



**Association for the human rights
of the Azerbaijani people in Iran**

Deprivation from Learning Mother Tongue and Its Effects on Azerbaijani Turk Children in Iran

Duman S. Radmehr, Azra Azari
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About AHRAZ

Association for the human rights of the Azerbaijani people in Iran (AHRAZ) concentrates on minorities' human rights situation, especially Azerbaijani Turks in Iran. Considering the fact that AHRAZ has a precise knowledge about Azerbaijani Turks in Iran, this group is missioned to monitor and improve the human rights situation considering the rights based on identity, religion, labor, gender and children rights.

Azerbaijani Turk people are the biggest minority in Iran. They speak Azerbaijani Turkish and mostly live in north-west of Iran. Regarding the difference between Azerbaijanis and official-state culture which is Farsi (Persian), the government's policies almost always have been discriminational and intended to assimilate Azerbaijani culture. This in turn has doubled pressure on Azerbaijani women and labors more than those who belong to the major culture.

As a result of this discrimination the new Azerbaijani generation focused their activities on demanding education in mother language, women and workers' rights, establishing party and peaceful demonstration, and environmental activities. However, Iranian government have always responded to this activities with violence, detention, torture, long term imprisonment, and even murdering.

AHRAZ founders themselves who are victims of the suppression applied by Islamic Republic have witnessed the effect of the international human rights organizations support. Therefore, they established this non-political association intending to reflect the human rights situation in the region in order to attain the support of international human rights organizations and institutes all over the world. AHRAZ believes that despite this group's local approach to deal with human rights issues, its success requires support of global organizations as well as their collaboration. To this end, in addition to its local human right activities, AHRAZ also is intending to reinforce the communication between the international supporters and local activists.

It worth mentioning that in addition to systematic violation of minorities and individuals rights by government and semi-government groups, ordinary people belong to dominant ethnic group also violate those rights as well. For this reason, we as AHRAZ believe that informing people about their rights and responsibilities is the most effective tool to improve the situation of human rights. By establishing a network between like-minded activists, AHRAZ follows this goal. This network fulfils the duty of monitoring and reporting the violations of human rights as well.

AHRAZ is an independent and non-governmental foundation established in 2014. The official registration of the foundation is under process. AHRAZ members are present in Europe and North America and collaborating with varied human rights organizations and foundations.

AHRAZ Board, 2014

Contacts:

Duman S. Radmehr
AHRAZ Board member
Email: dsavalan@gmail.com
Tel: 0046739488869

Azra Azari
AHRAZ Board member
Email: azeriazra@gmail.com
Tel: 0046769488220

www.ahraz.org



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Note! In this document the terms of “Azerbaijan” refers to the region of Azerbaijan inside Iran and **NOT** the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani people in Iran mostly recognize themselves as “Turk” and their language as “Turkish or Azerbaijani Turkish”. Thus, in this report the terms of “Azerbaijani”, “Azerbaijani Turk”, “Azeri Turk” and “Turk” are the same and refer to the indigenous people of the region inside Iran and **NOT** The Republic of Azerbaijani or Turkey.

1. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Convention on the Right of the Child emphasizes the right of children of ethnic minorities to learning their native language, ethnic art and culture as well as participating in recreation [of these art forms]. In 1991, the Islamic Republic of Iran signed and in 1994 the Islamic Consultative Assembly ratified that international convention, under the condition that its sections do not contradict the Islamic legal code and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Constitution only recognizes Persian (Farsi) as the official language [of Iran] and does not mention other languages of Iranian ethnic minorities such as Azerbaijani Turkish. However, the constitution grants freedom to practice languages of ethnic minority origin, specifically referring to them as “regional and tribal languages.” Thus, from the point of view of compliance with the Iranian legal code, the implementation of the articles of the convention- which are about the states’ commitment to teach minorities’ children their mother language- is legal. Despite of this fact, not only Iran regime does not keep his commitment to teach the Azerbaijani Turk children their mother tongue but also in different ways it prevents the activists and non-governmental organization to practice this right. Consequently, Iran regime, as a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be held accountable.

