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DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

„TWO VARIETIES OF KURDISH IN
COMPETITION: THE PROBLEMATIC OF
MODELLING A LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION
IN IRAQI KURDISTAN“

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Abstract

One of the major challenges facing the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraqi Kurdistan is the absence of a unified language of instruction for the education system. Instead, two geographic varieties, Sorani and Bahdini (Kurmanji), are used as languages of instruction, each by its speakers. Kurmanji is the variety spoken by the majority of Kurds in all parts of divided Kurdistan, while Sorani comprises approximately 25% of the total number of Kurdish speakers in all parts of Kurdistan.

Some intellectual Sorani speakers claim that Sorani should be accepted as the language of instruction by all Kurds, since, as they point out, the Sorani variety was selected as the language of instruction during the era of British mandate in Iraq in 1920s and has been used for considerable time as the language of instruction in Sulaimaniya and some other Sorani speaking areas, as well, such as in the Bahdini region for a number of years after 1970. However, the Bahdini speakers have been using their own Bahdini variety as the language of instruction in the schools since 2003. Currently, all elementary and secondary schools in Bahdini province use the Bahdini variety as the language of instruction.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the currently implemented policy of using two varieties in Iraqi Kurdistan is the convenient solution for the language of instruction, and to what extent this is accepted by the Bahdini intellectuals and politician. Furthermore, the study aims to determine whether the linguistic differences between both varieties form obstacles in the way of establishing a unified language. Finally, to establish which alphabet, the Latin or the Perso-Arabic alphabet, is more favored by the Bahdini speakers.

To reach convenient results, the study was conducted using a twofold method: theoretical and empirical; theoretically on the basis of collected available literature, such as books, researches, and documents, and empirically by conducting a qualitative study in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The data collected for the empirical study were interviews with 20 students and intellectuals from the province of Duhok, a Bahdini speaking area. The collected data were subjected to a deep content analysis.

The outcomes have shown that Bahdini speakers do not accept the return to the use of the Sorani variety as the language of instruction. The participants in the qualitative study linked their stance of refusing to return to the use of Sorani to the linguistic differences between both varieties. However, the study discovered that ideologies play an important role in the rejection of Sorani by Bahdini speakers. Concerning the kind of alphabet, the participants preferred the use of the Latin alphabet over the Perso-Arabic one, and here, also, ideologies played a considerable role.

The study has made some constructive proposals for future perspectives and the long term, which might bring both varieties closer to each other.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	12
1.1 Personal motivation	12
1.2 Description of the problem of language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan	12
1.3 Study objectives	15
1.4 Research questions	15
1.5 The significance of this study	16
1.6 Methodology	17
1.7 The structure of this dissertation	18
CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORY OF KURDISH LANGUAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF IRAQ TO THE PRESENT	21
2.1 The Kurdish language during the period of the Iraqi Kingdom and British mandate	21
2.1.1 The period of denial of the promises given to the Kurds	22
2.1.2 The period of establishment of the Kurdish Kingdom of Sheikh Mahmud	23
2.1.3 The situation of Kurmanji variety in the Iraqi Kingdom	23
2.1.4 The stance of Arab ministers on the Kurdish language	24
2.1.5 The stance of some British officials on the Kurdish language	24
2.1.6 The stance of Kurdish deputies of chamber on the issue of ignoring the Kurdish language	25
2.1.7 The joint British-Iraqi policy towards the Kurdish language	25
2.2 The Kurdish language during the era of the Republic of Iraq	27
2.3 The Kurdish language during the era of Saddam Hussein	27
2.3.1 The March 11 th , 1970 agreement	27
2.3.2 The Kurdish Academy of Science	30
2.3.3 The status of the Kurdish language from 1974-1990	35
2.3.4 Arabization policy	36
2.3.5 Deportation policy	37
2.3.6 Discrimination policy	38
2.4 Kurdish language in Iraqi constitutions	38

2.5	The Kurdish language in the Post-Saddam Hussein era	41
2.5.1	The period of establishing the safe haven	41
2.5.2	The period of re-establishing schools and administration in the Kurdish region	42
2.5.3	The period of establishing the Kurdish Regional Government	43
2.5.4	The period of the civil war between KDP and PUK from 1994 to the peace agreement of Washington in 1998	43
2.6	A chronological presentation of the Kurdish language in radio and television	45
2.6.1	The period between 1939 and 1990	45
2.6.2	Kurdish radio and television from 1990 to the present	46
2.7	Kurdish in books and literary works	48
2.8	Islam and Kurdish language in the modern history	48
2.8.1	The effect of religion on the Kurdish language	49
2.8.2	Political Islam and the Kurdish language	50
2.8.3	Kurdish society and Islam after 1991	53
2.9	Background of the competition between Sorani and Kurmanji	55
2.9.1	The stance of Kurmanji intellectuals on the petition	56
CHAPTER 3: THE FRAMEWORK OF KURDISH STANDARDIZATION		60
3.1	The connotation of standard and standardization	60
3.2	Debates on the Kurdish standardization	60
3.3	Socio-political initiatives promoting standardization of the Kurdish language	67
3.3.1	The Congress of Erivan, 1934	67
3.3.2	The Congress of Shaqlawa, 1959	68
3.3.3	The congress of Erbil, 2011	68
3.3.4	The conference of Diyarbakir, 2012	69
3.3.5	The diaspora attempt to standardize the Kurdish language	70
3.4	Language ideology, language maintenance, language policy, and language planning	71
3.4.1	Language ideology	71
3.4.2	The ideology of national language and standardization	72

3.4.3	Kurdish and the ideology of language and variety maintenance	74
3.4.4	Language policy	77
3.4.5	Language planning	78
3.5	The problem of corpus planning in the Kurdish language	81
3.5.1	The problem of different grammars	82
3.5.2	The dilemma of selecting a Latin or Perso-Arabic based alphabet	83
3.6	The classification of Kurdish varieties	88
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL STUDY		91
4.1	The field of the study	91
4.1.1	Why the focus on the province of Duhok	91
4.1.2	Why a qualitative study	92
4.1.3	Selection of participants for the qualitative study	93
4.1.4	Method of selecting the participants	95
4.1.5	Naming the participants	96
4.2	Conducting the interviews	97
4.2.1	Difficulties	98
4.2.2	Interview Questions	98
4.2.3	Transcription of the interviews	99
4.3	Technique of content analysis for the study	99
4.3.1	The final stage of coding the categories	102
4.3.2	The outcomes of the data analysis	103
4.3.3	The final outcomes of the data analysis	107
4.4	Language ideologies behind refusing Sorani and preferring Bahdini	108
4.4.1	Constructions of linguistic differences	108
4.4.2	Conclusion	115
4.4.3	The claim for recognition as a distinct social group of speakers	116
4.4.4	Constructions of ‘otherness’ and competing varieties	123
4.4.5	Mother tongue as a language ideology	126
4.4.6	Summary to the ideologies behind refusing Sorani	130
4.5	Classification of motifs and reasons behind preferring the	

use of the Latin alphabet over the Perso Arabic alphabet	132
4.5.1 Summary to the ideologies which make the Bahdini speaker prefer Latin alphabet	137
4.6 Analysis of understanding Sorani by Bahdini	138
 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND DESIDERATA	 140
 5.1 The result regarding the main research question	 141
5.1.1 The result regarding the first sub-research question	145
5.1.2 The result regarding the second sub-research question	145
5.1.3 The result regarding the third sub-research question	146
5.2 Limitation of this study	148
5.3 Research contribution	148
5.4 Recommendation for further studies	149
5.5 Future perspectives	149
6. Bibliography	152
7. Appendix	167
7.1 The main questions of the interviews	167
7.2 Zusammenfassung	169
7.3 Akademischer Lebenslauf	171

List of tables

Table 1: Simple past in Kurmanji and Sorani	82
Table 2: Past continuous in Kurmanji and Sorani	83
Table 3: Modification of Arabic alphabet to match the Kurdish Phonological system	84
Table 4: Shows the use of both sounds L and R in Latin alphabet	85
Table 5: shows the use of both L and R in Perso-Arabic	85
Table 6: Shows the use of the sound /h/ ح	86
Table 7: The Latin and Arabic based Kurdish alphabets with (IPA) transcription	87
Table 8: classification of Kurdish varieties	89
Table 9: List of participants who had Kurdish as the language of instruction	96
Table 10: List of participants who had Arabic as the language of instruction	97
Table 11: shows the percentage of understanding Sorani by participants who had Sorani as the language of instruction	139
Table 12: percentage of understanding Sorani by participants who had Arabic as the language of instruction	139

List of Maps

1. Map 1: shows the disputed area in Iraqi Kurdistan	28
2. Map 2: shows the areas administrated by PUK and KDP	44
3. Map 3: shows the varieties of Kurdish in all parts of Kurdistan	90

List of Figures

1. Figure 1: Structure of the education system in Iraq and Kurdistan	29
2. Figure 2: Rubin (1977)	73
3. Figure 3: Kurdish language in divided Kurdistan	75
4. Figure 4: shows the classification of extracted meaning unites	100
5. Figure 5: A summary of content analysis suggested Mayring (2010)	101
6. Figure 6: Reduction of the categories (Mayring 2010)	102
7. Figure 7: Shows the degree of the important of ideologies which make the Bahdini speakers refuse to select Sorani as the language of instruction	131

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Personal motivations

There are many reasons that made me conduct this study on the situation of the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan. Firstly, I come from Iraqi Kurdistan. I was born there and worked there as a teacher at a secondary school as well as at the University of Duhok. Kurmanji variety is my native language, but I speak Sorani and five other languages as well. However, the important reason that made me investigate the current situation of the Kurdish language is my own personal experience during my school years in Iraqi Kurdistan. My acrimonious experience of the hostile language policy of the previous Iraqi regime against the Kurdish language implanted in my soul the inspiration to work hard on the issue of this language. Prohibiting the use of a native language and instead imposing the Arabic language for political and national reasons was not an easy matter for me. Another point that encouraged me to conduct this study was my knowledge of different writing systems that make it easier to understand the difficulties related to the issue of learning languages. Although there are many studies on the Kurdish language, none of them has focused on the issue of the language of instruction. I am also mindful of the difficulties linked to the life and language of Kurdish people in general. Therefore, I think it is my moral duty as an academic to study the current situation of using two varieties of Kurdish both as official languages and as languages of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan. I hope the outcomes have realized the objectives of this study.

1.2 Description of the problem of language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan

The main problem of the language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan is that of using two varieties instead of a unified Kurdish language. The two varieties are called Sorani and Kurmanji; the second one is known among Iraqi Kurds as “Bahdini”. These two main varieties are used in separate provinces; Sorani is used in the provinces of Sulaimaniya and Erbil, while Kurmanji (Bahdini) is used in the province of Duhok and some areas of the province of Mosul. In addition to the above-mentioned problem, the other issue engaging many Kurdish linguists is that

of selecting the proper writing system. Some intellectuals in Kurdistan are worried about using two varieties, while others find it normal and proper.

The Sorani variety has been used as a language of instruction in the province of Sulaimaniya since the 1920s (Entessar 2010: 93). The British mandate of that era recommended this variety as the language of instruction for the areas where the majority of the people were Kurds (Kreyenbroek 1992: 77). In the Kurmanji province of Duhok, however, Arabic remained the language of instruction.

Although Kurmanji speakers form 75% of the total number of Kurdish language speakers in all parts of Kurdistan, this variety was ignored by all Iraqi regimes that came to power. In 1970 the Iraqi regime, within a framework of an Autonomy program for the Kurdish region, approved the use of Sorani Kurdish as the language of instruction in schools in the Kurdish region, including the province of Duhok. However, Kurdish was used in schools for only four years, and afterwards all Kurdish schools were abolished and replaced by Arabic schools.

After establishing a safe haven for Iraqi Kurds in 1991, the Kurdish provisional administration began using Kurdish as an official language in the Kurdish region. The provinces of Sulaimaniya and Erbil implemented Sorani while the province of Duhok implemented Kurmanji “Bahdini” as the language of instruction (Berwary 2011:50). In 1994, the ministry of education in Iraqi Kurdistan began to implement Sorani as the language of instruction in the province of Duhok too. Twelve years later the language of instruction in province of Duhok was changed again from Sorani to Bahdini. It is worthy to mention that there was also an attempt in 2000 to implement a mixed variety of Sorani and Kurmanji in schools of Duhok, but the Bahdini (Kurmanji) speakers of Duhok refused the idea and insisted to use Bahdini (Ibid). In 2003 the language of instruction in the province of Duhok was changed from Sorani to Bahdini. Currently all schools of Bahdini speakers in the province of Duhok and surrounding areas of Mosul province use Bahdini, and the schools of Sorani speakers in the provinces Sulaimaniya and Erbil use Sorani variety.

