1	1	1
4. My children read my homeland language.	1	1	1
5. My children use homeland language when they play with their Afghan cousins.	1	1	1
6. My children have dreams in my homeland language.	1	1	1
7. My children think homeland stories are fascinating.	1	2	3
8. My children use English when they play with their Afghan cousins.	4	4	4

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

The pre-research response to statement 2 indicates F2mother agreed that her children are interested in Afghan celebrations. In the mid-research response to statement 2, F2mother disagreed with the statement that her children ask for Afghan celebrations; this changed to

strongly disagree in the post-research. In the pre-research, responses to statements 1 and 7 indicate her strong disagreement with statements that her children were interested in heritage stories. Later responses to statement 1 in the mid and post-research, however, indicate her children were asking their mother to tell them stories from Afghanistan. The post-research response to statement 7 also indicates F2mother agrees her children are fascinated with hearing heritage stories. Both these statements concentrate on stories from Afghanistan and the children's fascination with those stories. F2mother said that her children asked for Afghan stories during their Saturday morning breakfasts, in addition to other Dari conversations.

Table 18 shows the average score for these eight statements.

Table 18: Family 2 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Behavior

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post
My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	1.25	1.50	1.50

The results in Table 18 indicate in general F2mother disagrees with the statement that her children's behavior was positive regarding Dari during the research. Although F2mother perceived her children's behavior regarding learning Dari improved during the six month study, their attitudes were still not positive.

Family 2's responses to the interview questions also indicated their children did not exhibit significant positive behavior regarding Dari.¹⁰

In response to Q3-1 and Q3-2 regarding which language their children prefer to speak in the home, F2mother felt the younger children prefer to speak English at home. She speaks Dari to them and translates as necessary to English. F2mother provides opportunities in the home for her children to hear and use Dari. F2father often times speaks English with his children to avoid miscommunications.

In response to Q3-3 regarding which language their children speak outside the home,

¹⁰ We did not have time for, F2mother to respond to questions 9, 10, and 11.

F2mother perceived her children prefer to speak English outside the home. She added that her children normally speak English with their cousins and relatives; they speak Dari when necessary, but only when it is necessary.

In response to Q3-4 and Q3-9 regarding what settings the children are heard using Dari, F2mother said the only time she hears her children use Dari is in the home and once in a while at a family party.

In response to Q3-5 and Q3-7 regarding whether her children read and write Dari, F2mother said her children do not read or write Dari.

In response to Q3-6, F2mother perceived that F2a and F2b desire to visit Afghanistan once they finish their education, but that F2c and F2d are not interested in visiting Afghanistan.

In response to Q3-8, F2mother's perception of her children's interest in Afghan celebrations was due to their interest in meeting with their cousins, not due to interest in learning more about Afghan traditions or celebrations. They also like the celebrations because they get money from the adults. This social domain gives the children valuable yet insufficient exposure to Afghan culture. Family 2 found it is difficult to remember Afghan holidays because they are not national holidays. In addition, due to work schedules, Afghan holidays are frequently celebrated at a later time when it works into everyone's free time.

In response to Q3-12, F2mother thought her children did not get information from any media in Dari, not in print, audio nor video.

In response to Q3-13, F2mother thought her children use English to express all their emotions and do not use Dari when they are upset or angry.

In response to Q3-14 F2mother did not perceive a difference in her children introducing English-speaking friends to Dari-speaking friends first; she felt there was no protocol they followed for introducing their friends.

It is intriguing to see Family 2's children's increased interest in stories from Afghanistan during the research, but this may not be directly related to this study. F2mother thought her

children’s attitude and behavior were low in the pre-research, yet she still motivated her children to speak Dari in the home. Although Family 2 produced Dari learning environments for the children, the parents perceived they are competing against western values in their attempt to transmit Dari.

3.2.4 Family 2 Summary

Table 19 indicates the average scores for the questionnaire for all three main research questions.

Table 19: Summary of Family 2 – Parental Average Perception of Positive Attitudes towards Dari

Family 2	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	2.50	1.66	2.10	2.09
My child’s attitude towards Dari is positive.	2.08	1.92	1.83	1.94
My children’s behavior towards Dari is positive.	1.25	1.50	1.50	1.42

Overall, Family 2 consistently disagreed with all three statements concerning positive attitudes or behavior regarding learning Dari. Although Family 2’s pre-research response with regard to transmission was neutral, Family2 generally indicated negative attitudes regarding the likelihood of Dari being transmitted to their children. Perhaps the most effective methods Family 2 used to teach culture and language to their children were storytelling at breakfast on Saturday morning and speaking primarily Dari in the home.

The main obstacles Family 2 faced regarding transmission of Dari was dealing with family issues and motivating her children to learn Dari. F2mother showed significant interest in the reading material, but had limited stress-free opportunities to use the material.

3.3 Results for Family Three

Family 3 has one pre-teen child, referred to as F3a. F3a was a toddler when the family came to the United States. This provided the child with a good environment for learning Dari early in life, and F3a spoke mainly Dari when beginning school. This created many challenges for F3a in the United States. F3a wanted to speak only English at home. The family made this adjustment

and today they still speak mainly English in the home. F3a is doing average and above average academic work in English. Both parents in Family 3 work outside the home.

I visited Family 3's home twenty times and made numerous phone contacts. They read eighteen BBC books and two CADA Dari books. F3a learned the Dari alphabet and started initial reading and writing in both the grade 1 Dari schoolbook and *Your first 100 words in Persian*. Family 3 attempted to read five advanced BBC books and a story from the traditional Dari book to F3a, but F3mother put the books aside when she observed these books were slightly too advanced for her child.

In the first research month, F3mother reported F3a brought the Dari storybooks to her and asked her to read the books. F3a's self-initiative motivated F3mother to read the books. However, this enthusiasm diminished after Family 3's routines were interrupted with a three-day Eid (religious) celebration and F3mother's preparation for a vocational-level exam. Due to a lack of time, F3mother turned F3a down several times when the child brought her books to read. Later, F3mother perceived F3a forgot about the books, so she tried to draw the child's attention back to the books. But she perceived this early enthusiasm in the reading books never totally returned. F3mother commented that sometimes when she read a book to F3a, the child fidgeted and yawned, yet by the end of the story he was captivated. Later when the parents assessed F3a's comprehension on stories previously read, they were astounded at how well the child remembered the stories. F3mother perceived F3a especially liked interactive math stories, like to the BBC *Rabbit Story*. Overall F3mother perceived F3a focused on adages from the readings. F3mother most often read the books to F3a, but occasionally F3father read to F3a.

On her own initiative F3mother took the intergenerational heritage language reading program one step farther by reading a BBC book to another Afghan family. The youngest child was a pre-teen. One of the older children knew Dari well and was able to explain the story to the younger children. F3mother suggested I launch a Dari school where children could come and learn to read Dari. I asked if she would help me. F3mother excitingly agreed to help but asked where we

could meet. We brainstormed together and thought about possibly meeting in a library room where we could ask the librarian to stock our Dari books so the children and families could check out the Dari books whenever they wanted. F3mother perceived that actual distance between Afghan families would hinder meeting at any particular library. We did not successfully negotiate a suitable location for non-formal Dari education. But it was inspiring to see F3mother’s motivation to expand the reading program to other Afghan children.

During the research I recommended that F3mother reread the books to her child. I told her that rereading familiar stories improves comprehension since F3a could predict what was going to happen. Rereading stories would prepare her child for the next step in the project: for F3a to read stories he heard a number of times. However, F3mother reported that F3a only wanted to hear the stories once.

3.3.1 Family 3 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

Table 20 summarizes the responses of Family 3 to the first main research question: *What are the parents’ attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?* The five shaded statements reflect positive attitudes regarding transmission of Dari to their children.

