

**Attitudes of Different Afghan Immigration Generations Towards the Dutch and Afghan  
Languages and Cultures**

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## Abstract

Afghans are a minority group in the Netherlands whose linguistic and cultural attitudes have not been studied extensively. Therefore, this thesis' aim is to fill this research gap by investigating how first- and second-generation Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands perceive their own mother tongue and ethnic culture, and how they perceive the Dutch language and culture. A survey with closed and open questions was conducted, and 51 participants from six different immigration generations answered it. The results demonstrated that most participants have better Dutch language abilities than Afghan abilities, and they use Dutch more often in most social contexts. Moreover, the results demonstrate that both languages are perceived as intellectual, friendly, formal, and modern, but Dutch is reported to sound more direct, whereas Afghan is reported to sound more poetic. Additionally, the Afghan culture is perceived as collectivistic, traditional, and hospitable, whereas the Dutch culture is seen as individualistic, secular, and direct. Also, despite most participants having poorer Afghan language abilities they still identify themselves more as an Afghan person than a Dutch person. The study creates an initial image of the different attitudes that Afghan immigrants from different generations have about their Afghan and Dutch languages and cultures.

*Keywords:* Afghanistan; Afghan; Dari; The Netherlands; Dutch; language attitudes; cultural attitudes; immigration generations

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## 1. Introduction

The Netherlands is a very multiethnic country as about 26% of the country has a non-Dutch background, which includes immigrants; and those who were born inside of the Netherlands but had one or both parents who were born abroad (CBS, 2023). A small proportion of these people have an Afghan background, and they are considered a minority group in the country as there are approximately 55,000 people with this ethnicity (AlleCijfers.nl, 2024). The first wave of Afghan immigrants arrived in the Netherlands during the early 1990s as refugees because they wished to escape the takeover of the Taliban during that time, so people were fleeing the country and seeking asylum in safer countries. Over time many ethnic Afghans were also born in the Netherlands, and there have been several other immigration waves from Afghans. The most recent one was in 2021/2022 when the Taliban re-took the country again.

The language and culture from Afghanistan and the Netherlands vary significantly, and it is interesting to observe the cross cultural -communication and -behaviour in the community but also in individuals. For example, there are evident distinctions in the ways that adults who moved to the Netherlands and children who were born there handle their identities and lives. Additionally, there are also differences when people immigrate to the Netherlands during their childhoods compared to the previous two groups. For instance, Afghans who started living in the Netherlands since the 1990s have now lived in the Netherlands for approximately 3 decades, hence all of them have integrated into Dutch society to a significant extent. According to Hessels (2004) many Afghans are living between two worlds, but they are leaning more towards their Western Dutch culture because they know that they need to integrate into Dutch society to live a better life. Therefore, Rambout (2004) created different immigration generations to differentiate

at what age people immigrated and how their ages would impact their integration into the new host country. This part is explained in more detail in the next section.

The national language of the Netherlands is Dutch, and Frisian is the co-official minority language. But the country is very multilingual, as all people at school are taught two or more languages, and often these are other European languages such as English, French, German, or Latin. Similarly, Afghanistan is also a very multilingual country as several languages are spoken in the country such as Dari, Pashto, Uzbeki, Hazaragi, Turkmen etc. (Ethnologue, 2024). The national languages of the country are Dari and Pashto. Exposure to diverse languages frequently leads to an appreciation for their existence and, consequently, an awareness and understanding of the attitudes that people have towards them. It is especially interesting to discover how different immigration generations perceive the same language because it shows the differences and the evolution of language attitudes. Furthermore, as Afghan is a heritage language in this instance and is primarily taught to younger generations through families, the views of the parents towards language may also have an impact on the attitudes of their children. (Li et al. 1997; Luykx 2005; McEwan-Fujita 2010 as cited in Liang, 2015). Moreover, it is also important to study language attitudes because they reflect the attitudes towards the speakers of these languages, and the social implications about the language can become clearer such as any societal stereotypes and biases. Furthermore, language is closely tied to culture and identity, therefore cultural attitudes are also important to investigate. Cultural attitudes are important because they can demonstrate the influence of culture on social dynamics such as relationships and interactions. Similarly, it also influences a person's identity significantly on an individual but also group level. Additionally, understanding cultural attitudes can help with intercultural communication.

This topic of this thesis is uncommon as there are few academic sources that have researched Afghans in the Netherlands. There are sources on Pashto that have been published but only physically a few decades ago in English and there are not many digital sources on them. Also, there has been less recent research done on Dari and its language attitudes that have been published digitally. This thesis theme is very niche as there are few academic sources that have looked at Afghan immigrants from different generations, specifically in the Netherlands in terms of language and cultural attitudes. Thus, this study will attempt to fill that gap by sharing data digitally on Afghan immigrants who also mainly communicate in Dari, and the following research questions were created:

RQ: How do first- and second-generation Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands perceive their own mother tongue and ethnic culture, and how do they perceive the Dutch language and culture?

SQ1: In what situations are the home language and Dutch used by the first and second generations?

SQ2: What are the language attitudes toward the home language and Dutch, among the first and second generations?

SQ 3: What are the attitudes towards the home and the Dutch culture among the first and second generations?

The structure of this paper starts with a theoretical framework that explains the following topics: Afghan languages; immigration generations; heritage languages; bilingualism; language and cultural attitudes, and differences between Afghanistan and the Netherlands. Then the used methodology is explained, followed by the findings section which describes, analyses, and

discusses the results. Lastly, there is the conclusion and appendices that have additional information and analysis of the study.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.1 Afghan Languages***

There are several languages spoken in Afghanistan, such as: Dari, Pashto, Uzbeki, Hazaragi, Turkmen etc. (Ethnologue, 2024). However, the two most common languages spoken throughout Afghanistan are Dari and Pashto, and they are a branch of the Indo-Iranian languages which are part of the Indo-European family languages (Weinbaum et al., 2024). Dari is considered a variety of the Persian language, and Dari and the Persian language of Iran are mutually intelligible. Dari is also used as the lingua franca in the country for many people. It is approximated that over half of the population speaks Dari as their L1, and about 90% of the country speaks it as either their L1 or L2 (Wahab, 2006, p. 1; Hansia, 2014, p. 8).

Dari and Pashto are two different languages that share similar cultures, geographical regions, and alphabets. They both use the Arabic alphabet, which consists of 28 letters, but the pronunciation of the letters varies to certain extents from the Arabic one. Moreover, Dari has added 4 more letters, so its alphabet is 32 letters, and Pashto has added 12 extra letters, so its alphabet is 40 letters in total (Saadat, 2023). More information on the alphabets and the way they are used are in Appendix A. Thus, two very different languages are predominantly spoken in the country so there is linguistic variation within the country that can separate people, but this diversity also unifies people as most people in Afghanistan are often exposed to different languages and they are all accepted. From here on forward this paper will use the umbrella term



‘Afghan’ to describe all the languages spoken in Afghanistan, but the focus may sometimes be more on the Dari (and Pashto) languages as they are the largest spoken languages. When needed, clear distinctions will be made.

## ***2.2 Immigration***

Immigration is “the process of the process of coming to live permanently in a different country from the one you were born in” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d.-a). There are many reasons why people immigrate such as better economic opportunities; career development; education; political stability and security; family reunification; quality of life; escape from environmental factors or retirement. However, there are also disadvantages to moving to a whole new country such as experiencing culture shock; discrimination and prejudice; legal and bureaucratic challenges; social integration; financial strain; family and personal challenges; cultural adjustment for children and loss of social status or career progression.

According to Rambout (2004), a person's adaptation process in a new country and their degree of attachment or identification with the place they left behind would differ based on their age and stage of life when they migrate. For example, people from the first generation (G1) are adults so they most likely identify significantly with their home country and may immediately try to find a job in their new host country. Thus, these adults will immediately become acquainted with the work world, and if they know the language it would be easier to find a job. But if they do not, such as the case with most new Afghan immigrants, then it would be challenging to find a job due to language barriers. Meaning that many adults in such contexts often first must learn a language to acquire a job; or, if they do find a job then language probably does not play a significant role. On the other hand, people from generation 1.25 (G1.25) are “those who arrive in their adolescent years (ages 13-17), who may or may not come with their families of origin,

either attend secondary schools after arrival or in the older ages may go directly into the workforce (Rumbaut, 1997a)” (Rumbaut, 2004, p. 1167). Therefore, their experiences would be theorised to be more similar to G1.

Moreover, Rumbaut (2004) mentioned that people from generation 1.5 (G1.5) are “those who arrive in middle childhood (ages 6-12) . . . are pre-adolescent, primary-school-age children who have learned (or begun to learn) to read and write in the mother tongue at schools abroad, but whose education is largely completed here” (p. 1167). Hence, people migrated from this group have a largely different integration process into the host society as they are obliged in most countries to attend school, and at these schools they will have many opportunities to learn the host country’s language in a formal setting with guidance. Additionally, the migrant children who will have a similar upbringing to children from the host country are from generation 1.75 (G1.75) because they arrived between the ages of 0-5 years old, so in their early childhood and

“[t]heir experience and adaptive outcomes are closer to that of . . . [a] second generation [born person, and] are pre-school children who retain virtually no memory of their country of birth, were too young to go to school to learn to read or write in the parental language in the home country (and typically learn English [or another language] without an accent), and are almost entirely socialised here” (Rumbaut, 2004, p. 1167).

Table 1 shows Rumbaut’s (2004) definitions of immigration generations:

**Table 1**

*Immigration generations*

Generation	Definition
1	Foreign born people who immigrated to another country as adults
1.25	Foreign born people who immigrated to

	another country as teenagers (13-17 years old)
1.5	Foreign born people who immigrated to another country as children/pre-adolescence (middle childhood) (6-12 years old)
1.75	Foreign born people who immigrated to another country during early childhood (0-5 years old)
2	People born in the destination country by the 1st generation
2.5	People born in the destination country by 1 parent of the 1st generation and the other parents is native to the destination country
3	People born in the destination country by the 2nd generation
Beyond	People born in the destination country by the 3rd generation and generations afterwards

*(Note: Rumbaut, 2004)*

### **2.3 Bilingualism**

Therefore, most immigrants are bilinguals or multilinguals, and according to Montrul (2012) the age of acquisition plays an important role in how stable a person is in using both languages. For example, “early bilingualism refers to the acquisition of two languages before puberty” (Montrul, 2012, p. 168), thus that would refer to people from arguably G1.5, G1.75 and all the second generations and latter ones. On the other hand, “late bilingualism, also known as adult second - language acquisition, typically occurs after puberty” (Montrul, 2012, p. 168), hence that would people from G1. However, there is a distinction within early bilingualism which is whether it was a simultaneous bilingual acquisition, so that both languages were learnt since birth (G2 and later generations), or if it was sequential bilingualism, so a person learns it

after the age of 3-4 years old (G1.75) (Montrul, 2012). Moreover, the language use of bilinguals can be categorised into primary and secondary languages. The primary language is the language that is used most frequently and may have psycholinguistic dominance; in contrast, the language that is used less frequently or in more limited circumstances is known as the secondary language (Montrul, 2012). Additionally, it is possible for the “first or native language to become secondary and for a second language to become primary” (Seliger 1996 as cited in Montrul, 2012, p. 169), which can be seen often in heritage speakers.

#### ***2.4 Heritage Language***

According to Montrul (2012) heritage language and thus heritage speakers are people who have been exposed to a minority or immigrant language since early on in their life. They are also fluent in the majority language spoken in the wider community of the host country they are living in, so they are often bilingual. All Afghans in the Netherlands are bilingual, but many have become L1 attritioners and heritage speakers. Attrition means to forget one’s language (L1 or L2) temporarily or permanently due to changes in the speaker’s behaviour or environment (Brehmer & Treffers-Daller, 2020), and this can also consequently lead to a decrease in one’s proficiency levels in a language. The L2, in this case Dutch for most Afghan migrants, was needed to be learnt for survival reasons, and consequently individuals would use their L1s slightly less, so their L1 becomes weaker and their L2 becomes the stronger or dominant language. L1 attrition can begin in childhood and the effect of this forgetfulness is stronger if immigration occurs before the age of 12 (Brehmer & Treffers-Daller, 2020) and for G1 the attrition effect would be the slowest. Consequently, the L1 turns into a heritage language especially for people who immigrated during their childhood to another country or for second generation immigrants.

Furthermore, heritage speakers are less exposed to their L1 because the language is typically used only within the family, and the L2 is used in most other occasions. Often heritage speakers do not get formal education in their native language, and the formal education will be dependent on the parents or on language classes/schools, if they are available (Brehmer & Treffers-Daller, 2020). However, heritage speakers often have been exposed to their L1 since birth and therefore need less hours of formal education if they ever want to learn the language professionally compared to non-heritage learners (Shin, 2012 as cited in Hansia, 2014). Therefore, many Afghans in the Netherlands are heritage speakers of Dari and Pashto.

## **2.5 Language Attitudes**

Garrett et al. (2003) explained that the concept of attitude has a tripartite psychological structure which has three parts: firstly, there is an affective component which is about the speaker's feelings about the language and about the speakers of the language. Secondly, the cognitive component which are the facts, knowledge, and beliefs about a language. Thirdly, the behavioural component which is the action or readiness to act part (Garrett et al., 2003; TEDx Talks, 2017, 00:58 – 01:38; Baker, 1992, p. 12). So, if a person has a positive attitude towards a language, they might deem it as important and therefore the language will continue to be maintained and integrated more deeply in society. Furthermore, language attitudes are important to research because they can provide “indicator[s] of current community thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires. . . [and any] changing beliefs” (Baker, 1992, p. 9). For example, Al-Masri mentioned that there are many different vernaculars of Arabic and that there is classical Arabic that unites all of them (TEDx Talks, 2017). She also mentioned that in her study most participants had a positive affective attitude about spoken Jordanian Arabic but when they were asked if their Jordanian Arabic was more important than classic Arabic most of them disagreed,

thus there is a difference between speakers' feelings and their beliefs (TEDx Talks, 2017, 05:33-06:19).

Moreover, the attitudes that speakers have towards a language plays an important role as this refers to a person's perceptions, feelings, and beliefs of speakers of that language. The attitudes can be negative, neutral, or positive, and they are often influenced by cultural, economic, social, and political factors. For example, Kircher (2014) found in their study in Montreal that the status of French has become more positive over time due to the Bill 101 implementation of making French the official language in Quebec. However, most participants still had a more positive image of the English language even if English was not their L1, because English has more uses as it is the lingua franca of the world. The study demonstrated that both languages are perceived as positive and that social and political factors play an important role in people's perception of these languages as well.

Additionally, another important concept is diglossia meaning that language choice is based on a distinction between formal and informal language use (Hudson, 1994). Also, Schiffman (1998) defined it as a language situation that

“consist of two or more varieties, existing together in a speech community where the domains of linguistic behaviour are ranked in a hierarchy from highly valued (H) to less valued (L). If the two varieties are genetically related, the H variety serves for conservative purposes and ‘Formal’ domains such as public speaking, religious texts and practice, education and other prestigious kinds of usage, whereas the L one will be reserved for informal communicative events like jokes, the street and the market, [and] the telephone” (as cited in Elhambakhsh & Allami, 2017, pp. 567-8).

For example, Ferguson (1959) mentioned that one type of diglossia differentiation is between the standard language and regional dialects used in countries such as in Italy or Iran. People in these countries may speak their local dialect with their family and friends of the same area, but they use the standard language when they are communicating with people from other regions or in public areas (Ferguson, 1959).

The concept of diglossia can be linked to language prestige, which can be split into overt and covert prestige. The official language of a state, or when a language has internal variation, the standard variety of that language, often has overt prestige, which means that it is used in education and formal situations. On the other hand, non-official languages or non-standard varieties may also enjoy a certain form of prestige, in the sense that they are perceived by speakers as markers of solidarity. As a result, they may be the preferred language for use amongst family, friends and in more informal situations (Gordon, 2012). Labov (1966) indicated that prestige acts as a social identity marker for people in society. For example, Labov (1966) demonstrated through his study that in US English, pronouncing the post-vocalic 'r' in a word such as 'car' is considered 'standard' and people who pronounce this final 'r' were therefore perceived as more educated, rich and have higher social status, hence this variety of the language was perceived as the higher variety and had overt prestige. On the other hand, a number of working-class men in New York would not pronounce the 'r' sound at the end of the words, and they were considered as less educated, poor and having a lower social status. Therefore, this variety was considered lower but did have covert prestige as a marker of solidarity among people from that social class (as cited in Labov, 2006; Gordon, 2012).

### **2.5.1 Afghan Language Attitudes.**

In Sultani (2023) was the BA thesis that I conducted where 9 participants coloured in a language portrait and were asked questions on all the languages they spoke and what they also thought of their cultures; one of the aims was to find out what they thought of the English language. However, this current thesis will ask more participants and conduct a survey that will focus more on just Afghan immigrants instead of all Dutch people. In Sultani (2023), there were three male Afghan participants (from G1.75) who were asked what they thought of the Afghan language and culture. One participant from the project mentioned that they think the Dari language is a beautiful and emotional language; they learnt it through their family, and they do not know how to read or write it (Sultani, 2023, p. 69). Similarly, idem mentioned that Dari is their mother tongue; they learnt it informally through their family, so they cannot read or write it either (Sultani, 2023, p. 74). Lastly, idem mentioned that Afghan (Dari and Pashto) is their first language and that it is easy; they learnt it through their family (Sultani, 2023, p. 80). They also mentioned that they speak the language daily with their family. Thus, the participants have a positive image of the Afghan language, and they use it very often, but their language abilities are limited to speaking and listening.

Additionally, another thesis project by Hansia (2014) in the United States found out that in 2012 the language maintenance efforts of Dari had been difficult in California, as the older people of the Afghan community were concerned that the younger generations were losing their language and culture. So, they created a school but unfortunately it closed in six months “due to a lack of interest” (p. 7). This shows that there is a difference in the attitudes between the first- and second-generation Afghans when it comes to language maintenance and importance, and that the second generation seems to care less than their elders. Moreover, her thesis also looked



at the language attitudes people had towards Dari (Afghan Persian) and Farsi (Iranian Persian) using matched voice guises, and she found out that most participants had a negative image of Dari compared to Farsi and this due to overt prestige status that Farsi holds over Dari. The difference in prestige is arguably created after the war in Afghanistan collapsed the country's economy, so Afghanistan was very poor, whilst Iran was rich compared to it and therefore, there is the perception that the Afghan language sounds 'poorer'. Additionally, in terms of diglossia Farsi is considered as the High variety as it is used in writing and formal occasions. On the other hand, Dari is considered the Low variety as it is the colloquial form of the language.

Elhambakhsh and Allami (2017) support this point as they stated that "Dari is primarily spoken (rarely written)" (p. 568). However, within Afghanistan Dari and Pashto do hold the High variety, and the other minority languages within the country are considered as the low variety. Refocusing on Hansia's (2014) study she showed that Dari was viewed as less wealthy, intelligent and nice; annoying and bossy. But there were some participants that deemed that Dari sounded educated, intelligent, and nice. Hence, Dari has a more negative perception from the younger generation Afghans but also from Iranian Americans in the area.

### ***2.5.2 Attitudes towards Dutch language.***

For those who arrived in the Netherlands when they were young or those who were born in Afghanistan or in another foreign country, the language acquisition would be quite easy because children (from generations 1.5, 1.75, 2 and beyond) are universally known to learn languages quickly. In this case Dutch would be either the L1 or L2 for the above group of people. For the adults (G1) who arrived in the Netherlands, the Dutch language would most likely be their L3, L4 or even a later language they would have acquired (Sultani, 2023, pp. 11-12).

All participants find the Dutch language easy as they have grown up most of their lives in the Netherlands, so they have learnt the language formally at school. Idem said that they even text their Afghan acquaintances in Dutch. Secondly, idem mentioned that Dutch is also an easy language and that they use it daily with their family, friends and at work (p. 72). Thirdly, idem stated that “a person has to integrate in the country they live in” so they must learn Dutch; they are more fluent in Dutch than Afghan; that Dutch is their dominant language (p. 80). Thus, these people feel confident and comfortable with their Dutch language skills.

On the other hand, another thesis by de Jong (2022) interviewed 1st generation Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands and they mentioned how important it is to learn the Dutch language because that is the only way they could have a job, and that it is a difficult language to learn. They perceive it as a difficult language because learning a new language from a whole different language family as an adult can be particularly challenging, and to have the pressure to learn it well and quickly must make the learning process more difficult too. Therefore, depending on the generation and living situations people will have different attitudes towards the Dutch language.

## ***2.6 Cultural Differences Between Afghanistan and the Netherlands***

Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of Culture (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner & Culture Factory BV, Subsidiary of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, 2024a) who used several dimensions to understand cultural differences better from other perspectives. The benefits of this framework are that it compares more countries, and it includes Afghanistan in its database, and the results are empirical as surveys, interviews, and case studies across multiple countries and industries were used. However, the drawbacks are that there are generalisations and simplifications of cultures; having a western bias, and that the results are static meaning that they are not changing

over time like how people and cultures change over time. This framework is used because it provides a foundation of what the cultures are like from an abundance of previous research. The data will be used to see if it is still applicable to people today, and to see if these frameworks are also applicable to immigrants who are multicultural.

On the other hand, Hofstede also has a framework that explains cultural differences called Hofstede's cultural dimension framework. However, it does not have Afghanistan in its database, therefore Hofstede's framework will not be explained in this study, but references will be made to it at times.

### **2.6.1 Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of Culture.**

This section will compare Afghanistan and the Netherlands directly on most of Trompenaars' dimensions. All the information is gathered from the Trompenaars Hampden-Turner and Culture Factory BV, Subsidiary of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner (2024). First is the dimension of communitarianism and individualism which is similar to Hofstede's individualistic dimension. Trompenaars' research demonstrated that the Netherlands scores 79/100 on the individualism scale thus the culture is indeed individualistic but not as extreme as Hofstede claims, who rated the Netherlands as 100/100 (Hofstede Insights Oy., n.d.). As the assumption above Afghanistan is considered more of a collectivist country as it scored 38/100. Supporting this point Johnson and Leslie (2001) said that the concept of "individualism does not sit well with Afghan society" (p. 106). It is more of a communitarian country that has a

“[g]roup oriented society plac[ing] the interest of the community before the individual, whose main responsibility is to serve the group. . . The quality of life for the individual is seen as directly dependent on the degree to which [they] take care of fellow members, even at the cost of individual freedom”.