The issue of using two Kurdish varieties as languages of instruction in the schools of Iraqi Kurdistan has become a source of uneasiness for many Kurdish intellectuals and politicians. Some linguists and politicians see the situation of using two dialects instead of one unified Kurdish language as a large threat to the unity of the Kurdish nation.

In addition to the issue of using two varieties of Kurdish in schools and in the administration of the Kurdish region, there is another problem related to the Kurdish writing system. The current alphabet is derived from both the Arabic and Persian alphabets. This alphabet has been modified to match the Kurdish phonological system, because there are some phonemes in Kurdish that do not exist in Arabic, for example [p], [v], [g], [ʒ] and [tʃ]. Moreover, the Kurdish phonetic system has two kinds of dark and light, [l] and [r], while Arabic has only one phoneme for each (Nebez.1976).

However, there is a slight difference between Sorani and Kurmanji in connection to these five phonemes: in Sorani the Kurmanji phoneme [v] changes into [w], for example the Kurmanji word “av” (water) changes into “aw” in Sorani. The [v] phoneme does not exist in Sorani, therefore, all Kurmanji [v] phonemes change into [w] (Ibid: 59).

In addition to the Arabic- and Persian-based alphabet, there is also a Latin alphabet system established by Bedir Khan during the 1930s (Blau 2006: 105). This alphabet is used unofficially by the Kurds in the Northern part of Kurdistan in Turkey, by the Kurds in Syria, and widely by the intellectual Kurds in Europe. In Iraqi Kurdistan it is used parallel to the Arabic- and Persian-based one on Kurdish television and in magazines and newspapers, but not in schools or administration.

It is worthwhile to mention that using the Latin alphabet for Kurdish during the era of the previous regime of Hussein was strictly prohibited; it was only after the establishment of the safe haven in Iraqi Kurdistan that the issue of using the Latin alphabet became very obvious.

1.3 Study Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the current situation of using two varieties of the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan and to determine whether the uncertainty among some linguists about using two varieties is justified or if the use of two varieties is, in fact, the solution.

During my work as an assistant teacher at the University of Duhok, I have noticed that some politicians and intellectuals were worried about using two varieties of Kurdish in Iraqi Kurdistan. There were some attempts to make Sorani variety the official language and the language of instruction in the Kurdish region; they claimed that using two varieties might split the Kurdish nation. These attempts created unease among Kurmanji speakers who use their own Kurmanji variety in their schools. The indeterminate feeling of the people that the language of instruction might change again prompted many parents to send their children to private English schools. Such schools are relatively expensive, however, and not every family can afford them. The case of the Kurdish language has become one of the major challenges facing the Kurdish government, people, and institutions. Therefore, this study attempts to find reliable answers to questions related to the current situation of using two varieties of Kurdish in separate provinces. This study is a diagnostic of the existing problem. It is my hope that this study realizes its objectives and its findings be taken into consideration when conducting any language policy relating to the language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1.4 Research questions

I have selected the following research questions to investigate for the following reasons. First, these questions are key to any policy in search of a solution to the current problem of using two varieties. Second, if the questions are resolved, there will be no grounds for a dispute over establishing a unified language. Third, resolving the research questions makes the issue of selecting a convenient writing system for Kurdish much easier.

The main research question:

Is the current implementation of two varieties of Kurdish as official languages in Iraqi Kurdistan an adequate solution?

The sub-questions:

1. To what extent does this solution find acceptance among Kurdish speakers, within the scientific community, and at the political level?
2. Do the differences between the two varieties of Kurdish present an obstacle to the possibility of establishing a unified language in the long term perspective?
3. Which writing system is appropriate and can find acceptance among Kurdish speakers in Iraq?

1.5 The Significance of this Study

The major aspect of this study that distinguishes it from others done on the Kurdish language is the subject of the research, which is the language of instruction. This is the first research focusing on the problem of language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan. The majority of other studies has been done on Kurdish dialects or the Kurdish language and have dealt with general aspects of Kurdish, but none has undertaken any steps to investigate this profound and crucial issue in Kurdish society. The second point is the structure of the research, which is twofold: theoretical and empirical. This is the first empirical qualitative study on the issue of language of instruction. This means that the data are directly collected from the people concerned with the problem. Consequently, the result will be more accurate than those depending solely on data collected exclusively from available literature.

What especially distinguishes this study from others is the timing. This study has been done at a time when there was no oppression of the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan, because the Kurdish region has recently been enjoying

autonomous status within federal Iraq; there are Kurdish administrations, schools, institutions, etc. These new circumstances have created an atmosphere of consciousness among the Kurdish people, enabling them to expound their ideas during interviews without any fear of being interrogated by the authorities, as was normally the case during the previous regime of Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, the qualitative study presents important first-hand data, as the participants had the possibility to express their own ideas and experiences without hesitation or fear of reprisals.

1.6 Methodology

To obtain accurate and reliable results for studying the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan, I have adopted a twofold method of investigation: theoretical and empirical. In the theoretical part, I have focused on all of the studies related to the issue of standardization of Kurdish and the attempts that tended to find a solution for unifying the existing Kurdish varieties. In the same context, I have also focused on all organized attempts to deal with the situation of the Kurdish language represented by national and international congresses. All of the results and points of view reached by other researchers have been evaluated and compared.

The Kurdish mass media was also an important source for data collection; for example, interviews with Kurdish linguists and politicians that were published in daily newspapers and weekly magazines. Moreover, relevant documents such as published petitions of linguists to governments and laws issued by the previous Iraqi government have been considered. It is worthwhile to mention that general linguistic theories on standardization and language policy, such as Haugen's theory and Kloss', have been taken into account, as well.

This study also presents a general historical review of the development of the Kurdish literary language from the beginning of the last century to the present. In this section, I have focused on the role of politics, religion, and other social factors, showing how these factors have and are affecting the Kurdish language.

The second part of this study presents qualitative research that I have conducted in Iraqi Kurdistan in the province of Duhok. The study has focused on the Kurmanji speakers of Duhok, since the majority of Sorani linguists think either Kurmanji should adopt the Sorani variety or a new variety should be established by mixing both varieties. However, they believe the new established variety should mainly be based on the Sorani variety, but also integrate portions of Kurmanji and other varieties. These linguists justify their vision by saying that Sorani has a longer literary history than Kurmanji. Thus, it was important to hear firsthand from the Kurmanji speakers about how they see such attempts and to evaluate their reactions, because they would be the ones most affected by such measures.

The study aimed to collect data from native Kurdish speakers. The participants were interviewed in Kurdish and the interviews recorded; the collected interviews have been translated into English and submitted to a process of content analysis based on the approach advocated by Mayring (2011). The purpose of conducting the qualitative study was to collect data that were unobtainable from neither available literature nor through a quantitative study.

1.7 The Structure of this Dissertation

Chapter Two of this dissertation introduces the development of the status of the Kurdish language in modern Iraqi history, from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraqi Kurdistan. The chapter illustrates how the Iraqi government in Baghdad during the mandate period tried by all means to ignore the national demands of the Kurds, among them the demand for legalization establishing the use of Kurdish in schools and in the local administration in areas where the majority of the inhabitants were Kurds. It also shows the status of the Kurdish language in the Iraqi constitution during various periods in the history of modern Iraq, the relationship between religion and language, and the influence of Islam on the Kurdish language. Furthermore, it demonstrates how Iraqi governments, especially during the era of Saddam Hussein, used Islam as an instrument to apply brutal policies against the Kurds. Hussein's regime gave Islamic names to military operations aimed at killing thousands of innocent Kurdish civilians; the name

“Anfal”, meaning “Prey” in English, is an example of such a criminal operation. The chapter also reveals the policies implemented by the regime of Saddam Hussein, such as discrimination, Arabization, and deportation.

Another important event in the era of Saddam Hussein was the March 11, 1970, agreement with the Kurds. This agreement is one the most important events in Kurdish history. Although the regime did not carry out its promises, the agreement remains as the first official recognition of the Kurds in Iraq. This chapter also focuses on another important incident linked to the aforementioned agreement: the establishment of the Kurdish Academy of Science in Baghdad. The chapter demonstrates the aims, activities, and structure of this institution.

It also explains the conflict over variety selection, how a certain Kurdish variety tried to be recognized as the standard variety in Iraqi Kurdistan, and the reaction of the other group to such attempts. The chronological development of the use of Kurdish in media and books occupies another part of this chapter.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical part of literature review on the issue of standardizing Kurdish. The chapter begins with an introduction to the terms *standard* and *standardization*. It then demonstrates different points of view from different linguists in connection with possible options for establishing a unified Kurdish language. In this regard, the chapter presents a debate on the standardization of Kurdish on an individual level, as well as through sociolinguistic initiatives. The terms *language ideologies*, *language maintenance*, *language policy*, and *language planning* occupy considerable space in this chapter. The issues of ideology of national language and standardization, and the ideology of language and variety maintenance within the Kurdish nation will be discussed within this framework. The chapter also illustrates the problem of corpus planning in Kurdish, the problem of two different grammars in the two Kurdish varieties, and presents some examples of the existing grammatical differences. This chapter also reveals the dilemma of selecting either the Perso-Arabic or the Latin alphabet. The chapter ends with a classification of the existing Kurdish varieties.

Chapter Four presents the steps in the process of the empirical study. It shows the reasoning behind selecting the Bahdini province of Duhok to conduct the qualitative study. It then demonstrates the method of selecting the participants, conducting the interviews, the difficulties encountered, interview questions, transcripts of the interviews, the technique used for content analysis, the process of coding, the findings, and then classification of the arguments of the participants, ordering them in several charts to show the degree of importance of the factors that made participants refuse the Sorani variety. The chapter also analyzes and charts the issue of understanding Sorani by Bahdini and illustrates the percentage of the degree of understanding.

Chapter Five is the discussion part of this dissertation. It demonstrates the findings of this study and shows how the results were obtained. The chapter also shows how the findings correspond to the research questions and presents a comparison with results of other studies on the Kurdish language. Furthermore, it illustrates the limits and contributions of the study to the existing knowledge, suggests recommendations for further studies in this field, and future perspectives of the Kurdish language.

Chapter 2: The History of the Kurdish Language from the Foundation of Iraq to the Present

The objective of this chapter is to show the development of the status of the Kurdish language in Iraq from 1920 to the present day. The chapter displays the hostile language policies implemented by Iraqi governments towards the Kurdish language. It demonstrates the role of Islam and the development of Kurdish media and its influence on the Kurdish language. Furthermore, it delineates the background of the dispute over the selection of either Kurmanji or Sorani variety, and the role of the Kurdish Academy in Baghdad during the 1970s and in the present time. This chapter is based on a theoretical literature review of academic studies, books on the history of Kurds and Iraq, and available published documents.

2.1 The Kurdish language during the period of the Iraqi Kingdom and British Mandate

With the end of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, new borders were drawn in the Mesopotamian region, and, consequently, new countries came into existence. The new borders were drawn without respecting the will of the population of this region, and the Kurds were the main victims of that division. Kurdistan, which means the “Homeland of the Kurds,” was divided among Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

Iraq, the new-born country, came into existence under the name of “The Kingdom of Iraq” and was put under British mandate, which established an Iraqi national government supervised by British advisers (Lowe 1982: 135).

In 1921, Prince Faisal I bin Hussein, brother of the new ruler of neighbouring Jordan, was proclaimed king of Iraq (Tripp 2002:48). The population of this new kingdom consisted of Arabs, Kurds, Turks, Assyrians, and some other small minority groups.

2.1.1 The period of denial of the promises given to the Kurds

The initial promises of a semi-independent identity for the Kurdish people by the international community in the treaties of Sever and Lausanne¹, as well as in the joint declaration of 1922 by Great Britain and the newly established state of Iraq, were later ignored and abandoned (Morad 1992:123). The new kingdom was run by an Arab government.