Table 20: Family 3 - Parental Attitudes towards Transmission

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language and English at the same time.	2	2	2
2. I think it is easy for my children to speak my homeland language and English at the same time.	4	3	2
3. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language once they go to school.	1	2	2
4. I think my grandchildren will speak my homeland language.	1	1	1
5. I think a father should speak primarily homeland language with his children.	4	4	4
6. I think a mother should speak primarily homeland language with her children.	4	3	4

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

F3mother’s response to the first three statements in the pre-research indicates she agrees that F3a can learn Dari and English at the same time, although responses to statement 2 changed to

disagree by the post-research, indicating F3mother perceived it was difficult for her child to learn Dari and English at the same time. Family 3’s responses to statement 1 remained positive regarding Dari transmission during the six-month research, while responses to statement 3 dropped from strongly agree to agree. In response to statement 5 and 6, F3mother strongly agreed that both a father and mother should speak predominately Dari in the home. The research results indicate F3mother was confident that Dari would be transmitted to her child.

The average scores, given in Table 21, express the parents’ overall positive attitude regarding the general statement, “It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.”

Table 21: Family 3 - Parental Average Attitudes towards Transmission

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	3.33	2.83	2.83

As displayed in Table 21, Family 3’s score of 3.33 in the pre-research response indicates they agree with the general statement. In the mid and post-research their score decreased to 2.83 indicating in general they still maintained a positive attitude regarding Dari transmission. We see Family 3 started with a relatively high positive attitude and maintained a positive attitude regarding Dari transmission to their children. At the beginning of the study, F3mother clearly stated F3a must learn Dari.

Now consider the responses to the eight interview questions.

In response to Q1-1 regarding the obstacles their children face in learning Dari, F3mother predicted that F3a could face some obstacles with the Dari writing system and with the new sounds in Dari that are not found in English. She also preferred a Dari school versus a family-centered reading, but she was willing to give the reading study a try.

In response to Q1-2 regarding their attitudes regarding the inevitable shift from Dari to English, F3mother’s reemphasized that F3a must speak both Dari and English.

In response to Q1-3 dealing with family ties to Afghanistan, F3mother has sisters and brothers still living in Afghanistan. They also have family living in other non-English-speaking

countries that they speak with on the phone once a month. F3father has immediate family living in Afghanistan whom they speak with often on the phone. Separation from family members has been difficult for them.

In response to Q1-4 regarding parents' bilingual fluency in Dari and English, as shown in Table 2, F3mother had described their Dari fluency as above average, and their English fluency average. In addition, they have learned other languages. In the interview F3mother and F3father confirmed that their fluency in Dari is above average and their English skills are average. Both F3father and F3mother appeared to communicate well in English, both in their community and work area.

In response to Q1-5 regarding Family 3's leadership responsibilities in their community, Family 3 has no leadership responsibilities in their community.

In response to Q1-6 regarding Family 3's cultural ties to their jobs, both F3father and F3mother do not have cultural ties with their places of employment.

In response to Q1-7 and Q1-8 on the likelihood of their children passing on Dari to their children, F3mother felt F3a might transmit some things about Afghanistan. However, Family 3 felt if F3a visited Afghanistan Dari transmission would be more likely. They felt that F3a's ability in Dari has improved, but not enough to transmit it.

In addition to the interviews, F3mother commented independently on home-school programs and public-school language programs. F3mother said it is easier for her to make sure F3a completed homework sheets than it is for her to organize and motivate her child in a family-centered reading project. In the interviews Family 3 continually placed high expectations for their child to speak Dari.

Family 3 exhibited significant determination regarding Dari transmission to their child. The parents also have a strong work ethic and ambition to advance themselves. For example, F3mother is continuing her education in order to raise her pay scale and responsibility level in America. It appears the parents are good role models for their child to keep on learning. They

struggle with the challenge of living away from family, but their positive attitudes keep them learning. The questionnaire and interview results indicated a high motivation for passing on their heritage language to their child.

3.3.2 Family 3 - Parental Perception of Children’s Attitudes

Table 22 shows the responses to the statements related to the second main research question: *What are parents’ perceptions of their children’s attitudes towards Dari?* The eight shaded statements highlight responses showing positive perceptions of their child’s attitudes regarding learning Dari.

Table 22: Family 3 - Parental Perception of Children’s Attitudes

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
1. I think my children like to speak the homeland language at home.	1	3	3
2. I think my children like to speak my homeland language.	2	3	3
3. I think my children would like to use only English in the home.	1	1	1
4. I think my children prefer to speak English outside the home.	3	3	4
5. I think my children would like to visit my homeland.	2	3	3
6. I think my children like hearing stories in my homeland language.	3	3	3
7. I think my children like hearing stories from my homeland.	3	2	4
8. I think my children like hearing stories in English.	4	3	4
9. I think my children would like to learn how to read my homeland language.	1	4	2
10. I think my children would like to learn how to write my homeland language.	4	3	1
11. I think my children like Afghan celebrations.	3	3	3
12. My children want to speak my homeland language in the United States.	2	3	2

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

Statements 1 through 3, 6, 9, 10 and 12 indicate the parents’ positive perceptions of their child’s positive attitudes towards oral and written Dari communications. Statements 5, 7 and 11 indicate positive attitudes regarding Afghan culture. Family 3 maintained a positive perception of F3a’s attitude regarding learning Dari.

For statements 1 and 2, F3mother disagreed and strongly disagreed in the pre-research that her child’s attitude regarding speaking Dari was positive. However, in the mid and post-research she agrees with both statements. In statement 3, F3mother, for the entire study, strongly disagrees that her child wants to speak only English in the home. In the pre-research response to

statement 5, F3mother's perception was that F3a was not interested in visiting Afghanistan. However, during the mid and post-research F3mother agreed with the statements that F3a was interested in visiting Afghanistan. Likewise, for statements 6 and 7, F3mother generally agreed that F3a's attitude was positive regarding listening to stories in Dari from Afghanistan. The pre-research response to statement 9 indicates F3mother strongly disagreed that F3a's attitude towards reading Dari was positive. Then in the mid-research F3mother indicates strong agreement with the statement. Finally, in the post-research F3mother disagreed that F3a desired to read Dari.

As mentioned in the methodology section 2.3.1 F3mother and F3a responded to the last 16 questions in the pre-research. Together they indicated strong agreement with statement 10 that F3a wanted to learn how to write Dari. In comparison, the pre-research results for statement 9 were that F3mother strongly disagreed that F3a's attitude regarding learning to read Dari was positive. Only F3mother responded to the mid and post-research questions. Her response in statement 10 decreased to agreement. However, in post-research F3mother strongly disagreed that F3a's attitude regarding writing Dari was positive. In section 3.3.1 I reported that with regard to Q1-1, Family 3 predicted F3a could face obstacles in learning the new sounds in Dari and learning to write with a new orthography. F3mother perceived the transition between her reading stories to F3a and F3a's learning to read and write Dari would be difficult.

In statement 11, F3mother indicates throughout the study that F3a attitude regarding Afghan celebrations was positive. Finally, in statement 12 in the pre-research she indicated disagreement that F3a wants to speak Dari in the United States. In mid-research this shifted to agree, but fell back again to disagree in the post-research.

Table 23 shows the average score on these twelve statements.

Table 23: Family 3 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Attitudes

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
My child's attitude towards Dari is positive.	2.33	2.92	2.50

Overall, Family 3 agreed more strongly with the statement at the end than at the beginning of the research period. In the pre-research responses, F3mother disagreed slightly that F3a's attitude regarding learning Dari was positive. In the mid-research responses F3mother agreed that F3a's attitude regarding learning Dari was positive. In the final interview, F3mother's perception was neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement that F3a's attitude regarding learning Dari was positive. Family 3's strengths were F3a initiating the reading times with the Dari stories and listening to F3mother and F3father read Dari material.

Next I present the responses Family3 gave to the interview questions. Family 3's perception that their child had a positive attitude towards Dari was also reflected in their responses during the interviews.

In response to Q2-1 regarding parents' perception of their children's interest in visiting Afghanistan, F3mother perceived F3a wants to visit Afghanistan.

In response to Q2-2 regarding parents' perception on how do their children feel about using Dari in the home, F3mother felt F3a likes to use Dari in the home; he likes to play around with speaking in Dari.

In response to Q2-3 regarding parental perception on their children using Dari outside the home, F3mother perceived F3a likes to speak Dari outside the home if people allow him time to practice his Dari.