Azerbaijani Turks and Persian-speaking people make up the majority of the population of Iran. Although there are no official figures for Iran's ethnic population, according to the statements made by the officials of the Islamic Republic 40% of the population of Iran speaks (Azerbaijani) Turkish. Therefore, there are about nine million children whose mother language is (Azerbaijani) Turkish. Even though the article 15 of the Iranian Constitution declares that teach language of other ethnic minorities is legal, to this day no effort has been made to implement this law. In reality, the central government continues the policies of the former regime regarding “Persianization” and denying the ethnic identity of Turkish-speaking minorities and continues the systematic policy to assimilate Turkish children. Research and statistics show that depriving Azerbaijani children from learning their mother language causes high illiteracy rates, decline in academic performance, and a sense of humiliation and alienation of those children. Since the 1990s, when the Azerbaijani’s desire for distinguishing their identity was demonstrated through increased emphasis on learning Azerbaijani Turkish, the government of the Islamic Republic has confronted this minority group with arrests and police brutality. Every year dozens of Azerbaijani youth are arrested at special gatherings such as the International Mother Language Day, charged with "separatism" and are sentenced to long prison terms. Although in his campaign, the new president of Iran Hassan Rohani, acknowledged and promised to implement the right to receiving education in native language for the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current statements of government officials has destroyed all hope of government’s actions towards this goal.

Regarding the facts and investigations on the Azerbaijani children's privation of the right to acquire and using of their language and culture, which is summarized in this report, the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ) requests that the United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child hold the Iranian government responsible to implement the following:

- Teaching Azerbaijani Turkish language and literature in schools in the provinces where the Azerbaijani Turkish is the native language.
- Provide the conditions that non-governmental organizations and educational institutions can freely teach the Azerbaijani Turkish language.
- Freeing Azerbaijani civil society activists who were arrested and imprisoned for demanding the right to receive education in their native language.
- Establishing the Azerbaijani Turkish Language Institute to preserve this language and also to provide the educational books for children in this language.
- Broadcasting TV programs for children and adolescents in Azerbaijani Turkish language.
- Implementing positive discrimination in governmental facilities and providing subsidies for publishing children's books and publications in Azerbaijani Turkish language.
- Removing ban on using Turkish names for public places.
- Removing ban on choosing Turkish names for children.
- Reviewing the current educational (school) textbooks in order to remove contents offensive to Turks.

2. Introduction and background

The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) prohibits any discrimination against children and obliges the governments to guarantee the rights of children belonging to ethnic, religious and lingual minorities to learn and practice their culture. In articles 17, 20, 29 and 30, the CRC insists upon member's duty to attend to the needs and rights of children of ethnic minorities to learning their languages, culture, literature and arts and specifically emphasizes respecting and granting freedom of communication and cultural expressions in the media. In its general comments No. 17, the Committee on the Rights of the Child insists that the necessary time and expertise should be expended so that minority children acquire, participate in and recreate their culture and arts such as music, dramatic arts, literature, poetry and fine arts as well as [cultural] sports and games.

The Islamic Republic of Iran signed the Convention in 1991 and the Islamic Consultative Assembly ratified the Convention after adding a condition. The aforementioned condition states that "if the articles of the CRC is inconsistent with the provisions of Islamic legal code and Islamic Sharia, the Islamic Republic will not observe it"¹. The right of non-Persian children to learn their mother tongue is one of the most important cases which seemingly no legal ban exists for exercising it. But instead, unwritten laws that usually originate from nationalistic policies and religious views of the Iranian regime hinder

¹ " Children's Rights: Iran". Library of Congress. 4 April 2011. Retrieved 28 May 2012 .[link](#):

the implementation of these laws and civil activists who demand the enforcement of these laws are pursued and severely prosecuted. Compared with Persian speaking children, the children of these minority groups are not only discriminated against with regards to access to welfare services (e.g. economic, social and cultural), they are generally deprived of fundamental rights such as the right to learning their native language. This report delineates the result of academic research on the extent and consequence of privation of Azerbaijani children of the right to learn their native language.