According to the basic constitution of the Iraq, also called “the Basic Iraqi Law of 1925,” all Iraqi people were considered to have equals rights despite differences in religion and nationalities. The Kurds, as the second biggest nationality, were supposed to have the right of using Kurdish as an official language in the provinces that had a majority Kurdish population and also the right of using Kurdish as the language of instruction in their local schools. The British mandate also confirmed this issue (Kreyenbroek 1992: 77). However, Kurds were excluded from the political process and there was no reference to their status. The Kurds sharply protested against their ambiguous status in Iraq and called for recognition of their national rights, including the right to use Kurdish as the language of instruction in schools. Furthermore, the government also promised the Kurds that an office for translating school textbooks from Arabic into Kurdish would be established, but nothing was done in that regard either (Sluglett 2007:127). Edmonds, a British official, stated that “all efforts were devoted in order not to resolve the Kurdish problems. The Iraqi government neither trained teachers in Kurdistan nor provided textbooks” (Ibid: 127).

The British administration promised the Kurds that it would realize their demands, but unfortunately nothing was fulfilled on the ground. Bois (1966: 145), states:

At the same time the government of Iraq, thanks to the British mandate, was making every effort to extend its dominion over the Kurds, not without promising repeatedly, in its Declaration of July 11th 1923, and Circulars of the President of the Council (January 21st 1926) and that of

¹ treaty between the Ententes and the representative of the defeated Ottoman empire after the First World War, according to which the representative of the Ottoman Empire acknowledged the loss of power over Arabia and accepted an independent Armenian state and an autonomous Kurdistan in the region.

the Minister of the Interior (February 18th 1926), that the right of the Kurds would be respected, that their language would be taught in the schools and used in the courts and administration, that the functionaries would be Kurds, or at least be able to speak the language, in the Kurdish areas of the country. The British strove to make these regulations effective; but in June 1930, they signed an Anglo-Iraklion [Anglo-Iraqi] treaty, which terminated the mandate without any provision had been made for recognition of the rights of minorities, whether of religion or of race.

All promises related to minorities were ignored, especially those related to the legal rights of the Kurds.

2.1.2 The period of establishment of the Kurdish kingdom of Sheikh Mahmud

In 1922, Sheikh Mahmud proclaimed himself king of Kurdistan and formed a government in the province of Sulaimaniya; however, his administration did not last long and was ended through the intervention of British colonial troops. Although that period spanned only about five years, it witnessed the publication of several magazines and newspapers in Kurdish as well as the establishment of some schools for boys and girls (Nebez 2000). It is worthy to mention that despite the administration Sheikh Mahmud having ended, the Kurds of the province of Sulaimaniya insisted on having Kurdish as a language of instruction in schools (Bois 1966: 151).

2.1.3 The situation of Kurmanji variety in the Iraqi Kingdom

The speakers of the Kurmanji variety in Iraqi Kurdistan did not have the possibility of being educated in their variety of Kurmanji because the majority of the areas of Kurmanji speakers were administratively annexed to the province of Mosul (in Arabic, Liwa al Mosul), where the administration was run by the Arabs who had the upper hand in administrative affairs (Hassanpour 1992: 159). The Kurmanji speakers were forced to attend Arabic schools.

On January 21, 1926, during one of the debates of the Chamber of Deputies about the Kurdish areas in Iraq, Prime Minister Abd al Muhsin al Sa'dun addressed the members of the Chamber (proceeding of Chamber of Deputies, 21 January 1926):

Gentlemen! This nation cannot live unless it gives all Iraqi elements their rights..... The fate of Turkey should be a lesson to us and we should not revert to the policy formerly pursued by Ottoman Government. We should give the Kurds their rights. Their officials should be from among them. Their tongue should be their official language and their children should learn their own tongue in the schools. It is incumbent upon us to treat all elements, Whether Muslim or non- Muslim, with fairness and justice, and give them their rights (Delhi, BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, File 13/14 Vol. V as cited in Sluglett 2007: 124).

Despite this statement by Prime Minister al Sa'dun, nothing was implemented in that context. The Iraqi government did nothing in this regard until 1930. At the same time, all promises of an independent Kurdistan and autonomy of The Sever Treaty of 1926 were abolished.

2.1.4 The stance of Arab ministers on the Kurdish language

The Arab ministers during the period of British mandatory were trying to deny the existence of the Kurdish issue, which they considered to exist only in the minds of the British, who intended to weaken Iraqi national unity (See Sluglett 2007: 125). Interior Minister Abdul Aziz claimed that Kurdish was not practical for use in schools, saying that the schools that used Kurdish as a language of instruction were not successful. Therefore, he suggested that the textbooks in the province of Mosul should be in Arabic, and if the Kurdish pupils did not understand the Arabic textbooks, teachers should translate and explain them in their native language (Ibid: 2007).

2.1.5 The stance of some British officials on the Kurdish language

Some British officials considered the position of the Arab ministers towards Kurdish demands as deliberately ignoring the legitimate rights of the Kurds. Lionel Smith, the director of education in Iraq from 1920 to 1921, backed the issue of Kurdish language and thought it possible to standardize it (Ibid: 2007:

125). He also demanded the establishment of two Kurdish secondary schools, one in Erbil and one in Suliamaniya.

In 1926, there were twenty-five primary schools in Kurdish areas, and sixteen of them used both Arabic and Kurdish as the language of instruction. Kurdish schools formed 2% of the total number of primary schools in Iraq (Entessar 2010: 93).

2.1.6 The stance of Kurdish deputies of chamber on the issue of ignoring the Kurdish language

The Kurds continuously raised petitions to the government confirming that they were waiting for the implementation of their demands to make the Kurdish language an official language and the language of instruction in schools (Sluglett 2007:125). In 1929, a group of Kurdish deputies of chamber sent a petition to the Prime Minister of Iraq complaining about the Kurdish language being ignored and about the bad situation of the education system in Iraqi Kurdistan in general (Ibid: 127). But, unfortunately, all of these efforts did not realize even the least of the aspirations of the Kurds in Iraq.

2.1.7 The joint British-Iraqi policy towards the Kurdish language

The Iraqi government not only hampered teaching Kurdish in schools, but it began practicing a policy of Arabization of Kurdish primary schools, especially in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Erbil. The process of Arabization was carried out (Zari Kirmanci, No 1, May 24, 1926:16, cited by Hassanpour 1992: 312) by initiating changes in the school textbooks and by appointing non-Kurdish teachers to instruct Kurdish children, and they encouraged pupils to transfer from Kurdish to Arabic schools. In Kirkuk, a lot of Kurdish schools were abolished, and pupils were forced to learn Turkish for four years and then to attend Arabic schools (Ibid. No. 19 May 26, 1929, cited in Hassanpour 1992: 313).

Zaki, a Kurdish member of the Chamber of Deputies of Iraq, complained to the king about the measures that abolished teaching Kurdish in primary schools. He confirmed that the policy of Arabization was deliberately done by the British and

Iraqi governments. The British mandate expressed their appreciation to the League of Nations regarding the measures taken by the Iraqi government by saying:

It has been felt that the Kurdish language alone provides too narrow a basis for secondary and higher education. The government has therefore always insisted that Arabic shall be studied in Kurdish primary school, and in the intermediate schools of Erbil and Sulaimaniya a gradual change over is made from Kurdish to Arabic as the medium of instruction. This example has even been followed by some Kurdish elementary and primary schools in Mosul Liwa where Kurdish nationalism is less active. In these, Arabic textbooks are used from the beginning, though Kurdish is the language of instruction and explanation (Great Britain: Colonia office 1920-31: 230, cited by Hassanpour, 1992: 313-314).

Both the British and Iraqi authorities undertook some measures, such as propagating the use of Arabic as a language of instruction in schools among the Kurds. In fact, this system of incremental change from a dominated to a dominant language was a policy that was current in many settings aiming at assimilation. This policy also has been described for, amongst other, Carinthia (see Busch: 1999). They began changing the language of some primary schools from Kurdish to Arabic, as well, especially in the fifth and sixth grades. Furthermore, they abolished teaching Kurdish in girls' schools in Erbil ("The Kurdish question", NO.S.A. 321 of May 12, 1929, Delhi, BHCF. Events in Kurdistan, Kurdish Policy, File No.13/14 Vol. VI, secret, quoted in: Hassanpour, 1992: 314).

The Iraqi governments of that period tried to persuade the League of Nations that they respected the rights of the Kurds, but, in reality, they did little in this concern. Tripp (2000: 67) stated:

..., the Iraqi government made a gesture towards Kurdish cultural identity by promulgating the Local Language Law. Intended to show the Kurds and the League of the Nations that Iraqi government took seriously its pledge to recognize the distinctive nature and interests of Iraqi Kurdish citizens, the watered-down version of the law which eventually appeared did little to allay Kurdish fears.

Although Kurds form 23% of the Iraqi population, the second largest nationality behind Arabs, the Iraqi government denied most of their rights (Myhill 2006: 18).

2.2 The Kurdish language during the era of the Republic of Iraq

In 1958, the era of the Kingdom of Iraq came to the end, and Kasim, who commanded the coup, became the country's first president (Kreyenbroek 1992:77). In the beginning, the newly-founded republic recognized the Kurds as the partner of the Arabs, and the Kurdish language received some recognition by Iraq. In 1959, a branch of Kurdish studies was founded at the University of Baghdad. Likewise, a General Directorate of Kurdish studies was established in order to supervise Kurdish schools (Ibid: 78). Furthermore, numerous magazines, newspapers, and radios in Kurdish came into existence. Sorani variety was recognized to be the base for a standard Kurdish in the Republic of Iraq (Ibid: 78). This situation did not last long, however; in 1963, as a result of tension between the Kurds and the government, the Iraqi government put an eight-month ban on all Kurdish publications.

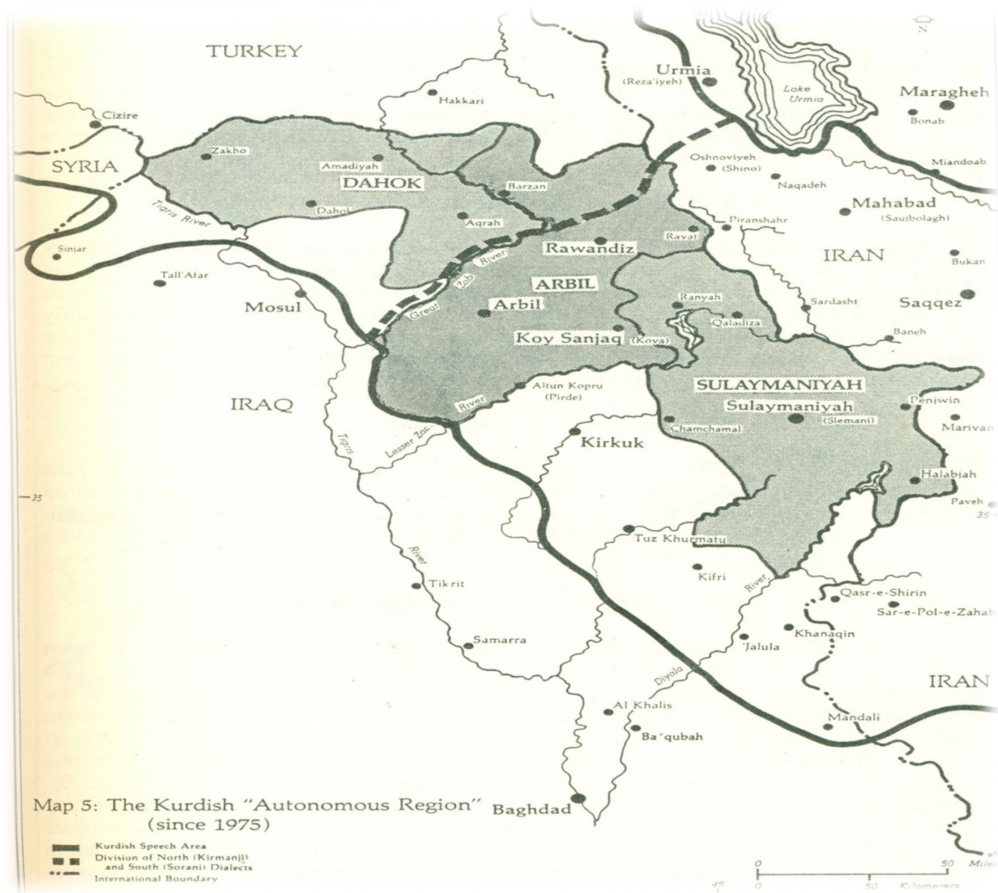
2.3 The Kurdish language during the era of Saddam Hussein

On the 17th of July, 1968, Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Baath's Party came to power through a military coup. Al Bakir became the new president and Saddam Hussein was the vice president. In his first radio speech, the new president declared that the new government would try to solve the Kurdish problem. It is important to mention that the Kurds Armed Movement in Iraq, led by Kurdistan Democratic Party at that time, was struggling for autonomy for Kurdistan and democracy for Iraq.