In response to Q2-4 and Q2-5 on parental perception of language choice when their child is playing with Dari and non-Dari-speaking friends, F3mother's response was the same. She perceived F3a prefers to speak English with English-speaking children and with Afghan children. She observed that all of the Afghan children F3a communicates with also have English as their dominant language. Before the pre-research interview, Family 3 spent a fair amount of time with

an Afghan family that recently arrived to the States. This gave F3a opportunity to interact in Dari with their children. However, during the time of the research the two families did not meet regularly. Now the children in this new family feel more comfortable speaking in English than in Dari. So the children use English in their conversations more often than they do Dari.

In response to Q2-6 regarding who the children prefer to play with, F3mother perceived F3a feels equally comfortable playing with Afghan and non-Afghan children.

It appeared that when Family 3 provided language learning activities for their child, their child more readily took risks to speak in Dari. It appears the child's Dari use both inside and outside the home feeds on adult stimulation and encouragement. Family 3's positive attitude regarding Dari transmission likely influenced their child's attitude. Overall F3mother perceived that F3a's attitude was somewhat positive regarding learning and using Dari both inside and outside the home.

In summary, Family 3 felt the most effective way to assure Dari transmission to the next generation is for F3a to visit Afghanistan. F3father's and F3mother's positive attitude regarding Dari transmission was stronger than they perceived F3a's attitude was in learning Dari. Even so the parents' optimism appeared to be stimulating and contagious for their child.

3.3.3 Family 3 - Parental Perception of Children's Behavior

In this section I present Family 3's responses to the third main research question: *What are parents' perceptions of their children's behavior towards learning Dari?* The six shaded statements highlight parents' perception of positive behavior in F3a regarding learning Dari.

Table 24: Family 3 - Parental Perception of Children's Behavior

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
1. My children ask me to tell them stories about my homeland.	1	3	3
2. My children ask to have Afghan celebrations.	3	2	2
3. My children write in my homeland language.	1	3	1
4. My children read my homeland language.	1	1	1
5. My children use homeland language when they play with their Afghan cousins.	4	2	1
6. My children have dreams in my homeland language.	1	1	2
7. My children think homeland stories are fascinating.	3	3	2
8. My children use English when they play with their Afghan cousins.	3	3	4

4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree

The pre-research responses to statements 2, 5 and 7 indicate F3mother agrees and strongly agrees that F3a attitudes regarding Afghan celebrations, using Dari when playing with Afghan cousins, and listening to stories from Afghanistan were positive. In the mid-research response to statements 1, 3, and 7, F3mother agreed that F3a asked for stories from Afghanistan, found the stories fascinating, and was learning to write Dari. In the post-research response statement 1, F3mother maintained a positive perception of F3a's behavior in asking for stories from Afghanistan. But statement 1 was the only one for which the response was more positive than the pre-research response; for all the other statements the pre-research responses were more positive than the post-research responses.

Table 25 shows the average responses to the above eight statements.

Table 25: Family 3 - Parental Average Perception of Children's Behavior

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post
My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	2.00	2.30	1.63

The results in Table 25 indicate that Family 3 consistently disagreed with the statement that their children's behavior was positive during this research. Now I turn to the interview information to see what comments Family 3 made regarding F3a language behavior.

In response to Q3-1 regarding which language their child prefers to speak at home, F3mother perceived F3a speaks a mixture of English and Dari, but spoke mostly English in the home.

In response to Q3-2 regarding the language their child preferred to speak in the home,

F3mother felt F3a preferred to speak English due to a lack of confidence in speaking Dari.

In response to Q3-3 and Q3-4 regarding what language their child speaks and uses inside and outside the home, F3mother reported F3a speaks English outside the home. They hear F3a speaking more Dari in the home and once a month when they speak with relatives living in non-English-speaking countries on the phone. During the pre-research interview, Family 3 added that when F3a spoke with relatives on the phone the child said a few words and returned the phone to the parents due to not understanding the conversation or not knowing how to answer their questions. Later, the parents said that now when speaking with relatives on the phone F3a pauses and asks the parents how to say something in Dari before conveying their answer to the relatives. The relatives praised F3a for this progress in Dari use during the six-month study.

In response to Q3-5 and Q3-7 regarding reading and writing Dari, F3mother commented during the pre-research interviews that F3a used to bring the Dari books to her. Now F3mother has to motivate F3a to have the reading times. During the first research month F3mother taught F3a the Dari alphabet in addition to reading storybooks. Every day F3a consistently worked on about three to five new Dari sounds, looking at the letter and later reciting each letter in order by memory. Later F3a received permission to sign homework assignments in Dari. On a few occasions F3a attempted to learn to read from two beginner Dari books: *Grade 1 Dari* and *Your first 100 words in Persian*. Family 3 perceived F3a's beginner reading and writing attempts were unsuccessful as F3a lost interest in the books and said that the task of reading was too hard. The *Grade 1 Dari* schoolbook lacked learning guides in English to facilitate learning for an English-speaking person. *Your first 100 words in Persian* had Persian script, Persian transliteration and English, but 27 of the 100 Persian words were non-Dari words. The first three lessons actually used around 50 percent non-Dari words in each lesson. Although F3mother crossed out the Persian words and wrote in the Dari words, the games and exercises in the book were also too challenging for F3a. Taking all this into consideration, F3mother perceived F3a lost interest in using the book. At the post-research interview F3mother said that F3a expressed an interest to try

the *Beginner's Dari* book (Dari with English transliteration) because it is easier to just copy words than it is to do exercises in Dari as found in *Your first 100 words in Persian*. This indicates F3mother perceived F3a maintained a slight interest in learning Dari literacy skills.

In response to Q3-6 regarding plans to visit Afghanistan, F3mother was not sure if F3a planned to visit Afghanistan or not. She presumes he will visit their homeland, but no plans have been made. An additional comment by F3mother during the six-month study was that when the school held their annual international night F3a actively participated in it. During the previous two years F3a was busy visiting all the other cultural booths while F3mother presented life in Afghanistan. This year however, F3father, F3mother and F3a staffed their Afghan booth and answered visitors' questions about Afghanistan. When unsure how to answer questions, F3a would ask for help and relay the information to the visitors. F3mother observed F3a's increased interest in Afghan clothes, telling people about Afghanistan, Dari vocabulary, and Dari reading books. F3mother commented that during the six-month study F3a asked more questions regarding Afghanistan. In addition to his questions, F3a is learning one Pushtu word a day because F3father also speaks Pushtu.

In response to Q3-8 with regards to Afghan celebrations, F3mother perceived F3a does not ask for Afghan celebrations. The Afghan community in Minnesota is small and it is difficult to maintain Afghan traditions. The children hear more about American holidays in school.

In response to Q3-9 regarding use of Dari to communicate to distant friends and relatives, F3mother said that F3a speaks on the phone with relatives living in non-English-speaking countries.

In response to Q3-10 with regards to the child using Dari to get messages from print, audio, and video sources, F3mother commented that F3father and F3a listen to Afghan music about 20 percent of the time now. If the parents are listening to Afghan music F3a will listen too. Otherwise F3mother perceived F3a does not get messages from Dari media.

In response to Q3-11 regarding parental perception on which language their child uses when

playing games and drawing pictures, both F3father and F3mother indirectly answered this question. This question reminded them that they had forgotten all the Afghan games they once knew and they have not passed these games on to their child. They also mentioned they are so tired when they come home from work that they do not have the energy to play with F3a in the evening. F3mother stated that F3a has good artistic abilities but mainly draws contemporary fantasy images, nothing related to Dari or Afghanistan.

In response to Q3-12 regarding dreaming in Dari, F3mother said that F3a does not know enough Dari to think in Dari, to say nothing about dreaming in Dari.

In response to Q3-13 regarding which language is used when the child is upset or very angry, F3mother observed that F3a always uses English when upset or happy.

In response to Q3-14 regarding the child introducing English-speaking friends to Dari speakers in Dari first and then in English, F3mother was not sure but thought F3a would move from English to Dari, American to Afghan when introducing friends.

Family 3 entered the research with positive motivation on the part of all family members. The research data suggests that the parent's attitude stimulated their child's attitude in learning Dari. At the same time it appears F3a's interest in learning Dari built confidence in the parents for teaching their child Dari.

The parents took extra steps to make sure they read the storybooks. Family 3 also faced issues that interrupted the reading time, but apparently a slight increase in language and cultural exposure enhanced transmission of Dari to their child.