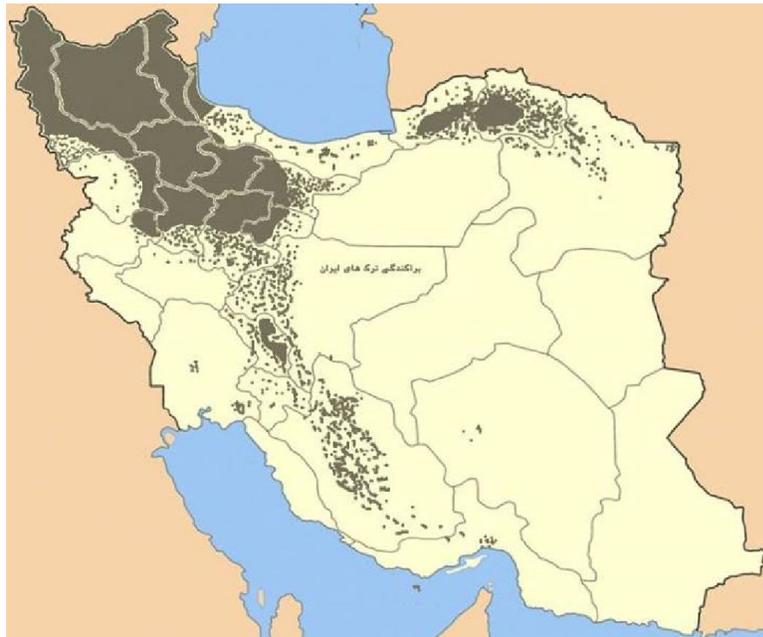
3. Children of Azerbaijani Turks in Iran

Iran's population of over 75 million people comprises various ethnic minority groups. Turkish (Azerbaijani), Persians, Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs and Turkaman minorities have been living together in this country for centuries. The Iranian Turks include Azerbaijani Turks living in the North West and the center of Iran in provinces of Eastern Azerbaijan, Western Azerbaijan, Ardebil, Zanjan, Qazvin, Tehran, Alborz, Tehran, Qom, Markazi, Gilan, Kermanshah and Kurdistan; Khalaj Turks in central Iran; Qashqai Turks in the central and south of Iran and south; and Khorasani Turks in the East of Iran (Figure 1). No official statistics exists that shows the population of ethnic minorities of Iran, or none has been published. Furthermore, dispersion and migration of Azerbaijani Turkish speakers to different areas has made it difficult to calculate their population. Still, careful observation of the claims made by the Islamic Republic authorities has provided reasonable estimates for the population of Azerbaijani Turks and Turkish speaking children in Iran. The former minister of education announced the statistics of (non-Farsi speaking) bilingual children as seventy percent² and the former Foreign Minister announced the Azerbaijani Turkish speaking population as forty percent³ of the total population of Iran. Therefore, according to these figures approximately 40% of the population of total children in Iran is of Azerbaijani Turkish descent. According to the information provided by the Statistical Centre of Iran on the age of the Iranian population and considering that by the Convention on the Right of the Child a person is considered a minor until the age of eighteen, the population of children in Iran in the year 1390 (2011) was more than 24 million⁴, which would bring the population of Azerbaijani Turkish children (40% of total population) to more than nine million in that year.

² Iran's Minister of Education Mr. Hamid Reza Babaie: "Seventy percent of the total student in the country are bilingual and after the first year in school their mother tongue does not change to Farsi (Persian)", Fars News Agency, 15 December 2009,. [Link in Persian](#)

³ Iran's Foreign Ex-Minister Mr. Ali Akbar Salehi: "Forty percent of Iran's population speaks Turkish and this is a big link between Turkey and Iran", Interview with the journalist in Turkey, January 2012. [Video Link](#).

