

## Loss and Maintenance of Somali Language in the UK

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### Abstract

This study attempts to investigate first language attrition in Somali (L1) speakers of English as L2. Specifically answers were sought for the questions on Somali language features that are first susceptible to attrition when they come in contact with the English language; and the perception of Somali parents on maintaining the Somali language by their children. The data collected was based on 11 tape recordings (to elicit oral narrative) of six Somali pupils' voices, structured/unstructured interviews with pupils and parents while case study approach is used. The six pupils were divided into two groups: group1, which included three Somali siblings who are newly arrived in the UK whilst Group 2 consisted of three Somali siblings who are already established in the UK. Initially it was assumed that Group1 would constitute as a control group. This was later disregarded for two reasons: 1) the utterances provided by them, at this early stage, illustrated demise of their L1 verbal ability and 2) due to time and space. Therefore, Group2's utterances were analysed and the outcome indicate strong indicators for attrition in their L1 lexical retrieving and L1 sentence structure skills.

**Keywords:** First Language, Second Language, Language Attrition.