Secondly, the dimension of diffuse (high involvement) and specific (low involvement) presents that individuals from a diffuse society interact with people only in specific settings such as work and only know a person's work personality, and that there is a boundary between private and work life. On the other hand, people from a diffuse society interact with each other in several different social settings and therefore can engage with a person on many levels, consequently there is less of a distinction between work and private life. The results showed that the Netherlands scored 93/100 so it is an extremely specific and low involvement society, whereas Afghanistan scored 30/100 hence it is a diffuse and high involvement society.

Third is the dimension of affective (express emotions) and neutral (reserved emotions). Affective cultures encourage spontaneous emotional expressions; it is acceptable to express emotions; it is a sign of sincerity and trust. Whereas in neutral cultures, covertly expressing one's emotions is better as it is a sign of self-control and that reasoning matters more than emotions. The results show that both countries are more neutral and reserved but the Netherlands is more reserved (85/100) than Afghanistan (64/100). These results are clearly overgeneralised as every individual is different and some people will always be more emotionally expressive than others.

Fourthly, the dimension of ascription and achievement is how social status is assigned. Ascription in this context means "you are what you are from birth", and achievement means "you are what you do" (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner and Culture Factory BV, Subsidiary of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, 2024). Afghanistan has an ascription society (29/100), and the Netherlands is an achievement society (80/100). Therefore, the way people are perceived and the way that people interact with each other may differ in these two cultures, as in Afghanistan, one's status is known to everyone, and how a person may be treated may depend on that status. But in the Netherlands, a person's achievements will stand out more and give a person their status.

Fifthly, the dimension of sequential (single tasking) and synchronic (multi-tasking). Societies that are sequential have structured time; do one task at a time; prefer plans and stick to them; time commitments and punctuality is important. Whilst sequential societies perceive time as temporal, so people multitask as time is “flexible and intangible” for them and therefore punctuality is also less important to them as plans can easily be adapted. The results show that the Netherlands is quite a sequential society (88/100), and Afghanistan is a fairly synchronic society (35/100). This is a big cultural difference as people from these societies would view appointments or meeting up with people on time as differently, and Dutch people might view Afghans as rude or unorganised, whilst Afghans could view Dutch people as stringent and inflexible.

Therefore, throughout the whole cultural differences section of Afghanistan and the Netherlands it can be clearly seen that the two countries have more cultural differences than similarities, and it is interesting to find out how Afghan immigrants have adapted to living in the Netherlands despite all these unalike cultural habits.

### **2.6.2 Attitudes towards Afghan culture.**

Afghanistan possesses an extensive cultural legacy spanning over 5000 years and has been influenced by many diverse cultures such as Iran, India, and Greece (Allchin et al., 2024). Culture has several different elements to itself such as food, clothing and music that make it all unique.

### **Figure 1**

*Modern and Traditional Afghan Music Instruments*



*(Note: American Voices, n.d. Instruments. electric keyboard, violin, Tabla (drums) and Harmonium)*

**Figure 2**

Traditional Afghan Food



*(Note: Alamy Ltd & Ryingen, 2014)*

**Figure 3**

Traditional Afghan Clothes (for parties and weddings)



*(Note: Afghan Fashion, 2023)*

Other aspects that are significant to culture were mentioned above by Trompenaars's cultural dimension sections. Sultani (2023) showed that Afghan culture plays a large role in Afghan people's lives in the Netherlands, and Hessels (2004) partially agrees with this point as he believes that Afghans want to keep their traditions, but that many are also westernising themselves to fit in better with the Dutch society. Moreover, there are many Afghan

organisations all over Europe that unite and support Afghans, and one of their aims is cultural activism, thus culture does play an important role for many Afghans even outside of Afghanistan (Battiston et al., 2022). A participant mentioned that the culture is “beautiful and [has a] rich culture full of history; respect (for elders) and [has] homely food. [They] feel both Afghan and Dutch, but a bit more Afghan in both language and cultural senses” (Sultani, 2023, p. 69). Idem said they are a proud Afghan, and that family is unbelievably valuable. Lastly, idem stated that “Afghans are prideful, dependent and respectful” (p. 80). Hence, from these brief statements it is clear that Afghan culture is important, and it has many aspects that play large roles in people’s lives.

### **2.6.3 Attitudes towards Dutch culture.**

“As all Afghans are immigrants in the Netherlands, they know that they are ethnically, culturally and religiously of different backgrounds. However, the Netherlands have opened their doors to help out as many people as possible in the past decades, which has created a strong feeling of gratitude amongst many Afghans because they received the opportunity for a better education, healthcare system and quality of life.” (Sultani, 2023, pp. 11-12)

Supporting this point to an extent are Albada et al. (2021) and De Jong (2022): “the Netherlands is viewed as a multicultural, welcoming society for newcomers (Albada et al., 2021). However, in recent years, the Dutch approach to welcoming refugees has shifted” (de Jong, 2022, p. 6). There is a shift due to changes in the law, and the attitude of some Dutch people has changed over the recent years to become more Islamophobic (Solmaz, 2023). De Jong (2022) found that some 1st generation Afghans experienced no racism at all, but that others felt

like they were treated unequal at times. Thus, there could be some people who have a positive attitude, and others have a slightly more negative attitude towards the Dutch people and culture.

On the other hand, in Sultani (2023) the three Afghan participants mentioned the following about Dutch culture. Idem said that the Dutch culture plays a very significant role in their life and that they experienced everything that the culture has to offer; they have many Dutch and foreign friends; both the Dutch and Afghan languages and cultures play a large role in their life as they live in the Netherlands; they think and feel half the time in Dutch, and they feel half Dutch and half Afghan.

Similarly, idem mentioned that they are “very much integrated into the society since [they] lived here for so long and because of [their] work socialising with all kinds of people is important” (Sultani, 2023, p. 72). They also mentioned that they observe that Dutch people seem like “they don’t worry about a thing. But actually, they worry about everything, and they complain about the smallest things” (p. 72). Additionally, according to them Dutch people “do not like change, which can make things difficult for themselves and others. But once they are open to a change, they will fully support it” (p. 72). Furthermore, they mentioned that both the language and culture play a significant role in their life. Lastly, idem said that the Netherlands is home as they grew up here; “Dutch people are less prideful and more independent; [they] would take less care of their elders by sending them to an elderly home in the future and Afghans would not do this” (p. 80). Just like the previous two participants, this one also said that the Dutch culture and language play a large role in their life and that they feel half Dutch and half Afghan, and moreover they mentioned that there are parts of both cultures that they dislike, so they have created a mix of the two, thus a hybrid culture, that they live by which is to respect their elders but to also be independent. For example, Abedin (2018) found in their study that Afghans in



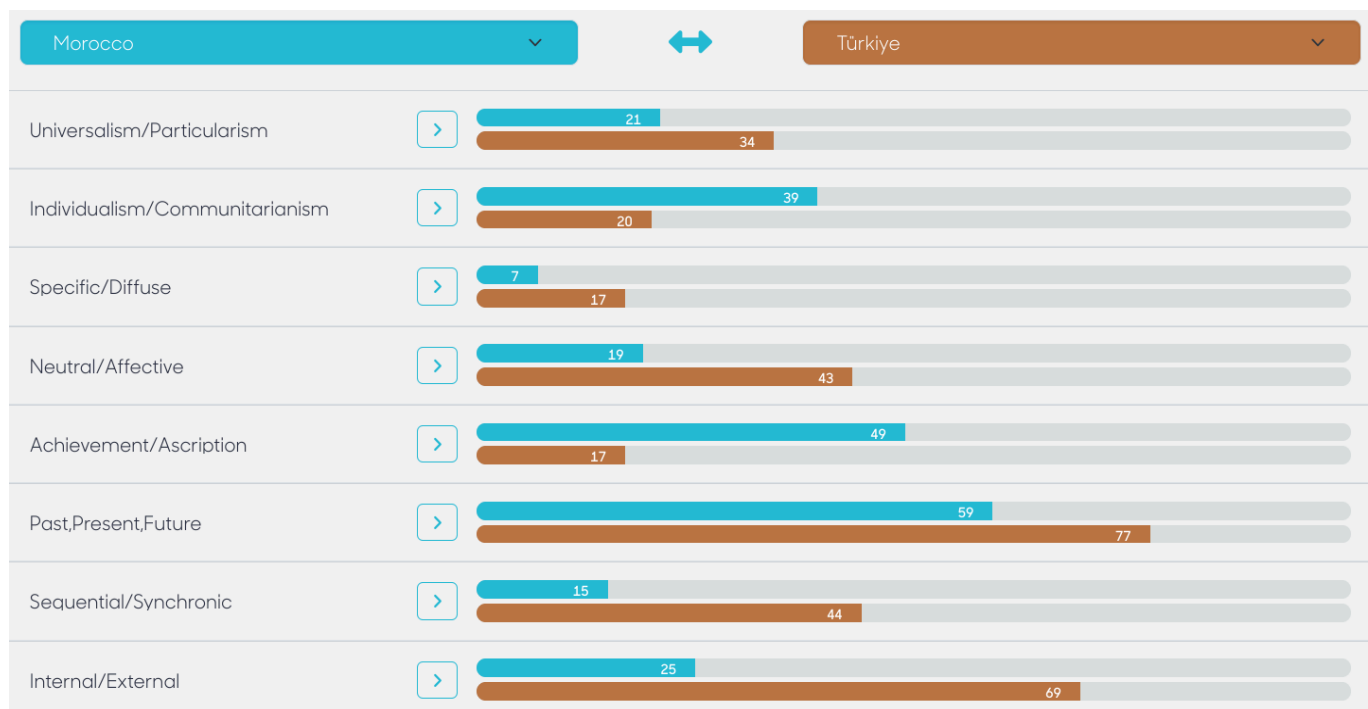
Sweden have created a hybrid culture too where they celebrate both Afghan and Swedish events, and that they also mix the two cuisines.

## 2.7 Comparison to Türkiye and Morocco

It is interesting and relevant to compare Türkiye and Morocco to the Netherlands because there are large diasporic groups of people from these countries in the Netherlands. Most people from these countries have the same religion in common, which is Islam, and often over time religion and culture could merge to create a new kind of lifestyle - “syncretism” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Therefore, by comparing these countries and their cultures an image could be created about the Afghan diaspora too because there is not much information written about Afghans (in English), especially about them living in the Netherlands.

### Figure 4

#### *Comparing Morocco and Türkiye using Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of Culture*



*(Note: Trompenaars Hampden-Turner & Culture Factory BV, Subsidiary of Trompenaars Hampden-Turner., 2024b)*

Comparing both frameworks the Netherlands is ranked differently in all categories compared to Morocco and Türkiye who are closer in rankings. The biggest difference is in the category of individualism vs collectivism/communitarianism. According to Hofstede the Netherlands is extremely individualistic. Whereas Morocco and Türkiye are more collectivist so “the ‘We’ is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans, or organisations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty” (Hofstede Insights Oy, n.d.-a). Similarly, Trompenaars agrees with this concept except the numbers are slightly different as Trompenaar shows that Türkiye is apparently more communitarian compared to Morocco, which is the opposite of what Hofstede claims. Therefore, the way people view relationships and loyalty are perceived differently in the Netherlands compared to the other two countries, and this means that their lifestyles are also very different from one another, and that Turks and Moroccans understand each other better in this aspect, and arguably Afghans would understand them better too as they have similar mindsets towards relationship standards.

Yilmaz and Schmid (2015) conducted a study in the Netherlands with Turkish immigrants who came to the country after the age of 15, thus from generations 1 or 1.25. They found out that when Turkish people immigrate as adults to the Netherlands they have an attachment to their own Turkish language and culture; that they have issues with identifying with the Dutch language and culture compared to other ethnic groups, such as Moroccans or Surinamese people (Dagevos & Gijsberts, 2007 as cited in Yilmaz & Schmid, 2015, p. 102). Moreover, over time people conform to be bicultural so “they adopt some aspects of the host country culture to various degrees but not at the cost of losing their own” (p. 124). Additionally,

in terms of language proficiency they mentioned that it depends on the individual and the several factors that influence their life such as “input, native language, motivation, age, education, personality and so on” (de Bot et al., 2007; Herdina & Jessner, 2002 as cited in Yilmaz & Schmid, 2015, p. 102). Furthermore, Yilmaz and Schmid (2015) mentioned that several Dutch studies demonstrated that most Dutch people disapprove of interacting with immigrants, especially non-European ones and instead believe that the immigrants should adapt to the Dutch ways as soon as possible (Koopmans, 2010 as cited in Yilmaz & Schmid, 2015, pp. 125-6; Breugelmans & Van De Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar & Van De Vijver, 2008). Lastly, they concluded that L2 (Dutch language) success, and identification with the Dutch community and culture is not affected by how often they spoke in their L1 (Turkish) (p. 126). So, Turkish immigrants speaking and identifying with their Turkish roots does not affect how well a person can also identify with being Dutch. The results could be applicable to Afghan immigrants as well because the Afghan and Turkish cultures are more like one another compared to the Dutch one, especially in terms of religion, collectivism, diffuseism (high involvement), ascription and linguistically to an extent.

There are not many other studies that have looked at the Afghan culture and language in depth in the English language and especially not from the perspectives of Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands. Therefore, this study will look at the following niche aspects in depth: how Afghans in the Netherlands perceive their own language and culture, and how they also perceive the Dutch language and culture.

### **3 Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Pilot Study***

Three people were asked to complete a pilot study to find out how to improve the survey. The participants were all from different generations, and have different Dutch and Afghan proficiency levels, thus I was able to find out what words and questions in the survey had to be adapted to make it easier for all participants.

One of the participants mentioned that they had to search up the words ‘individualistic culture; collectivist culture, and egalitarian’; they mentioned that they did hear of these words before, but they forgot the exact meaning of it, so they had to google it before answering the questions. Another participant mentioned they had trouble understanding the words: ‘poetic, intellectual, progressive, hierarchical and conservative’. Therefore, a brief definition of all these words and other descriptive keywords were added to the survey so that it would be clear for the participants what the question means.

#### ***3.2 Participants***

An eligible participant is anyone with a full or partial Afghan ethnic background; who lives in the Netherlands and is above the age of 16, so that they can fill in the questionnaire independently. There are people in the Netherlands that fall in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations, and there is a possibility that 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Afghans in the Netherlands are already born, but chances are high that they are not adults yet. Therefore, chances might be small to find enough participants from that group. However, I will still include the option for people that do come

from this group in case there are suitable participants, consequently, I will not be missing any participants.

### ***3.3 Materials***

A self-reporting survey was used which is a common way to gather data on language attitudes and it is a “direct method” to do so (Liang, 2015, p. 39). It was created using Qualtrics Software. To gather the data in the most efficient way several types of question formats were used such as multiple choice, Likert scale, matrix table, and open-ended questions. The survey had two main parts: 1) questions about the participants’ Afghan and Dutch language abilities and attitudes. 2) questions about the participants’ attitudes towards the Afghan and Dutch cultures.

### ***3.4 Procedure***

The questionnaire was open for 2 weeks and was shared via social media platforms to all the participants, for example, through WhatsApp and Instagram. The participants were gathered through a snowball sampling method – I asked my family, family friends and acquaintances to fill in the questionnaire and to share this with their other family members, friends, and acquaintances. Although this type of sampling method is often used for qualitative research, I used it for a quantitative project due to the following advantages: 1) it is possible to reach a marginalised group of people (Kennedy-Shaffer et al., 2021); 2) it is cost and time effective as not any money is spend for finding the participants (Kennedy-Shaffer et al., 2021); 3) it is quick to share the questionnaire through social media; 4) the questionnaire was most likely send from a known trustworthy person, thus the participants would more likely answer the questionnaire.

The disadvantages of this sampling method are that there is a high chance of a biased sample as the participants are not selected randomly but recruited instead; therefore, there could be a lack of generalisation/representativeness (Kennedy-Shaffer et al., 2021). Moreover, since most participants know each other there is a high chance that they might feel more peer/familial pressure to fill it out because it came from a known person, which could raise an ethical concern. Additionally, they might have similar perspectives when it comes to both the Afghan and Dutch languages and cultures. On one hand, that means there might not be a variety of opinions. On the other hand, the aim of this study is to find out what individual but also the collective opinion of the participants is, thus the necessary data is still gathered through this sampling method.

## **4 Findings**

The following section demonstrates the results gathered from the survey. All the data, including the graphs and statistics were generated through Qualtrics and Excel Microsoft.

### ***4.1 Demographic Information of the Participants***

This section will briefly describe the participants' ages, migration generations, educational background, immigration year they arrived in the Netherlands, and the Afghan languages they speak.

#### **4.1.1 Number of Participants in Each Generation.**

In total 46 people answered the survey completely, and 51 participants answered up to the end of the language section, but they did not answer the culture part of the survey. Whether this was an issue due to the Qualtrics Software, or whether the participants no longer want to answer the survey or did not realise there was another section to the survey is unknown. Next, the

participants' age ranged from 16-59 years old, so a wide age range has been gathered. Most participants from the 20s were either born in the Netherlands (G2) or moved to the Netherlands before the age of 13 (G1.5 and G1.75). Similarly, most participants in the 30s age bracket moved to the Netherlands before the age of 13. Therefore, most participants in these 2 age groups have lived most of their lives in the Netherlands and have considerable exposure and experience with both the Afghan and Dutch languages and cultures.

**Table 2**

*Distribution of participants' ages and generations*

Age range	Number of participants	Migration Generations (Started living in the Netherlands from the following ages)					
		1 (+18, adult)	1.25 (13-17 years old)	1.5 (6-12 years old)	1.75 (0-5 years old)	2 (Born in NL)	2.5 (Born in NL, and 1 parent born in NL)
16-19	4	-	-	1	-	2	1
20-29	17	-	-	3	5	9	-
30-39	20	2	1	9	8	-	-
40-49	8	2	2	3	1	-	-
50-59	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>

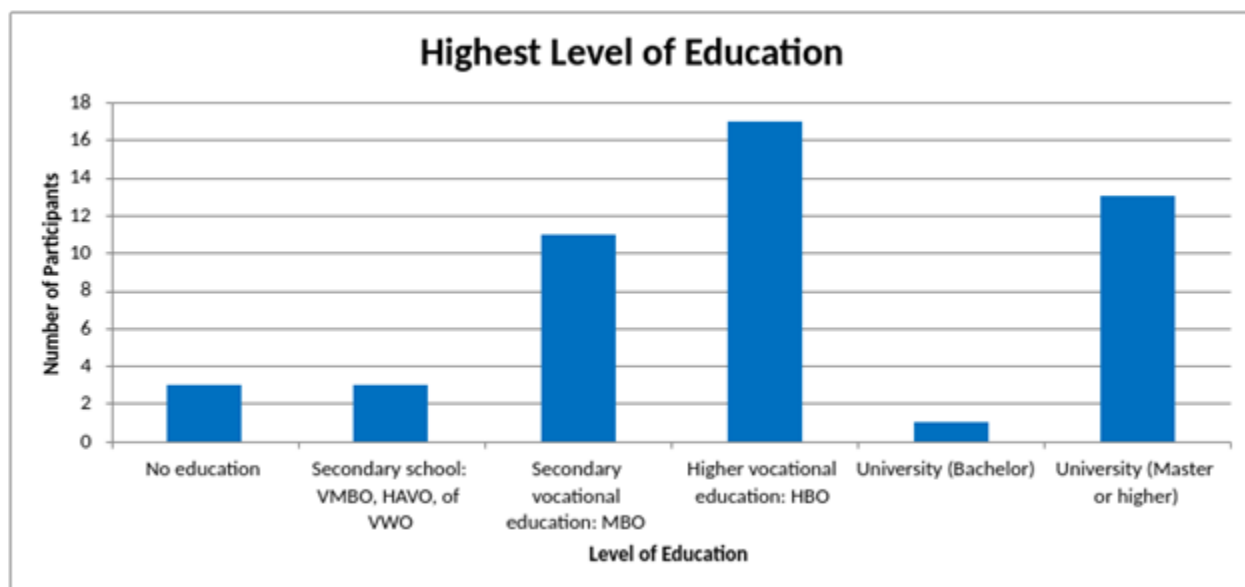
There were no participants for generation 3. Moreover, most of the participants were female ( $39/51 = 76\%$ ); there were a few men ( $9/51 = 18\%$ ), and 3 participants ( $6\%$ ) identified as non-binary/third gender.

#### 4.1.2 Educational Level.

Furthermore, almost all participants have achieved some kind of educational level. As seen in Figure 1. These results are not too surprising as education in the Netherlands is compulsory for everyone until the age of 16, however, most people continue with their education depending on what school they went to and whether they wish to pursue higher education for academic or professional reasons.

**Figure 5**

*Distribution of Participant's highest educational level*



If most participants went to school in the Netherlands this would suggest that most of them would have strong Dutch communication skills in terms of comprehending, reading, writing, and speaking the language. Consequently, this also means that most participants are



multilingual because they most likely also speak an Afghan language to a degree, and they also learnt English and one or two additional foreign languages at school in the Netherlands.

#### **4.1.3 Migration.**

People from the first generations who filled in this survey migrated from Afghanistan to the Netherlands between the years of 1980-2022. The results demonstrated that almost half of the participants (from the first generations) had migrated to the Netherlands in the 1990s (24/39), which can be considered the first wave of Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands as that was the time period when the dictatorship of the Taliban took over the country, and people were fleeing the country for safety reasons. There was a second wave of Afghan immigrants in 2021 when the Taliban took over the country for the second time when approximately 4500 people immigrated to the Netherlands between 2021-2023 (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023). An assumption is that most of these newly migrated people cannot comprehend the Dutch language that well yet, thus it would be difficult for them to have filled in this survey.

#### **4.1.4 Languages in Afghanistan.**

Almost all participants know Dari (49/51), and the second most known language is Pashto (10 participants), which is not surprising as these are the official languages of the country. Additionally, a couple of the minority languages such as Hazaragi (3 participants) and Uzbeki (2 participants) were languages that a few participants also understand.

#### **4.1.5 Other Languages.**

Two participants mentioned that they also understand Farsi/Persian. Dari and Persian are mutually intelligible dialects of the same language, the difference is that Dari is predominantly

used in Afghanistan, whilst Persian is used in Iran. One of the participants mentioned that they comprehend Farsi better than Dari. Similarly, one other participant mentioned that they are also able to understand Multani and that this language is the one they comprehend better than Dari. Multani, also known as Saraiki, is a language spoken by millions of people in the Punjab area of Pakistan, and Saraiki and Dari are two different languages that are not mutually intelligible.