⁴ The age distribution of the population in Iran, Official data from the Iranian governmental organization of "Statistical Center of Iran", 2010 . [Link in Persian](#).



Distribution of Turk-speaking population in Iran

In the history of this geographic area, Turkish language has been a major language of the residents of the region alongside Persian and Arabic languages. Traditionally, Turkish has been taught in traditional educational institutions and seminaries. In 1894, the year new schools and modern education system were established in Iran, subjects were taught in Turkish⁵. After the coup of 1921 and the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi who believed in the “One nation, one language” (Unified nation, unified language) policy, Persian (Farsi) was chosen as the only official language and using Turkish language was banned. In that era, a student would have been fined for speaking Turkish in school. After the Azerbaijani government was established in 1945, Turkish was once again taught in academic institutions in Azerbaijan. However, in 1946 with the occupation of Azerbaijan by the **Iranian Army**, teaching Azerbaijani Turkish language was banned again and educational books printed by the national government were burned on December 17, 1946⁶. Although the Revolution of 1979 brought the expectation of improved minority rights and in particular the hope of teaching Turkish language, particularly at its onset, the newly established Islamic Republic suppressed protests of various ethnic groups and has never taken action towards this goal.

4. Islamic Republic’s Laws Regarding the Language and Culture of Ethnic Minorities

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran only recognizes Persian (Farsi) as the official language. As a result, discrimination against the speakers of other ethnic languages has been institutionalized. The constitution does not mention the name or language of ethnic minorities such as (Azerbaijani) Turks,

⁵ “Introduction to the History of the Education in Azerbaijani Turkish language in Iran”, Shiva Farahmand, Stockholm 2013. [Link in Persian](#)

⁶ “Strange Lands and friendly people”, William O. Douglas, ISBN 1-4067-7204-6, 1950s

Kurds, etc., hence directly disregards their legitimacy and refers to them as “regional and tribal,” an expression with a negative connotation in the Persian language. Nevertheless, it does not legally ban instruction of native language. The fifteenth article of the Constitution states, "Persian (Farsi) is the official language and the script of Iranian people. Documents, correspondences, official texts and textbooks should be in this language and script. However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, and the instruction of their literature in school alongside Persian is allowed." Article nineteenth of the Iranian constitution states that, “The people of Iran enjoy equal rights regardless of their ethnicity or tribe; Race, skin color, language, and the like will not cause favoritism.”

In other words, implementing the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child about his or her language and culture, does not contradict the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, in practice, the right of Turk children to learn their native language, literature, culture and art are violated in various forms.

5. Islamic Republic of Iran’s Policy towards Learning Native Languages

The laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran strictly stress the importance and development of the Persian (Farsi) language and only ambiguously refer to the rights of other languages. Private publications and institutions that work on Azerbaijani language, culture and art are under severe pressure by security organizations and in many cases face license cancelations.⁷ Obtaining license for books written in Azerbaijani Turkish language is difficult and under the supervision of security agencies.⁸ The ban on using Turkish names in public places⁹, strict regulations against naming children Turkish names,¹⁰ changing Turkish names of the geographic area to Persian names,¹¹ banning children’s Turkish language

⁷ As one of the tens examples, in 2006 the journal of “Dilmaj” which had been published monthly in the culture and social issues of Turkish people in Iran faced license cancelation without being informed the reason. “Dilmaj, the school which was closed”, Ali Jamali, Radiozamani, 2007. [The link in Persian](#)

⁸ As an example, Ms. Sharifeh Jafari, the owner for the publication company of “Pinar, who has been active in publishing of Turkish books in Iran, has been threaten several time by Iranian security forces and had to flee from the country. “The Sad Story of the Turk Publishers in Iran”, Sharife Jafari, Iranwire, 2014. [The Link in Persian](#).