2.3.1 The March 11th, 1970, agreement

On the 11th March 1970, after along negotiation, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Iraqi government signed a for four-year peace agreement (Izady 1992: 213), according to which, the Kurds were to begin running the administration of the so-called autonomous region. The region included the three Kurdish provinces of Sulaimaniya, Erbil, and Duhok (Sherzad 2011). It is worth noting that some Kurdish areas, like Kirkuk and Sinjar, were not put under the Kurdish administration but administrated by the central government of Baghdad. These areas remained as one of the issues of dispute between the Kurds and the Iraqi government till the present day (see Map 1).

Map 1: Disputed area in Iraqi Kurdistan



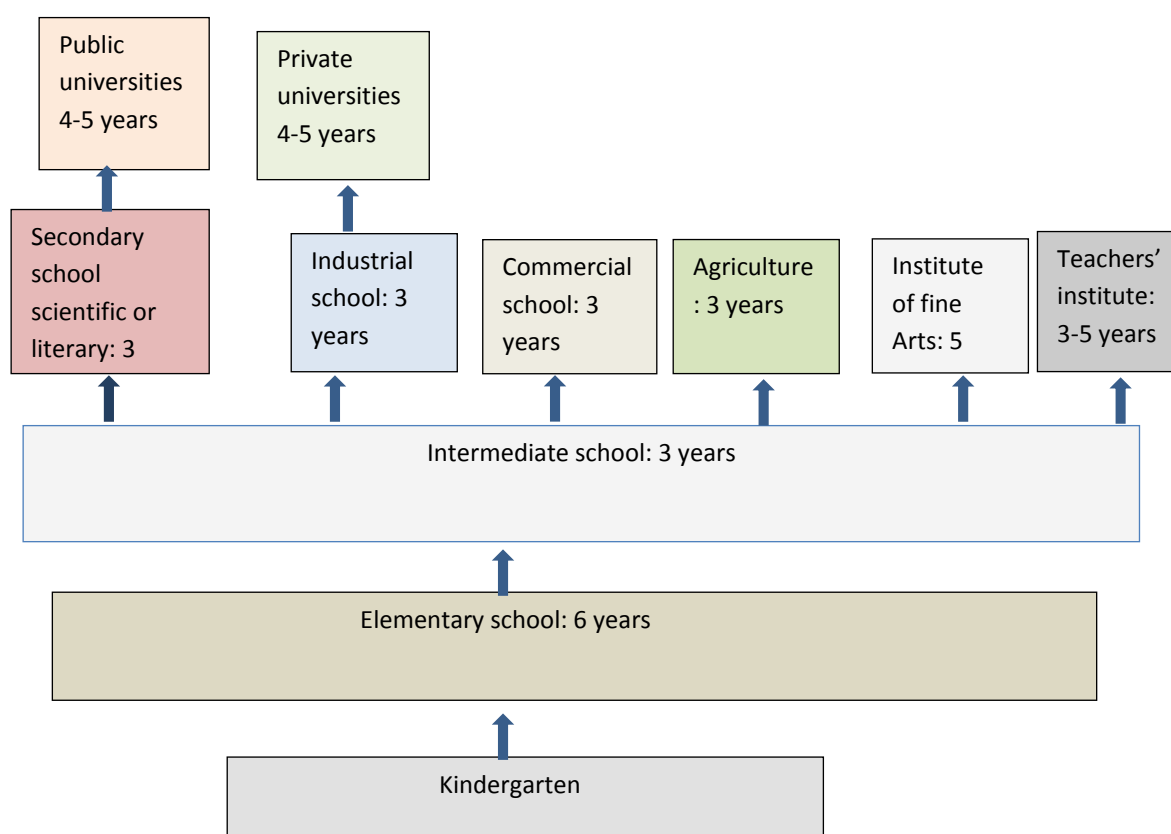
Map 1: The Kurdish Autonomous Region in Iraq. Hassanpour (1992:7).

During those four years, the Kurds began officially to use Kurdish as a medium of instruction in the schools of the Kurdish region. At that time, Sorani was used as the language of instruction in the schools of the Kurdish region, including the province of Duhok (Butani 2002). The first stage was to change the curricula of

the 1st grade of elementary schools into Sorani variety, and all other intermediate and secondary schools began to have one subject in Sorani variety (see figure 1: the structure of education system in Iraq).

That period witnessed many positive developments in the field of language beside the use of Kurdish in the schools; a lot of Kurdish newspapers and magazines were published in both Kurdish varieties. Another important positive development was the establishment of the Kurdish Academy of Science in Baghdad.

Figure 1: Structure of the education system in Iraq and Kurdistan at that time. (Authors' own illustration)



2.3.2 The Kurdish Academy of Science

Having an academy for the Kurdish language was always among the demands of Iraqi Kurds since the foundation of Iraq as an independent state in 1922, but all Iraqi governments that came to the power in Iraq denied this legal right. Consequently, the Kurdish language became prey to all those who wanted to obliterate it. The denial of Kurdish legal rights did not stop the struggle of the Kurds in Iraq. In 1970, the Iraqi government established an Academy within a framework of an autonomy program for the Kurds called the Kurdish Academy of Science ("KAS"), with its head office in Baghdad (Blau 2006:109-110).

In fact, this academy was not totally independent, as was proclaimed, because the Iraqi government attached this academy to the Iraqi Academy of Science, of which it was considered a branch (Hassanpour 1992: 450). This academy was officially established and a special law showing the framework of targets and tasks of this academic corpus was issued by the Iraqi government².

Kurdish Academy Law No 183 for the year 1970

Title legislation: Kurdish Academy Law No 183 for the year 1970

Classification: Iraqi law

Number of the legislation: 183 /1970

Date of Issue: 25.08.1970

Law number 996

In the name of the people

Revolution commands council

Based on the provisions of paragraph (a) of Article 42 of the Provisional Constitution, the Revolutionary Command Council has decided in its meeting on 29.8.197 to issuing the following law:

Article 1

² Iraqi laws [Arabic translation by the author]. Retrieved from: <http://wiki.dorar-aliraq.net/iraqilaws/law/5238.html>[accessed on 25 January 2012].

An academy will be established in the Iraqi Republic called (Kurdish Academy of Science) and will be the Kurdish branch of the Iraqi Academy of Science. It is considered an independent body with a judgmental entity and with independent financial and administration, which is managed by the office of the presidency, represented by the minister of education.

Article 2

The head office will be in Baghdad, and it can select any other place in the Iraqi Republic by two thirds of voices to hold the meetings.

Article 3

The Academy aims to

- promote scientific studies and research in Iraq to keep pace with scientific progress;
- maintain the integrity of the Kurdish language and work on the development and fulfilment of the demands of science, literature, and the arts;
- revive the Kurdish and Islamic heritage in the literature, sciences, and the arts;
- offer scholarship to study the history of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan;
- disseminate independent research and encourage the translation and publishing in science, literature; and the arts (Ibid).

Article 4

The academy achieves its aims through the following means:

- publishing linguistic and scientific encyclopedias,
- publishing a magazine and brochures,
- publishing old books, documents, and texts,
- strengthening the ties with the Iraqi Academy and with scientific and cultural academies and institutions in the Arab world and other countries,

- granting the researchers, scientists and writers awards,
- providing financial aid for publishers and translators,
- calling to publish and translate selected topics chosen by the society,
- organizing a symposium for teaching, and
- establishing a library for the academy, developing it, and taking care of printing affairs (Ibid).

Article 5

The academy is authorized to hold scientific and literary conferences, organize celebrations within the framework of this law, contribute to scientific and literary conferences, send selected delegates from its members to represent them, and to dispatch nominated members for scientific and research purposes (Ibid).

a. Structure

The members of the Academy consisted of ten active members, two honorary members, three members from outside Iraq, and thirty-four supporters.

The Academy formed ten different specialized committees in various fields of science from members and supporters of the academy and from outside the academy, as well; the Language and Linguistics committee, the Literature and Culture committee, the Social Science committee, the Natural Science committee, the Dictionary committee, the Translating and Editing committee, the Islamic Culture committee, the Library and Magazine committee, and the Language Research committee (Sherzad 2009: 459).

b. Activities

Although the Academy did not last long, it succeeded in the following.

1. Establishment of different committees to collect Kurdish scientific terms, write Kurdish grammar, and to code the Kurdish writing system.

2. Sending some members of the Academy to different countries to collect Kurdish manuscripts in the fields of history, language, and literature. Consequently, different European institutes and individuals expressed their readiness to cooperate with the Academy.
3. Different academic institutes in Moscow, Leningrad, Yerevan, and Baku supplied the Academy with useful books.
4. European orientalists, such as Joyce Blau, also expressed support.
5. The Academy supported the translation of books into Kurdish (Sherzad 2011: 391-392).
6. The Academy established a good relationship with different national and international institutions and organizations with shared goals, like the universities of Iraq and their libraries, some Arabic libraries, and some oriental institutes abroad. The members of the Academy actively participated in different international congresses, symposia and festivals. Among them were the International Oriental Congress held in July 1973 in Paris, the symposium organized by the Directorate of Kurdish Studies in connection to the school textbooks, the History Congress in Baghdad, and the Congress of Kurdish Writers (Ibid: 393).

c. Publications

1. *Journal of the Kurdish Academy of Science*, in Arabic and Kurdish, 799 pages. Considered to be the largest journal in the history of Kurdish publications.
2. Translation of the important historic work, *Sherefname*, 1016 pages, by Abdurrahman Hejar, member of the Academy.
3. The first volume of the book, *Haji Qadir Qui*, 400 pages, by Massud Mohammed.
4. *Jawan the Forgotten Kurdish Tribe and the Famous Jawanies*, by Mustafa Jewad.
5. Translation of the book *Jawan the Forgotten Kurdish Tribe and the Famous Jawanies* into Kurdish by Hejar.

6. The Academy also published an abundance of other research in the fields of history and language, Kurdistan during the First World War, as well as a book on Kurdish idioms.
7. The Academy supported 22 Kurdish authors in publishing their books, among them the second part of *Al-khal*, a book on Kurdish ethnography and folklore by Sujady, the *Scientific Dictionary* by Jalal Gareeb, *The Agriculture Dictionary*, *Kurdish Idioms* by Sadiq Baha Al-Deen, *Akrad Almeli* by Ahmad Othman, and *A Glance at the Kurds* by the French orientalist Thomas Bois. (Ibid)

d. Library

Within two years of its inception, the Academy succeeded in establishing a library of more than 12,000 books in various languages. The library contained valuable collections of old and new journals, magazines, and newspapers, some of which were rare. The library also made copies of some important manuscripts when obtaining an original was impossible. Additionally, it exchanged some publications with different national and international institutions (Ibid).

After the collapse of the Kurdish Armed Movement in 1975, the Academy was marginalized and later abolished by the Iraqi regime. After the 1990s, when the Kurds established a regional government in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Academy came into existence again. In September 1997, The Kurdistan parliament issued a special law for the Kurdish Academy, according to which it was considered to be an independent institute related to the ministers' council in Erbil (Al-sharq Awsat 06.09.2001.No.8318). Unfortunately, the Academy is not politically independent, because its members are appointed by both main political parties, the KDP and PUK. When the Academy was established in Erbil, its members were only from the KPD; however, after establishing a joint government from both the PUK and KDP, the government appointed new members from both parties (Kheznedar 26.05.2008).

2.3.3 The status of the Kurdish language from 1974-1990

The epoch of the previous regime of Saddam Hussein from 1974 was the worst in the history of the Kurds (see Human Rights Watch, *Genocide in Iraq* 1993). In 1974, the Kurds and the Iraqi government could not reach a final agreement on the form of autonomy. A lot of issues remained hanging without any solution. Many Kurdish demands were ignored by the government and remained words on paper, without implementation. The Iraqi government, for example, refused to attach the Kurdish oil rich province of Kirkuk to the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan. There were also other disputed areas under the control of Iraqi government. Furthermore, the issue of the Kurdish *Peshmerga*³ fighters remained unsolved; Iraq refused to recognize them officially as border troops. There was the issue of the Kurds giving up their weapons to the Iraqi government. Iraq was not ready to accept a lot of Kurdish demands and, as a result of that, war broke out between both sides.