#### ***4.2 Afghan and Dutch Language Abilities***

Participants were also asked about their Afghan and Dutch language abilities. The complete results including the description and analysis can be found in Appendix H. But a brief summary of the results are as follows. In terms of understanding, speaking, reading, and writing most participants are better in Dutch than Afghan. Firstly, the average Afghan understanding score is 7.73/10, and the Dutch score is 8.76/10, thus the understanding of most people is good and above average. Secondly, for the speaking Afghan part the average score was 7.04 and the Dutch average score is 8.76, so there is a slightly larger gap between the two, but in general most people can speak both languages quite well. An interesting result is from a participant from G1.25 who scored themselves a 4 on Dutch understanding but a 6 on Dutch speaking abilities. It might be possible that this person focuses more on producing results and output of a language rather than on comprehending and understanding the language; everyone also has different learning styles so the surprising results can make sense if looked at from this angle.

Thirdly, compared to the two previous sections, the results of the Afghan reading are the opposite as 42% (21/50) participants chose 0, meaning that they cannot read Afghan at all. The average reading score is 3.28, whereas the Dutch average score is 8.64 and over half of the participants (27/50) believe that their reading abilities are outstanding as they gave themselves a

score of 10. An interesting finding is that two participants from G1 ranked themselves in the Afghan reading section with a 0 and 3, but in the Dutch reading section they respectively ranked themselves with a 3 and 6. This most likely suggests that perhaps these people did not have the opportunity to go to school (properly) at all in Afghanistan, but the Netherlands gave them an opportunity to go to school and become literate even though it is in their L2.

Fourthly, for the Afghan writing section the average is 2.56, and over half of the participants 54% (27/50) stated that they cannot write Afghan at all, which is not surprising as most of them do not know how to read either. Whereas the results for the Dutch writing section are considerably high as the average score was 8.10, and most participants ranked themselves with a score of 9 or 10, meaning that they are extremely confident in their skills. An intriguing fact to take note of is that a participant asked whether by Afghan writing the question meant writing using the Afghan/Arabic alphabet or the Romanised/Latin alphabet. The survey meant the Afghan/Arabic version, so they scored themselves a lower score because they do know how to communicate in written Afghan using Romanised letters but not the Afghan alphabet. Thus, there might be several participants who can communicate in written Afghan but using a different alphabet system, but the results do not make this distinction as it was not asked, and this was not considered either until later.

However, another finding is that there are two participants from G2 who gave themselves a score of 1 and 2 for the Dutch writing, which is very surprising as they were born in the Netherlands, and they went to school in the Netherlands. An assumption for this result could be that these participants were born in the Netherlands, but they did not complete their school in the Netherlands or in the Dutch language, and perhaps they are more fluent in other languages such as English. This is mentioned because one of the other questions participants were asked was in

which language they felt they could express their emotions in the most effectively, and a small number of them said English rather than Dutch or Afghan (see Appendix G for the full results on those results). Thus, it is possible for a number of people that their second or later languages has become their primary or dominant language, which refers to the point that Seliger (1996) and Montrul (2012) also mentioned.

Moreover, most of the participants' abilities in Dutch are better than Afghan. This supports the points Brehmer and Treffers-Daller (2020) about heritage speakers especially from the first generations having L1 attrition and the L2 becoming the dominant language, especially for people who have lived in the host country since childhood. Whereas, for people in the second generations and later ones it could be due to incomplete language acquisition of the Afghan language. The results are presumably like this because most participants have not received any formal Afghan language education, especially not in reading or writing, but rather were informally taught the language through verbal communication with their family members.

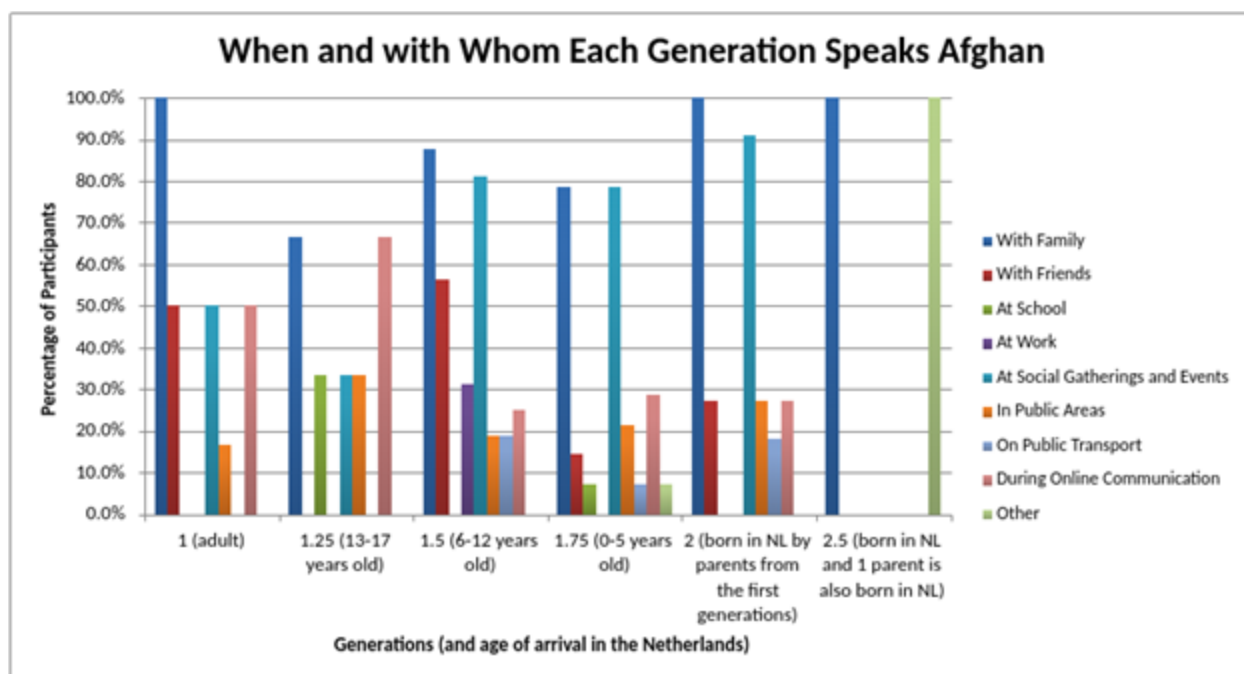
### ***4.3 Language Use***

To answer the first question: 'in what situations are the home language and Dutch used by the first and second generations?' The following results for the Afghan language use were generated from the 51 participants.

#### **4.3.1 When and With Whom Do People Speak Afghan?**

##### **Figure 6**

*When and with Whom Each Generation Speaks Afghan*



Analysing the dataset, there is a clear pattern that all generations speak Afghan with their family members. However, it is surprising to see that there are a few people in G1.25, G1.5 and G1.75 that do not speak Afghan with their family members although they were born in Afghanistan and most likely have lived, and perhaps still do live a significant part of their lives with their fellow Afghan family members. An assumption is that the participants talk to their family members, and especially their siblings in Dutch as that might be their preferred and primary language, and this is also a common phenomenon with heritage speakers. The second noticeable pattern is that almost all generations speak Afghan during social gatherings and events, which is not too surprising as it is highly probable that other Afghan family members are also attending these events, thus everyone is communicating in a language that they are familiar with. The exception is generation 2.5, but this participant's (1/51) result may not be the most reliable in this instance as they mention in the 'Additional Messages' section (Appendix B), which was open to suggestions that "I master almost no Afghan, but I am trying to learn it by practising it with my family".

Another interesting pattern is the use of Afghani during online communication (e.g., WhatsApp). Generation 1 and 1.25 are the ones that communicate in Afghani the most in this manner (50% or more) compared to the rest of the generations where less than a third of the participants from each generation communicate online in Afghani. However, something to take into consideration is that two people from generation 1 and one person from generation 1.25 stated that they do not have an educational background, thus chances are high that they do not know how to read or write in Afghani, which can also be seen through the language abilities (4.2) section. This indicates that these people use online communication perhaps through the use of voice messages instead of texting, and that there are maybe more people from those generations that communicate in Afghani in this manner.

A negative pattern observed is that almost all generations, except 1.5, do not speak any Afghani at school or at the workplace. This could be because there are language policies in these places as they have a more formal environment, and that everyone communicates in the same language, in this case Dutch, so that everyone can understand each other and communicate well. Another reason could be that there are fewer Afghans in these places simultaneously as Afghans are a minority group in the Netherlands. Additionally, it could be that people want to feel like they are part of the in-group in these social places, therefore everyone speaks the same language to avoid feeling alienated or alone.

Furthermore, another weak pattern is that many people do not speak Afghani whilst they are on public transportation, but a few more do talk in public areas such as parks and shopping centres. This could be because of several reasons, firstly, in public transport often people do not talk too much as most people tend to pick up their phone to text or watch something. Secondly, a social phenomenon through personal observation is that family members, or friends who speak a

foreign language outside often do this so that the surrounding people do not understand their conversation because they often wish to have a private conversation.

### **4.3.2 When and With Whom Do People Speak Dutch?**

Next, the following results for the Dutch language use were generated from 42 participants<sup>1</sup>. One to two participants from each generation (except 2.5) were affected by this error and have therefore not answered the question down below. However, the results still provide a good basis of what many of the participants do, therefore they will be analysed.

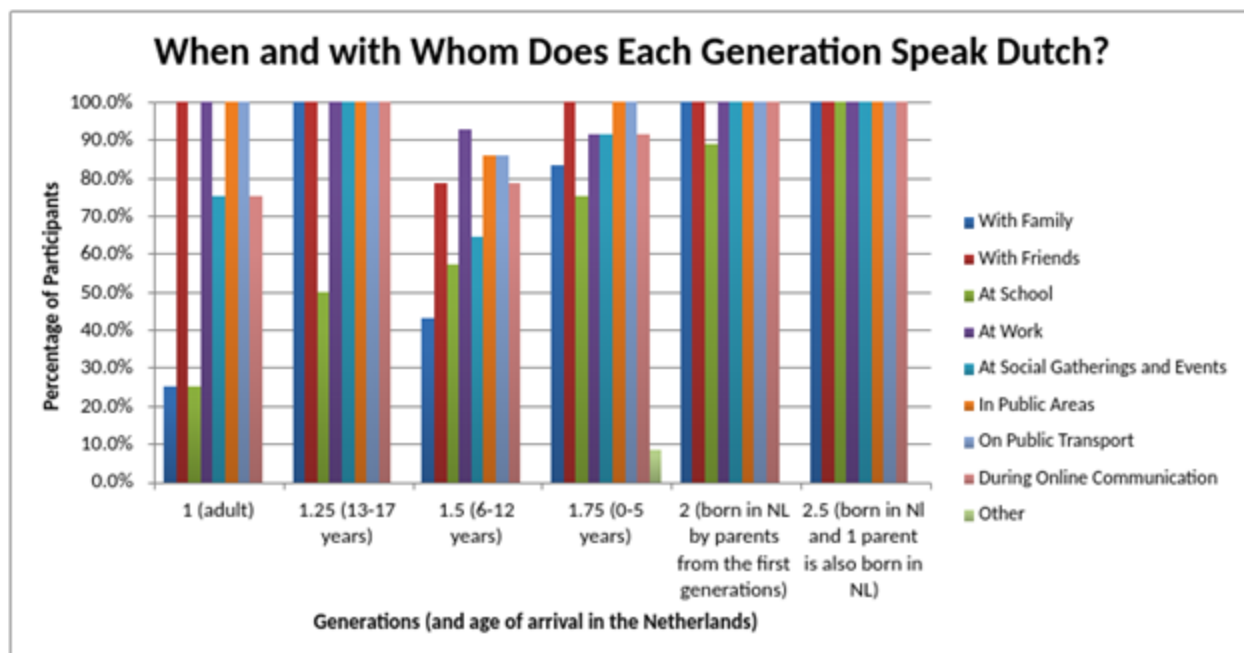
#### **Figure 7**

*When and with Whom Each Generation Speaks Dutch?*

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#### **<sup>1</sup> Issues with Qualtrics**

To note there were issues with Qualtrics software as 9 participants did not answer 9 compulsory questions. The affected questions are those related to how often participants watch TV/films, read books/newspapers, visit websites and listen to music in the Afghan and Dutch languages. Additionally, one of the main questions related to sub question 1 of ‘in what situations are the home language and Dutch used by the first and second generation?’ was also affected, specifically the question related to when people use the Dutch language. Thus, the results of this question only have 42 answers, instead of the 51 answers that the Afghan counterpart has.



Comparing this dataset with the Afghan one there is a stark difference between the two. The results suggest that most of the participants speak more Dutch compared to Afghan in general, which is not surprising as seen in the language abilities section where overall all participants have better Dutch language abilities than Afghan ones. This could also be because for a number of the participants Afghan has become the secondary language that they use less frequently and in more limited circumstances (Montrul, 2012). On top of that, it could also be because there was incomplete language acquisition for the Afghan language due to the lack of formal education, whereas for the Dutch language almost all the participants have received various degrees of formal education.

All the generations, except for generation 1 speak more Dutch than Afghan with their family members. Firstly, talking in Dutch with family members: generation 1 talks the least Dutch; less than half the participants from generation 1.5; over 80% of the participants from generation 1.75, and all the other participants from the other generations speak Dutch with their



family members. On one hand, it is not surprising that people speak Dutch with their family members because all of them live in the Netherlands and they are simply speaking the national language. For many, it can be assumed that Dutch is one of their L1s (for the second generations as they are simultaneous bilinguals) and that it is the dominant language for the others (first generations). This further proves that the Afghan community is not an exception to the effects of being heritage language speakers as this phenomenon also occurs to all other heritage speakers worldwide (Montrul, 2012).

A fascinating finding is that the results from G1.5 and G1 are the ones that have the most differences compared to the other generations as most of the other generations almost scored 100% in all categories except for G1.5 and G1. This could indicate that people from these generations simply communicate in several languages in all settings because either their Dutch skills are not that good, or because they are simply confident enough to speak different languages in all kinds of situations with people. Next, except for G1.5 who speak approximately 80% of the time Dutch with their friends, and all the other generations stated that all the participants speak Dutch with their friends 100% of the time, which is a significant difference compared to the Afghan statistics, which had an average of less than 25% participants talking in Afghan with their peers. Additionally, there is a growing trend in the school category. It appears that individuals from the first generations are now adults and do not attend school anymore, which is why they gave themselves a lower score. On the other hand, individuals from the second generations are probably still in school and speak more Dutch in this context. This statistic is also quite different from the Afghan one because for the exception of G1.25 and G1.75 none of the others would communicate in Afghan at school. In terms of diglossia and language use Dutch can be considered as the High variety because it is used more in formal settings such as at work

and school, thus at more formal places. Whereas Afghan could be considered as the Low variety as it is used more in informal settings.

Thus, to answer sub question 1: ‘in what situations is the home language and Dutch used by the first and second generations?’ is that a large proportion of the people in most generations often communicate Afghan with their family, friends, and at social gatherings and events as most people in these relationships and places speak the same language. This partially supports but also negates the point of Brehmer & Treffers-Daller (2020) as they claimed that the heritage language is only used with family, but the results of this study prove that it is used in other occasions and with other people too. Online communication in Afghan is prominent in G1 and G1.25, and it occurs less often in the other generations. Furthermore, not much Afghan is spoken in public areas or on public transport. Similarly, there is little to almost no Afghan communication at school or at the workplace in the Netherlands. On the other hand, Dutch is used in all settings and with all kinds of people by all generations, but G1 and G1.5 use less Dutch in most contexts compared to the others. Dutch is used 75% or more by all generations with friends; at work; in public areas; on public transport, and during online communication.

#### **4.3.3 When People Watch, Read, and Listen to Music in Afghan and Dutch.**

Similarly to the above section this section will answer the sub question 1: ‘in what situations is the home language and Dutch used?’ but in specific situations. This section will be very brief with limited descriptions and analysis, for the full version please check Appendix C. The results between the two language groups are quite distinct.

Firstly, the Afghan results demonstrate that 54% (22/42) of the participants never watch any Afghan movies or TV shows, and about 10% watch it daily. On the other hand, the Dutch

results present that around 15% of the participants never watch any Dutch movies or TV shows; around 30% watch it on a weekly basis, and around 24% watch it daily. The results are understandable because there are more Dutch TV programmes and movies available in the Netherlands. Secondly, for the Afghan reading books or newspaper results 76% of the participants never read anything, which makes sense as the majority of the participants do not know how to read, and just under 10% read something in Afghan on a weekly basis. Whereas the Dutch section of the results demonstrate that approximately 20% never read anything in Dutch and roughly 21% read Dutch daily. Thus, people read more in Dutch as they have the ability to do so and have more access to Dutch texts compared to Afghan ones because they live in the Netherlands. Thirdly, for the music section a third of the participants listen to Afghan music daily (31%) and a fifth never listen to it (19%). Comparing these results to participants listening to Dutch music is significant, as 45% of the participants never listen to any Dutch music, and around 17% listen to it on a weekly basis, but none of the participants listen to it more regularly. These results could indicate that the participants find Afghan music to be more entertaining or pleasant to listen to rather than Dutch music. However, it is possible that participants also listen to music in other foreign languages such as English or Spanish as songs in those languages are also popular in the Netherlands.

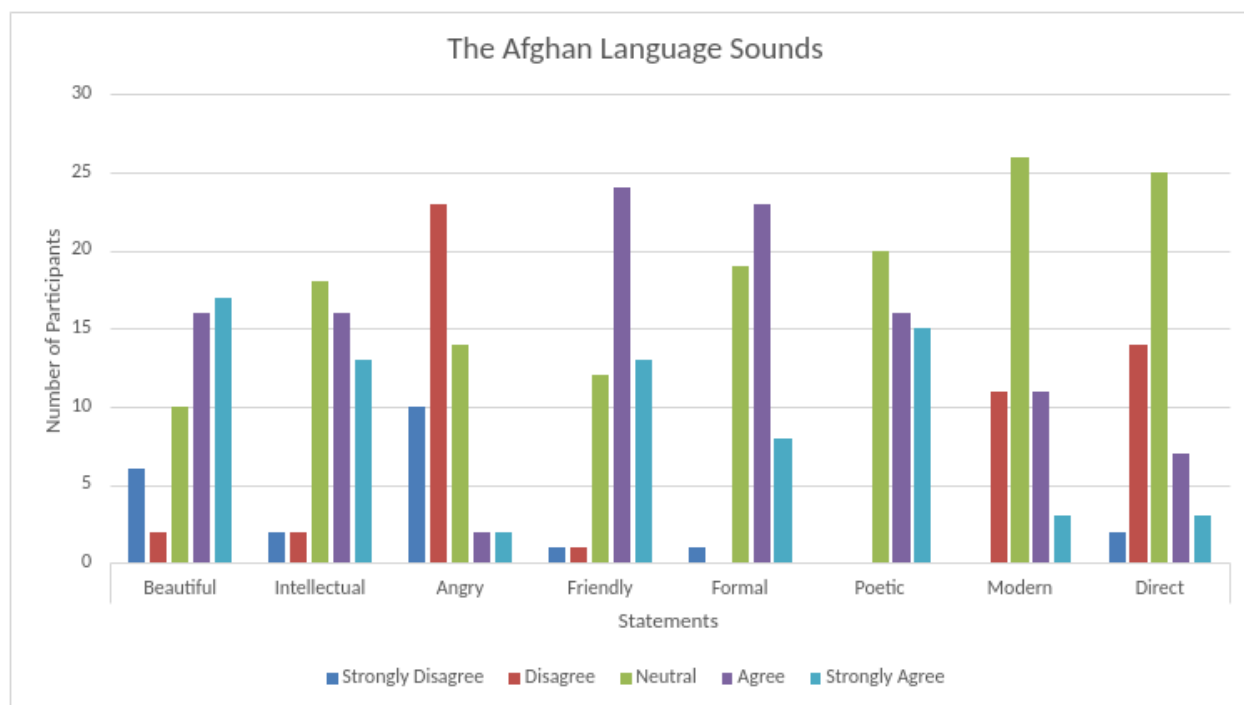
#### ***4.4 Comparing Language Attitudes***

##### **4.4.1 What do the Afghan and Dutch Languages Sound Like?**

To answer question 2: ‘what are the language attitudes toward the home language and Dutch, among the first and second generations?’ The following results were generated from the 51 participants.

**Figure 8**

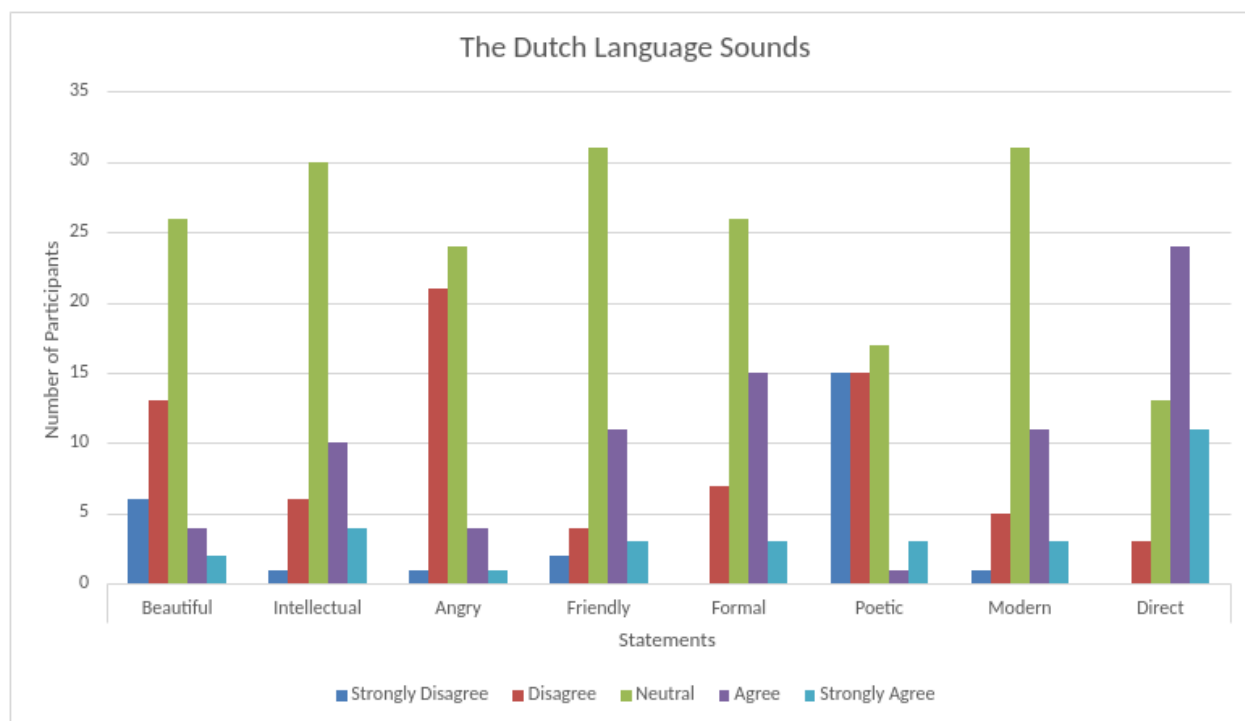
*Number of Participants Stating Their Opinion on How the Afghan Language Sounds*



The results demonstrate that most participants (strongly) agreed that the Afghan language sounds beautiful, intellectual, friendly, formal, poetic, and modern; most participants (strongly) disagreed that the language sounds angry and direct. The most significant statements with 31 votes (60%) or more votes are friendly, not angry, formal, and poetic.