⁹ The governmental department for Islamic Culture and Guidance in BouShehr province has issued a directive in 2013 ordering that to protect the language of Farsi (Persian) it was forbidden to name the business and public place in other languages including Turkish. “Ban on using Turkish words to name public name”, Oyannews news agency, 2013. [The link in Persian](#).

¹⁰ For just one example, Mr. Firouz Yousefi has been denied to name his child “Alp Orhan” because it is Turkish and not Persian. His struggle is still continuing to submit his son’s name. “Refusing to submit the name for a child”, Hra-News, September 2014. [The link in Persian](#).

¹¹ The weekly journal of “Navid Azerbaijan” has collected more than 500 geografuc name which has been changed from Turkish to Farsi (Persian) during last 70 years. “Changing of the geographic names of Azerbaijan 1937-2006”, Navid Azerbaijan, December 2013. [The link in Persian](#).

TV programs from broadcasting on regional channels,¹² humiliating Turks in official media,¹³ publishing material offensive to Turks and misrepresenting their history in textbooks,¹⁴ and implementing economic discrimination against the Azerbaijan region that has resulted in widespread immigrations¹⁵ are examples of Iranian regime's policies implemented in the Azerbaijan region. In addition to not following the CRC, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not fulfilled its duties to uphold the cultural rights of children. Instead, it actively and severely punishes cultural activists of Azerbaijan. Among the alleged charges that security officials of the Islamic Republic have used to arrest and indict civil rights activists who have been sentenced to long prison terms in courts are "Propaganda against the regime" and "acting against national security." Since 1990s, the "national movement of Azerbaijan," a movement proclaiming national rights of Azerbaijani Turks, has formed in Iran. Their primary demand is establishing schools where the language of instruction is Turkish. Turkish language schools and ethnic dance and national Azerbaijani music classes that are taught underground in the homes of activists are raided by government agents and result in arrests on charge of "separatism"¹⁶. Since 1999, Azerbaijani activists celebrate February 21st, UNESCO's the International Mother Language Day, with ceremonies and street demonstrations. Every year on this day, the majority of cities in Azerbaijan experience heightened security conditions that result in detentions and violent police repressions¹⁷. During the Islamic Republic regime, officials have always attempted to reject the public demand for providing education in mother language by denying the arrests and indictments. Among the prisoners of activism for Turkish cultural rights is Said Matinpour (photo below), an Azerbaijani journalist sentenced to eight years of prison who is currently serving the fifth year of his prison term in Evin prison. He was charged with "propaganda against the regime" and "communicating with foreigners."¹⁸

¹² Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting banned the regional (also governmental) channel from having program in Turkish for children. Hra-News, May 2010. [The link in Persian.](#)

¹³ As one of the hundreds examples, after publishing of an insulting carton against Turks in Iran Governmental newspaper of "Iran", in 26 may 2006 hundred thousands of Azerbaijani Turk held demonstration to protest it. By police brutality tens of demonstrators died during two weeks protest in different cities. For more information look [here.](#)

¹⁴ As an example, In the school book of Persian literature for the student at grade six, the language for the inhabitant in city of Tabriz which is the largest Turk city in Iran has been introduced as Farsi. The Lesson has been removed from the book after the Turk teachers protested it. Khabar-online agency, February 2013. [The link in Persian.](#)

¹⁵ The manager for the The National Organization for Civil Registration in East Azerbaijan Province, Mr. Ali Jafari: "East Azerbaijan has had the largest number of migrants in country. During last two years 2.5 million has migrated from the province." Mehr News Agency, November 2013. [The link in Persian.](#)

¹⁶ As an example, the Azerbaijani singer Mr. Abbas Nikravan and his music band were raided by Iran police on their performance and after being bitten were arrested. Oyannews news agency, September 2014. [The link in Persian.](#)

¹⁷ "Arresting Waves on the Eve of International Mother Language Day", February 2014, Oyannews agency. [The Link.](#)