In 1974, despite the objections of the Kurds, the Iraqi government issued a law called “The Law of Autonomy.” This precipitated a war between the Kurds and the central government. One year later, the regime signed an agreement with Iran, according to which Iran cut all forms of assistance to the Kurds, and, consequently, the Kurdish resistance came to the end. The regime then began to practice a policy of genocide (Bruinessen 1994: 141-170).

Generally, except those four years of agreement from 1970-1974, the situation of the Kurdish language and the Kurds in Iraq did not change after the end of the monarchy in Iraq, and all of the governments that came to power during the era of the republic conducted the same antagonistic policy towards the Kurds and their language (Myhill 2006: 18). The Kurdish language was not recognized as an official language by any Iraqi government until the end of the regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The governments always found justification for their policy towards the Kurds: “The Arabs constantly found excuses to deny the linguistic

³ Armed Kurdish fighters, and the word means in Kurdish “those who face death”.

and autonomous rights of Kurds” (Ibid). They dealt with the Kurdish language as a political issue.

The regime demoralized the Kurds by performing a racist policy intending to change the demography of Iraqi Kurdistan. The regime’s policy towards the Kurds mainly took the three following dimensions.

2.3.4 Arabization policy

Arabization of Kurdish life and culture was one of the schemes used by Saddam’s regime to systematically change the demography of Iraqi Kurdistan (Wanche 2005: 187). Education in Kurdish was either totally forbidden in some areas, such as Khanaqin, Mosul, Sinjar, and Kirkuk, or was considerably reduced in others, including at the university level. Even children’s magazines in Kurdish were banned. Most of the Kurdish cultural institutions were abolished, for example the *Kurdish Publishing House*, *The Kurdish Academy*, *The Faculty of Kurdish Studies*, and broadcasting and television programs in Kurdish were reduced. Kurdish organizations were completely banned, for example, the Kurdistan Students Union, the Union of Kurdish Women, and other syndicates. The only University in Kurdistan, Suliamaniya University, was also abolished in 1981. The regime of the Arab ruling Ba’ath party tried by all available means to change the national aspects of the Kurdish people (Sadiq 31.08.2011). This chauvinist policy was very obvious during the 1980s. Even the Kurdish names of cities and villages were replaced by Arabic names. The new Arabic names given had nothing to do with the history or the culture of the region; the city of Kirkuk became “El-Tamim” (nationalization) and hundreds of other names, such as El-Qudis (Jerusalem), etc. These new Arabic names were very Arabic nationalistic.

Another means of Arabizing the Kurds was forcing them to become affiliated with the Ba'ath Party. At the same time, the regime demanded that thousands of the Yazidi and Shabak Kurdish religion minorities (Blau 2006:215) register themselves as Arabs, otherwise they would be deported from their villages to southern Iraq.

In order to force the Kurds to prefer education in Arabic rather than in Kurdish, the regime issued a law stating that studies at university should be in Arabic. Before issuing the law, all humanities studies were in Arabic while natural sciences studies, such as engineering and medicine, were in English; in this way, the regime tried to coerce all of the Kurdish students to learn Arabic. Moreover, this policy encouraged parents to send their children to Arabic schools and not Kurdish ones (Mahawi 2008: 383). For the above purpose, I will translate some points of Iraqi law No. 17 issued in 1977 under the title, "Instructions from the Directorate of Studies and Follow-up of the Arabization Center," published in (Al Waqayi Al-Iraqia, 08,01,1977,No 2602, translated from Arabic by the author) an Arabic magazine for the issued Iraqi laws.

Term of references:

1. Contribution in the plan preparation needed for Arabization of the higher education.
2. Contribution in conducting studies related to the issue of organizing the process of arabizing in higher education, and preparing curricula books, supporting books, and reference books in the Arabic language.
3. Preparing studies for issuing laws related to the implementation of the Arabization plan of higher education, according to the regulation of the High National Committee of Arabization, and the regulations and statements issued by the ministry and center of Arabization.
4. Follow-up the implementation of regulations, issued statements from the ministry, Arabization center, and specialized committees related to higher education.
- 5.

This was an organized method for Arabization, implemented through administrative channels, supported by Iraqi institutions and policy makers.

2.3.5 Deportation policy

Deportation was another policy of the regime to change the demography of the Kurdistan region and the national characteristics of Kurdish culture. After the collapse of the Kurdish revolt in 1975, the Iraqi regime began to deport a huge number of Kurds to the areas close to the Iranian and Turkish borders and created a kind of no-man zone that was 15 kilometers wide (Sherzad 1999: 138). The

Ba'ath's regime deported at least 600,000 Kurds from 1970 to 2001, among them 100,000 Kurds from Kirkuk, who were forced in 1991 to leave this province and were replaced by Arab inhabitants from the south of Iraq (Aziz 2011: 8). In 1975, the regime of Hussein brought 279,000 Arabs from different parts of Iraq and forced them to live in the province of Kirkuk (Ibid: 8). Thousands of people from villages across the Turkish-Iraqi and Iranian-Iraqi borders were put either into collective camps in areas between the Kurdish and Arabic regions or were sent to the south of Iraq (O'Leary, C.A. 04.12.2002).

2.3.6 Discrimination policy

The discriminatory policy influenced the number of Kurdish pupils and students in schools and universities, but also the education sector in general. For example, on September 13, 1971, the number of pupils were 120 per 1000 residents in the Arab province of Basra, while the numbers of pupils in the most convenient residential areas of Kurdistan were only 70 per 1000 (Vanley 1988:312) The proportion of students coming from Kurdistan at the various universities, including those of Sulaimaniya, reached only 6.4% in the years 1970-71 and 6.1% in 1971-72, the rest were Arabs. The government also reduced the number of schools in Kurdish areas. Between March 11 and December 31, 1970, more than 110 schools in the province of Duhok and the Kurdish districts of the province of Nineveh were closed. After the opening of Kurdish schools in Khanaqin in 1972, repeated pressure from the government forced more than 400 pupils to leave Kurdish schools and go to Arabic schools. As for scholarship recipients, only 3% to 4% were of Kurdish origin. The number of the Kurdish students at both the military and the police academy were never more than 2% (Ibid).

2.4 Kurdish language in Iraqi constitutions

The first Iraqi basic constitution of 1925, article 123, did not recognize the Kurdish language and even denied referring to the Kurds as a second nationality group of Iraq or even as one of its components. Instead, the Iraqi constitution

confirmed in article 17 that Arabic is the official language of the country⁴. And despite two constitutional amendments, the first three months after the announcement of the constitution, and the second in 1943, there were neither a modification of that article nor any reference to Kurdish as a second official language of the country⁵.

In 1931, when the Local Language Law was issued, there was partial recognition of Kurdish, but only as a local language in certain areas in Kurdistan and not as an official language in Iraqi Kurdistan. In fact, the negligence of Kurdish education was the main reason behind the uprising of the Kurdish people in 1943. For further information on the status of Kurdish during era of British mandate, see Johnson 2004 (Ibid).

In the transitional constitution of 1958, there was obvious controversy between its articles; on one hand, Article 3 mentions that Arabs and Kurds are partners in the homeland, on the other hand, the preceding article confirms that Iraq is a part of the whole Arab Nation, as if there were no Kurds in Iraq (Heyawi, No Year of Publication: 7). This constitution also did not refer to Kurdish as an official language in Iraq.

The constitution of 1964, Article 3, determines that Islam is the religion of the Iraqi state and the basis for its constitution and Arabic is the official language of the country (Ibid: 13). But Article 19 states that “this constitution recognizes the national rights of the Kurds within Iraqi people in a brotherly national unity” (Ibid: 15).

The transitional constitution of 1968, Article 1, states that the Iraqi people are a part of the Arab nation, while Article 4 confirms that only Arabic is the official language of the country.

⁴ Constitution of the Kingdom of Iraq 1925. Retrieved from <http://www.constitution.org/cons/iraq/iraqconst19250321.html> [Accessed August 22, 2014]

⁵ Constance Johnson, Iraq: Legal History and Traditions, LL. The Law Library Of Congress file No.2004-208, Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://www.loc.gov/law/help/iraq%20_legal_history_and_traditions.pdf [Accessed October 15, 2013].

The Iraqi transitional constitution of 1970 was a modified copy of the constitution of 1968. This constitution confirmed in Article 7B that Kurdish is the official language alongside Arabic in the Kurdish autonomous region and can be used in the areas where the majority of the inhabitants are Kurdish (Heyawi n.d.: 44). However, in fact, the regime began its Arabization policy at that same time, intending to change the demography of the region.

Article 6 of the constitution of 1990 states that the Iraqi people consist of Arabs and Kurds and confirms the national rights of the Kurds, but in the same document Article 7 states that Arabic is the official language of Iraq, and that Kurdish is an official language beside the Arabic language in the Kurdish autonomous region (Ibid: 66). This constitution remained in effect until the fall of Saddam in 2003.

After the collapse of the regime of Saddam Hussein, there was a long debate among all Iraqi ethnic, political, and religious groups about what the new constitution should look like. After a referendum, the constitution was finally approved and, as such, is considered the first democratic constitution. According to Article 3 of this constitution, “Iraq is a country of multiple nationalities, religions, and sects. It is a founding and active member of the Arab League and is committed in its charter, and it is part of the Islamic world.”⁶

Another dramatic change occurred in this article when Kurdish, for the first time in the history of modern Iraq, is recognized as an official language besides Arabic in all parts of Iraq:

The Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The Iraqis have the right to educate their children in their mother tongue, languages like Turkmen, Syriac, and Armenian shall be guaranteed in public educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions (Ibid).

6 Iraqi Constitution 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?fileid=230000> [Accessed January 25, 2013].

In 2014, the Iraqi parliament approved a new law that even improved the status of Kurdish language.

Article -2 - Arabic and Kurdish languages are the two official languages of Iraq

Article -3 – Arabic and Kurdish are languages of the official newspaper

Article -4 - Arabic and Kurdish languages are the official languages of meetings, the House of Representatives, the Presidency of the Republic , the Federal Council of Ministers, the Supreme Judicial Council, the Federal agencies and institutions, other official meetings in the Kurdistan Region, its parliament , its presidency and its government.

Article 5 Arabic and Kurdish are the languages for communication and correspondence between the federal authorities and the authorities of the Kurdistan Region

Article 6 Recognition of documents and correspondence of the two official languages at the federal and the province authorities

Article 7 Private Schools are allowed to be opened in all levels in Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmen, Syriac, Armenian or Mandaean in accordance with educational guidelines.

Article 8 Arabic and Kurdish are used in the following fields:

First: Currency Second: passports and traffic indicator panels, boards of the ministries and state departments, and of the Federal Kurdistan Region⁷.

2.5 The Kurdish language in the Post-Saddam Hussein era

2.5.1 The period of establishing the safe haven

In 1991, more than 1.5 million Kurds fled from Saddam's weapons of mass destruction to the mountainous areas within the territories of the neighbouring countries of Turkey and Iran (Dabrowiska and Hahn 2008: 154). Consequently, U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 created a safe haven following international

⁷ Language laws. Retrieved from <http://ar.parliament.iq/LiveWebsites/Arabic/Container.aspx?LawID=592> [Accessed January 20,2014].

concern for the safety of the Kurdish refugees⁸. The U.S. and British governments established a no-fly zone over a huge area of northern Iraq; however, it left some of the Kurdish populated areas unprotected (See Map 1). The majority of refugee Kurds returned to cities and villages in Iraqi Kurdistan. In 1991, the Iraqi government fully withdrew from the safe haven region, de facto allowing Iraqi Kurdistan to function independently. The Kurds began to organize (Thielmann September 2000) themselves to fill the vacuum of administration left behind after the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the absence of governmental institutions related to the Iraqi government. The two Kurdish factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani, played the role of government. Both factions tried to build a local administration from the local Kurdish people (Entessar 2010: 100).

2.5.2 The period of re-establishing schools and administration in the Kurdish region

The country's infrastructure was completely destroyed. As the Kurds began to launch their new administration, they faced new challenges: lack of resources, experience, and organization. And just like most of the other sectors of Kurdish society, education suffered from many difficulties: schools were closed or destroyed, teachers were living in hard conditions, and there was a shortage of books and school materials. Despite all of these difficulties, the Kurdish people were eased by the absence of Saddam's military, intelligence, security, and Ba'ath's party in the region, and thus felt more secure.