3.3.4 Family 3 Summary

Table 26 summarizes the questionnaire information from Family 3 regarding all three main research statements.

Table 26: Summary of Family 3 - Parental Average Perception of Positive Attitudes towards Dari

Family 3	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	3.33	2.83	2.83	2.99
My child's attitude towards Dari is positive.	2.33	2.92	2.50	2.59
My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	2.00	2.13	1.63	1.92

F3father and F3mother consistently agreed that their attitude regarding transmission and their child's attitude regarding Dari were positive. The parents disagreed with the statement that their child's behavior regarding Dari was positive. Overall the parents' attitude regarding transmission was 0.40 higher than their perception of their child's attitude regarding learning Dari. This same perception, in turn, was 0.67 points higher than their perception of their child's behavior regarding Dari. Family 3 commented that while they read to F3a, they observed F3a's increased interest in Afghan language and culture.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

In chapter 3, I presented the research results by family. This chapter includes two sections. In the first section, I discuss the results by research statements. Then, in the second section, I discuss four related issues that surfaced during the research and their potential influence on transmission of Dari to Afghan children living in North America. The four issues are: the appropriate language form, appropriate orthography, appropriate literacy material, and appropriate educational methods for transmission.

4.1 Results and Discussion by Area

In this section, I consider results in terms of the three main research statements:

- a) It is likely my children will learn and use Dari.
- b) My children's attitude towards Dari is positive.
- c) My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.

4.1.1 Parents' Attitudes towards Transmission

Table 27 shows responses from the questionnaire with regards to statement 1 concerning families' attitudes regarding transmission of Dari to their children.

Table 27: Summary on Parents' Average Attitudes towards Transmission

It is likely that my children will learn and use Dari.	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
Family 1	2.00	2.00	1.84	1.95
Family 2	2.50	1.66	2.10	1.92
Family 3	3.33	2.83	2.83	2.99

Statement 1 results indicate that overall Family 3 agreed with this statement, whereas Family 1 and 2 disagreed with it. We can also see Family 1 and 3 were more consistent in their responses

during the six month study, whereas Family 2's responses to statement 1 showed greater internal fluctuation. In general, the parents agreed more with the statement at the beginning than at the end of the study.

Four factors that might influence attitudes about transmission are: the child's level of contact with non-English-speaking relatives, the parents' level of English fluency, the value parents place on their children's fluency in reading and speaking two languages, and parents' affirmation of their children's fluency in reading and speaking two languages. Each family brought different values to the study with regard to these four factors.

The first possible factor influencing Dari fluency is the child's level of contact with non-English-speaking relatives living in non-English-speaking countries. Family 3's immediate family lives in non-English-speaking countries. They communicate with their family every month, and thus have greater needs for Dari fluency. They have some relatives here in the United States, but no immediate family. Family 1 and 2 have considerable family living in North America. They gather for social and religious gatherings several times a year. Although some family members still struggle with English, overall the family is bilingual with perhaps varying degrees of fluency according to age. (Some older Afghans are weaker in English and some younger Afghans are weaker in Dari.) A possible correlation is that parents of children with more contact with non-English-speaking relatives appear to have more positive attitudes regarding Dari transmission.

A second possible factor stimulating child's fluency is parents' English fluency and American acculturation. In both Family 1 and Family 2 one parent occasionally relied on their children to interpret for them. As Portes and Rumbaut (1996) warned, this parent-child dependency could lead to role reversal in which the child could become the source of information regarding American language and culture. In Family 3 both parents were fluent in Dari and English and frequently interpreted from English to Dari or visa-versa for their child. When the goal for Dari transmission is to preserve language and heritage instead of a goal to compensate

for a lack of English fluency, the children are more likely to value the parents' heritage language.

Portes and Rumbaut stressed the importance of parents' adaptation to a new language and culture. Parents' acculturation to the language and culture sets a role model for their children and protects them from role reversal. It is not easy for parents to compete with their children's young minds and exposure to English and American cultural adaptation. However, if parents do not advance with their children the danger is a reversal of roles, with the children informing their parents as to what is culturally appropriate and interpreting for their parents. Parents' efforts to adjust to the new culture increase their children's respect for their parents.

Warner and Wittner (1998) explain this further by stating parents need to model for their children a negotiation of American values in relation to their personal values while living in the United States. Therefore the parents' degree of English fluency and cultural adaptation may correlate with their attitudes regarding transmission of Dari to their children.

A third possible factor accounting for differences in attitudes regarding transmission is the value parents placed on their children's Dari fluency. In Family 1 and Family 3,¹¹ the parents sometimes criticized their children for not knowing how to respond in Dari during Dari language interaction. Shaming a student is a common approach used in Afghan culture to motivate the student to work harder. In an American context, however, this approach more often causes the child to lose interest. Afghan parents need to rethink the best way to draw their children into the heritage language learning experience. The manner in which parents build communication bridges between their Afghan traditions and the American traditions influences their children.

Lastly, parental acceptance and affirmation is important to successful language transmission. Parents could respond in one of three ways when their children do not communicate in Dari properly. Parents may both affirm their children for trying and guide them in how to correctly

¹¹ I did not observe F2mother's language interaction with her children to compare her experiences with Family 1 and Family 3.

say something in Dari. Secondly, parents can criticize their children for not responding in Dari properly, discouraging both the parent and children. Third, parents may criticize their children about their Dari abilities, but then draw the child back into the lesson.

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) found even young children lose interest in trying to speak the heritage language if they are criticized. However, children will strive to please their parents by learning their heritage language if they sense their bilingualism is important to their parents. Barron-Hauwart observed that parents committed to heritage transmission by having a family support group, friends or other heritage social involvements, or reading books and articles are usually most successful in passing on their heritage language to their children. It is important to remember that parental acceptance and affirmation is vital when children feel insecure about moving through the different learning stages of intensive mixing of the languages. It is possible that attitudes of the parents, coupled with their interaction with their children, influences their children’s attitude and bilingual achievements.

In summary, social contact with non-English-speaking relatives, parents’ English and American adaptation, the value parents place on children’s fluency in reading and speaking two languages, and parents’ affirmation of their children appear to correlate with the degree of children’s bilingual fluency.

4.1.2 *Parents’ Perception of Children’s Attitudes*

Next I discuss responses to statement 2 regarding parents’ perception of their children’s attitudes towards learning Dari. Table 28 summarizes the parents’ perception of their children’s attitudes towards learning Dari.

Table 28: Summary of Parents’ Average Perception of Children’s Attitude

My child’s attitude towards Dari is positive.	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
Family 1	1.75	1.83	1.83	1.80
Family 2	2.08	1.92	1.83	1.94
Family 3	2.33	2.92	2.50	2.58

All three families showed minimal fluctuation between their responses at the three stages of the

research. The parents' perceptions of their children's attitude were lower than their own attitudes regarding Dari transmission. Family 3, who had a more positive attitude regarding Dari transmission, also perceived their children's attitude was more positive. Families 1 and 2 consistently disagreed with the statement. Overall, Family 3 perceived their child's attitude was neutral, between positive and negative, regarding Dari learning. In addition Family 3 perceived a slight improvement in their child's attitude regarding Dari transmission during the study. In the mid-research responses to the questionnaire, the greater agreement was due to the fact that F3a responded positively to memorizing the Dari alphabet, initiated signing school homework papers in Dari and speaking Dari on the phone with relatives living in non-English-speaking countries. The drop in agreement in the post-research responses was possibly due to F3a's lack of progress in achieving Dari reading and writing skills.

There are three factors that might have influenced the parents' perception of their children's attitude: the children's readiness to have Dari books read to them, their appreciation of books, and their motivation to learn their heritage language.

The first factor possibly affecting parents' perception was their children's readiness to have Dari books read to them. Early in the reading program F1father and F2mother reported their children informed them they were not interested in studying Dari or having Dari storybooks read to them. Both Family 1 and Family 2 disagreed with statement 2 that their children indicated positive attitudes regarding Dari. However, the results for Family 3 showed an improvement in F3a's attitude regarding heritage reading. F3mother reported that in the period between pre and mid-research questionnaires, F3a brought the Dari storybooks to F3mother and F3father, asking them to read the books. This motivated them to read the books to their child. Between the mid and post-research questionnaire F3a stopped this and so the parents initiated the reading time with F3a. It appears that the children's readiness to have Dari books read to them correlated directly with parents' perception of their child's attitude towards learning Dari.