¹⁸ The webpage about Said Matinour. [The link.](#)



Said Matinpour, a jailed Turkish cultural rights activist

In addition to systematically preventing the formation of classes with teaching licenses, authorities of the Islamic Republic have repeatedly claimed that Turkish speakers are not interested in learning their language. In the last presidential election, for the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Rohani admitted the Azerbaijani's widespread demand for receiving their education in their mother language.¹⁹ However, after his election to presidency, his special deputy to minority affairs claimed that Azerbaijani Turks are not interested in learning their native language.²⁰

6. Lack of Availability of Education in Mother Language and its Effects on Azerbaijani Children

Since the Iranian Constitution does not mention ethnic minority groups, and the statistics on the population of these minorities is not published, conducting academic research on national minorities in Iran also faces challenges. Moreover, the importance of receiving education in one's native language and the depth of its impact on a child's life is a complex topic and assessing its various consequences is difficult. Language is not only the most important tool for connecting a child to the outside world, but it is also a power tool in interpersonal and social relationships. Depriving a child from access to his or her native language is in fact depriving the child from the most important tool for having power in social

¹⁹ The speech of Mr. Hasan Rohani in Tabriz during his presidential campaign in which he promised to take action to provide education in Azerbaijani Turkish and also to establish the institute for this language. 2013. [Video Link](#).

²⁰ The Iran's special deputy president to minorities affair, Mr. Ali Younesi: "Education in mother tongue is not a public of the minorities' people. March 2014. Mehr News Agency. [The link in Persian](#).

life and interpersonal relationships. Nowadays, researchers believe that in bilingual children, consequences [of these deprivations] can surface in the form of feelings of humiliation, delayed speech in language development in toddlers, lisp, and alienation from self and others.²¹

"Mother language and Azerbaijani Turkish children" has been the subject of many academic studies. Below is the summary of the results from three examples. The researches mentioned below are important because they investigate some of the consequences of depriving Azerbaijani children from being educated in their mother language such as its impact on other dimensions of their personality and social life.

6.1 First Study: Investigating Educational Issues of Bilingual Children in Eastern Azerbaijan

Ms. Solmaz Modarres, graduate of the Faculty of Linguistics at Allameh Tabatabai University in Tehran in 1993, researched "Educational issues of Bilingual Children in East Azerbaijan"²² for her Master's thesis.²³ In order to compare Turkish children with Persian children (or you can say children of Turkish parents/children of Persian parents) in Iran, she selected 24 schools. This selection contained 12 schools in Tehran (the capital) and the surrounding villages and 12 schools in Tabriz (the city with the largest Turkish population) and the surrounding villages. Also, as noted in the following table, half of the schools are all-boys schools and half all-girls schools. Also, half are located in rural and half in urban areas.

Table 1. Distribution of selected schools for the first study

	Tehran		Tabriz		Total
	City	Villages	City	Villages	
All-Girls Schools	3	3	3	3	12
All-Boys Schools	3	3	3	3	12
Total number of Schools in Region	6	6	6	6	24
Total number of Schools in Area	12		12		

²¹ "Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?" Jim Cummins, University of Toronto, 2001. [The link](#).

²² "Educational issues of Bilingual Children in East Azerbaijan", Solmaz Modarres, 2004, Dilmaj 4 pp 31-41.

²³ "The policy of the education in non- mother tongue language and the academic failure in Children", Alireza Sarrafi, 2000.

She randomly chose files of 10 first graders, and after checking and copying information from their records, she returned to all of the schools in the third trimester before the exams and gave the same test to all of the students in subjects of dictation, Persian (Farsi) reading comprehension, science and mathematics. She subsequently gathered results for comparison and obtaining final conclusions.

Her thesis includes lengthy explanations including charts, graphs, sample of the exam questions and obtained answers. Here is a brief summary of her thesis' main findings:

1. In Persian dictation exam, Turkish speaking students had on average 7, when Persian speaking students had 1.5 mistakes.

