

# Students' attitudes towards Kurdology Course

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**Abstract**— This study examines students' attitudes towards studying kurdology course at university level in Duhok. Attitude is considered as a necessary component in language learning. Therefore, a positive attitude is considered as one of the important factors that have an impact on language learning. By providing insight into the attitudes students towards learning Kurdish, It contributes to the teaching of Kurdish as a foreign language. The main purpose of this research is to reveal students' attitudes towards learning Kurdish and find out how to make their attitudes positive. Language educators who know how to develop positive attitudes in students will be able to conduct interesting and effective classroom activities; get them to be more successful in learning Kurdish. The researcher used a questionnaire to obtain data about the learners' attitudes and analyse them. 112 students from different universities in Duhok participated in this study. The findings shows that there is positive relationship between emotional, behavioural and cognitive attitudes towards learning Kurdish language, however the highest value was for behavioural attitudes. **Keywords**— *Kurdish language, kurdology, attitudes, Duhok, Kurdistan.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be a powerful method which aids to change the behaviour of the students based on their needs and expectation of the society. Student attitude is considered an essential part of learning; consequently it becomes an important element of second language learning. Kurdish language has an important role in many societies as it is the language which separates influential class from the rest of individual who lives in society (Akram and Yasmeen, (2011). According to Candlin & Mercer, (2011) Concerning Individual's attitudes towards the learning Kurdish language, they state that it is the learning context that might explain their success in learning a language. Many lecturers have different strategies used in their class in order to recognize the target students' attitudes (Ahmed, C.M. Yossatorm and Yossiri, (2012). According to Youssef, (2012) attitudes towards a specific language could be either positive or negative. Attitudes towards learning Kurdish language have an impact on behaviours such as choosing and reading books, listening to Kurdish radio, watching

Kurdish channels etc. Particularly in academic, in case a student has a positive attitude towards learning Kurdish language, they will be able to attain many things in that particular area.

Many students begin learning Kurdish from primary school; some others from kindergarten or even from day care; however the issue is that many of them are not able to accomplish the desired level of Kurdish proficiency, the main reason is de-motivation of students in all levels. 'Attitude' is as somebody's thoughts or emotional state regarding to something, particularly as exposed in their behaviour. Section two of this research consists of Literature Review that will look into various studies, theories, attitude definitions, importance of attitudes and attitude components. Learning a new language is the powerful instrument which aids to adjust the behaviour of the student with regard to their desires and expectation of the society. Student's attitude is an essential portion of learning; consequently attitude is considered a vital factor of language learning. Attitude towards learning Kurdish is supposed to affect attitude for instance choosing and reading the right material, communicating with a native Kurdish speaker and so on. Particularly in University, if students have a positive attitude towards a particular topic, they will be able to attain numerous things in that particular field. There is a relation between learning language and the environmental mechanisms in which the students were grown up. Both positive and negative attitudes will have a huge influence on the achievement of learning the Kurdish language. According to Yamashita (2013) several factors that have impact on learning the Kurdish language process for instance, attitude, age, anxiety, aptitudes, gender, personality and so on (Lehmann, 2006 and Gardner, 1960). Tavit (2009) argue that learning a new language could aid students in demonstrating their idea, thoughts and opinion. This research concentrates on the idea of attitude as the main affective aspects for achievements in learning a new language. In more detail, it examines students' attitudes towards learning Kurdish language, focusing on three aspects of attitude (emotional, behavioural and cognitive).

## Research Hypotheses

The addressed hypotheses for this research are:

**First research hypothesis:** Students have emotional attitudes towards learning Kurdish.

**First research hypothesis:** Students have behavioural attitudes towards learning Kurdish.

**First research hypothesis:** Students have cognitive attitudes towards learning Kurdish.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definitions of Attitude

Attitude has several definitions from the perspective of diverse aspects and contexts. Kasprzyk & Montano (2008) defined Attitude as person's belief regarding an attribute of executing the behaviour, prejudiced by assessments of attributes. Consequently, an individual has great belief that confidently valued consequences will outcome from. Gardner (1985) defined attitude as connected to an individual's beliefs and values (Lawrence and Lawrence, 2013:66). According to Kurihara, (2006) attitude is modified individual's behaviour".

The Macmillan Kurdish Dictionary (2002) defined the attitude as "somebody's thoughts or emotional state regarding to something, particularly as exposed in their behaviour". All individuals have some attitudes towards everything, it could be negative or positive therefore, students' attitudes towards learning Kurdish will not vary with mentioned statement, students could have negative attitudes towards learning Kurdish language on the other hand they could have positive attitudes towards the Kurdish language (Al Noursi, 2013).

According to Yamashita, (2013), attitude is a complex psychological construct. According to Sadighi and Zarafshan, (2006) and Petrides, (2006) There are many factors that play a role in students' success, and attitude is considered as one of the most influential factors. Moreover, teachers' attitude plays a role in teaching Kurdish language such as teachers' commitment and motivation (Vasudevan, 2013). According to Fakeye, (2010), Students' attitude to the language is one of the personal variables that affect the learning of Kurdish language.