The second factor possibly affecting parents' perception was their children's appreciation for

books and reading material. F1father and F2mother reported in the interviews that although their children were able readers, their children lacked motivation to read their English schoolbooks. On the other hand, F3mother reported in the interviews that F3a enjoyed reading for an hour before going to sleep at night. It appears Family 3's child had learned reading for the enjoyment that comes with reading and that there maybe a possible correlation between this appreciation and children's attitude towards learning Dari.

The third factor affecting parents' perception was their children's motivation to study Dari. F3mother perceived F3a had a positive attitude regarding learning Dari. This coupled with F3a's motivation to bring the storybooks to F3mother and F3father, enhanced F3a's progress in learning Dari. On the other hand, both F1father and F2mother reported their children chose to study a non-Afghan language in school and reported they excelled in their studies. Although their children excelled in school learning a non-Afghan language, their children also communicated their lack of interest in studying Dari. It appears parents' perception of their children's attitude regarding learning Dari correlated with their perception of children's progress in learning Dari.

In summary, children's readiness to learn Dari, children's appreciation of books, and children's motivation to learn Dari strongly influenced parents' attitudes and parents' perceptions of their children's attitude towards learning Dari. Over all, it appears children's positive attitude towards learning influenced parents' perceptions of their children's attitude toward Dari.

4.1.3 Parents' Perception of Children's Behavior

Finally I present responses to statement 3 dealing with the parents' perception of their children's behavior. The main differences between the parents on this questionnaire were their responses to their children's Dari reading, writing, or speaking behaviors during the study. Table 29 indicates the parents' perception of their children's behavior during the six-month study.

Table 29: Summary Parents' Average Perception of Children's Behavior

My children's behavior towards Dari is positive.	Pre	Mid	Post	Average
Family 1	1.75	1.88	1.63	1.75
Family 2	1.25	1.50	1.50	1.42
Family 3	2.00	2.13	1.63	1.92

The differences between all three families decreased during the six-month study. The average scores for the first research question (as displayed on Table 27) ranged from 1.92 to 2.99, and the average score for the second research question (as displayed in Table 28) ranged from 1.80 to 2.58. The average scores for this research question only range from 1.42 to 1.92. That is, there is less disagreement between families with regard to statement 3 than with regard to statements 1 or 2. In statement 3 all parents disagreed with the statement that their children's behavior regarding Dari was positive. Although Family 3's child learned the Dari alphabet and learned to write a few words, he did not achieve Dari literacy skills that resulted in behavioral changes during the study. It appears that children's lack of Dari literacy development correlated with parents' perception of their children's behavior regarding heritage language.

4.1.4 Summary

In summary, parents with positive attitudes regarding Dari transmission also perceived their children's attitudes were more positive toward learning Dari. Although the final results showed little difference between parents' attitudes and parents' perception of their children's behavior, the parents with positive attitudes did interact more with their children in the family-centered reading activities. The four factors that appeared to affect their children's advancement in the family-centered reading were: children's social contact with non-English speaking relatives, parents acculturation to America, the value parents placed on children's fluency in reading and speaking two languages, and parents' affirmation of children's fluency in reading and speaking two languages. By assessing the parents' interaction with their children, both active and passive, we observe parents' attitudes regarding Dari transmission. Table 30 summarizes the differences between the three families' parental interaction, including differences in interaction between the

active and non-active parent. (The active parent was the one who responded to the questionnaire and interviews; the non-active parents sometimes took an active part in the family-centered reading and sometimes did not.)

Table 30 Summary of Parents' Interaction with Family-Centered Reading

	Family 1		Family 2		Family 3	
	Active parent	Non-active parent	Active parent	Non-active parent	Active parent	Non-active parent
Children's social contact with non-English-speaking relatives	P	P	P	P	A	A
Parents' American acculturation	A	P	A	P	A	A
Parents' value on children's bilingual and biliteracy fluency	P	P	A	P	A	A
Parents' affirmation of children's bilingual and biliteracy efforts	A	P	A	P	A	A

(A) active and (P) passive indicate parental interaction with their children

Both F3father and F3mother actively interacted with their child in all four areas and they engaged in the most family-centered reading activities, emphasizing the importance of parents' attitudes towards heritage language and culture learning and active interaction with their children.

Three factors that appeared to influence children the most were: their readiness to learn the heritage language, their appreciation of reading books, and their motivation to learn the heritage language. When parents perceived their children as showing positive attitudes in these three areas, family-centered learning was stimulated. Table 31 summarizes parents' perception of their children's attitudes and behavior regarding heritage family-centered reading.

Table 31 Summary of Parents' Perception of Children's Attitudes and Behavior

	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
Children's readiness to learn heritage language	-	-	+
Children's appreciation of reading books	-	-	+
Children's motivation to learn heritage language	-	-	+

(+) plus and (-) minus indicate parents' perception of their children's attitude and behavior as positive or negative

Only F3father and F3mother perceived their child's attitude as becoming more positive during the six-month study. However, even with Family 1 and Family 2, I perceived that the study ended with a positive relationship with the families. For example, on my most recent visits with Family 2, F2a sat with me to discuss her academic studies. The family was reviewing the intergenerational reading books and F2a and I looked at a few books together. As reported in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 F2mother indicated that F2a was seeking ways to maintain her Dari and Afghan culture and I observed that same interest.

Overall, when parents' attitude was positive regarding Dari transmission and their perception of their children's attitude and behavior were positive regarding learning Dari, the family engaged in more family-centered learning.

4.2 Related Issues

This limited study on the effects of an intergenerational Dari reading program gives us a better understanding of issues Afghan immigrants face living in a North American society. In this section I present four additional issues which surfaced regarding Afghan children living in North America and learning Dari. These related issues are: 1) selection of an appropriate language form, 2) selection of an appropriate orthography in a North American context, 3) selection of appropriate literacy material, and 4) selection of an appropriate education method for a North American context.

4.2.1 Selecting Appropriate Language Variety for Transmission

First I present background information on differences between varieties of Dari. North American-Afghan children, similar to other immigrant populations, learn two different languages: their heritage language and English. On the other hand, in Afghanistan the parents spoke and wrote different varieties of a single language, used in different situations. The form of Dari used in literacy, or high Dari, was used in formal settings and vernacular Dari, or low Dari, was used in informal settings. In North America, Afghan parents expect their children to learn English well

and to learn at least functional vernacular Dari because low Dari is traditionally used in the home. Afghan children communicate in vernacular Dari and English in North America whereas in Afghanistan their parents mainly communicated in both forms of Dari. Although the form used in literacy in Dari and vernacular Dari are related to each other, for Afghan children living in North America, learning the form used in literacy in Dari is like learning a third language, a language form they rarely encounter in a North America social context. The form used in literacy in Dari is tied to Old Persian, which has a long, prestigious history from the Mogul empire reaching into India, and was used in the Mogul courts until 1837. “Persian scholars were prominent in both Turkish and Indian courts during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries in composing dictionaries and grammatical works. A Persian Indian L1¹² developed and many colonial British officers learned their Persian from Indian scribes” (UCLA 2005). The Old Persian language is actually closer to high Dari than to Modern Persian. Presumably, high Dari’s extensive history in Southwest Asia and the Middle East contributes to its position of prestige in Afghanistan, whereas the preservation of both high and low Dari in North America was challenged by the prestige of the English language.

Other immigrant populations face similar dialect challenges. For example, Hispanic parents in Minnesota examined the Spanish “Compañeros” programs, a two-way immersion language program taught in school. They wanted to assure themselves that the level of Spanish their children were taught in school was a high Spanish dialect and not a low Spanish dialect.¹³ Across linguistic groups the high dialect carries a prestige the low dialect does not.

Ferguson (1971) discusses languages that have two forms: a high form and low form. The high form, or the form used in literacy, is used in formal situations and a low form, or spoken

¹² Trudgill, in *A Glossary of Sociolinguistics* defines L1 (Language 1) as a speaker’s first language learned from infancy, as a native language, or mother-tongue.