2. Among all the exams, Azerbaijanis received the highest grades in mathematics, while children from Tehran obtained the best score in Persian reading comprehension. The reason is obvious; mathematics does not require language abilities, but scientific skills. Therefore, Azerbaijanis have less difficulty with mathematics.

3. In the villages, 14 (out of 20) is the grade point average of Persian speaking students whose both parents are illiterate. However, the grade point average of Turkish speaking students whose both parents are literate is 10 (out of 20).

4. The average grade point average of Persian-speaking children in these tests was 15, while it was 8.5 for Turkish-speaking children.

Ms. Modarres creates an interesting experiment for testing the subject of science. She asks a group of Azerbaijani students some questions in Persian (Farsi) and asks them to answer the questions in Persian (Farsi). She asks the same questions from the other group in their native language, and asks them to respond in their native language. In the first scenario, the average grade was 9 and in the second the average grade was 16.

At the end of her thesis she recommends that elementary education be taught in a child's mother tongue and secondary and higher levels in Persian (Farsi).

6.2 Second Study: Bilingualism and Diglossia in Turkish Speakers of Iran

For his doctoral thesis from Sorbonne University (2003), Mr. Sonel Bosnali²⁴ investigated bilingualism and diglossia²⁵ in Iranian Turkish speakers who have been educated in a language other than their mother tongue, and have had to write and speak Persian²⁶.

He picked Tehran (the capital) and Salmas (a town in the province of Western Azerbaijan with majority

²⁴ Webpage for Dr. Sonel Bosnali. [the link](#).

²⁵ "Diglossia as a Sociolinguistic Situation", Harold F. Schiffman, South Asian Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2012, [Link](#)

²⁶ "Bilingualism and Diglossia in Iranian Turkish Speakers", Hasan Rashedi, 2000.

Turkish population) as two sample cities for his research and studied the use of Turkish language in these two cities. According to Mr. Bosnali the cities of Tehran and Salmas were chosen because in Tehran, Turkish language is spoken alongside Persian (Farsi) and other traditional Iranian languages, and that other language such as Armenian and Kurdish [are also spoken] in Salmas.

In Tehran, Mr. Bosnali picked randomly 555 people (the relative sampling of 1/10000) and in Salmas 36 people (the relative sampling of 2/1000. In Tehran, he asked his questions of the bilingual Turkish speakers who:

- A. had Turkish speaking parents and were born in Tehran
- B. had one Turkish speaking parents
- C. were Turkish speakers who have been living in Tehran for a long time.

No selective criteria were used in Salmas.

In Tehran, he surveyed three social classes (upper middle class in the north of Tehran), middle class (center of the city of Tehran) and lower class (south of Tehran).

Respondents in Tehran and Salmas referred to Turkish language as follows:

In Tehran: Azerbaijani Turkish, Azeri Turkish, Azeri, Turkish

In Salmas: Azerbaijani Turkish, Azeri Turkish, Azeri, Turkish, Ajami

(Ajami is a name that some Kurdish people use to refer to Turkish language.)

In Salmas, 86% of the respondents considered Turkish their native language and the remaining 14% who had non-Turkish speaking parents considered another language their native language.

In Tehran, among the 146 respondents with at least one Turkish parent, 74% considered Turkish their native language. Of the remaining 26%, 21% considered Persian (Farsi) and 4% considered Gilaki, Taleshi or Lori their native language. The people with at least one Persian (Farsi) speaking parent considered their native language Persian (Farsi). However, 2% considered their native language Turkish even without having Turkish parents.

Following is the table of responses to the question: Where do you speak Turkish? Note its social significance [to the respondent] from least important to most important:

Table 2. Respondents Answer to the Question: Where do you speak Turkish?

	Home	Neighborhood	Market	School	Office	Everywhere
Salmâs	74%	91%	88%	86%	70%	75%
Tehran	81%	49%	48%	33%	28%	26%

In this context, "school" means academic environment, since all of the respondents responded "no" to the question about whether they spoke Turkish in the classroom.