**Figure 9**

*Number of Participants Stating Their Opinion on How the Dutch Language Sounds*



The results show that most participants (strongly) agreed that the Dutch language sounds intellectual, friendly, formal, modern, and direct. Additionally, most people (strongly) disagreed that the language does not sound beautiful, angry, and poetic. The most remarkable results with the strongest opinions from the participants could be seen in the direct, poetic, and angry results. Comparing the results, most participants agreed that both languages sound intellectual, friendly, formal, modern, and not angry, which are all positive descriptions for both languages.

Possible explanations for some of the differences between the two results could be due to cultural and language ideology differences between the two languages. Ideologies are “systems of belief and representation that both shape and are shaped by individual and collective ways of interacting” (Train, 2007, p. 210). Hence, in terms of language ideologies the concept of speakers of a language appointing positive or negative adjectives to a language is created; this influences how speakers represent their language, and how they use it too (Showstack et al., 2024).

For example, Dutch is perceived as a more ‘direct’ language by the participants, who can be considered Dutch citizens as almost all participants have lived approximately for two decades or longer in the Netherlands, and this was also the observation Meyer (2014) made in her work. This indicates that Dutch speakers from seemingly most ethnic backgrounds have the ideology that the language is direct because Dutch speakers often communicate in a direct manner, and not that the linguistic features of the language are direct. On top of that, the Netherlands is considered a low-context country, meaning that the communication style is more explicit, direct, and clear, which Saskia Maarse agrees with (BBC Global, 2023, 00:38 - 00:53). Moreover, Trompenaars (2024) and Hofstede’s individualism dimension mentions that most individualistic countries tend to have a more low-context, direct communication style and collectivistic countries tend to have a more high-context, indirect communication style (Worthy et al., 2020), thus this supports what most of the participants also believe.

Furthermore, most participants agreed that the Afghan language is poetic, this can also be due to several reasons such as the creative and often emotional expressions that people use on a daily basis; the Afghan people themselves also say it is a creative language, which is an ideological belief. There are not many academic sources that convey this exact message in this manner but Ahmadi (2008), for example, wrote how poetic the Afghan language is through the display of poems, (oral) stories and analysis of them. Moreover, the only part that all participants either (strongly) agreed upon or voted neutral was in the Afghan section for ‘poetic’, therefore indicating how strong that perception is of all the participants towards the word ‘poetic’ and ‘Afghan’ as one concept. Additionally, from the data it can be assumed that the participants believe that both languages have overt prestige as most participants agreed with the positive adjectives and disagreed with the negative adjective.

For the majority of the statements in the Dutch section except the ‘direct’ one majority of the votes were neutral, so the participants were either unsure of their answer or they had no opinion. Or it could be that people were tired filling in the survey, and that is why they gave more neutral choices in the Dutch section compared to the Afghan section because in that section half of the statements had neutral as the highest score.

#### ***4. 5 Attitudes Towards the Afghan and Dutch Cultures***

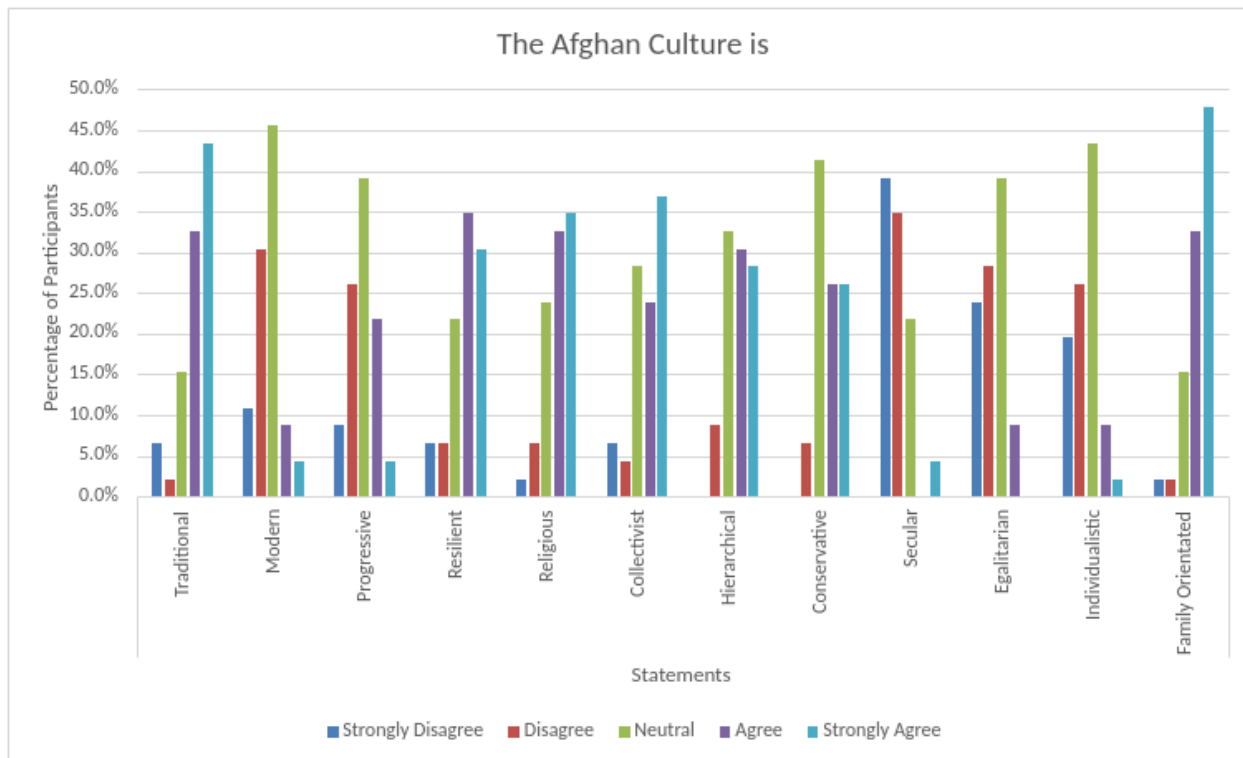
##### **4.5.1 Closed Question Results.**

The results from this section will answer sub question 3: ‘what are the attitudes towards the home and the Dutch culture among the first and second generations?’ Due to an error in Qualtrics, only 46 people answered the questions in this section. To find out people’s opinions on the Afghan culture a set of closed questions was asked and an open question. The closed questions were based on adjectives that can describe a culture, and the participants chose on a Lickert scale of 5 points between strongly disagree to neutral to strongly agree. Ten of the adjectives are antonyms to test if the participants think the Afghan and Dutch cultures are different or not. The additional two adjectives - resilient and family orientated - are used to see what people think of the culture without having a direct word to compare it with.

##### ***4.5.1.1 Afghan Cultural Attitudes.***

#### **Figure 10**

*Number of Participants Stating Their Opinion of The Afghan Culture*



For almost all of the statements ‘neutral’ has ranked in second or third place. The term neutral means that the participants are unsure about the correct answer or that they do not have an opinion on the matter. Therefore, the neutral votes will not be mentioned as much in the written results section below, unless they do play a significant role depending on the statement.

Firstly, the majority of the participants (35) (strongly) agree that the Afghan culture is ‘traditional’, which is as expected as seen in Figures 2-4 as well. On the other hand, the antonym of it being ‘modern’ reflects the results as many of the participants (19) (strongly) disagreed that the Afghan culture is modern.

Secondly, for the ‘progressive’ statement the opinions were very varied as 16 people (strongly) disagreed, and 12 people (strongly) agreed. Consequently, the antonym of ‘conservative’ has the opposite results as 24 people voted (strongly) agree. Thus, from these results it can be assumed that everyone has a different opinion on how progressive the culture is



but there seems to be an inclination towards it being less progressive and more conservative, which seems to be the right assumption of how the current state of the Afghan society in Afghanistan is functioning. Subsequently, that also influences the Afghan people outside of the country to an extent especially if they are still in touch with their cultural roots or the current state of the country through family or news directly from Afghanistan.

Thirdly, most of the participants (strongly) agree that the Afghan culture is 'religious' (31). Hence, expectedly most people voted (strongly) disagree that it is a 'secular' culture (34). These results are as expected as most of the country's population are Muslims, and due to the Taliban, who enforce the Islamic religion even more and exclude all other religions in the country. Naturally, the state of the country will influence the culture to an extent as well, so the culture being religious is normal. Fourthly, as mentioned by Trompenaars (2024), the Afghan culture is 'collectivist', which most of the participants (strongly) agree with (28). Surprisingly, the votes were split in almost half as 20 voted neutral and 21 voted (strongly) disagree for the 'individualistic' statement. There seems to be an inclination for the Afghan society to be less individualistic and more collectivist, but the reason many voted neutral is unknown, an assumption could be that the participants feel individualistic themselves but since they are multicultural it may be difficult to distinguish this difference between an individual and the culture at times.

Fifthly, many (strongly) agree that the culture has 'hierarchical' tendencies (27), whereas 24 (strongly) disagree that it is an 'egalitarian' culture. From the results there is an inclination that the Afghan culture is not that equal and instead has a focus on hierarchy, which aligns to Hofstede's (n.d.-b) dimension of power distance, where both Iran and Pakistan and seemingly Afghanistan are leaning more towards a hierarchical society. These countries are compared to

Afghanistan as they have many similarities in terms of geographical location, religious beliefs, and languages to an extent.

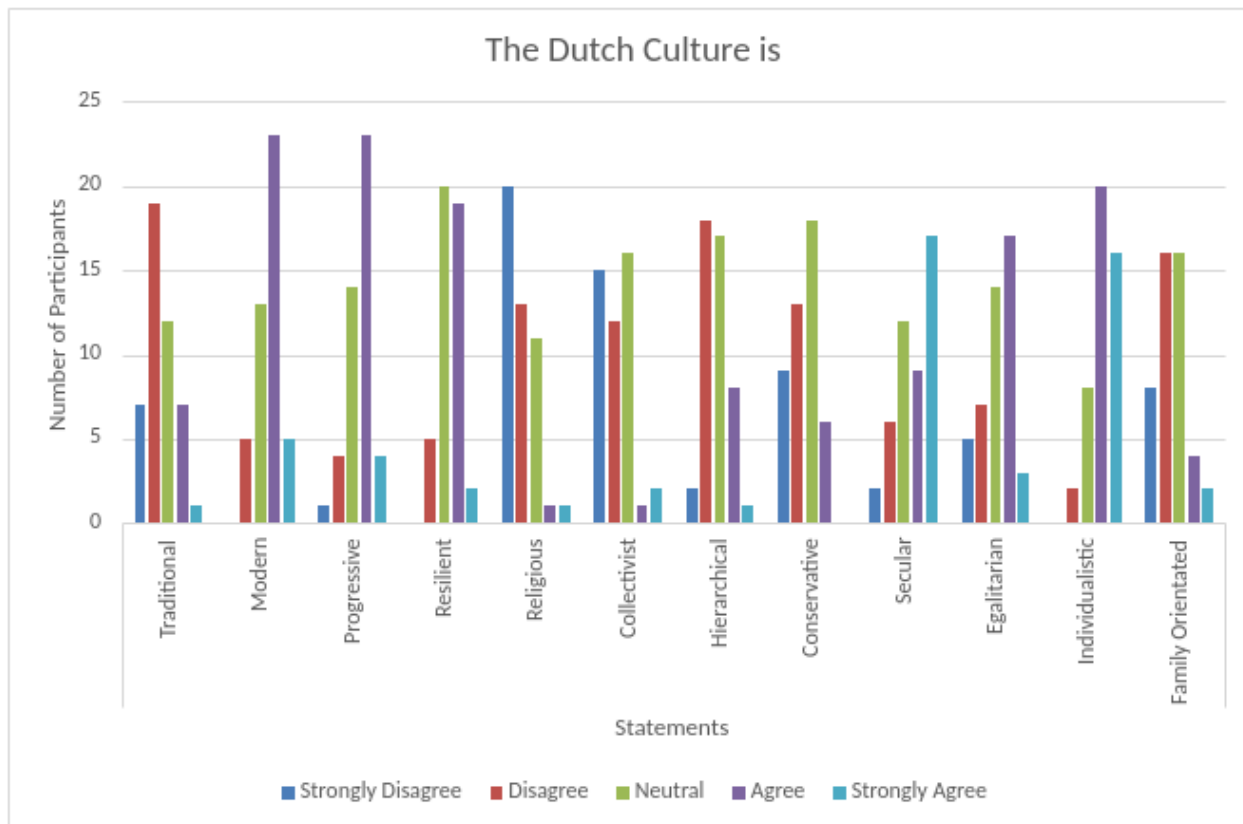
Sixthly, most people voted (strongly) agree that the Afghan culture is ‘resilient’ (30). This adjective was chosen because of its strong meaning and historical association with the Afghan people- “the ability of people or things to recover quickly after something unpleasant” such as war; changing social and political landscapes (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d.-b). Afghanistan and its people have faced four decades, with several major political and social changes in their lives yet the Afghan people are still kind and hospitable even though they have faced so many struggles and are still facing struggles such as poverty, famine, natural disasters, and human right violations. This statement was included to see if the Afghans in the Netherlands think and perhaps remember that the Afghan people are resilient. Fortunately, the results do show that many participants also agree that Afghan culture always bounces back from downfalls.

Lastly, the statement that most of the participants (strongly) agreed upon is that the culture is ‘family orientated’ (37), and only 2 people (strongly) disagreed, which is the lowest number of disagreements from all the statements. Therefore, there is a clear opinion from the majority that the Afghan culture deems family relationships as particularly important, and this partially from the collectivist culture too. Thus, from the above results it can be concluded that the participants believe that the Afghan culture is traditional, conservative, religious, collectivist, hierarchical, resilient, and family orientated.

#### ***4.5.1.2 Dutch Cultural Attitudes.***

### **Figure 11**

*Number of Participants Stating Their Opinion of The Dutch Culture*



Firstly, many of the participants (strongly) disagree that the Dutch culture is not ‘traditional’ (26), and 8 voted (strongly) agree. Most people do not believe that the Dutch culture is traditional, which is as expected if it is compared to the Afghan culture. However, Dutch culture has some traditions such as bitterballen, cheese markets, King’s Day, pancakes, and Sinterklaas (TDG Digital, 2022; Heckmann, 2024). Perhaps the participants do not celebrate or consume these traditional aspects as much compared to the Afghan ones. Assumably there could be less pressure for people to partake or think of these Dutch festivals and food as traditional and compulsory. Whereas, with many Afghan traditions people often feel that all of the traditions are obligatory, and this could be because the Afghan culture has a high involvement tendency (Trompenaars, 2024); thus, the Afghan culture feels more traditional compared to the Dutch which is more easy-going. Therefore, for the antonym of traditional, most participants voted

(strongly) agree that the Dutch culture is ‘modern’ (28). A reason for the Dutch culture to be considered more modern could be because the Netherlands is driven to renew and renovate its houses, roads, and streets, so the general environment and landscape throughout the country. So, in that regard, the Netherlands seems more modern than Afghanistan.

Secondly, many participants voted (strongly) agree that the Dutch culture is ‘progressive’ (27), and that is an understandable perspective as the Netherlands is more technologically advanced. Moreover, the Netherlands has much gender equality in its society as it is ranked 28 out of 146 countries, comparing this to Afghanistan, which has ranked globally and regionally at the bottom in 2023 (World Economic Forum, 2024). Hence, it is no surprise that the Netherlands is perceived as more progressive compared to Afghanistan. The results for the antonym ‘conservative’ are almost split in half: 22 voted (strongly) disagree and 18 voted neutral. The Netherlands is a relatively open-minded country as it is for example the first country to legalise same sex marriage, so it is not considered as conservative society in that sense, so the choice of the those who disagreed are valid. However, the neutral votes could come from the fact that the political landscape of the country is changing in this time-period into an extreme right-wing government which is conservative (Van Rij, 2024). So perhaps a few participants feel like the country is becoming more conservative, but they are not sure yet because the government has not implemented any of the conservative measures.

Thirdly, a high number of participants (strongly) disagree that the Dutch culture is ‘religious’ (33), and the antonym of ‘secular’ has 26 people who (strongly) agree with that statement. Dutch culture is therefore not considered as religious as religious practices may not be practised constantly or openly in society; therefore, it is also considered as secular. Additionally, it can be considered as secular as almost 60% of the country’s population was not religious in

2022 (Schmeets & Houben, 2023). However, in both these categories, 25 people voted neutral and this could be because the participants, and the people around them are religious. Or it can also be because the Netherlands is a multi-religious country that has prayer buildings for all the major religions, so it is a country that accepts and allows for religious people to live and practise their beliefs. Thus, arguably the culture is open for religious people.

Fourthly, most participants (strongly) disagree that the Dutch culture is 'collectivist' (27) and the antonym 'individualistic' they (strongly) agree upon (36). These results suggest that Hofstede (n.d.) and Trompenaars' (2024) dimensions of individualism are true to an extent. It would be interesting to find out in the future what people from a collectivist culture feel like living in an individualistic culture in detail. From the limited results gathered from this survey in the open question results (mentioned in more detail below), some of the participants seemed to be dissatisfied with the whole 'I-culture' from the Netherlands. From personal experience and observation of others, there have been times where there were conflicts between parents from G1, and the children from the latter generations who had an easier time adapting to Dutch culture because they were able to integrate with the Dutch culture from a younger age. The conflicts were often about the values and identifying with the different cultures and finding it difficult to find a balance between the two at times. Hence, belonging to cultures there are opposites in terms of being collectivist and individualistic can create friction in people's lives.

Fifthly, the results of the Dutch culture being 'resilient' are almost split in half: 21 voted (strongly) agree and 20 voted neutral. The Netherlands can be considered as resilient as it has overcome the historical challenges against the many floods the country has experienced, and the solutions created to battle these environmental issues is a sign of resilience. The country is also economically, socially, politically, environmentally (renewable energy), and educationally

resilient as it has faced many challenges in all these aspects, yet the country is still successful and safe. Perhaps the reason for many participants voting neutral could be because they did not remember that the Netherlands has overcome so many issues, or it could be that they are comparing the war and human rights situation from Afghanistan to the Netherlands, and in that sense Afghans seem to be more resilient as they never give up to attain peace although they are not there yet.

Sixthly, most of the participants voted (strongly) disagree that the Dutch culture is 'family orientated' (24), and 16 voted neutral. Most people do not think that the Dutch culture is family orientated. This could be due to several reasons such as the Dutch culture being more individualistic, so people focus more on themselves and their immediate family rather than their extended family members too. It could also be because people are comparing the Afghan culture directly to the Dutch culture and the Afghan culture is very collectivist and highly involved with others (Hofstede, n.d.; Trompenaars, 2024), so all family members are considered even extended family members; in the Afghan culture when people turn old their children will take care of the elders in their own homes. But in the Netherlands people do that less often, and instead elders go to elderly homes, or they live alone, so their own family arguably takes less care of them, which in turn can be interpreted as Dutch people being less family orientated.

Concluding, to answer sub question 3, 'what are the attitudes towards the home and the Dutch culture among the first and second generations?' They perceive the Afghan culture as more traditional, conservative, religious, collectivist, hierarchical, resilient, and family orientated. Whilst the Dutch culture is viewed as more modern, progressive, resilient, secular, egalitarian and individualistic.

### 4.5.2 Open Question Results.

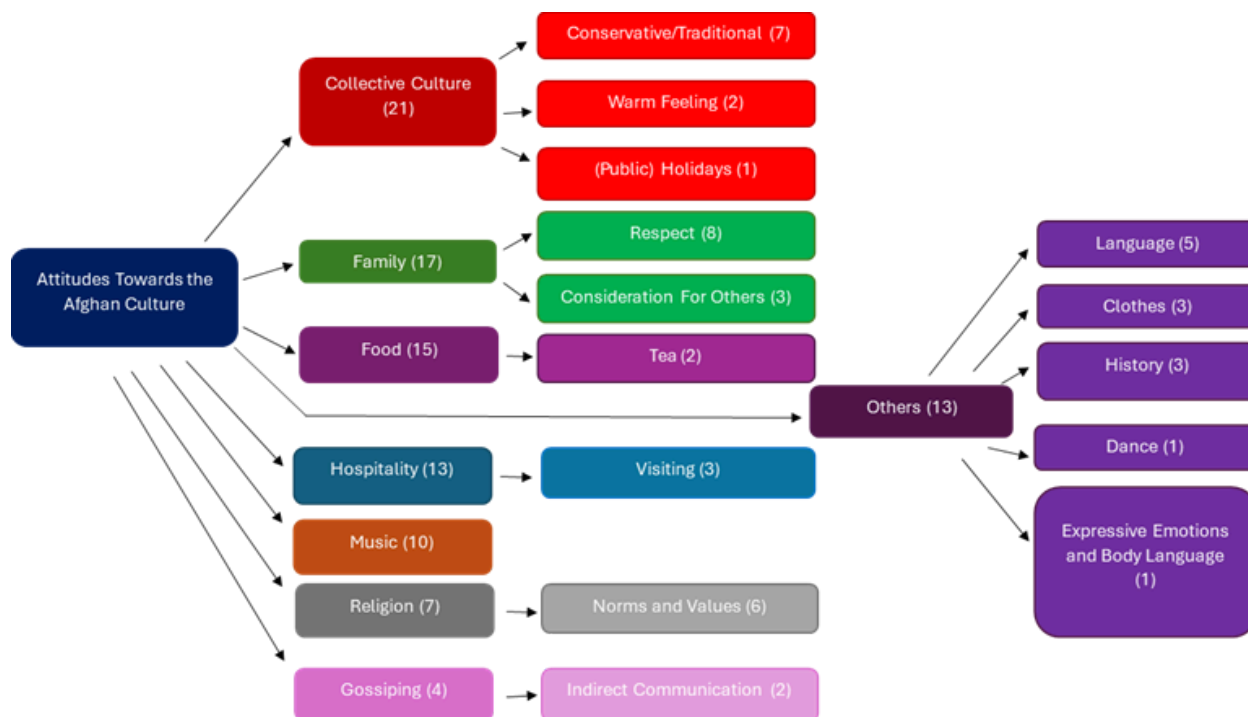
Similarly to the above section this part will answer sub question 3, ‘what are the attitudes towards the home and the Dutch culture among the first and second generations?’ This was a voluntary question so people could opt out not to answer it.