¹³ Personal conversation with Edward Holden, Dakota Prairie ABE (Adult Basic Education) Services, Northfield, MN.

form, is used in informal situations. Ferguson (1971) notes the high form is considered prestigious. Even those whose proficiency is limited consider the high form to be more beautiful, more logical, and better suited to communicate one's thoughts. The two genres are used in the following settings:

- a) High form is used in the mosque, personal letters, speech in parliament, political speech, university lecture, news broadcasts, newspaper editorials, news stories, captions on pictures and poetry.
- b) Low form is used in instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks, conversation with family, friends and colleagues, radio "soap opera", captions on political cartoons, and folk literature.

Afghan parents must wrestle with this challenge and make decisions regarding which Dari is best suited for their children to use for literacy purposes in North America. In the North American context, is it possible to go from spoken low Dari to high Dari literacy? What benefit is it for Afghan children to be literate in high Dari, a form of Dari they rarely encounter in the North America context? For North American-Afghan children, English is replacing high Dari as the form used in literacy.

Family 1 preferred to use only high Dari for learning to read, while Family 2 and Family 3 felt it was important to begin with low Dari and build the children's ability to understand high Dari material. There are two problems parents face in choosing whether to teach their children to read using high Dari or low Dari. On the one hand, if children only learn to read low Dari they can not access the huge amount of literature available in high Dari. In addition, to teach low Dari, parents must overcome their negative attitudes toward low Dari. On the other hand, if parents only use high Dari for literacy, which is a form the children do not know, parents must plan to include high Dari in more domains so their children can develop fluency. Another consideration is that if parents insist that children learn to read using high Dari, and their children refuse to use it, it may hasten the loss of Dari.

4.2.2 *Selecting Appropriate Orthography*

When comparing English orthography with Dari orthography, one could assume the differences could create interference in achieving literacy. Using two totally different orthographies may cause this difficulty. The parents in this study learned to read Dari using the Dari orthography in Afghanistan; they now live in America. The parents later learned the English orthography. The parents expect their children to learn to read English orthography first, and then learn the Dari orthography for Dari.

Dari orthography was used in this Dari reading project. All three families agreed Dari should be taught using the Dari orthography rather than Roman orthography. Three factors influence this feeling. First, the parents valued reading in the prestigious Dari orthography of Afghanistan. Secondly, the Dari orthography is based on a modified Arabic alphabet and builds transfer bridges to Arabic and reading the Quran, the Muslim holy book. Thirdly, it opens a whole new world of literature and culture communication in the Dari and Persian speaking world because most books in Dari are written using Dari orthography. In light of these reasons for using the Dari orthography, parents need to assess potential problems their children could face in learning two different orthographies while living in North America.

Many parents might assume that learning to read a language written in one orthography will make it more difficult to learn to read the second language with a different orthography. A result from a study in Canada conducted by Gholamain and Geva (1999)¹⁴ indicates that, in fact, this is not true. Children do not generally have a problem using different orthographies for two different languages. Gholamain and Geva conducted their research with 70 students in grades 1-5, who attended a three-hour weekly Persian Heritage Language Program in a large metropolitan city in

¹⁴ Another study conducted in Ottawa, Canada measured children learning to read in two distinctly different orthographies. Information from this study was not included in this thesis. Arab-Moghaddam, Narges, and Monique Se□ne□chal. 2001. Orthographic and phonological processing skills in reading and spelling in Persian/English bilinguals. The International Society for the Study of Behavior Development.

Canada. They compared children's learning to read Persian with the regular Persian orthography versus learning to read English with the irregular English (Roman) orthography. The study showed "accurate word recognitions skills develop more slowly in languages with an irregular orthography, such as English, than in regular orthographies, such as Persian" (Gholamain and Geva 1999:183).

The children in Gholamain and Geva's study had at least two years of English schooling before they were placed in Persian heritage classes according to their speaking and reading abilities. The 70 children used L1 Persian in their home and they had a rudimentary grasp of spoken Persian when they started the program. Therefore, their literacy skills were English for L1 and Persian for L2.¹⁵ Gholamin and Geva hypothesized that, "English orthography is more complicated in that the reader must master grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules, reflecting Germanic, Latin, and Greek influences on the English writing system. Given these differences in the depth of English and Persian orthography, it was predicted that children who are developing their reading skills concurrently in these two languages would acquire decoding skills in Persian with more ease than in English" (1999:190).

The research results reflected the fact that Persian has a regular orthography, and after children studied Persian for two years and learned all 32 Persian alphabet letters, they showed strong abilities in word recognition and pseudoword solving in both English and Persian. Learning to read in English and then learning the Persian script did not produce difficulties in Persian word recognition. The results of learning the Persian orthography revealed "...some evidence that once schoolchildren learn the grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules in Persian, they can read accurately and decode unfamiliar Persian words regardless of general proficiency in Persian" (Gholamain and Geva 1999:210).

Gholamain and Geva's results are helpful in showing that the difference between English and

¹⁵ L2 (Language 2) is the second language the learner acquires.

Persian orthography did not create learning interference when moving from English language skills to Persian language skills. In addition, studying the Persian orthography developed word recognition and pseudoword solving skills. Their study suggested that Afghan children living in North America using the Dari orthography should not encounter interference. We can therefore support Afghan parents teaching their children the Dari orthography.

4.2.3 Selecting Appropriate Literacy Material

The third issue to consider in passing on the Dari language is selecting appropriate literacy material for Afghan children living in North America. Evaluating the current Afghan Dari educational material in North America revealed both weaknesses and strengths in the material when used in an Afghan intergenerational reading program. Two weaknesses were exposed. First, F3mother perceived the nineteen BBC and two CADA Dari books were too few low Dari books for the family-centered reading. Secondly, the parents perceived the high Dari schoolbooks from Afghanistan were less attractive. (I was not able to evaluate the Dari and Persian beginner's books printed in the United States since I received them at the end of this study.) Three strengths were observed: First, most of the materials were attractive to the parents. Secondly, interactive reading materials were available. Thirdly, the reading materials were available in both low Dari and high Dari.

Turning to the first problem, the insufficiency of low Dari material, Family 1 and Family 2 read the BBC and Traditional Dari Story books to their children and reported back to me. Their responses were so neutral that it was impossible to evaluate the books. Family 3, however, gave more details. They read the informal, simpler stories, and progressed to more formal, more advanced stories. Even with the informal language books, F3mother needed to explain many words that were beyond F3a's vocabulary. F3a preferred to not have books re-read; therefore the natural progression through the reading material was to progressively select more difficult reading material. The insufficient amount of low Dari reading material created problems in the

reading program as F3a did not fully learn the new vocabulary from previous books, only hearing the new words a few times. Additional and innovative teaching methods were needed to review the books. This would have led to increased comprehension development and to draw F3a back into the learning experience. Consequently, when F3mother progressed to the more difficult books, F3a understood less of the reading material and lost interest in the reading program. Developing additional low Dari reading books could strengthen the bridge between the low and high Dari books so the transition between the two levels is not so steep. Possible topics could include sports, stories from the parents' childhood, and what was it like settling in America.

The second weakness in the materials was that the parents considered that the Dari schoolbooks were not attractive to the children for various reasons. Compared to the BBC and CADA books, they had more words per page, had fewer photos, were printed on inexpensive paper instead of high quality, glossy paper, and did not have English instructions. For example, when trying to read from the Dari schoolbooks, F1a requested more English pronunciation and grammar aids to help the student through the learning process. It would also have been valuable to have more pre-reading, reading and post-reading techniques to help the children learn how to read.

Finally, while the parents felt the Persian book *Your first 100 words in Persian* and the *Beginners' Dari* book were attractive to the children; these books were not fully evaluated during this reading study. The Persian book needed to be modified to include only Dari words, since 27 of the 100 Persian words were not Dari words. This was especially problematic in the first three chapters of the book in which 17 of the 36 words introduced were not Dari words. One parent felt that *Beginner's Dari* is the best book to begin the high Dari and low Dari reading process. This book has English explanations, Dari orthography, Dari sentences written in a phonetic English alphabet, and simple writing exercises for each lesson. As these books were discovered at the end of the reading program, they were not fully tested in the program. Perhaps these books could successfully bridge between the parents reading aloud and children reading Dari for

themselves, but I did not have access to these books early enough to see if this was true.