Of the respondents in Tehran, 29% only speak Turkish at home and 26% speak it everywhere. However, 10% do not speak Turkish and 3% stated that they speak Turkish when necessary or everywhere only if everyone is Turkish speaking.

Only one of the respondents in Salmas positively responded to the question, 'Do you only speak Turkish at home?'

According to the provided statistics of the two sample cities of Tehran and Salmas, Turkish language is mostly used in the home environment. Considering the significance of public places in social interactions among new generations in Tehran, the number of people who use Turkish outside of home environment has decreased. In Tehran, most respondents considered their home the proper place for speaking Turkish and do not use this language in public places. Some even refuse to use it in official and formal settings.

According to Mr. Bosnali, although "Bilingualism or Diglossia" is very evident in Tehran, diglossia, or refusing to speak mother language, does not exist among the Turkish speakers in Salmas.

In Salmas, more people speak Turkish in public places than at home, which could mean that other ethnic language speakers, such as Kurdish speakers also speak Turkish in public places in Salmas.

In Salmas, use of Turkish language relatively declines only in the authorities' places. The statistics obtained from Salmas shows that Turkish language has a higher social status in Salmas, and this status declines in Tehran to the extent that some actively refuse to speak Turkish anywhere [in Tehran]. The following conclusions can be drawn from Mr. Bosnali's research:

Of the bilingual children of Tehran, 29% only speak Turkish at home and refuse to speak it outside the home environment. 10% do not speak Turkish at all. These statistics demonstrate the sense of inferiority of the 39% of Turkish speaking children who cannot bear insults and humiliations directed at their native language, and by assimilating and refusing to speak their native language outside of home, even with people who don't speak Persian (Farsi), use Persian (Farsi) language as a refuge. Furthermore, 70% of children of Turkish parents considered Persian (Farsi) their mother tongue which demonstrates their sense of insecurity associated with having a Turkish identity [that makes them] assume a Persian identity instead.

Although no comment can be made regarding the existence of diglossia in Salmas, only 74% of the 86% of the people who declared Turkish as their mother language speak Turkish at home [in that city]. This means that the remaining 12% of these families, influenced by TV and radio advertisements, journals and other Persian (Farsi) speaking media, have assimilated and began speaking Persian (Farsi) to their children at home as a result of psychological pressure. This shows that in Tehran social assimilation happens at home and outside, but in Salmas it starts at home!

6.3 Third study: Comparing Literacy Rates in Provinces with Majority Turkish Speakers and Those with Majority Persian (Farsi) Speakers

Statistical Center of Iran published the latest statistics on literacy rates in various provinces of Iran in 2006²⁷. The table below demonstrates literacy rates (ability to read and write Persian) four cities with majority Turkish and four with majority Persian (Farsi) speakers.

Table 3. Literacy Rates in Azerbaijan Provinces according to the Latest Census Gathered by the Statistical Center of Iran in 2006

Name of Province	Literacy Rate	National Ranking
Provinces with Majority Persian Speaking Population		
Tehran	83.73%	1
Semnan	80.34%	2
Isfahan	80.08%	3
Fars	78.89%	4
Provinces with Majority Turkish Speaking Population		
Eastern Azerbaijan	73.98%	17
Zanjan	73.82%	19
Ardebil	72.40%	24
Western Azerbaijan	69.56%	29

Noting the rate of literacy in Turkish speaking provinces and comparing it to that of Persian speaking provinces that are ranked among the first [in the nation], it is evident that the population of Persian (Farsi) speakers who can read and write is approximately 10% more than the literate Turkish speaking population. Undoubtedly, lack of receiving education in native language in Turkish speaking provinces (in addition to the lack of necessary provisions) has reduced the desire to attend to school and learn to read and write.

²⁷ Official data from the Iranian governmental organization of “Statistical Center of Iran”, 2006 . [Link in Persian](#)