#### 4.5.2.1 Afghan Cultural Attitudes.

In total 35 people answered the question for the Afghan culture, and the numbers in each of the boxes represents the number of times these words and themes were mentioned in the open question the participants were asked. Only the three most significant results will be described and analysed in detail in this section. Look at Appendix D for further analysis and the complete results of the participants’ individual answers.

**Figure 12**

*‘What makes the Afghan culture Afghan? What are the important features/aspects of Afghan culture?’*



The figure above summarises the key topics and features that the participants mentioned. Majority of the participants mentioned that the Afghan culture is ‘collective’, which the majority of participants also mentioned in figure 11, and Trompenaars’ (2024) support this opinion too. Branching from this heading the subheadings of ‘conservative and traditional; warm feeling and (public) holidays’ were added. The ‘conservative and traditional’ heading is added to the ‘collective culture’ main heading because these key words describe the culture well, and ‘(public) holidays’ are part of the country, so becoming something that matters in the general culture for most people. The subheading of ‘warm feeling’ was added here and not the family heading because I asked what people thought of the culture, and none of the participants mentioned the words warm feelings and family as one key theme, but rather separate themes. As the results show, a large number of participants described the culture as collectivist, conservative, traditional and family, which aligns with the results of figure 14. However, there could be a carryover effect from the previous question as participants used the same keywords from the closed question in the open question answers. On the other hand, it can be argued that these words describe the Afghan culture well, and from the above figure it is clear that participants used many other words to describe the culture too.

Next, the second highest heading is of ‘family’ with the subheadings of ‘respect’ and ‘consideration for others’. As demonstrated before, the Afghan culture is very family orientated therefore it is natural that they are considerate of their family members and the society around them as the culture is collectivist, so even neighbours can be considered as family over time as they are part of the community. Moreover, part of the Afghan lifestyle is fictive kinship meaning that it is common to address people who are not biologically or legally related to oneself in familial terms such as aunty, uncle, sister, and brother. This consideration for others is thus



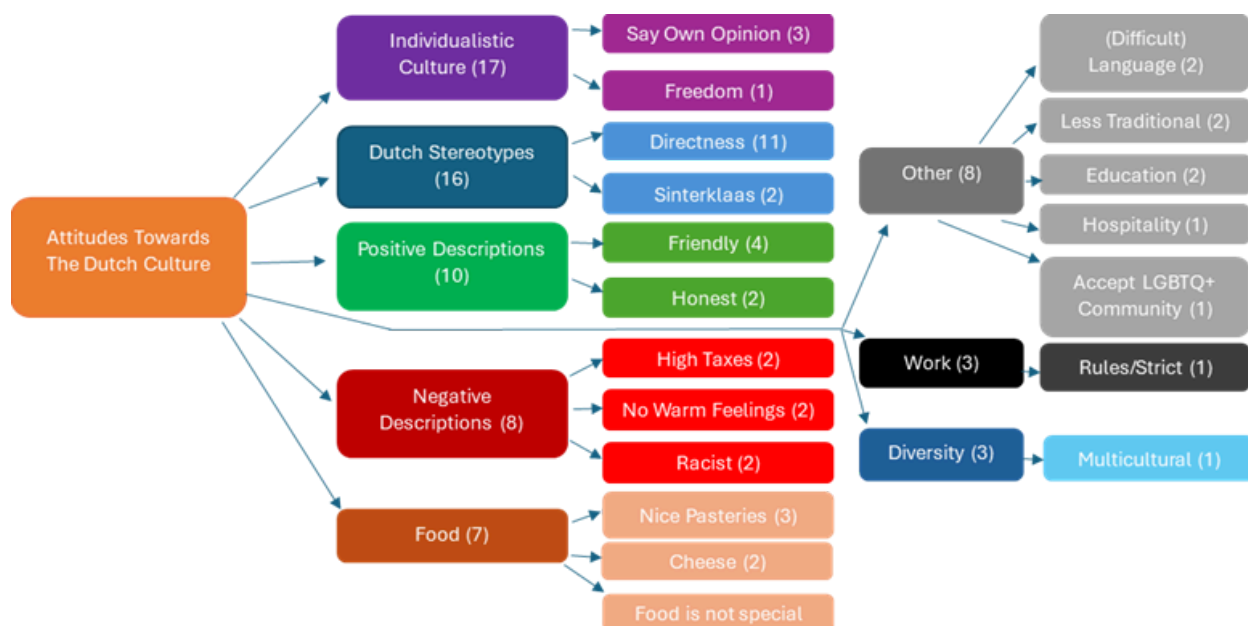
shared across the whole society. Additionally, the theme of ‘respect’ is also in this section as several participants mention that respecting the elders in the family is especially important, thus also showing that there is hierarchy within the family. Thirdly, ‘food’ was mentioned often as a key feature of Afghan culture, and a couple of people also mentioned ‘tea’. These words were expected to be mentioned as Afghans appreciate their cuisine and it is consumed on almost a daily basis by most Afghans; tea is drunk daily too and is especially a key beverage during family visits too.

#### 4.5.2.2 Dutch Cultural Attitudes.

For this open question 29 participants answered the question, therefore there are less answers, but they were all very diverse. Most of the results that had only one mention are not portrayed in the mind map because they would take up too much space. However, they are mentioned in the analysis, and only the top three most significant results will be discussed in depth in this section. For further information please look at Appendix E.

**Figure 13**

*‘What makes Dutch culture Dutch? What are the important features/aspects of Dutch culture?’*



The most significant result was that almost 60% of the participants mentioned that the Dutch culture is individualistic, which supports the findings of Hofstede (n.d.) and Trompenaars' (2024). The subheadings are 'say own opinion' and 'freedom'. I decided to add these headings under 'individualistic culture' because they fit under the theme, since Dutch culture is very independent, indulgent and encourages freedom of speech. Being able to say one's own opinion is part of the (high) indulgence category (Hofstede, n.d.). Moreover, in an individualistic society it is also clear that there is more freedom as people are more independent and do not need to rely on others too much, so one's freedom is not restricted in terms of social relationships, which links back to Trompenaars' (2024) low involvement dimension. Comparing the two cultures they are polar opposites in this sense as Afghanistan is extremely collectivist and restraint, and the Netherlands is exceptionally individualistic and indulgent.

Secondly, several 'Dutch stereotypes' were mentioned such as 'directness, Sinterklaas, legalised drugs, windmills and wooden shoes'. The biggest subheading was directness which relates to the communication style of the language and culture, and that is low context. Thus, Dutch people tend to communicate explicitly, directly and rely much on verbal expressions. Once again, this is the opposite of the Afghan communication style which is more high context, so implicit and indirect, which most participants also agree with as seen in section 4.2. At times, the Dutch style is so straightforward it may be considered rude, especially to those from foreign countries with indirect communication styles. Additionally, most Dutch people do not enjoy small talk and prefer getting to the point of the conversation, which is the opposite of the Afghan style and can be considered as rude. Thirdly, the heading of 'positive descriptions' was created to categorise the diverse positive words describing the culture which are 'friendly; honest; a

developing culture; open minded; respectful, and self-development'. Thus, several participants seem to be very satisfied with several aspects of Dutch culture.

Concluding, to answer sub question 3, 'what are the attitudes towards the home and the Dutch cultures?' They have vastly different attitudes towards the two cultures. The attitudes towards the Afghan culture have a large focus on the fact that it is a collective and familial culture that appreciates its cuisine and music largely; its characteristics are tea, clothes, and language. Whereas the Dutch culture is perceived as individualistic, friendly, honest, and direct; its characteristics are Sinterklaas and pastries. An interesting observation is also that it was easier to categorise the Afghan answers because they were similar, whereas the Dutch ones were diverse. From this it could be argued that people either agree with stereotypes or that the Afghan mindset is collectivistic or very clear in what it is, and the Dutch mindset is individualistic and has more positive and negative aspects.

#### ***4.6 Identification as a Person***

This section includes not just identification with the culture, but also language and feelings of belongingness that the participants have towards the two various societies. In total 46 participants answered this question. The average scores were quite different as participants identified as an Afghan person 71.4/100 and as a Dutch person 47.7/100.

#### **Figure 14**

*Number of Participants from Each Generation Identifying as an Afghan Person*

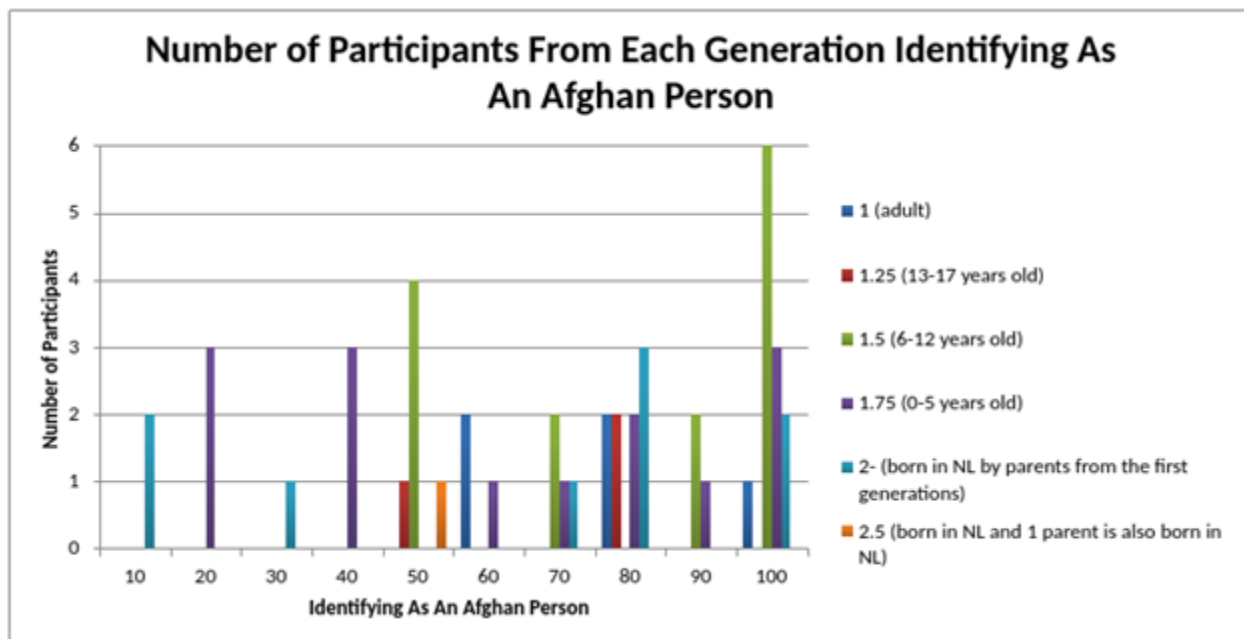


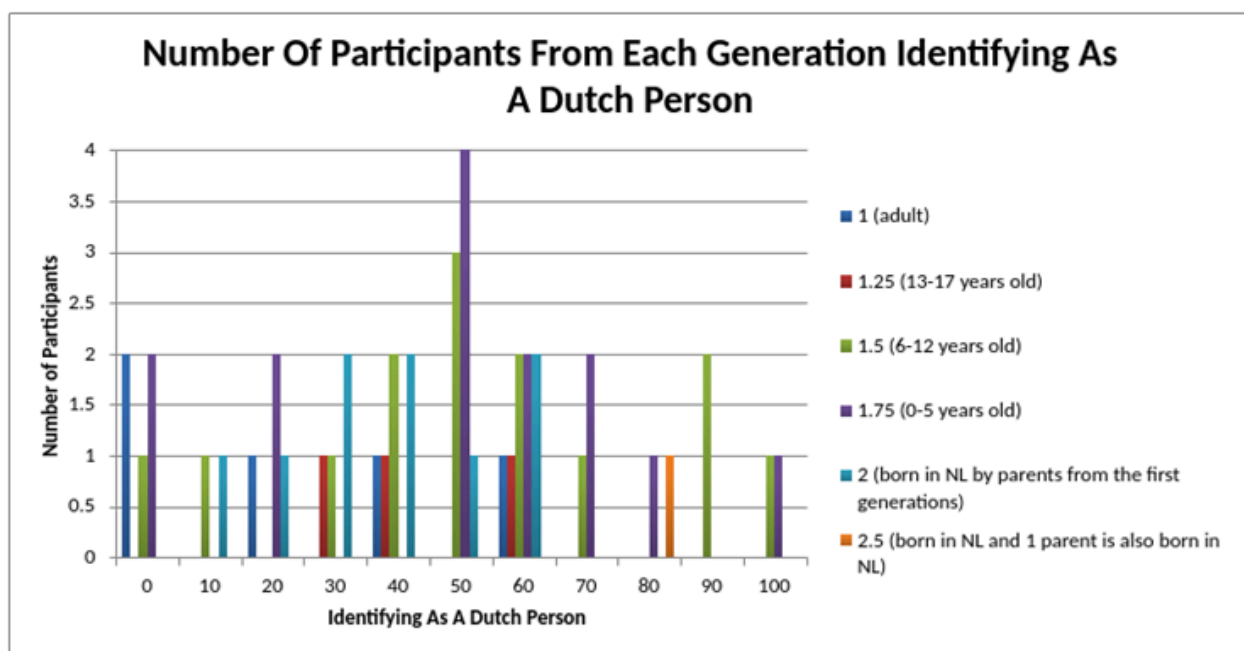
Figure 15 demonstrates that many participants identify strongly as an Afghan person. The participants who identify less than 50% are from generation 2 and 1.75, probably because the Dutch society played a larger role in their roles as they lived since birth or a younger age in the Netherlands. Interestingly, the results from generation 1 are varied between the 60s, 80s and 100 percent, so it can be assumed that when some people emigrate from their home country they can lose or exchange a part of their identity with a new place. People from G1.5 and G2 have the most interesting results as for G.1.5 there are two peaks in the graph where a portion of them identify about 50% as an Afghan person but most of them 100%. So, some of them feel like they are Afghan to a moderate extent and others feel like they are extremely Afghan. Moreover, some participants from G2 have polar opposite identification levels as an Afghan person as two people identified less than 10% as Afghan and two others as 100%.

Next, Figure 16 presents how much participants identify as a Dutch person and the results are more spread out, but there is a peak at around 50% due to participants from G1.5 and 1.75. Thus, most of the participants feel only fairly Dutch. Like the Dutch culture section (4.5 and

Appendix F), most people from G1 identify approximately 40% as a Dutch person, but there is one person who identifies around 60%. Perhaps this person has integrated more into the society and has accepted that they are also Dutch.

**Figure 15**

*Number of Participants from Each Generation Identifying as a Dutch Person*



Intriguingly, participants from G1.5 have identified themselves all over the scale from less than 10% to 100%, which is interesting as for the Afghan section the lowest score was 50%, meaning that people from this generation identify more as an Afghan person than Dutch. No participants from G1, G1.25 and G2 have identified more than 70% as Dutch, which is interesting because for G1 it is to be expected as they grew up in a foreign country until they were adults. But everyone from G2 was born in NL yet they do not feel like a very Dutch person, and not all the people from G2 identified strongly as an Afghan person either.

Comparing these results to the findings of Yilmaz and Schmid (2015) of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, they concluded that Dutch language success and identification is

not affected by how often they speak Turkish. Also, that identifying as Turkish does not affect how much one can also identify as being Dutch. The results of this study suggest similar results to Yilmaz and Schmid (2015), as most of the participants have a better command of the Dutch language and speak more Dutch but they still identify as more Afghan. This proves that speaking Afghan does not hinder the success of having proficient Dutch language abilities, and that having a less well command of the Afghan language does not block a person from identifying more as an Afghan person. However, identifying more as an Afghan person does affect that most participants identify less as a Dutch person, but this varies on an individual basis rather than a generational difference.

## **5. Conclusion**

All the results from this study are new contributions to the field of Afghans in the Netherlands in terms of language and cultural attitudes as they have never been researched on before. The main research question of ‘how do first- and second-generation Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands perceive their own mother tongue and ethnic culture, and how do they also perceive the Dutch language and culture as?’ has been answered through this study. Afghan immigrants in the Netherlands have quite different attitudes towards the Afghan and Dutch languages and cultures. Most of them have overall better Dutch language abilities compared to Afghan ones as a substantial proportion of the participants do not know how to read or write in Afghan. Moreover, people do not watch or read that much in Afghan, but they do listen to more Afghan music. They do not read often due to most participants not being able to Afghan. On the other hand, participants do watch and read a bit more in Dutch but listen less to Dutch music. The results also presented that the Dutch language sounds intellectual, friendly, formal, modern,

and direct. Whereas the Afghan language sounds beautiful, intellectual, friendly, formal, poetic, and modern. In general people use the Dutch language in more situations and with more people compared to Afghan, especially with friends, at work, at school and during online communication. Furthermore, the Afghan culture is perceived as more traditional, collectivist, and family orientated; while the Dutch culture is viewed as more modern, individualistic, and direct. In addition, the identification rate of people from all generations are varied, for example, a few participants from G2 and G1.75 (7) identified themselves as 40% or less Afghan. Conversely participants from all generations (21), except 2.5, identified themselves as 40% or less Dutch. Thus, there is a stronger inclination that most participants feel more Afghan than Dutch despite the fact that most of them have a better command of the Dutch language, and have lived longer in the Netherlands than Afghanistan.

If interested, there is more information in the appendices that were either excluded or briefly mentioned in the thesis, and this is due to the word limit restraint on the thesis. For example, there is information in Appendix F for the identification of only the Afghan and Dutch cultures and in Appendix G in what language(s) participants can express themselves emotionally best in.

### ***5.1 Limitations and Improvements***

An issue was that not all participants completed the survey and that there was a problem with the Qualtrics Software consequently some people did not answer a few questions, or their answers were not recorded. For next time it would be beneficial if the survey were shorter, and to keep all components of the survey on one page instead of splitting it up in multiple pages;

because participants may forget to click on the next page button and consequently not complete the survey.

Additionally, there was a participant who was confused in the reading and writing language abilities question section about what version of the Afghan language alphabet they were being questioned about. Specifically, they were confused on whether the question meant that the participant could read and write in the Afghan/Arabic alphabet or in the Romanised/Latin alphabet. Next time, the researcher could explicitly mention which alphabet system they are asking the participants. Or to also ask the participants, perhaps, if they can read and write in both or only one of the alphabet systems. Moreover, next time the researchers should try to find more participants from all the generations, and to try and have a better gender balance between the participants because the current results are not very representative. But the results do give a first image of the attitudes of Afghans in the Netherlands on the Afghan and Dutch languages and cultures, especially for those in their 20s and 30s as they are the majority of the participants.

Discussions with participants brought some insight on how to improve the survey and similar future studies. A portion of the participants are family members. A number of the participants said that the elder family members (from G1) could not fill in the survey without the help of their children or that the elders did not fill it in because of two reasons: firstly, there was a language barrier. Although the survey's language was tried to be made as easy as possible and keywords were defined too, it was still too difficult for several people. Secondly, there were technological difficulties for the elderly who do not understand how to use technological devices that well, thus they also had struggles filling out the survey to an extent.



Furthermore, one of the participants was asked, 'if the survey were written in Dari would it have been easier for the elders to fill in?' Their response was that it would still be a bit difficult because although the language barrier element is no longer an issue there is still a technological issue to an extent. Moreover, they mentioned that there are also elders that also did not receive the opportunity to go to school in Afghanistan, so they do not know how to read and write Dari either. Thus, for them it would be difficult to fill out the questionnaire either way. A recommendation for future researchers would be to conduct interviews with participants that are illiterate and literate so that they do not have the above issue, and interviews gather more qualitative data, which is beneficial.

The cultural attitudes are also vastly different as the Afghan culture is perceived as traditional, conservative, religious, collectivist, hierarchical, resilient, and family orientated. Also, Afghan food and hospitality are also key traits that many participants value in the Afghan culture. On the contrary, Dutch culture is perceived as modern, progressive, resilient, secular, egalitarian and individualistic; a key characteristic of the culture is that it is direct. Lastly, on average participants identified more as an Afghan person than a Dutch person even though they live in the Netherlands and their Dutch language skills are better too. This suggests that there is a difference between language proficiency and cultural identification, and that arguably a person's heritage/ethnicity plays a larger role than their nationality or the country that they live in when it comes to their identity.