The Kurdish local administration began to open the schools and call the teachers to return to work (Cole 2006: 53). But because of the hard economic situation and the inability of the local administration to pay the teachers a decent salary to cover

⁸ Resolutions of United Nation Security Council in 1991, resolution 688. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1991/scres91.htm>. [Accessed April 24, 2013].

their living costs, a lot of teachers were forced to seek other private jobs to supplement their income.

In addition to economic difficulties, schools were suffering from a shortage of textbooks, and the ones they had were out of date and in Arabic. Moreover, the contents of the books were mainly political propaganda for Saddam's regime (Goering, July 31, 2003). Thus the teachers were forced to translate them into Kurdish and, after omitting unwanted texts, dictate them for the pupils to write.

2.5.3 The period of establishing the Kurdish regional government

In 1992, in order to establish a Kurdish regional government for Iraqi Kurdistan, all Kurdish political parties participated in an election. By the end of voting, both political parties had won equal seats in the parliament (Cook 1995: 80-81)). The majority of KDP voters were and still are in the province of Duhok where the people speak Kurmanji, while PUK voters were in the region of Sulaimaniya where the people speak Sorani dialect. The newly elected parliament with only two political parties represented could not solve the problems of the Kurdish people and could not even agree to select one president for the region. Consequently, less attention was paid to infrastructure and other important sectors; instead they spent money and effort on secondary party conflicts until a civil war broke out between the two rival parties in 1994 (Ibid, 1995).

2.5.4 The period of the civil war between KDP and PUK from 1994 to the peace agreement of Washington in 1998

The political and social situation from 1994 to 1998 was tragic. There were two governments in this region. The PUK established its own government in Suliamaniyia where the vast majority were PUK supporters, and KDP established its own government in Erbil and Duhok where the vast majority were KDP supporters. The region was divided into two parts and two administrations (see Map: 2).

There was no central educational institution for the whole of Iraqi Kurdistan. The schools in the region of Duhok, which were under the control of the KDP with its Kurmanji speakers, were under the ministry of education in Erbil, while the schools of Sulaimaniya, which were under the control of PUK with its Sorani speakers, were under the ministry of education in Sulaimaniya. This internal division influenced the Kurdish language and the Kurdish society severely: it created a hidden, underlying enmity between inhabitants of these regions and added obstacles to solving the problem of the dichotomy of the Kurdish language.



1. Map 2: shows the areas administrated by PUK and KDP. Kurdish institute in Paris⁹.

After the Washington agreement between the KDP and PUK, the Kurdish region has been considered to be very safe and stable in comparison to other parts of Iraq. There are thousands of Kurdish schools in the region, and there are a considerable number of universities that are internationally recognized (Blau 2006: 111), such as Duhok University, University of Sulaimaniya, Salahaddin University, and the American University.

2.6 A chronological presentation of the Kurdish language in radio and television

This section focuses on the history of Kurdish broadcasting, such as radio and television stations in Iraqi Kurdistan and other parts of the country. The purpose of this section of the dissertation is to show the role and impact of Kurdish media on the process of standardizing the Kurdish language. Clearly, different studies have confirmed that the media play an important role in the process of standardization of languages. In this context, Busch (2004) states:

Der Konnex zwischen Medien, Sprache und Gesellschaft/Staat wird in Untersuchungen verschiedener Disziplinen angesprochen. So wird den Medien neben dem Bildungswesen eine wichtige Rolle in der Konstituierung von Standardsprachen und der Durchsetzung von Nationalsprachen zugeschrieben (31).

2.6.1 The period between 1939 and 1990

If we go back to the history of Kurdish broadcasting, we see that the first Kurdish radio station was not established in Kurdistan but in Yerevan in the USSR prior to 1939 (Nadirov 1992:38 as cited by Hassanpour 1992: 282). Their programs were received in all parts of Kurdistan. The language of broadcasting was Kurmanji dialect. However, the situation of this station began deteriorating after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Armenia. Recently, the station has

⁹ Kurdish Institute of Paris. Retrieved from http://www.institutkurde.org/en/kurdorama/Map_of_kurdistan.php [Accessed June 18, 2013].

been broadcasting only 45 minutes a day because of a shortage of financial resources.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, the first Kurdish radio station began broadcasting from Baghdad in 1939 (Kakaii, 14.08.2002). At the beginning, the broadcasting language was Sorani dialect, but later, in the 1970s and until the end of the 1990s, the Kurmanji dialect was dominant. The programs were limited to the news and some educational programs for schools. This radio station was under the control of the government (Hassanpour 1992: 283). It is worth mentioning that broadcasting in the Kurdish language was one of the main demands of the Kurdish people since the beginning of the 1920s and throughout their struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan. Unfortunately, Kurdish radio was used by governments that came to power to propagate (Ibid) their own policies and to attack the leadership of the Kurdish movement in Iraqi Kurdistan. In 1969, the Iraqi government established the first Kurdish television station in Kirkuk, which broadcasted its program in Sorani dialect (Kakaii, 14.08.2002).

In 1963, the KDP established a clandestine radio station (Hassanpour 1992:284), which broadcasted its program under the name *Dengê Kurdistanê Iraqê* (in English, “Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan”). This was broadcasted from a secret Kurdish transmitter situated in mountainous areas of Iraqi Kurdistan. Despite the bad reception—due to the Iraqi regime’s jamming to try to prevent the Kurds from hearing its news—Kurds eagerly followed its broadcasts. This station mainly broadcasted the news of the activities of the Peshmerga (Kurdish fighters) against the Iraqi military.

The first station in Iranian Kurdistan was established in Tabriz in 1945-46, which was then followed by another radio station in the capital of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad; the programs were in Sorani dialect (Hassanpour 1992:285).

2.6.2 Kurdish radio and television from 1990 to the present

While previously the issue of broadcasting in Kurdish was among the main demands of the Kurdish people in all four parts of Kurdistan, the issue of

broadcasting in Kurdish has recently been resolved naturally. Dozens of radio and television stations began broadcasting their programs in Kurdish from Europe via satellite, which reach every home in all parts of Kurdistan without any need for licensing from the governments of the countries among which the land of Kurdistan is divided. The stations and their offices are enjoying the democratic atmosphere of European countries, without any kind of suppression.

In 1995, when the first Kurdish satellite television station, Med-TV, began broadcasting from Great Britain in both Kurmanji and Sorani, as well as in Turkish (Hassanpour 2003: 81), the Turkish government tried to prevent the broadcast. This station also produced a program called *Roj baş Mamusta* [Good Day Teacher] that taught Kurdish live for children. The majority of the Kurds consider television a quantum leap in the history of Kurdish media. It was the first time (Romano 2006: 153) that the Kurds could express their opinion freely without regime control. However, this station has been closed under pressure from the Turkish government (Hassanpour 2003: 83), who, through diplomatic ties with the European Union, accused the station of supporting the *Partia Karkeren Kurdistane*, PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), which has been put on the list of terrorist organizations.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, and after the establishment of the safe haven for the Kurds in 1990, the Kurdish political parties began to organize themselves to establish a regional government in Iraqi Kurdistan, with each party establishing a local radio station to propagate its politics. Therefore, there were a dozen radio stations in the region. The KDP later established its TV satellite called K. TV ¹⁰ and the PUK also established their own satellite, Kurd-sat.

In fact, the last twenty years have witnessed a quickly increasing number of Kurdish television and radio stations. However, not all these media are stationed in Iraqi Kurdistan. Many are broadcasting from outside Kurdistan, especially satellite TV stations. Such a large number of television and radio stations may not have a positive effect on language because these media to a large extent are

10 Available online at: Kurdistan TV <http://www.kurdistantv.net>.

directed by political parties or organizations, and sometimes by individuals. Because the Kurds do not have a unified standard language, these media are obstacles to standardization. Another point is that the majority of these media are outside of Kurdistan, namely in Europe, and this makes it difficult for them to cooperate within the framework of any kind of unified strategy.

2.7 Kurdish in books and literary works

In Iraqi Kurdistan, books are published in different varieties. An author from Suliamaniya writes in Sorani, while similarly, an author from Duhok writes in Kurmanji variety. The same could be said about the kind of alphabets used; there are books published in the Latin alphabet and others in the Arabic-Persian-based alphabet. Despite this variation in writing Kurdish, the atmosphere of freedom in Kurdistan encourages Kurdish academics to translate various international literary works, like “Byron, Shelly, Lamartine, Pushkin” (Blau 2006: 107), into Kurdish, and also works from other fields of knowledge.

2.8 Islam and Kurdish language in modern history

Kurdistan was and still is a mosaic of religions. The Kurds most presumably were followers of Zoroastrianism or Mithraism before the advent of Judaism and Christianity (Aziz 2011: 10). In the seventh century, after the Islamic invasion of Kurdistan, the Kurds had to accept Islam as a new religion. Although the majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslim, Islam was never considered a factor for the foundation of an ideology of the Kurdish national movement (Ibid: 10). It only became so after 1990 when some influential Kurdish political Islamic parties came into existence, affected by external political entities in the neighbouring region, like Saudi Arabia and Republic of Iran (Blau: 2006: 218).

The majority of the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan are Muslims, but there are also Kurds who follow other religions, like Kaka’is or E-hli El-Haq, Yazidi, and Alawis (Leezenberg 2006: 203). There are also other non-Kurdish religious minorities, such as the Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Syriac (Gunter 2006: 236). These ethnic groups are spread over different provinces of the region

in the form of small communities in villages and districts within urban communities.

The non-Muslim minorities are recognized officially by both Iraqi and Kurdistan constitutions, and, according to the law, should be protected. They also have their own radio broadcasts, TV, and other mass media, like newspapers and magazines. The ethnic minorities who speak languages other than Kurdish also have their own schools where they learn their own native languages (Ibid). Such languages, under previous Iraqi regimes, were taught in churches. Not all Christians send their children to those schools, however. Some send their children to the regular public schools, which have a heterogeneous student body composed of diverse ethnic and religious groups.

2.8.1 The effect of religion on the Kurdish language

Religion is an important factor that affects the language and the culture of all societies. Sometimes religion is a factor for maintaining a given language, for example Arabic and Islam, and sometimes religion hinders the development of a language, for example, with Kurdish and Islam. The kind of influence differs, depending on the origin of the religion. If the religion is native, it will work as a factor of maintenance, stability, and development of the language, but if the religion comes from foreign sources, it leads to a shift in the language of the people who adopt that religion (Fishman 2006: 21).

Before the First World War (WW I), Kurdistan was a multi-religion region; there were Armenian, Assyrian, Jacobites, and Jews (Myhill 2006: 167). Today, Muslims form the majority of the population in comparison to the non-Muslim minorities, including Yazidi, Jews, Ehil-elhaq Assyrians, and Chaldeans (Aziz 2011: 11).

The Kurds, like a lot of other nations, entered the religion of Islam after the 7th century with the Islamic conquest, which was a foreign religion in a foreign language (Ibid: 10). The holy book of Islam (Qur'an) is written in classical Arabic. For the Arabs, the Qur'an is a factor in maintaining the language, and the

Qur'an was the main factor that helped the process of using one standard language for all Arabs despite the existence of many Arabic dialects and varieties of slang. The Qur'an is an important language source for all Arabic speakers.

The Kurds have no native holy book (Nebez 1976: 9) of their own, and any translation of the Qur'an due to the principles of Islam will be considered an interpretation of the Qur'an but not a holy book of the same value. So if the Kurds had a holy book in their own language, the situation of the Kurdish language would be much better, and definitely would make it much easier to adopt that variety as a basis for a standard variety of the Kurdish language. There are Kurds who follow other religions, the Yazidi Kurds or Ehl-elhaq minorities, for example (Izady 1992), but they have no remarkable influence on the Kurdish language for several reasons. First, they have no written holy book but only religious texts that are transferred orally from one generation to the next (Nebez 2005). Second, they form a minority in Kurdish society in comparison to Muslim Kurds. Because Islam is not a native religion, it brought with it many Arabic words into Kurdish.

There are also other religious groups in Kurdistan, among them, Christians, who include Catholics, Protestants, Chaldeans, Assyrian, and Syriac. Some of these groups consider themselves Kurds while others see themselves as independent ethnic minorities. Generally, their religions have no influence on the Kurdish language.

2.8.2 Political Islam and the Kurdish language

Religions were and are a part of the culture of peoples, and it is a normal phenomenon to find religious groups in various small and large communities. But using religion as an instrument for killing other cultures and languages is an abnormal phenomenon. In this context, we have to differentiate between two kinds of impact Islam has had on the Kurdish language: one spontaneous and the other deliberate.