Overall the strengths of the reading material were that they were attractive, interactive and that the material was in both low Dari and high Dari. All three families were excited to receive the books and to show other Afghan families the materials available for intergenerational Dari reading in North America. Although, additional reading material may be needed, the existing materials are a valuable resource for Dari language transmission.

In summary, more testing is needed on *Beginner's Dari* and a Dari-modified *Your first 100 words in Persian* books to determine if these books build the children's reading abilities sufficiently. Perhaps once the children learn to read Dari, the schoolbooks from Afghanistan may hold their interest more.

4.2.4 *Selecting an Appropriate Educational Method*

Some conflict resulted because the parents and the children expected different educational methods: teacher-centered versus student-centered. The parents implemented a teacher-centered model for the intergenerational reading. The parents also stated their preference that future intergenerational reading be held in a school setting, not a family-centered setting. On the other hand, the children were used to the student-centered teaching method more commonly used in North America. The children appeared willing to learn from their parents in the family-centered literacy program, but they expected to be drawn into the learning experience. Consequently, both parents' and children's expectations were unmet in the intergenerational reading.

Fingeret and Jurmo (1989) stressed that participatory literacy education is based on the belief that learners should be at the center of literacy experience, and their experience should focus on the students' needs, aspirations, personality, and interests. These key motivations draw the learner into the learning experience. They observe that "...active learner participation in adult literacy programs enables learners to take high degrees of control, responsibility, and reward vis-à-vis program activities. Active participants can improve program efficiency, enhance learner's

personal development, and enable them to transform the larger social context in which they live” (1989:17). Fingeret and Jurmo’s research focused on adult learners, but many of the same principles are applicable to children’s education. For example, the values of involving the children as active learners enhance the learner’s personal development, and in the end children learn to direct their learning experiences. The following authors emphasize using a learner-centered approach (Baratta, Ellsworth and Hedley 1994; Cazden 1992; Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Ji-Mei, et.al. 2004; Snow and Verhoeven 2001).

Wang (2000:1) found similar factors to be important “There are various factors that influence children’s attitudes towards reading: children’s personal experiences in reading, children’s confidence in reading, parents’ attitudes regarding reading, and teachers’ way of teaching.” Wang emphasized the value of providing children with a rich reading environment, and encouraged parents to visit the classroom to observe how the teacher presented the reading material. Wang also encouraged parents to make frequent visits to the library with their children and, when necessary, to purchase books their children are interested in reading. When parents read books for personal enrichment and provide rich reading environments for their children, they stimulate confidence in their children’s reading skills. Building children’s confidence in reading is the first step in forming a positive attitude regarding reading. Thus, when children have positive attitudes in reading it enriches their literacy development. Although rich reading environments are important for children’s development, without positive attitudes on the part of the parents towards reading a child may get very little out of reading. The results of Wang’s research showed that parents’ and teachers’ attitudes are most pivotal to children’s literacy development. A good place for parents to observe a student-centered learning environment is their children’s classroom.

Paratore (1994) focused on two benefits gleaned from an intergenerational reading program. First, it extends the parents’ own literacy skills. Second, it stimulates parents’ involvement in and support for their children’s own education. Modeling by parents through intergenerational

reading and involvement in their children's education strongly influences and motivates their children's reading habits.

Paratore and Krol-Sinclair (1996) presented a study in which parents were taught read-aloud strategies to use while reading to their children. The reading process was broken into three steps: pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities. They recommended parents discuss the picture or illustration on the book cover at the beginning of a reading session, read the title, read the author's name. Next, the children were encouraged to predict what they thought might happen in the story. Parents should acknowledge and repeat each suggestion made by each child. Then, if words were repeated during the reading, parents should invite the children to read the repeated words together. Once the story was read, the parents could ask for volunteers from the children to retell the story. This can be done many ways. The parent could page through the book to prompt the child on the story, occasionally asking the child questions about how the character might have felt and what happened. Another approach would be to ask children about the settings, problems, solutions and consequences learned from the book. She recommends parents also ask what their children liked about this book. Paratore found that some parents in the intergenerational reading program encouraged the children to make comments about words and events in the story before, during and after the reading time. Other parents quickly read through the material and allowed the children to comment at the end of the reading. Paratore and Krol-Sinclair observed the more experience parents had in the reading to their children the more likely they were to elicit children's participation in a meaningful way. This child-centered reading method allows the parent to track the child's comprehension and to keep the child engaged in the reading exercise. Unfortunately, I discovered their reading strategies too late to implement in this research.

Children learn from the parents' role models. Parents' values often become their children's values over time. Paratore stressed that the more parents are involved in their child's education, the more both parents and children benefit from the experience. Whether an individual is born in

North America or immigrates to North America, Paratore emphasizes that the value parents place on intergenerational reading assists their children's literacy development at home and in school.

The parents in my study desired to have a Dari language program taught in a school, either in a weekend school or public school. Their experience was that schools deliver quality education. School teachers are trained to assure quality education in their opinions. Their assumption was that the classroom was teacher-centered and ideally the student wants to learn. In this model the parents' responsibility is to monitor their children and to assure that their children complete their homework. They were not confident in their ability to teach their children Dari. The parents thought the children, on the other hand, were intrigued with the reading material but they thought that the children were reluctant to be responsible to learn from the books. They thought the classes their children enjoyed the most were classes in which they connected with their teacher. For example, this past year an English literature class studying Shakespeare was one child's favorite class because the teacher drew the students into the subject matter. The children were open to learning Dari if it benefited them and they were not forced to work too hard. This was the greatest of all the problems: the parents wanted a school with ambitious students and the children wanted a teacher who could bring the subject material to life. But it is unlikely that programs like the parents wanted and children expected will ever be developed. Therefore it is important to modify a heritage language program to be more acceptable to both the parents and children.

The above studies demonstrated how essential parental involvement is in their children's education and that it also can be a pivotal time to pass on their heritage language to their children. The benefits of a family-centered literacy program are that parents can better monitor what the children are learning and facilitate opportunities for their children to practice what they have learned in everyday situations. Parents are sometimes more aware than a school teacher what their children's language abilities are. Through a family-centered approach, parents are likely to meet their children at the appropriate level and take them to a higher level of fluency. When

parents consider themselves to be learning facilitators (and not teachers) and consider their children to be participants in a heritage language program (and not students), both are likely to be captivated by the learning experience.

4.2.5 Summary

To summarize, the related issues in this research were: selection of the appropriate language variety for transmission, selection of the appropriate orthography, selection of appropriate literacy material, and selection of the appropriate educational method. In the end, the language variety and educational method appeared to be the most problematic as both parents' expectations and children's expectations were unmet.

It was evident from the outcomes of the research that Afghan parents need to select the appropriate Dari variety before beginning to teach Dari to their children. As indicated in section 3.1, one parent preferred only high Dari at the beginner's level for literacy, while two other parents began with low Dari and moved to literacy in high Dari through the appropriate development stages. Afghan parents need to consider the new context in which their children are learning to read Dari, since it is different from the context in which they themselves studied Dari in Afghanistan.

Less important, with regards to using an appropriate orthography, Gholamain and Geva's (1999) research indicates that teaching children a second regular orthography is not problematic. They discovered that teaching children a new regular Persian orthography in addition to the English orthography merely enhanced the children's reading skills rather than creating problems. It is the belief of this researcher that Afghan parents should follow through with their desire to teach their children the Dari orthography and compare their findings with those of Gholamain and Geva.

Thirdly, although the intergenerational literacy materials had strengths and weaknesses, additional testing of the *Beginners' Dari* and a modified, Dari version of *Your first 100 words in*

Persian should be carried out. It would be useful to see if this material could successfully bridge reading aloud by parent and children reading by themselves. Additional reading instructions in English with examples and lessons in Dari orthography may be helpful in guiding the children through the literacy lessons. One consideration is that these Afghan children are living in North America. This change in location will be a consideration in the children's identity. Reading material can influence what bridges are built between North American and Afghan culture. In this way, the children will build stronger identities.