## ***5.2 Future Research***

Future research could be done in the following areas: firstly, to carry out a similar study in a few years' time to see if more people from the second (and third) generations could fill in the survey, and to observe if there are any significant attitudinal changes between the first generation

immigrants, and born second/third generation Afghans in the Netherlands. Secondly, to find out how participants who did not have the opportunity to go to school properly in their lifetimes perceive diverse cultures/languages and/or how they view the world differently compared to those who have had the opportunity to go to school. Thirdly, what people from a collectivist culture feel like living in an individualistic culture in detail. Fourthly, to see to what extent there is a relationship between how much a person identifies themselves as an Afghan and/or Dutch person and the extent to which Afghan and/or Dutch are mastered and used by these individuals. It is relevant to research the above in order to understand the Afghan diaspora better as it is important and interesting to represent them in an academic manner.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Dari and Pashto Alphabet

More information on the Dari alphabet and how to write using it. Also, the source of the picture below:

<https://www.webonary.org/dari/overview/alphabet/>

## The Dari Alphabet

The Dari alphabet has 32 letters—as follows (starting from right to left):

ا ب پ ت ث چ چ ح خ د ذ ر ز ژ س ش ص ض ط ظ ع غ ف ق ک ل م ن و ه ی

ح	چ	ج	ث	ت	پ	ب	آ / ا
ح	چ	جیم	ثی	تی	پی	بی	الف
hE	chE	jIm	sE	tE	pE	bE	alef
H	ch	j	s	t	p	b	A/a/e/u <sup>1</sup>
[h]	[tʃ]	[dʒ]	[s]	[t]	[p]	[b]	[ɒ/a/ɛ/u]
ش	س	ژ	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ
شین	سین	ژی	زی	ری	ذال	دال	خ
shIn	sIn	zhE	zE	rE	zAl	dAl	khE
sh	s	zh	z	r	z	d	kh
[ʃ]	[s]	[ʒ]	[z]	[r]	[z]	[d]	[x]
ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص
قاف	ف	غین	عین	ظوی/ظا	طوی/طا	ضاد	صاد
qAf	fE	ghain	ain	zOi/zA	tOi/tA	zwAd/zAd	swAd/sAd
q	f	gh	( <sup>1</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	z	t	z	s
[q]	[f]	[ɣ]	[ʔ]	[z]	[t]	[z]	[s]
ی	ه	و	ن	م	ل	گ	ک
یا	ه	واو	نون	میم	لام	گاف	کاف
yA	hE	wAw	nUn	mIm	lam	gAf	kAf
y/E/I <sup>2</sup>	h	w/O/U <sup>3</sup>	n	m	l	g	k
[y/e/i]	[h]	[w/o/u]	[n]	[m]	[l]	[g]	[k]

More information on the Pashto Alphabet and sources of picture below:

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Pashto-characters-dataset\\_fig1\\_328754005](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Pashto-characters-dataset_fig1_328754005)

<b>Pashto Character Set</b>					
Name	Alphabet	Name	Alphabet	Name	Alphabet
Alif	ا	Re	ر	Qa'uf	ق
Be	ب	Rhe	ړ	Ka'f	ک
Pe	پ	Ze	ز	Ga'f	گ
The	ت	Jey	ژ	Laam	ل
Te	ټ	Ghey	ږ	Meem	م
Se	س	Seen	س	Noon	ن
Jeem	ج	Sheen	ش	Rnoon	ښ
Zeem	خ	Heen	هڼ	Wow	و
Che	چ	Swa'd	ص	Kha	ه
Seem	شخ	Dwa'd	ض	Yee	ي
Hey	ح	Thwe	ط	Yey	ې
Khe	خ	Zwe	ظ	Ye	ی
Dhaal	د	Ain	ع	Yay	ی
Daal	ډ	Ghain	غ	Yai	ئ
Zaal	ذ	Fey	ف		

## Appendix B: Additional Messages

Als u iets wilt toevoegen over uw gedachten, emoties en/of ervaring ten opzichte van de Afghaanse en/of Nederlandse taal en cultuur: ⓘ

...

Ik ben sinds kleins af aan, heen en weer gereisd tussen Nederland en Afghanistan. Mijn manier van denken, praten en doen, is als het ware door de samenstelling van twee prachtige culturen gecreëerd. De één is niet beter of slechter dan de ander, en ik voel duidelijk de leegte van deze twee landen, wanneer ik niet aanwezig ben in één daarvan. Ik ben wel van mening dat de Afghaanse cultuur veel rijker en puurder was in vroegere tijden, in tegenstelling tot de onderdrukte Afghanistan die wij in het heden kennen. Nederland heeft gelukkig met de jaren mee, alleen maar positieve vooruitgang geboekt. Deze twee landen met hun culturen en mensen, liggen beiden dichtbij mijn hart.

Afghaans eten is lekkerder.

...

Mijn ouders zijn gescheiden ik woon sinds ik 8 ben bijna volledig bij mijn Afghaanse moeder, mijn vader is nederlands. Mijn moeder heeft tot ze acht was ongeveer in Afghanistan gewoont maar heeft tot haar 20ste voornamelijk in Afghaanse gemeenschappen en met Afghaanse familie doorgebracht. Ik ben voornamelijk opgevoegd door mijn moeder en ik heb dus veel dingen meegekregen van de Afghaanse cultuur ook zie ik mijn Afghaanse familieleden wekelijks tot maandelijks afhankelijk van hoe druk ik het heb. Ik identificeer mijzelf dus erg met de Afghaanse cultuur omdat ik voornamelijk door mijn Afghaanse moeder ben opgevoed en hecht ben opgegroeid met mijn volle Afghaanse familieleden. Behalve dat ik geen Afghaanse talen beheers voel ik mij niet verder verbonden van de cultuur dan dat vol Afghaanse kinderen die in Nederland zijn geboren. Mijn sociale circles en vriendengroepen zijn voornamelijk nederlands. Mijn wereldbeeld is denk ik wel meer beïnvloed door de Nederlandse cultuur die ik via school, vrienden en de media tegen kom. Als mij wordt gevraagd waar ik vandaan kom zeg ik dat ik nederlands ben maar mijn moeder Afghaans is. Alhoewel ik veel met de cultuur ben opgegroeid via mijn moeder en familie spreek ik de taal niet en zal ik door mensen in Afghanistan worden gezien als een westers persoon/Nederlander. Ik zie mijn moeders Afghaanse neven die in Duitsland wonen meerdere weekenden per maand. Mijn nederlandse tante die in hetzelfde dorp woont als mij zie ik een keer per jaar, mijn nederlandse oma die ook in hetzelfde dorp woont als min soms een paar keer per maand tot 1 keer in 2 maanden. Familie speelt in mijn Afghaanse kant een veel grotere rol dan in mijn nederlandse kant, in mijn ervaring is de Nederlandse cultuur meer gericht op het individu.

...

Nederlandse cultuur gaat alleen om je zelf maar in het afghaanse cultuur gaat om wij en dat vind ik het mooiste,

Ondanks dat er een groot verschil is tussen de Nederlandse en Afghaanse cultuur, hebben beiden leuke en minder leuke kenmerken. Beiden culturen staan (tegenwoordig) open voor nieuwe dingen en geven ruimte om jezelf te zijn en te volgen/doen wat bij je past.

...

"Als Afghanen moeten we hard aan onszelf werken. We moeten elkaar met rust laten en eerst proberen onszelf te verbeteren voordat we anderen willen corrigeren. Daarnaast moeten we de vrijheid respecteren van anderen om hun eigen weg te kiezen, of dat nu islamitisch is of niet. We moeten stoppen met het constant bekritisieren en beoordelen van anderen, en vooral het doorgeven van schaamte aan onze kinderen. We mogen onze kinderen niet manipuleren voor ons eigen belang, zoals hen onder druk zetten om bepaalde keuzes te maken. Nederlanders accepteren elkaar en laten anderen in hun waarde; ze gaan respectvol uit de weg als ze iemand niet leuk vinden, in plaats van hen constant te bekritisieren. We moeten onze oudere generatie leren om het leven van onze kinderen niet te beheersen en te accepteren dat ze hun eigen gezin en leven hebben, net zoals Nederlandse ouders dat doen."

...

Als er vrede was in Afghanistan dan zou ik met alle liefde gekijk daar naar toe willen gaan en een leven opbouwen. Maar de westerse landen en Amerika zijn de boosdoeners van alle problemen in de wereld en waarom er armoede en oorlog heerst

...

### ***Appendix C: When People Watch, Read, and Listen to Music in Afghan and Dutch***

This section will answer the first half of sub question 1: ‘in what situations is the home language (Afghan) used?’ but in specific situations. The following results were generated from the 42 participants due to a Qualtrics error 9 participants did not answer these questions. But the results are still analysed. The Likert scale is from 1 to 5: 1 means never; 2 means monthly; 3 means weekly; 4 means every couple of days; 5 means daily. The results between the two language groups are quite distinct. Firstly, the Afghan results demonstrate that 54% (22/42) of the participants never watch any Afghan movies or TV shows; around 20% of the participants watch Afghan programmes on a weekly basis; about 10% watch it daily. On the other hand, the Dutch results present that around 15% of the participants never watch any Dutch movies or TV shows; around 30% watch it on a weekly basis, and around 24% watch it daily.

Therefore, there is a distinct difference between the two groups as most participants do not ever or often watch any Afghan movies or TV shows, whereas there are more people who watch Dutch programmes on a weekly to daily basis. The results are understandable because there are more Dutch TV programmes and movies available in the Netherlands. On the other hand, if someone wants to watch Afghan TV or movies, they must connect their TV or smart device to another app or satellite to access them.

However, from personal experience the Afghan results are not completely accurate as the participant pool is not representative and few older people have filled in the survey. I have noticed from visiting my family that the elders in the family always have some kind of Afghan TV show or music playing on the TV screen, and I know that they often watch Afghan TV daily too. Other people during those visits are often therefore also exposed to Afghan TV shows, but

perhaps they are not consciously paying attention to it, so arguably the results could be accurate for the younger generations.

## Figure X

*How often do participants watch movies or TV in the Afghan and Dutch languages?*

Summary of Q33: Hoe vaak kijkt u naar films of TV in de volgende taal?

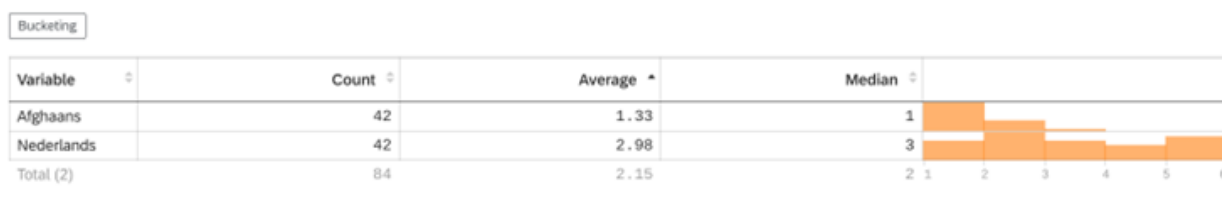


The results for the reading books or newspaper section are significantly different between the two groups again. For the Afghan results, just 76% of the participants never read anything; around 15% read something in Afghan once a month, and just under 10% read something in Afghan on a weekly basis. Whereas the Dutch section of the results demonstrate that approximately 20% never read anything in Dutch; most of the participants with 24% read monthly; around 20% read on a weekly basis; the second biggest group of 21% reads Dutch on daily basis. Thus, people read more in Dutch as they have the ability to do so and have more access to Dutch texts compared to Afghan ones because they live in the Netherlands.

## Figure X

*How often participants read books or newspapers in the Afghan and Dutch languages?*

Summary of Q35: Hoe vaak leest u boeken of tijdschriften in de volgende taal?

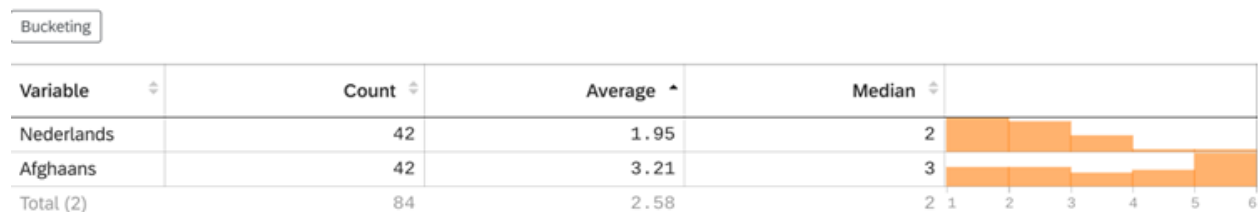


The results for the music section are surprisingly the other way round compared to the previous two questions. A third of the participants listen to Afghan music daily (31%) and a few people listen to it every couple of days (17%), and a fifth either never listen to it (19%) and the other fifth listen to it monthly (19%). Comparing these results to participants listening to Dutch music is significant, as 45% of the participants never listen to any Dutch music; around 30% listen to it monthly, and around 17% listen to it on a weekly basis, but none of the participants listen to it more regularly. These results could indicate that perhaps Afghan music is more entertaining than Dutch music. However, it is possible that participants also listen to music in other foreign languages such as English or Spanish as songs in those languages are also popular in the Netherlands.

### Figure X

*How often do participants listen to music in the Afghan and Dutch languages?*

Summary of Q37: Hoe vaak luistert u naar muziek in de volgende taal?



### ***Appendix D: Open Question Results for the Afghan Culture Section***

Further analysis for most of the remaining results:

Fourthly, ‘hospitality’ is a key trait that all Afghan households share, and this can always be seen during visits. The hospitality trait can also be linked to familial consideration and the collectivist and high involvement culture where communities always support one another in all manners.

Fifthly, ‘music’ was a common theme that popped up several times. Music is a universal sound that connects people worldwide and crosses time and cultural boundaries, so Afghan music being so loved and appreciated is great. Additionally, in section 4.4.2 there was a strong indication that most participants listen to Afghan music often.

Sixthly the topic of ‘religion’ was mentioned a few times, which could perhaps be because of the carryover effect. But Afghanistan can be considered to have a cultural religion meaning that the religion has become an important part of the culture’s traditions, social practices, and customs; meaning that the religious practices are not just an individual's choice to believe in something but that it is deeply woven into the daily life of people and the community identity. The subheading of ‘norms and values’ is connected to the religion and collective culture parts as they are all interconnected.

Seventhly, gossiping was mentioned a few times as well this is because Afghans love gossiping and there are several reasons for that: firstly, it is a form of social bonding and entertainment as sharing information even about other people can create a sense of trust and intimacy between people (Dunbar, 1998), and these conversations can often be engaging and fun too (McAndrew, 2008). As mentioned before, exchanging information is a key reason too because through gossiping people find out new information, and about social norms and behaviour that is (un)acceptable in their community/society. Moreover, it can be a form of stress



relief for many too such as a person can relieve their pent-up emotions and frustrations. Lastly, gossiping is also a form of social policing as it can be a ‘tool for social regulation, where individuals discuss the behaviour of others to enforce social norms and values within a group’” (ChatGPT, Beersman and Van Kleef, 2012). Afghans gossip due to all the above reasons as it is just part of the culture and what many human beings around the world do. The subheading of ‘indirect communication’ is added here because the Afghan culture is a high-context culture where implicit communication is quite common, and through gossiping people often tell each other indirectly subtle messages in the Afghan culture. Eighthly, the others section includes language, clothes, history, dance, expressive emotions, and body language. These parts will not be described or analysed in depth as the terms are self-explanatory.

### Individual Answers of Participants:

1 - in het buitenland geboren en als volwassene naar Nederland gekomen

Clothes and food. Respect for elders.

Clothes × Food × ...Respect ×



2 - in Nederland geboren uit ouders die buiten Nederland geboren zijn

Afghanen hebben vaak veel humor, ook gebruiken ze bepaalde gezichtsuitdrukkingen, geluiden en zelfs bewegingen met het lichaam, om hun gevoel uit te drukken. Hoewel niet iedere Afghaanse familie iets met muziek heeft, is het wel algemeen bekend dat Afghanen muzikaal ingericht zijn en/of het luisteren naar Afghaanse muziek op dagelijkse basis gewend zijn. Afghanen zijn pas écht Afghaans als ze thermoskannen van zwarte thee in één zitting leeg kunnen drinken. Afghanen zijn gastvrij en soms bijna "overgedienstig/té vriendelijk". Dit zorgt er soms voor dat veel Afghanen niet eerlijk zijn over wat zij écht vinden, en slechts de andere partij tevreden willen stellen. "Ghaibat"/roddelen gebeurt helaas tussen de Afghanen ook redelijk veel.

Expressive Emotions and Body Language × Gossiping × Hospitality × Music × ...Tea ×



1.25 -in het buitenland geboren en als tiener naar Nederland gekomen (13-17 jaar)

Gastvrijheid, familie gericht

Family × Hospitality ×

1.5 - in het buitenland geboren en als kind naar Nederland gekomen (6-12 jaar)

Afghaanse eten

Food ×



---

1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

Het geloof en de normen en waarden! Kenmerken daarvan zijn: denken aan het collectieve en niet individu.

Collective Culture ×

...Norms and Values ×



---

1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

Afghaanse cultuur is gebaseerd op familie en vrienden. De zo gezegde "Wij" cultuur.

Collective Culture ×

Family ×

### ***Appendix E: Open Question Results for Dutch Culture Attitude***

Further analysis:

Fourthly, the heading of ‘negative descriptions’ has the subheadings of ‘high taxes; no warm feelings; racist; selfish, and unreliable’. Unfortunately, the whole country suffers from paying high taxes and racism is arguably on the rise especially towards Muslims due to the right-wing government these days (Van Rij, 2024). However, it is interesting that a couple of people said there is a lack of ‘warm feelings’ in the Dutch culture, because in the language exists the word ‘gezellig’ meaning convivial, which indicates warm cosy feelings when one is spending time with others in a fun, familial or friendly manner. But perhaps some people feel that the warm convivial feelings one experiences in an Afghan atmosphere is stronger because of the collectivist and high involvement mindset of having more people and more interactions with people in many ways.

Fifthly, the heading of ‘food’ has the subheadings of ‘nice pastries; cheese, and the food is not special’. Unfortunately, many think that Dutch food tastes simple compared to Afghan or most Asian cuisines, but it is a positive sign that many do enjoy the sweet pastries. Cheese is technically also a Dutch stereotype, but since it is a food first it was put under this heading.

Sixthly, the theme of ‘work’ was mentioned a few times in the sense that it can be too much work or unreliable, and that the work environment can be ‘strict’ with many ‘rules’, which is normal for Dutch standards as it is necessary for any business to run smoothly. Also, this aligns with Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance dimension that the Dutch do prefer to have rules. But the Afghan culture can sometimes be more flexible as often family members work together as the culture is more collective. Seventhly, is the heading of ‘diversity’ with the subheading of

‘multicultural’, a few participants appreciated that the Dutch culture is truly diverse and that makes sense as almost a quarter of the population are people with a non-Dutch background, and most people in the country are multilingual which makes them multicultural to an extent.

Eighthly, is the heading of ‘others’ with the subheadings of ‘(difficult) language; less traditional; education hospitality; accept LGBTQ+ community; some people have tight family bonds, and people are less family oriented’.

From personal interactions with Afghans it is almost obligatory to greet and ask the other party how they are and how their families are, and they will ask the same back and then (usually if one texts) it is possible to get to the point of the conversation, but in person the small talk is usually longer. When I tried this same method with Dutch people, they would often ignore the small talk and sometimes even the greeting and just answer the main question to not waste any time. Moreover, if one is not close to the person asking about their family may be perceived as weird and intrusive, but to Afghans it is seen as normal. Thus, Afghans in the Netherlands must adapt their communication style to the Dutch one for the Dutch people to respond to them, and to have a positive interaction.

I decided not to include a ‘developing culture’ in the individualistic category because there are countries such as Brazil and South America that are leaning towards individualism but are not fully developed countries yet in terms of economy or infrastructure.

Individual Answers of Participants:

1 - in het buitenland geboren en als volwassene naar Nederland gekomen

The way they work, not reliable.

...Unreliable × Work ×



2- in Nederland geboren uit ouders die buiten Nederland geboren zijn

Nederlanders zijn vaak veel directer met hun woorden en acties. Ze zeggen wat ze denken, draaien er niet omheen en zijn daardoor vaak eerlijk en betrouwbaar. Nederlanders hebben echter wel hard taal/woordgebruik, waardoor zowel de grappen als scheldwoorden soms erg direct klinken. Verder zijn Nederlanders in het algemeen ook heel verwelkomend en gastvrij. In het traditionele Nederlandse gezin was het ook de norm om veel kinderen te hebben, dit zorgt nog steeds in deze generatie soms voor hele hechte banden tussen families.

...(Difficult) language × ...Directness × Family × ...Honest × ...Hospitality × ...Say Own Opinion ×

1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

Directe communicatie, 'normaal doen', tolerantie

...Directness ×



2.5- in Nederland geboren, uit één ouder die buiten Nederland geboren is

De cultuur is erg direct en draait niet zo veel om familie. Iedereen gaat een beetje zijn eigen pad op.

Individualistic Culture × ...Not Family Orientated ×



1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

In de Nederlandse cultuur gaat eigen geluk en succes voor. Ieder neemt eigen beslissingen en verantwoordelijkheden.

Individualistic Culture ×

1.25- in het buitenland geboren en als tiener naar Nederland gekomen (13-17 jaar)

Vriendelijk

...Friendly ×



1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

De Nederlandse cultuur is meer in de vorm van "Ikke ikke en de rest kan stikke"

Individualistic Culture ×



2- in Nederland geboren uit ouders die buiten Nederland geboren zijn

People are independent, and everyone needs to go to school (educated to various extents). Everyone speaks Dutch but a big portion of the population is open to interact with foreigners easier in English. So a large portion of society seems to be open minded and friendly to foreigners. The food is not special but the pasteries are great.

Diversity ×

...Education ×

...Food is not special ×

...Friendly ×

Individualistic Culture ×

...Nice Pastries ×

...Open minded ×

1.75- in het buitenland geboren en naar Nederland gekomen tijdens de vroege kinderjaren (0-5 jaar)

Het niet bemoeien met anderen en directe communicatie.

...Directness ×

Individualistic Culture ×



2- in Nederland geboren uit ouders die buiten Nederland geboren zijn

Blunt and direct, no sense of warmth.