- Spontaneous, as cited by Aziz (2011: 11)

The successful spread of Islam was based not only on military power, but on the training of Mullah (Mala in Kurdish), from the newly absorbed linguistic communities in the law and the language of Qur'an. These new local elites were often instrumental in facilitating not only the spread of Islamic faith but the Arabization of convert cultures as well.

The mullahs, who are obligated to be strictly religious, found the language of the Qur'an takes priority over their own language; therefore, they instigated the spread of Arabic words from the Qur'an into Kurdish. The fact that they and the rest of the Kurdish Muslims had to memorize Qur'an texts (*Sura* or *ayat* in Arabic) to read during their prayers facilitated the adoption of Arabic words. According to the Islamic dogma, the Qur'an is not allowed to be translated and any translation is considered an interpretation and not as the holy book of Qur'an or of the same value. This is one of the reasons that caused the spread of Arabic words into the languages of non-Arabic Muslim nations (Nebez 1976).

- Deliberate
 - This kind of impact is organized and planned. In Iraq, just like the neighbouring countries of Iran, Turkey and Syria, religion was almost used by the government as an instrument to destroy the Kurdish language and Kurdish culture, either directly or through disguised methods. The slogan "We are all Muslims, there is no difference between Arabs and non-Arabs, Arabic is the language of holy Qur'an" (Lewis 1988:4) was used only to distract the Kurds from thinking of their own native language and nationality affiliation, pushing the Kurds to rather be good Muslims, who believe that religion takes priority over any national or ethnic feeling. Afghani¹¹ believes as stated by Stephanous (2010):

The starting point is Afghani's concept of an Islamic league. Afghani believes that the history of Islam did not recognise national alliances or ethnic groupings. It recognized only a single Islamic religious community. Muslims in different countries reject any concept of ethnicity and are fully committed to their religious

¹¹ Jamal al Din al Afghani or Sayyid Jamal al din al Afghani (1838-1896) a political activist and Islamic ideologist, was the father of modern Islamic revival.

doctrine. Religious unity bound up with Arabic language supersedes nationalism (55).

This ideology was applied by the regimes that came to power in the countries that colonized Kurdistan. They considered the Kurdish demands, which were, in fact, normal legal rights in any given society, as not necessary for the Kurds since they were Muslims. “For Muslims to find their basic identity in the religious community, that is to say, in an entity defined by Islam rather than by ethnic origin, language or country of habitation” (Lewis 1988:4). Neglecting such rights is the result of the relationship between the ideology of Islam and Arabism, since the majority of the Arab nationalists and Islamists see a strong association between both Islam and Arabism. They think there is no Arabic nationality without Islam; Arab without Islam could not survive. It means that they are complementary to each other (see Stephanous 2010: 154-156).

The relationship between Arabism and Islam is one of the important topics that became the subject of arguments and discussions among various Arab apologists. In fact, we see that the majority of ordinary Muslims fail to separate Islam from politics, and that Arab Muslims consider Arabism a complement to Islam and Islam as the basis of Arabism. Through linking the two components, they define the national identity (see, Stephanous 2010: 154); this is political Islam.

Stephanous, A. Z. (2010) refers to the way Al-Faqi explains the relationship between Arabism and Islam as follows:

The clash between Islam and Arabism is artificial; Al-Faqi insists that they are two sides of the same coin. Islam is the basis of the continuity and spread of Arabism; Islam was the motivation that enabled Arabs to gain control over other nations and dominate other well-established cultures. Al-Fiqi claims that the real distinction between Arabism and Islam came from those advocated Islam as religion and correspondingly as nationalism (155).

Due to the aforementioned ideology, all non-Arab Muslims either have to neglect their national affiliation and consider themselves Arabized Muslims, or reject this concept to keep his/her national affiliation. In Iraq and Syria, where the majority of the population are Arabs, the Kurds have been subjected to a policy of Arabization and genocide. The regime of Iraq, for example, used names in Qur'an

Texts (in Arabic, *Sura*), like Al-Anfal, to kill more than 8,000 Kurds with chemical weapons in Halabja and other areas of Iraq Kurdistan in 1988-1990. The regime of Saddam Hussein used names from the Qur'an Surratt (Qur'an Texts), such as *Anfal*, to name military operations that used chemical weapons against Kurds (Gunter (2006: 235).

Therefore, all Iraqi governments, without exception, have deliberately tried to change the national identity of the Kurds in Iraq, and school curricula was one of the means used to realize this aim. Banning education in Kurdish was not the only political measure the government undertook. There were also disguised methods of brainwashing through teaching exaggerated curricula of Arab history and Islam. These curricula were compulsory from the first class of primary school until the end of secondary school. Pupils grew up with this ideology. Although the Kurds played an important role in the history of the country and the Islamic world (see Blau 2006: 103), nothing was mentioned about the Kurds or Kurdish culture. In fact, Salah Al din Al Ayubi was the only Kurdish figure mentioned in the history of the Crusades as Muslim hero, but not as a Kurdish leader.

The relationship between school and religion in Iraq goes back to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The education system before the establishment of the Iraqi state, during the period of the Ottoman Empire, was Islamic. The responsibility of alphabetizing was undertaken by mullahs. 'Madras', the Islamic connotation for school, was the place where children were to learn written Arabic.

The regime of Saddam Hussein used names from Qur'an Texts, such as *Anfal*, to name military operations that used chemical weapons against Kurds. (Gunter 2006: 235).

2.8.3 Kurdish society and Islam after 1991

The establishment of the safe haven in Iraq Kurdistan led to fundamental changes in different segments of Kurdish society, and the emergence of Islamic parties and organizations is an obvious one (see Stansfield 2006). It's worth being mentioned that the Kurdish National Movement, throughout its long history, never adopted

any Islamic ideology (Leezenberg 2006: 203) in its struggle, despite the majority of their revolutionary leaders were religious figures like mullahs or sheikhs. The Kurds have never used religion for political purposes. Furthermore, a lot of historical sources emphasize that the Kurds entered Islam in the 7th century not willingly, but by force. The Arabs, until the 12th century, accused the Kurds of being *Mushrikin* (polytheists). Izady (1992) refers to the religious status of the Kurds as:

Until at least the 12th century the Kurds were mostly, and rightly, reckoned as non-Muslims by influential medieval Muslim writers like Nizam al Mulk, Abu Mansur al-Baghdadi, and Ibin Athir, who referred to the Kurds as *mshrkin*, i.e. polytheists. It appears that Islam touched Kurdistan rather superficially, and primarily on its peripheries (135).

Before 1990, there were no influential Islamic parties opposing the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraqi Kurdistan. Those existing Islamic parties, in fact, played a minor role as opposition to the regime in Baghdad, and their quarters were mainly in Iran or at the Iranian border with Iraq. The birth of new Islamic parties with an influential role appeared on the political stage after the establishment of the safe haven. The establishment of these organizations and parties did not come spontaneously; there were some external and internal political factors (Stansfield 2006: 267) responsible. Externally, there was a foreign agenda of planning to plant Islamic parties and organizations in Iraqi Kurdistan. Both neighbouring countries, Iran and Saudi Arabia, played a distinctive role in this aspect.

After the establishment of the safe haven, the majority of the Kurds who escaped to Turkey and Iran returned home. They agonized over a very hard economic state of affairs. Iraq was under embargo and the Kurds suffered from double embargos: from the international community and from of the Iraqi regime. Islamic countries, like Saudi Arabia and Iran (Leezenberg 2006: 218), used the difficult economic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and planned relief operation and charities in the name of Islamic organizations like Rabita Al isslamia (Islamic Bond) to assist the poor with some aid, and also began building mosques in every village of Kurdistan and also in the cities. The aim of these countries was to win over the general opinion of the Kurds to Islam and to distract them from national tendencies. Internally, the

political conflict between the two main Kurdish secular parties, the KDP and PUK, which later developed into a civil war, created a feeling of disappointment among the Kurdish population (Stansfield 2006: 267). The second factor was the spread of corruption in the Kurdish governmental institutions after both parties agreed to establish a Kurdistan government. In 1994, the Kurdish Islamic Party came into existence in the province of Duhok, introducing itself as a moderate alternative to both the PUK and KDP (Ibid: 267).

In the province of Sulaimaniya, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan was previously related to Islam Brother Party. Islamic organizations that appeared after 1991 include Islamic Movement in Kurdistan, Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU), Anssar al-Islam (Supporters of Islam), and Kurdistan Islamic Group (Leezenberg 2006: 218; Stansfield 2006: 267).

2.9 Background of the competition between Sorani and Kurmanji

The problem of selecting one of the two main varieties of Kurdish to be the standard language is not a new issue, and it can be traced back to 1950. In his article, “The Question of the Unification of the Written Kurdish Language: Kurmanji or Sorani?” and in response to some ideas promulgated by Sorani speakers who claimed that Sorani should be the literary Kurdish language for all Kurds, Vanley (1959) stated:

Some of my Sorani-speaking compatriots will be probably surprised in reading the question posed in the title, because in the matter of the Kurdish written language, they have never considered the question in its true national proportions. For them the musical Sorani dialect, as spoken in the Sulaimaniya town, and as written in most Kurdish Iraqi publications ever issued, is naturally the Kurdish language. They bring a question of high national interest to a regional posture. But within the limit of a single region, speaking the same dialect, such a question, indeed, cannot be posed at all. The Kurdish dialects spoken-----and sometimes written---elsewhere, in Kurdistan of Turkey, of Persia and of Syria, or even in the Kurmanji-speaking areas of the Mosul department, are not even taken into consideration (5).

In fact, this dispute is still continuing to the present day. From time to time, one can hear some Kurdish linguists and intellectuals asking for the selection of one of these varieties to be the unified language.

In 2008, a group of Kurdish intellectuals in exile sent a petition to the Iraqi Kurdistan leadership and government asking an end be put to the situation of two languages being used in Iraqi Kurdistan by selecting Sorani variety—sometimes called central Kurmanji or central dialect—as the official language. The petition was published in the Kurdish newspaper (Hawlati, April 20, 2008). The petitioners substantiated their claim by saying that this variety has been in use in schools for a long time, it has a good literary background, and that there is a large body of school textbooks in this language. Then they mentioned that Sorani variety was the official language of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad and also the official language of the Kingdom of Sheikh Mahmud in Sulaimaniya. Furthermore, it was the official Kurdish language during the four-year agreement from 1970-1974 with the Iraqi government. They also claimed that using two different varieties in Kurdish society threatened national unity. They sustained their petition by referring to the conference of the Kurdish teachers held in 1959 in Shaqlawa, where Sorani variety was recognized as an official language for Iraqi Kurdistan (Gahzi, Hassan (April 2-3, 2009).

- The government should ratify a law which recognizes central variety of Sorani as an official language for Iraqi Kurdistan (Hawlati, April 20, 2008).
- The government should ratify an attached law for establishing a national institution undertaking the responsibility of making archives for all Kurdish varieties, and establishing universities and scientific bodies to focus on language vocabularies and terminology (Ibid).

2.9.1 The stance of Kurmanji intellectuals on the petition

As a reaction to the petition made by the speakers of Sorani variety, a group of Kurmanji intellectuals sent a counter petition to the president and the prime

minister of Kurdistan in which they protested against the petition's demands. I cite it below¹²:

Dear President Masoud Barzani
Dear Prime Minister Barham Saleh

In the past century, the occupiers of our homeland Kurdistan have fiercely attempted to assimilate the Kurdish culture and identity by banning the Kurdish language from the education system, social and political life and media. Ironically, today, in Iraqi Kurdistan – within some Kurdish circles – a similar policy has been formulated to impose the Sorani dialect over Kurmanji speakers and the speakers of other dialects.

For so many years, Kurds have been subject to cruel denial and suppression. The use of Kurdish language in education, except in Iraq, has been outlawed for decades. Today, Iraqi Kurdistan is the only part of Kurdistan where students are freely educated in Kurdish, as it is the only region where Kurds are governing themselves.

In April of 2008 a petition, by a group of 53 self-declared intellectuals, was generated in support of imposing Sorani as the medium in the education system while banning Kurmanji. In support of the idea, the former Minister of Education, Dr. Dilshad Abdulrahman, attempted to implement this self-destructive policy; however, the attempt to ban Kurmanji was faced with a fierce debate and was strongly rejected by the intellectuals and academics of Kurmanji speaking regions.