Lastly, and equally important to selecting the appropriate language variety, was implementing the appropriate educational method. It appeared parents were most comfortable with the teacher-centered, traditional method. However, the children were most familiar with a student-centered, innovative method. The parents' expectation and the manner of teaching familiar to the children clashed during their intergenerational readings. This researcher recommends that parents consider adapting a child-centered teaching method in order to draw their children into the heritage learning experience. Parent could consider seeing their role to be facilitators rather than teachers as they guide their children to Dari literacy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, four theories were discussed in this research. Acculturation (Portes and Rambauts 1996, and Rubin 1968); intergenerational reading (Paratore 1994; Paratore et.al. 1995; Paratore and Krol-Sinclair 1996; Paratore, Melzi and Krol-Sinclair 1999); bilingualism and biliteracy, (Williams and Snipper 1990; Warner and Wittner 1998); and learner-centered education (Fingeret and Jurmo 1989; Saunders 1983) were found to be pivotal for immigrants' positive adaptation to their new host country. Previous studies in these areas indicated that when parents model these domains it influences their children's values with regards to preserving the heritage language and culture. These theories were evaluated in my family-centered reading program. I hypothesized that intergenerational Afghan Dari family-centered reading would result in improvements in children's attitudes towards learning Dari and Afghan culture. This research on immigrant language issues affirms heritage language learning as a way to strengthen family identity and acculturation within North American. It emphasizes that it is important for parents to mentor their children. This will affirm the language and cultural identity of both parents and children and facilitate the adjustment to a new society. Involvement in the learning process by parents can foster family stability and promote both parents' and children's acculturation.

In practice I observed the effects of family-centered heritage reading in immigrant households. I wanted to see if reading could be an effective method of heritage language transmission by focusing not only on spoken heritage language but also on written heritage language. Family-centered reading can be used for the purpose of strengthening family connectedness. Parents' abilities to speak and read two languages and parental guidance towards

acculturation to a new host country can be utilized. Too frequently, parents' involvement in their children's host language learning experience is sidelined by host culture representatives when programs are initiated to assimilate children to the host country language.

This research suggests that parental attitude towards transmission was pivotal in passing on Dari to their children. Parents with positive attitudes towards Dari transmission also perceived their children's attitude was positive and they experienced more successful interaction with their children. For example, F3father and F3mother maintained a positive attitude throughout the study. Subsequently F3a brought the Dari reading books to them to read, memorized the Dari alphabet early in the reading program, spoke more Dari with other Afghan children, spoke more Dari with non-English-speaking relatives, and asked F3mother and F3father more questions about Afghanistan. This emphasizes that positive attitudes by the parents and positive interactions with their children were crucial in Dari transmission. Although the actual study showed minimal improvements on parents' perception of their children's positive attitudes and behaviors, Family 3 did observe F3a used more Dari with friends and family at the end of the study than at the beginning of the study.

Future studies are needed on how Dari oral skills and literacy are traditionally transmitted in Afghanistan. Some questions for future research are: in Afghanistan how do parents share oral stories with their children? Do Afghan parents model intergenerational reading in Afghanistan? These could help us explore ways to stimulate parents to take ownership in intergenerational reading. Another question is whether involving parents in material development workshops could facilitate ownership by parents in Dari intergenerational reading. Additional research in these areas could strengthen and contextualize intergenerational family-centered reading.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Acculturation across Generations

Modified from Portes and Rambaut (1996: 241)

Type	Predicted Consequences	Children' s Learning of American Culture and Language	Parents' Learning of American Culture and Language	Children' s Insertion into Ethnic Community	Parents' Insertion into Ethnic Community
Selective acculturation	Preservation of parental language and ethnic community resources	+	+	+	+
Dissonant acculturation (II)	Loss of parental authority and role reversal	+	-	-	-
Dissonant acculturation (I)	Rupture of family ties and children's abandonment of ethnic community	+	-	-	+
Consonant acculturation	Family search for integration and acceptance into social mainstream	+	+	-	-
Consonant resistance to acculturation	Family isolation within the ethnic community	-	-	+	+

Appendix B: Literature

<i>BBC Story books</i>	<i>Schoolbooks</i>
Where there is Peace	Dari grade 1
The Lion and the Wood Cutter	Dari grade 2
Three Cows and the Wolf	Dari grade 3
Ahmad Saves His Father	Faith grade 1
The Red Hen	Faith grade 2
Fire in the Jungle	Faith grade 3
The Pigeon and the Crow	
The Old Man and His Sons	<i>Additional advanced reading material</i>
The Story of the Rabbit	Treasures of Pushto
The Story of the Soap	Pinocchio
The Harvest Time	Beauty and the Beast
Murad and Parwan	The Worried Sparrow
The Treasure	Forty Tales of Korasan
The Boy and the Gun	Men's Promises
The Mat Weaver	Traditional Dari Stories
The Gold Fish	Beginner's Dari
The Story of Jandad	Your first 100 words in Persian
Know Your Country	Forty Tales of Korasan
The Fortunate and the Unfortunate	
Where there is No School_2	
The Lion and the Mouse	
The Pigeon and the Ant	
The Effects of Drugs	
Mother & Child	

Appendix C: Questionnaire

	4	3	2	1
1. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language and English at the same time.				
2. I think my children like to speak the homeland language at home.				
3. I think it is difficult for my children to learn my homeland language once they go to school.				
4. I think my children like to speak my homeland language.				
5. My children ask me to tell them stories about my homeland.				
6. I think my children would like to learn how to read my homeland language.				
7. I think my grandchildren will speak my homeland language.				
8. My children have dreams in my homeland language.				
9. I think my children like hearing stories from my homeland.				
10. My children read my homeland language.				
11. I think a father should speak primarily homeland language with his children.				
12. I think my children would like to use only English in the home.				
13. I think my children prefer to speak English outside the home.				
14. My children want to speak my homeland language in the United States.				
15. I think my children would like to visit my homeland.				
16. I think my children like hearing stories in my homeland language.				
17. I think my children like hearing stories in English.				
18. I think my children would like to learn how to write my homeland language.				
19. I think it is easy for my children to speak my homeland language and English at the same time.				
20. My children ask to have Afghan celebrations.				
21. My children write in my homeland language.				
22. My children use homeland language when they play with their Afghan cousins.				
23. I think my children like Afghan celebrations.				
24. My children think homeland stories are fascinating.				
25. I think a mother should speak primarily homeland language with her children.				
26. My children use English when they play with their Afghan cousins.				
4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree				

Appendix D: Interview Questions

What are the parents' attitudes towards passing on Dari to their children?

- 1) What obstacles do you perceive your children will face in learning homeland language and host country language at the same time?
- 2) What are your attitudes towards the inevitable shift from homeland language to host country language?
- 3) What are your ties to the homeland?
- 4) How would you describe your bilingual fluency in your homeland language and host country language?
- 5) What are your leadership responsibilities in your community?
- 6) What cultural ties do you have with regards to your job/jobs?
- 7) Do you think your children will pass their heritage language on to their children?
- 8) Do you think your grandchildren will speak your heritage language?

What are parents' perceptions of their children's attitudes towards Dari?

- 1) Do you think your children would like to visit your home country?
- 2) How do you think your children feel about using their heritage language inside the home?
- 3) How do you think their children feel about using their heritage language outside the home?
- 4) What language do you think your children prefer to use when playing with English-speaking children?
- 5) What language do you think your children prefer to use when they play with homeland friends and relatives?
- 6) What friends do you think your children prefer playing with, homeland language children or English-speaking children?

What is parents' perception of their children's behavior with regards to learning Dari?

- 1) What language do your children like to speak in the home?
- 2) Do your children prefer to speak only English in the home?
- 3) What language do your children speak outside the home?
- 4) In what settings do you hear your children using their homeland language?
- 5) Do your children read the homeland language?
- 6) Do your children plan on visiting your homeland?
- 7) Do your children write in the homeland language?
- 8) Do your children ask to have Afghan celebrations?
- 9) Do your children use homeland language to communicate with distant friends and relatives?
- 10) Do your children use homeland language to get messages from print, audio, and video sources?
- 11) Do your children play games, pretend or draw pictures using homeland language?
- 12) Do your children talk about dreaming in your homeland language?
- 13) When your children are upset or very happy, do they use the homeland language?
- 14) Do your children introduce their host country friends to homeland speakers in homeland language first and then host country language?

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