...Directness ×

...Honest ×

...No warm feelings ×

## Appendix Dutch Attitudes:

▼ Food	5
Cheese	2
Food is not special	2
Nice Pastries	3
▼ Individualistic Culture	17
Freedom	1
Say Own Opinion	3

▼ Diversity	3		
Multicultural	1		
▼ Dutch Stereotypes	12		
Directness	11	▼ Food	5
Legal Drugs	1	Cheese	2
Sinterklaas	2	Food is not special	2
Windmills	1	Nice Pastries	3
Wooden Shoes	1	▼ Individualistic Culture	17
▼ Family	2	Freedom	1
Not Family Orientated	1	Say Own Opinion	3
▼ Negative Descriptions	7		
High Taxes	2	▼ Other	
No warm feelings	2	(Difficult) language	2
Racist	2	Accept LGBTQ+ Community	1
Selfish	1	Education	2
Unreliable	1	Hospitality	1
No reponse	7	Less Traditional	2

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▼ Positive Descriptions	9
Developing Culture	1
Friendly	4
Honest	2
Open minded	1
Respectful	1
Self Development	1
▼ Work	3
Rules/Strict	1

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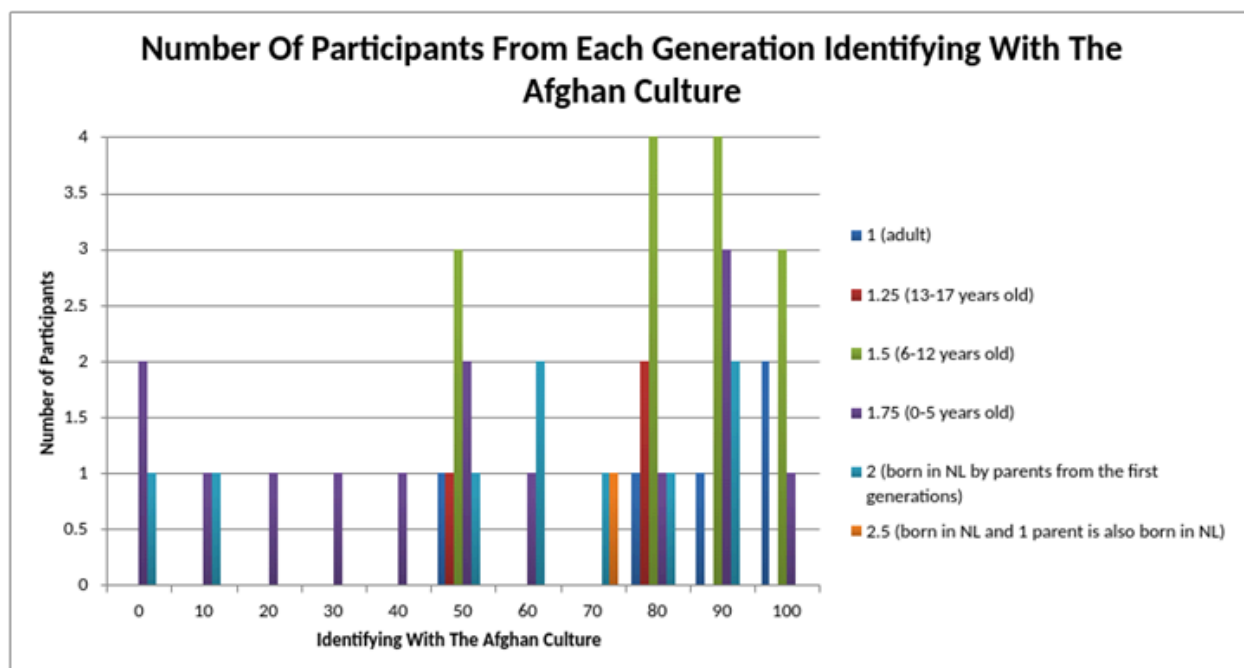
## Appendix F: Identifying with the Afghan and Dutch Cultures

### Identification With the Afghan Culture

The results for the graph below demonstrate how much participants identify with the Afghan culture: 0 means not at all until 100 which means very much. The participants could give themselves a personalised score on a Likert scale, but in the figure below the results are a bit clustered together, so the people in group 0 at the horizontal axis gave themselves a score between 0 and 9; whereas people who gave themselves a score between 90 to 99 are in the 90 category, and results in the 100 category means that participants gave themselves the perfect score of 100. The average score was 69.6 points from 46 participants, which is an above average score, meaning that majority of the participants identify highly with the Afghan culture.

### Figure X

*How Many Participants from Each Generation Identify with Afghan Culture?*



The generation with the most varied responses is 1.75 as participants from that group identified themselves in 10 of the 11 clustered results. The reason why their results could be so varied is

that they might have had more exposure to the Afghanistan and its culture compared to 2nd generation people, but simultaneously they have had much exposure to the Dutch culture too, and depending on how cultural their families are some people from generation 1.75 may feel more Afghan and others less. People from generation 1.75 are more similar to people from generation 2 in the sense that they have more likely grown up bilingually as it is possible for them to have started learning Dutch before turning 30 months old/2.5 years old, and arguably if you learn a language within that time period that language is considered as one of your first languages, and if that language is considered a first language that means that the culture will also play a significant role in that person's life.

A surprising result from generation 1 is that 1 participant identified themselves in the 50s category, indicating that they only somewhat identify with the culture which is surprising as they have lived in Afghanistan until they reached adulthood. An assumption for this result could be that the participant has simply never been a traditional and cultural person, or that they have adapted to the Dutch culture or other cultures more over time. The other participants from the 1st generation gave themselves a score between the 80s and 90s, meaning they identify with the Afghan culture very much, which is as expected.

Interestingly, generation 1.25 only identified themselves in two groups of numbers: 50s and 80s. From these results it could be argued that some participants somewhat identify with Afghan culture and others much more. Intriguingly, some people from generation 1.5 identify more with the Afghan culture than the people from generation 1.25 and 1.75. The people who moved to the Netherlands during their childhood are the ones that identify themselves exceptionally with the Afghan culture as 11 of them gave themselves a score between the 80s and 100. The reason for this high identification rate could be because the participants might feel

like that the Afghan culture is an integral part of their childhood that they want to keep close to their heart, as their childhood has arguably been ruined by moving away from Afghanistan against their will by the war and by their parents/guardians wanting to keep them safe and close to themselves. Children between the ages of 6-12 years old still have memories of their childhood, and that is why they might feel like they want to be Afghan as they have been separated from their homeland. On the other hand, people from generation 1.75 might have been too young to remember anything from Afghanistan that's why their results are so varied, and people from generation 1.25 were adolescence when they moved, so some of them might have already been rejected parts of the culture and traditions as that is what most teenagers do, and perhaps some of them understood that it is necessary to adapt to a new culture and country, and some of the others simply felt more connected to their roots because they have lived there for longer.

Next the results from the participants in the 2nd generation are also a bit varied: a couple of people have rated themselves between 0-19, meaning that they hardly identify with the culture. On the other hand, the others gave themselves a score between the 60s and 90s, meaning some of them considerably identify themselves with Afghan culture and others extremely. The varied results could come from the fact that some participants simply do not identify with the culture because they live in the Netherlands and they have less exposure to it or they can easily avoid the cultural practices by saying that they are Dutch, but some of the others identify stronger with it probably because their families were able to show the good side of the culture to their children, and for the children to accept them too.

Lastly, the only participant of generation 2.5 gave themselves a score in the 70s meaning that they highly identify with the culture. This result partially surprised me because this

participant mentioned in the extra remarks section their history of not knowing how to speak Afghan at all but that they spend much time with their Afghan family members. Their history and results indicate that a person does not need to know a language to identify with it, which is an aspect of a heritage speaker.

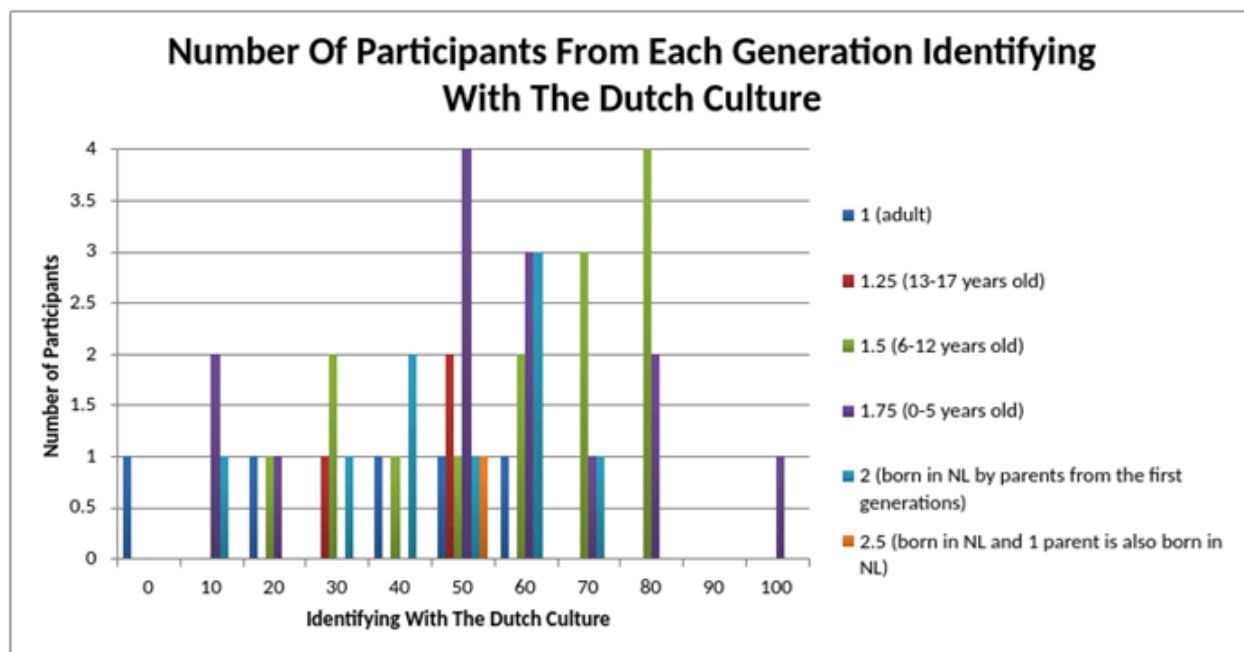
Therefore, a sizable proportion of the participants identify with Afghan culture, but there are people from generation 1.75 and 2 that identify less with it due to them being raised in two different cultures simultaneously since they were babies, infants, or young children.

### *Identification With the Dutch Culture*

The results for this section are very varied per generation, and the average score of the 46 participants is 54.3/100. So, in general, the participants identify with Dutch culture (DC) to a moderate extent.

### **Figure X**

*How Many Participants from Each Generation Identify with Dutch Culture?*



In general, the majority of the G1 participants identify with the culture about 60% or less, and the person who identified with the DC the least with less than 10% was from G1. There could be many reasons for this identification such as all the cultural differences between the two countries, and perhaps this person has not integrated with Dutch society yet. Secondly, participants from G1.25 identified with the DC between 30-50%, so to a low extent. On the other hand, people from G1.5 had very varied results as some identified about 20% with the DC, but most people identified 70%-80% with the DC, thus to a large extent. Similarly, people from G1.75 also had quite different opinions as a couple of people identified around 10% with DC; the majority with 50%-60%, and one participant 100%. These contrasting results could be due to several reasons such as upbringing, environment, and integration in the Netherlands. Fifthly, participants from G2 identified 10%-70% with DC, but the majority of them identify approximately 60%, so they identify with DC to a fair extent. Lastly, the one participant from G2.5 identified with DC around 50%, so exactly in the middle, which makes sense as they are mixed raced.

Thus, people from G1 identify with DC the least and people from G1.5 and G1.75 identify the most, which is a bit surprising as the people from the second generations do not identify that strongly with DC. This could perhaps indicate that people who integrate in the Netherlands since early childhood wanted to become closer with their fellow Dutch peers in society and be more Dutch because they were born abroad. Whereas, an assumption about people from the second generations is that they were born in the Netherlands, so they already have a strong foundation that they are Dutch, therefore they feel less pressured to identify as Dutch or participate in Dutch cultural events as no one can take away the fact that they are Dutch citizens

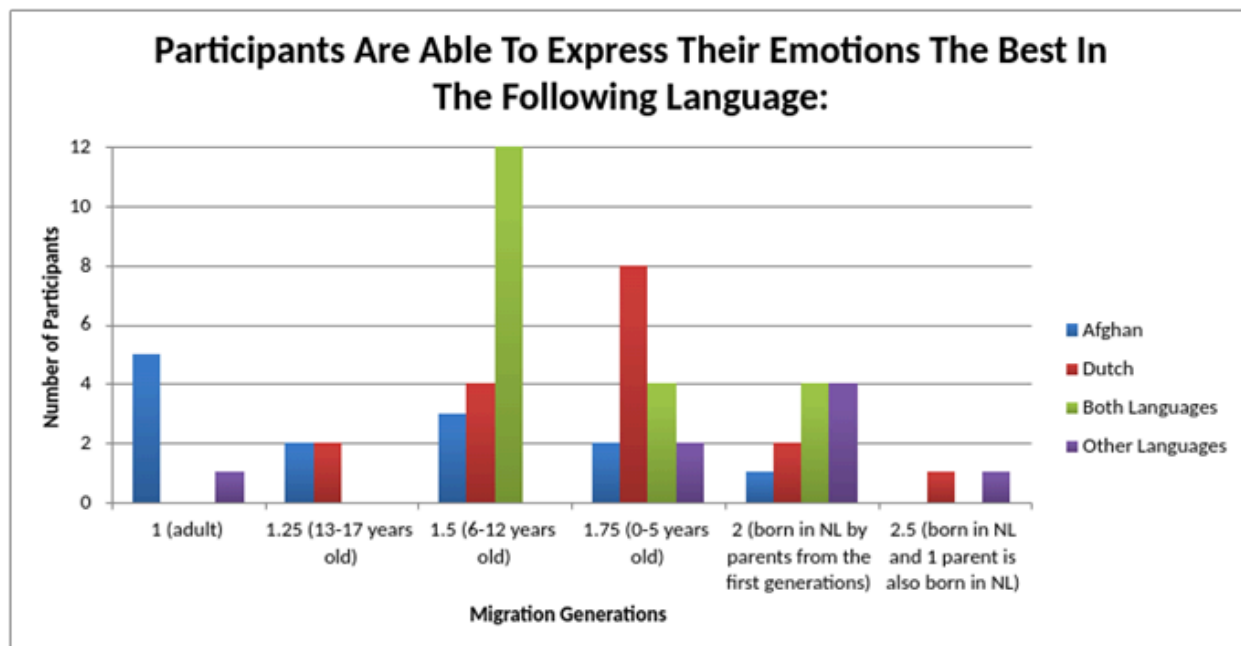
since birth. But the other generations might feel that pressure especially if they want to truly integrate in Dutch society.

### Appendix G: Emotional Expression

Participants were asked in what language they could best express their emotions in. All 51 participants answered the emotions question. Almost 40% of the participants stated that they can express their emotions the best in both Afghan and Dutch. Just above a third mentioned that Dutch is the easiest language they express themselves in. A quarter stated that they can express themselves the best in Afghan. All participants who chose ‘other languages’ (around 15%) mentioned that the other language that they can best express themselves in is English, and one participant from that category also said German alongside English.

#### Figure X

*Participants of Each Generation Are Able to Express Their Emotions the Best in the Following Language*



Looking at the choices per generation it is as expected that most of the participants in G1 chose Afghan as it is the language they grew up with and learnt all the emotional phrases in Afghan

first. G1.5 showed that most of them have the strong bilingual advantage that they can express themselves well in both Afghan and Dutch, but there seems to be a slight lean towards the Dutch language in this group. On the other hand, G1.75 had more participants that could express themselves the best in Dutch, and G2 had an equal number of participants choosing both languages and English. There seems to be a pattern that over the generations from 1 to 2.5 the ability to best express themselves in Afghan decreases (except for G1.25 but that could be due to the limited number of participants in that group). Consequently, the ability to emotionally express themselves increases in Dutch or both languages, and from G1.75 and later generations some participants stated that English is the language they can express themselves in. English is considered a foreign language in both Afghanistan and the Netherlands; however, the use of English has increased significantly over the years and especially in the Netherlands due to the education system and the use of social media. Perhaps one of the reasons why some participants can express themselves better in English is because the language enables them to have some “emotional distance” (Costa et al., 2014) when they are expressing themselves so that they do not feel too overwhelmed by their emotions or because they can rationalise themselves better.

Being able to express oneself in two languages very well proves that the participants are fluent in both languages as articulating one’s emotions can be difficult, and a person needs to know the right vocabulary to do that. Also, the fact that people can do this in two languages shows that their language skills are very good.



## **Appendix H: Afghan and Dutch Language Abilities**

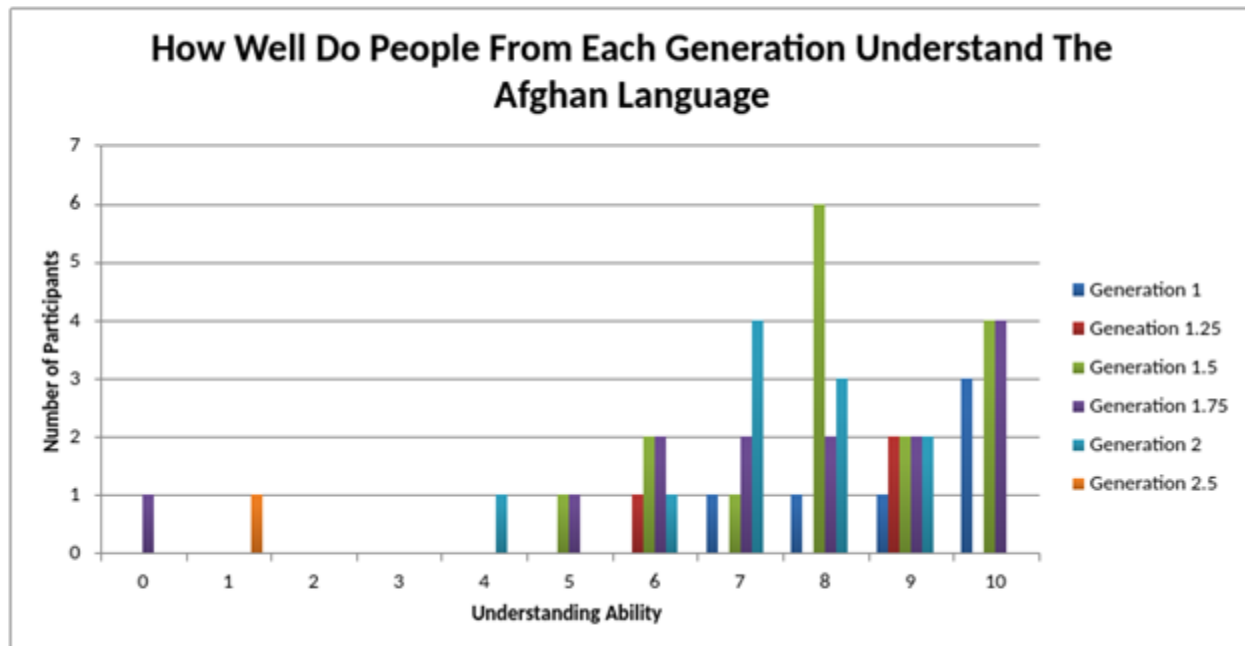
The questions based on the participants' language ability were asked on a Likert scale basis, where 1 meant not at all and 10 meant very good. The participants' language abilities varied on all aspects.

### **4.3.1 Understanding**

For the Afghan Understanding part the self-assessed score that participants gave themselves varied completely over the whole scale as seen in Figure 4. There were participants who chose 0 points meaning that they do not understand the language at all, and there were those who gave themselves a 10 meaning that they understand the language very well, interestingly both of these polar opposite scores came from people from G1.75. Almost all participants rated themselves above a 6, and the most chosen score was an 8; the average score of all the participants is 7.73 points, meaning that the understanding of most people is good and above average, and that they have a strong understanding of the Afghan language.

### **Figure X**

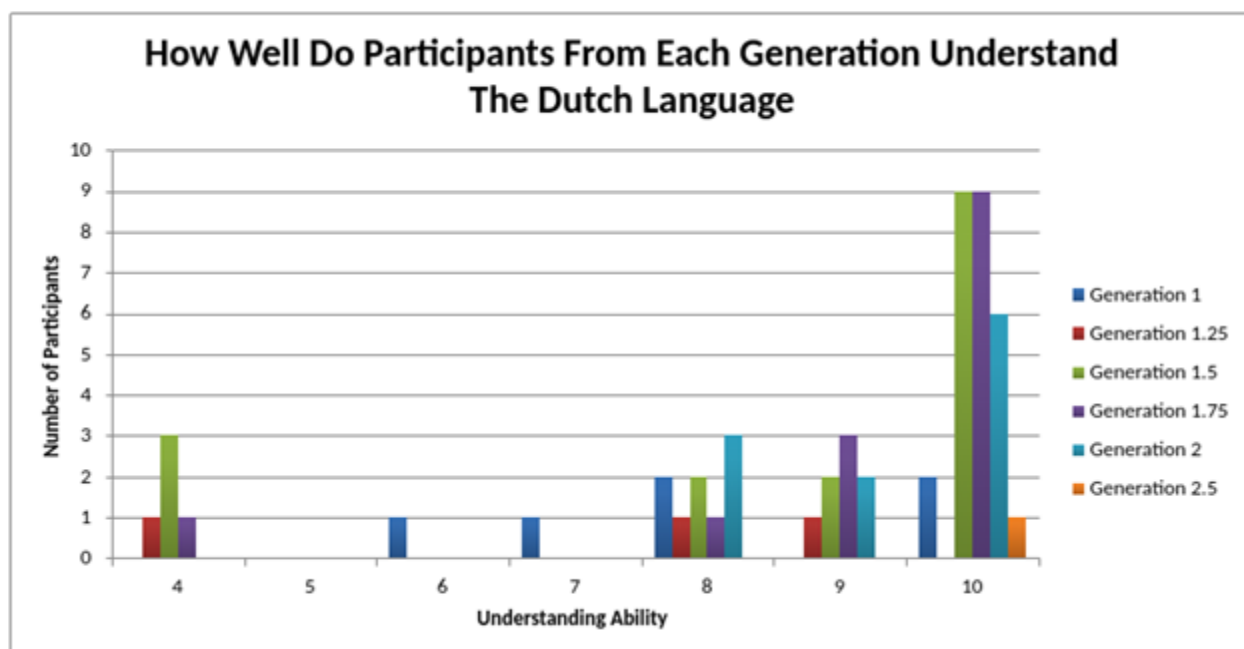
*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Understand Afghan?*



For the Dutch Understanding part, the self-assessed score that participants gave themselves varied scores between 4 to 10 as seen in figure 5. There were participants who chose 4 points, which was the lowest score, meaning that they have limited understanding of Dutch, and the majority gave themselves a 10 meaning that they understand the language very well. Almost all participants rated themselves above an 8, and the most chosen score was a 10; the average score of all the participants is 8.76 points, meaning that the understanding of most people is incredibly good and above average, and that they have a strong understanding of the Dutch language.