Wenden (1991) pointed out that attitude consists of three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural. The cognitive component includes the thoughts regarding the object of the attitude. The affective component is related to the individual's emotions and feelings towards an object, and the behavioural component contains the propensity to accept specific learning behaviours. Likert (1932) defined the attitude as "an implication created on the basis of a compound of beliefs about the attitude object". McGuire (1969) argued the possibility of the three attitude components are so strictly interconnected. According to Van Els et al. (1984) discussed that no matter if three components or only. The link between all

components is so strict that sufficient information on attitudes could be achieved by evaluating only a component. Paltridge & Starks (1996) stated that language learning is linked to individual's attitude towards the target language. Karahan (2007) mentioned that positive language attitudes will have positive effects on learner to have positive direction towards learning language. Positive attitude will play positive role in learning language, also will be the main key for success concerning learning language (Abidin et al., 2012).

### Attitude towards Language Learning

According to Eren (2012) several social and psychological features and attitude of learning the language towards second language impact the capability of the learners.

Baker concentrated on the significance of the study regarding the impact of attitude on learning language (Yao, 2011).

According to Sokuet, al. (2011) argued the importance of affective component and its effect on learning language behaviour, the main reason the importance of affective component such as values, interests and attitude of students related to effect of future behaviour. This explains the main reason of paying attention to positive attitudes for students towards learning language because positive attitude will have positive impact on students' future learning.

According to Youssef (2012) Students capability, strategy and attitude clarify their accomplishment for learning language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) mentioned that the capability of the students to learn a second language does not only effect by the language and mental skills, nonetheless likewise on the students' attitudes and opinions to the aimed language. Also they pointed that the perception of the attitude can improve the whole language learning process, inducing the environment of students' belief and behaviours to the target language, its community and culture, and also it would classify their propensity to obtain the target language. Baker (1992) pointed a theoretical model, concentrating on the significance of accompanying attitudinal study in the field of learning language.

De Bot et al. (2005) showed that language education providers, scholars and students should recognize that a positive attitude and positive motivation of students enable language learning. Therefore, in case if the student does not have the propensity and concentration in obtaining the target language to connect with others, in such case student will face a negative attitude and not be encouraged and excited in language learning. Consequently, student's attitudes might include in language learning, the reason is it might have the impact

on their performance in obtaining the aimed language (Samson, 2012).

Many features of language attitude towards learning a new language have been explored and examined (Williams et al. 2002, Donitsa-Schmidt et al. 2004, Bernaus et al. 2004,) the following scholars have been studied different aspects of attitude and its impact on learning new language, for instance, Gan (2004), studied the relationship between strategy of learning language and students attitude, Levine (2003), attitude and belief regarding learning aimed language, Yang and Lau (2003), attitudes towards learning language and language itself at tertiary and secondary stages, White (2002), using peers to learn Kurdish language as attitude aspect, Lee (2001), attitudes towards arguable practices between education providers and their students (u,2010).

Hartiala (2000) argued that the main objectives in educating students through contented and language combined learning models is to inspire learner's positive attitude towards the aimed language. Based on the above mentioned it clarifies whether the objectives have been accomplished or not (Lawrence and Lawrence, 2011).

Many decades ago the studies of attitudes have been examined in different languages. Also Kansikas mentioned that there are many views regarding language attitudes, at the present time the most common view is an integration of 10 older opinions. This theory proposes that attitude towards altered languages is not stable nevertheless always varying and therefore there is no specific determination regarding attitudes towards learning language (Samson, 2012).

#### **Aspects of Language Attitude**

According to Kara (2009), learning process is considered as a positive amendment in the person's personality regarding the cognitive behavioural and emotional attitude, meanwhile when an individual has learned a particular matter, therefore, an individual starts to behave and think in various ways and person's belief has been distinguished. Moreover, beside cognitive method, the learning process also has psychological and social aspects (Youssef, 2012).

Wenden (1991) states that attitude comprises three components; the first component is about the attitudes related to the cognitive component. This might include perception /belief regarding the situation or an object connected to the attitude. The second component is the evaluative component. This indicates that the situation/object connected to the attitude might produce dislike/like. The third component is related to the attitudes that have a behavioural component for instance; specific attitude tends to motivate students' to accept

specific learning behaviours (Soleimani and Hanafi, 2013).

#### **Cognitive Attitude**

This aspect contains the belief of the language learners in terms of the information that they can gain and their sympathetic in the process of language learning. The cognitive aspect could be categorized into four phases of linking the earlier information and the new information, producing new information, examining new information, and implementing the new information in different circumstances (Gajalakshmi, 2013).