### Figure X

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Understand Dutch?*



Comparing the two sections most participants have a much better understanding of the Dutch language compared to the Afghan language. However, it is a bit surprising that there were several people that gave themselves a score of 4 (figure 5), especially those from G1.5 and G1.75 because these people must have attended Dutch schools, so it would be logical if they would have scored above a 6. Notably because people from G1 gave themselves a higher score than them and their lowest score was a 6, which is just above average understanding levels. But it is positive to observe that most participants understand both languages well as this means that they are integrating well into Dutch society, but they are still able to stay in touch with their roots.

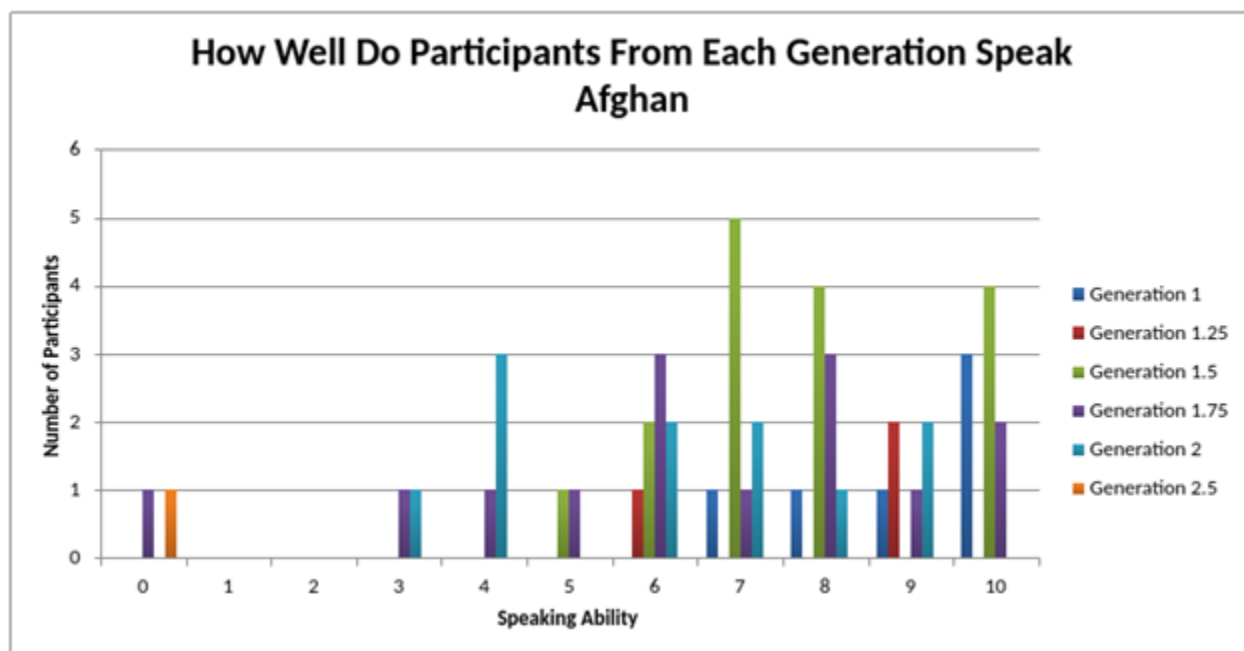
#### **4.3.2 Speaking**

Most participants believe that they can speak Afghan quite well (Figure 6). Once again, most participants rated themselves with a score of 6 or above, and the average score was 7.04. The highest scores were 7, 8, and 10, where each of those points was voted by 9 participants. Thus, the speaking abilities of most participants are above average, which is commendable as it

is not the national language spoken of the Netherlands, so there might be less opportunities to speak Afghan in Dutch society.

### Figure X

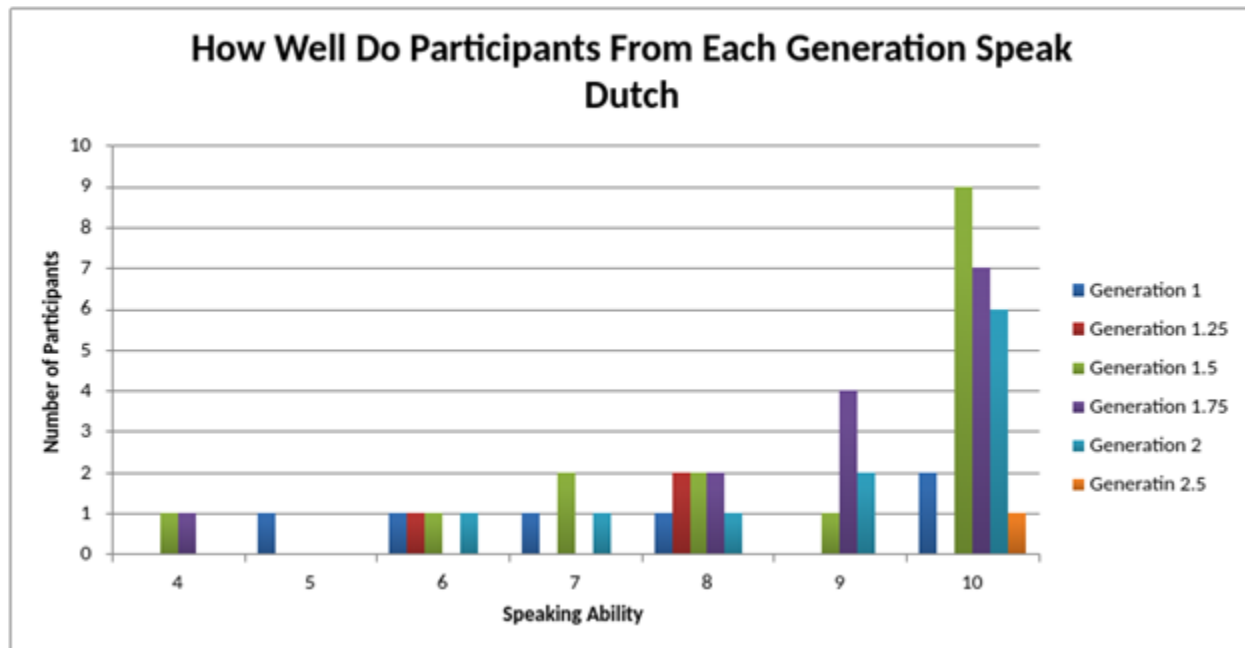
*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Speak Afghan?*



Similarly, most participants also believe they speak Dutch exceptionally well as half of them scored themselves a 10 (Figure 7), which means incredibly good speaking abilities. Like the Dutch understanding part for the speaking part the scores were between 4 to 10, which is different from the Afghan section. Most participants rated themselves an 8 or more and the average score of all the participants is 8.67, meaning that the speaking abilities of most people is outstanding, and that they have a strong command of speaking Dutch.

### Figure X

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Speak Dutch?*



Comparing the two results, participants are more confident in their Dutch speaking skills compared to their Afghan abilities. Two participants gave themselves a score of 4, although they have spent time in the Netherlands since their childhood an assumption for them to give a score below average could be because they are either not confident in their speaking skills or that they are underestimating their own skills. An interesting result is from a participant from G1.25 who scored themselves a 4 on Dutch understanding but a 6 on Dutch speaking abilities. It might be possible that this person focuses more on producing results and output of a language rather than on comprehending and understanding the language; everyone also has different learning styles so the surprising results can make sense if looked at from this angle. Additionally, the participant from G2.5 scored themselves extremely low for the Afghan sections but remarkably high for the Dutch sections, they mentioned their life story briefly in the additional messages section in Appendix B, where they mentioned that they just communicate in Dutch with even their Afghan

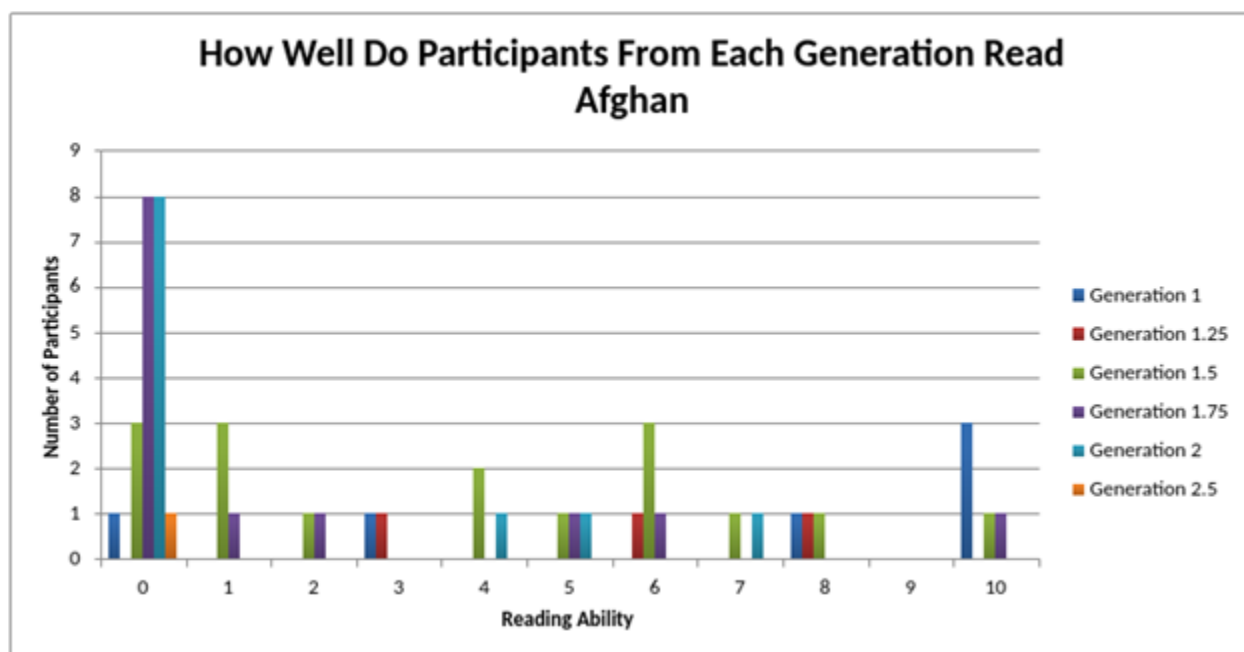
family members. Although this is the result from just one participant, it could indicate that people from later generations could slowly be less in touch with their heritage language actively.

### 4.3.3 Reading

Due to an error on Qualtrics 1 participant did not answer this question. Compared to the two previous sections, the results of the Afghan reading are the opposite (figure 8): 42% (21/50) participants chose 0, meaning that they cannot read Afghan at all. On the other hand, 18 participants chose a score between 5 and 10, suggesting that they have average to fluent reading abilities. However, the average reading score is 3.28, which is below the average score of 5.

#### Figure X

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Read Afghan?*

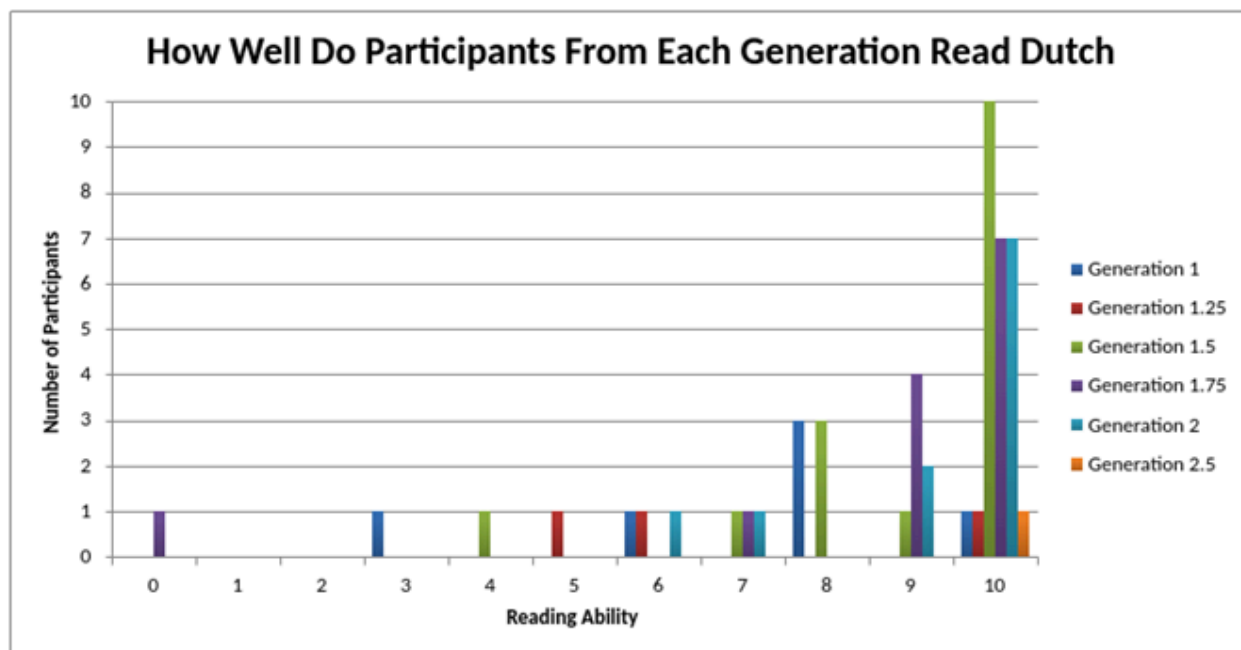


On the other hand, the results for the Dutch reading abilities are very high as the average score is 8.64. The minority of merely 4 participants rated themselves with a score of 5 or lower,

and all the other participants scored a 6 or more. Over half of the participants (27/50) believe that their reading abilities are outstanding as they gave themselves a score of 10.

**Figure X**

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Read Dutch?*



Comparing the above results, it is once again clear that participants are better at reading in the Dutch language compared to the Afghan one. An interesting finding is that two participants from G1 ranked themselves in the Afghan reading section with a 0 and 3, but in the Dutch reading section they respectively ranked themselves with a 3 and 6. This most likely suggests that perhaps these people did not have the opportunity to go to school (properly) at all in Afghanistan, but the Netherlands gave them an opportunity to go to school and become literate even though it is in their L2. However, an odd result is from one participant from G1.75 who claims to have absolutely no reading abilities in Dutch, which does not make sense because if they cannot read Dutch, they could not fill in this survey unless someone or an application

translated the questionnaire for them. This person ranked themselves low in almost all of the categories, so either they received help with this survey, or there was an error with Qualtrics, or the participant did not know how to use the Likert scale properly on their screen, therefore their results might not be fully accurate.

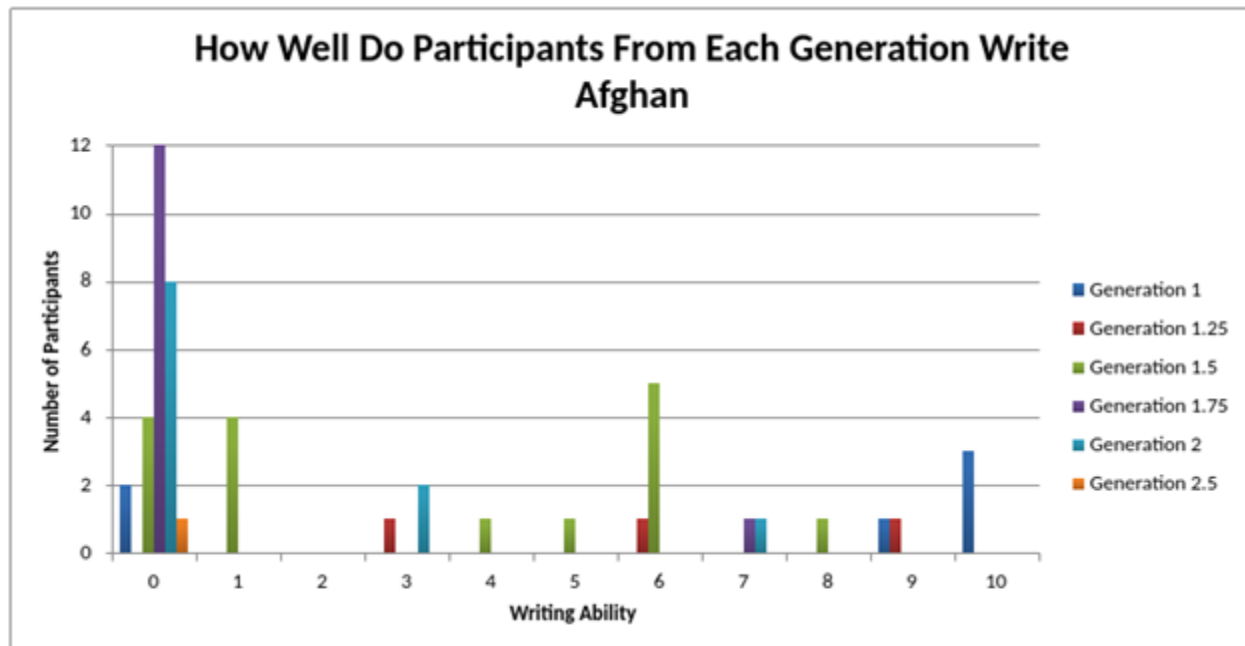
#### **4.3.4 Writing**

Due to an error on Qualtrics 1 participant did not answer this question. Similarly, to the reading part, the results for the writing section are low as well (figure 10), with the average being 2.56, which is slightly lower than the reading part. Over half of the participants 54% (27/50) stated that they cannot write Afghan at all, which is not surprising as most of them do not know how to read either. Only 15 participants chose a score of 5 or above, suggesting that just a minority of the Afghan population in the Netherlands have a good and fluent command of the Afghan language. An intriguing fact to take note of is that a participant asked whether by Afghan writing the question meant writing using the Afghan/Arabic alphabet or the Romanised/Latin alphabet. I told them that I meant the Afghan/Arabic version, so they scored themselves a lower score because they do know how to communicate in written Afghan using Romanised letters but not the Afghan alphabet. Thus, there might be several participants who can communicate in written Afghan but using a different alphabet system, but the results do not make this distinction as it was not asked, and this was not considered either until later.

#### **Figure X**

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Write Afghan?*

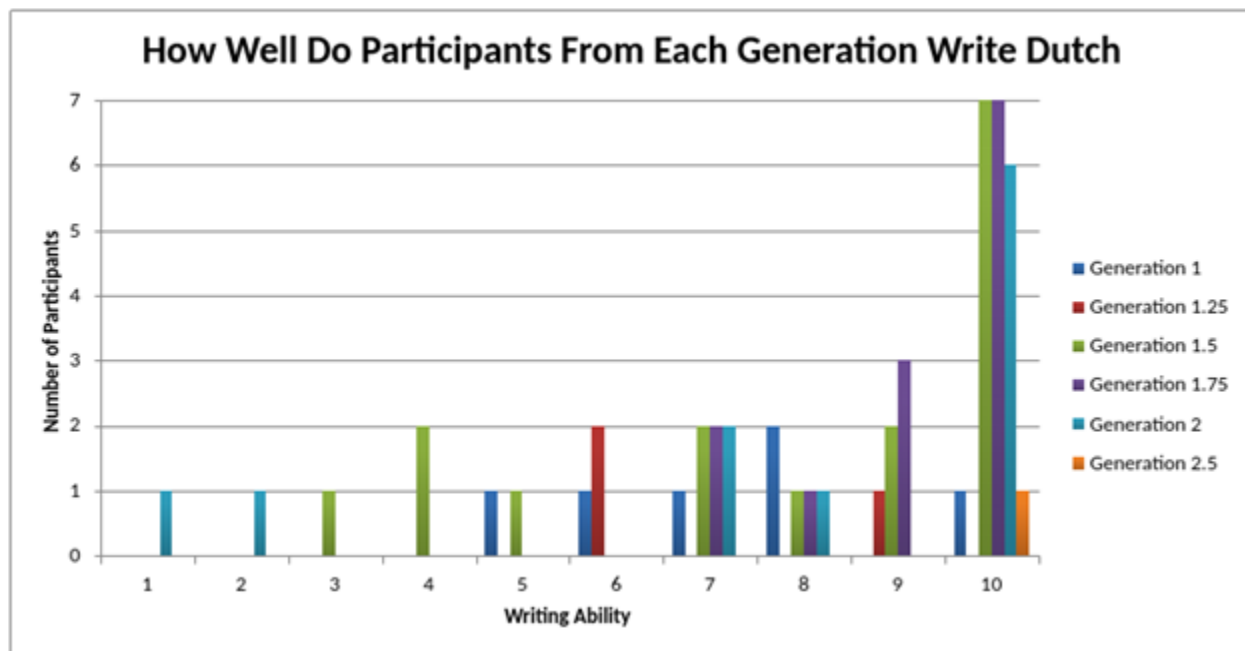




Whereas the results for the Dutch writing section are considerably high as the average score was 8.10 (figure 11). Over half of the participants ranked themselves with a score of 9 or 10, meaning that they are extremely confident in their skills. Only 7 participants scored themselves with 5 points or less. However, an odd and interesting finding is that there are two participants from G2 who gave themselves a score of 1 and 2, which is very surprising as they were born in the Netherlands, and they went to school in the Netherlands. An assumption for this result could be that these participants were born in the Netherlands, but they did not complete their school in the Netherlands or in the Dutch language, and perhaps they are more fluent in other languages such as English. This is mentioned because one of the other questions participants were asked is in what language participants can best express their emotions in and a small group of people mentioned English rather than Dutch or Afghan (see Appendix D for the full results on those results).

**Figure X**

*How Well Do Participants from Each Generation Write Dutch?*



Similarly, as all the previous results in this section, the participants' abilities in Dutch are better than Afghan. This supports the points Brehmer and Treffers-Daller (2020) about heritage speakers having L1 attrition and the L2 becoming the dominant language, especially for people who have lived in the host country since childhood. The results are probably like this because most participants have not received any formal Afghan language education, but rather were informally taught the language through just verbal communication with their family members. Assumptions from personal experience why most families have not taught their children formal written education could be because of the parents lacking education themselves; not having the ability to teach; not having the time to teach; the children not having any interest in learning; the Dutch language and education are having a higher priority because people are living in the Netherlands. Moreover, there is a lack of Afghan schools in the Netherlands, therefore the lack of formal Afghan education is expected in the Afghan diaspora in the country.