#### **Behavioural Aspect of Attitude**

The behavioural aspect determines the way an individual reacts and behaves in specific circumstances. In detail, the effective language learning improves the students to recognize themselves with the native Kurdish speakers and adopt or obtain numerous features of behaviours which describe the participants of the aimed language community. Kara (2009) proved that, an individual with positive attitude will result with the demonstration of positive behaviour towards learning new language. Such individuals are perceived to be extra enthusiastic problem solving, to obtain the knowledge and competencies valuable for day to day life and to motivate emotionally (Gajalakshmi, 2013).

#### **Emotional Aspect of Attitude**

Chen and Feng (2009) argued that, Learning process consider as an emotional process. Usually it effect by several emotional elements. Choy & Troudi (2006), the education provider and his students involve in numerous emotional actions in it and diverse fruits of emotions are yield. Attitude could assist the students to show their feeling whether they dislike/like the matters or circumstances. It has been agreed that the internal emotion and feeling of learning new language affect their viewpoints and their attitude towards the aimed language (Gajalakshmi, 2013).

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this research is to investigate student's attitudes towards learning Kurdish language. The purposes of methodology are to explain research methodology, clarify the procedures that used in this research, define the measurements used in planning the instrument, explain data collection, and to provide a clear clarification of the statistical method used in order to analyse data. A quantitative method used in order to analyse data gathered by the researcher. The researcher used a questionnaire to obtain data about the learners' attitudes and analyse them. 112 students from different universities in Duhok participated in this study.

**Findings**

Table.1: Factor analysis

Factor	Questions	Factor loading%	Number of items
Cognitive	My teacher teaches me how to write standard Kurdish	.912	3
	My teacher engages us in dialogues for the practice of speaking skills.	.904	
	I prefer to be taught only in Kurdish	.482	
Behavioural	I prefer to learn Kurdish to carry my tasks more efficiently	.274	3
	I prefer Kurdish language than other languages	.882	
	I prefer Kurdish subject than other subjects	.900	
Emotional	I improve my reading skills by reading Kurdish newspapers or magazines	.652	4
	I improve my Kurdish skills by watching Kurdish movies or series	.506	
	I improve my listening skills by listening to Kurdish Radio	.863	
	I cannot memorize Kurdish words	.604	

Extraction Method:Principal Component Analysis

Factor analysis determines essential variables that clarify the outline of associations within a set of perceived variables. Factor analysis is frequently used in reducing data to classify a small number of variables that clarify

most of the variance perceived in greater number of visible variables. Table (1) indicates that the cognitive factor has three items, behavioural factor also has three items and emotional factor has four items.

Table.2: Correlational analysis

		Cognitive	Behavioural	Emotional
Cognitive	Pearson Correlation	1	5.59**	6.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	112	112	112
Behavioural	Pearson Correlation	5.59**	1	.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	138	138	138
Emotional	Pearson Correlation	6.32**	.336**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	112	112	112

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 2,the correlational analysis presents the values of the identified correlation tests. The strength of the relationship between variables is determined by the correlational analysis. According to the correlation test, the cognitive factor has positive correlation ( $r=.5.59^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) with the behavioural factor. The positive linear relationship between cognitive and behaviours is moderately strong. The cognitive factor has a negative

correlation ( $r=.6.32^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) with the Emotional. The positive linear relationship between cognitive and Emotional factors is moderately strong. The behavioural factor has a negative correlation ( $r=-.336^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) with the Emotional. The negative linear relationship between the Emotional and behavioural factors is moderately strong.

Table.3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	Constant	0.89	.116		.826	.57
	Emotional	.656	.001	.678	27.592	.000
	Behavioural	.887	.12	.892	26.574	.000
	Cognitive	.745	.012	.778	23.256	.000
Dependent variable: attitudes						

Multiple regression analysis used in this study, as seen in table (3), the coefficients analysis shows the B value for emotional attitude = .656 > 0.01, which supported the first research hypothesis, the B value for behavioral attitude = .887 > 0.01, which supported the second research hypothesis and the B value for cognitive = .745 > 0.01, which supported the third research hypothesis.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Many students have negative attitudes towards Kurdish. This indicates that students are not aware of the significance of the Kurdish language. 'Attitude' is considered as a necessary factor in language learning. Therefore, it is important to create a positive atmosphere in Kurdish classes to develop positive attitude in learners. University lecturers should take account of the beliefs, feelings and behaviours of the learners of Kurdish. Students' attitudes significantly vary with respect to their gender and the years of language education that they have had. This evidently emphasizes the need for particular attention in this area. Based on the statistical results, the researcher came to the conclusion that current students have negative attitude towards the learning Kurdish language, therefore the first hypothesis is supported. Multiple regression analysis used in this study, as seen in table (3), the coefficients analysis shows the B value for emotional attitude = .656 > 0.01, which supported the first research hypothesis, the B value for behavioral attitude = .887 > 0.01, which supported the second research hypothesis and the B value for cognitive = .745 > 0.01, which supported the third research hypothesis.

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