Nevertheless, the conspirators remained determined to ban Kurmanji from the education system. To carry on the plan and impose Sorani as the only official language, a conference was held in late December of 2009, by the Kurdistan Language Academy, in Hewler, headed by Dr. Shafiq Qazaz. The organizer's dark intentions were revealed, as it was unveiled that a letter of a prominent Kurdish intellectual and author, Amir Hassanpour was forged when the genuine letter was exposed and read to the conference.

Due to the political predicaments that Kurds are facing today, implementing such policy will have harmful ramifications; it has the potential to further divide our nation and create a state of mistrust amidst the citizens of Kurdistan.

¹² Kurmanji must live, petitions. Retrieved from <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/kurmanji-must-live.html> [Accessed March 20, 2013].

We strongly believe that the best solution to the Kurdish linguistic dilemma is to allow the regions to freely choose the medium of education. Most importantly, Kurmanji must be granted official status equal to Sorani on the state level, within the KRG administration.

We turn to you to interfere in this matter based on the following reasons:

1. Freedom of choice: Kurdistan Regional Government is a democratic political system; therefore, based on democratic principles, the citizens have the right to choose their native dialect as the dialect of education in their region.
2. Based on numerous scientific studies, educating students in their native dialect would increase the comprehension and motivation level of students in education.
3. Today, the province of Duhok is the only region where the once endangered dialect, Kurmanji, is surviving and being used freely.
4. Kurmanji is a dialect spoken by some 40% of Kurds in Iraq; in addition, it is the dialect spoken by over 75% of Kurds in greater Kurdistan and it is the only dialect spoken in all parts of Kurdistan.

Gahzi, Hassan¹³. (April 2-3, 2009), in an international conference on language standardization and the question of the Kurdish varieties, made the following remarks on the pro-Sorani dialect petition.

- The petitioners ignored the multi-standard nature of the Kurdish written form, which is difficult to leave out
- The petitioners claimed that Sorani has achieved the status of a prestigious variety; however, the same could be said about Kurmanji dialect
- The petitioners linked political unity with dialect unity

Hasan Silivani¹⁴, president of the Kurdish writers in Duhok, stated:

¹³ A Kurdish linguist from Eastern Kurdistan published Swedish-Kurdish dictionary and other works, currently lives in Sweden.

¹⁴ Kurdish Academy of Language KAL retrieved from www.kurdishacademy.org/?=node/582, [Accessed on 13th January, 2013].

Contrary to a recent statement by KRGs education minister, nobody wants Sorani to be declared as a standard or official language in Bahdini. I personally don't want my children [to] put aside Kurmanji and study Sorani. Nobody accepts that. We do not accept anyone to impose upon us Sorani.

Chapter 3: The Framework of Kurdish Standardization

3.1 The connotation of standard and standardization

Evidently, there is no consensus among linguists on the definitions of the terms standard and standardization, and these terms consequently remain a subject for argumentation in the field of sociolinguistics. Ferguson (1961:23-27) considers a “standard” as a norm that is broadly accepted in a given community and is used with minimum alteration. Wardhaugh (2002:33) states: “standardization refers to the process by which a language has been codified in some way. That process usually involves the development of such things as grammar, spelling books, and dictionaries, and possibly a literature.” Trudgill (1974:17) considers standard language to be the variety of language that is used in school textbooks, by educated people, and in media such as radio, newspapers. He also confirms that standard and nonstandard language has nothing to do with formal and colloquial language. Standard English, for example, has both colloquial and formal varieties. As to whether a standard language should belong to an “old variety” of the language, Bloomfield confirms that a standard variety does not necessarily have to be an old variety (Bloomfield 1933).

Sometimes a local variety can be used as the standard. A good example is standard English, which was developed from a local variety of spoken English in London. Ray (1963) links the standard variety of a language with the use of a variety unified in grammar and lexicon. Bourdieu (cited by William 2005:75) claims that standardization is a sociopolitical process through which a so-called nonstandard variety is suppressed and the standard variety is codified by bureaucratic means, such as school curricula dictionaries, and grammar. The standard variety, through education, dictionaries, and administration, begins to represent power while the nonstandard is excluded. In this way, language standardization is an instrument to gain power.

3.2 Debates on the Kurdish standardization

There are different studies on the Kurdish language, and some of them even go back to the 18th century. Maurizio Garzoni wrote about Kurdish vocabularies and

grammar in *Grammatica e vocabulary Della lingua Kurda*. This work, which was published in 1787 in Rome/Italy, is possibly the first academic evidence of the originality of the Kurdish language. The book is considered to be the first effort to codify the writing system for Kurdish language. Garzoni's goal was to enable Christian missionaries to communicate with Kurmanji speakers. There were also other European scholars who wrote about Kurdish as well, such as Lerch (1857-1858), Makas (1897-1926), and Socin (1898-1901). The majority of these studies were done in the 18th and 19th centuries and dealt either with Kurdish dialects or with grammar and vocabularies.

Sociolinguistic studies on Kurdish demonstrate different opinions regarding the issue of establishing a unified Kurdish standard language. The studies include both grammar and orthography.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Soane (1913) wrote a book about the elementary grammar of the Kurdish dialect Sorani from the Sulaimaniya province. The purpose of writing this book was to enable the British military in that region to communicate with Kurdish inhabitants.

Some years later, Jardine (1922), a British officer, wrote a book on Kurmanji used in the districts of Mosul and Duhok. It was simple and suitable as a guide for beginners wanting to learn the dialect.

In 1930, Bedirkhan took the first practical step towards solving the problem of variation within the Kurdish dialects, at least on the basis of a unified orthography. He set the first Latin-based Kurdish alphabet, like the modern Turkish alphabet, and used the northern dialect of Kurmanji as the main guideline for Kurdish grammar; this was published in the Kurdish Journal *Hawar* and was later published as a monograph (Bedir Khan and Lescot 1970). This work is still considered important, and the alphabet has been widely used by the speakers of North Kurmanji. However, according to Nebez, this alphabet has deficiencies and needs adjustment because it does not represent all Kurdish sounds. Nebez stated in his lecture:

This alphabet shows various flaws, particularly regarding certain sounds that exist in other dialects, but which have no written counterpart in the alphabet of Bedir Khan.

Mackenzie (1961) published his work on both Kurdish dialects, Sorani and Kurmanji. This work was based on materials collected during his visit to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1954-5, and showed the grammatical and phonological differences between the two dialects.

Rasul (1971) wrote about the standardization of Kurdish literary varieties. His work, *A Glance into the Unified Literary Kurdish Language*, reflects a Marxist theory in connection to the national literary language and a review of Kurdish varieties. Rasul claimed that the then-used written Sorani variety did not represent the variety spoken in the Sulaimaniya province. He also confirmed that although Sorani dialect had not been accepted by most of the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds, it remained a unique literary language. He believed the Iraqi Kurds should accept one of the two main varieties as the standard, but, at the same time, they should take advantage of other dialects. Rasul meant that Sorani should be the standard variety and all Kurds should accept it, even the Kurds in Turkey, Syria, and Iran. Rasul supported his position by emphasizing that Sorani has been used as the language of instruction in Sulaimaniya since 1922, therefore can be used for the whole region of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Nawxush (2010) thought that a unified language could be based on the dialect of the city of Erbil. He supported his view with Erbil's status as the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. However, this variety is also Sorani and its grammar is similar to the variety of Sulaimaniya, but differs from Kurmanji (Bahdini).

Nebez (1976) made some proposals and published them in the form of a book titled *Towards a Unified Kurdish Language*. In his book, he gave a general view on the varieties of spoken and written Kurdish, explained some linguistic differences between them, and gave several reasons behind the absence of a unified standard language. Nebez focused on all of the existing Kurdish dialects, making some lexical, syntactic, phonological, and morphological analyses. Both

Nebez (1976) and Kurdojev (1982) have another vision for unifying the Kurdish varieties; they think it is possible to create a unified Kurdish language by mixing the lexicons of both dialects. Wali (2002: 43-49) also supports the idea of establishing a unified language from both Sorani and Kurmanji which supposed to be called Sormanji—Sormanji being derived from the combination of Sorani and Kurmanji. It is worthwhile to mention that there was an attempt to implement such a step partially in some schools of Duhok after 2000, but the Kurmanji speakers refused such trial, instead Kurmanji was used as the language of instruction in schools (Ibid)

Nebez (28 Nov.1993) stated that, “A unified language needs a unified grammar of which there is none today.” Nebez also reveals that “there can be no unified language without first conducting a thorough study and comparison of the grammar of the various dialects and modes of expression (Ibid).” At the end of his lecture, Nebez made some proposals for paving the road for a literary unified Kurdish language. I will summarize his important points below.

- The creation of a comprehensive Kurdish-Kurdish dictionary.
- An international conference on the Kurdish language to be repeated annually.
- The necessity of establishing institutes for Kurdology.
- A project for founding an Etymological Dictionary for Kurdish.

The above mentioned proposals by Nebez are part of necessary procedures that should be taken into consideration in any standardization process for the Kurdish language.

Abdulla (1980) did an empirical study that focused on Sorani and was aimed at promoting the purity of the dialect. The study showed the important stages in the development of written Kurdish, demonstrating the chronological change in the rate of loan words in this dialect. This study did not make any proposal for a unified Kurdish language but rather aimed at demonstrating the purity of Sorani.

Another linguist, Al-Basir (1984), wrote about “*The Kurdish National Language*” at his own initiative to support the unification of Kurdish dialects; he suggested finding a unified language for the Kurds by looking for the origin of the Kurdish language before it divided into dialects. This should be done through a linguistic study of all of the Kurdish dialects, extracting the commonalities.

Havrest (1989), in his study *Sprachpolitik, Sprachenrecht und Sprachplanung im geteilten Kurdenland*, focused on the general situation of the Kurdish language: the political, sociological, geographical, and other factors that influence Kurdish in all parts of Kurdistan. A portion of his study was on the political development of the situation of the Kurdish language during the rule of former Iraqi governments. Havrest explained how language and politics are related, and how Kurdish fell victim to the politics of the countries among which Kurdistan is divided. He also showed how these countries have been trying to divide the Kurdish people by proclaiming that some Kurdish dialects are independent languages. The author stated that Kurmanji speakers reject Sorani dialect because of what he called “regional nationalism” (p.266). Havrest believes that two varieties of Kurdish are standardized, Sorani in Iraqi Kurdistan and Kurmanji in Northern Kurdistan (Turkey).

Hassanpour (1992), in his work *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan 1918-1985*, gave general information about the Kurdish language and its dialects. His study included wide aspects of Kurdish society and the development of the language in different stages and in various parts of Kurdistan. Hassanpour argues that it is true that Sorani is standardized, but Kurmanji has also made huge progress in that direction; therefore, “Kurdish must be considered a bi-standard language” (Ibid: 166). At present, the option of promoting both varieties has been implemented in Iraqi Kurdistan, and, as I have mentioned in the introduction of this study, the main target of this study is to investigate whether implementation of both varieties of Kurdish as official language is an adequate and viable solution.

Selecting one of the previously mentioned options for standardizing Kurdish is not an easy task; in fact, it is very complicated. When Kurdish linguists,

politicians, and intellectuals talk about the language, they do not focus solely on Iraqi Kurdistan, but they think about the Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan. They consider the Kurds one nation despite their physical division among four countries (Havrest 1998; Nebez 1976; Hassanpour 1992).

From the above mentioned different points of view, we can conclude the following hypotheses in connection with the standardization of Kurdish language.

1. Accepting Sorani variety to be the standard language and the language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan, following the model of Haugen (1966). An option proposed by Rasul (1971) and partially supported by Havrest (1989).
2. Establishing a new variety from mixing both Sorani and Kurmanji varieties. An option proposed by Nebez (1976), Kurdojev (1982), and Wali (2002). Similarly, Al-Basir, who aimed at finding a kind of Porto-Kurdish, which he assumed as a single language.
3. Accepting Kurdish as a language of two standard varieties, an option proposed by Hassanpour (1992).

On the whole, I would like to add my opinion to the aforementioned points of view in relation to standardization of Kurdish language. Rasul (1971) thinks that Sorani should be accepted by all Kurds as the standard variety. There are, however, some factors that oppose his concept.

- The Kurmanji speakers in all parts of Kurdistan form 65% - 75% of the total number of Kurdish speakers, while Sorani speakers form only about 25%. Izady estimates the number of Kurmanji speakers at about 15 million and Sorani at about 6 million (Izady 1992).
- The lexical, syntactical, and phonological differences between Sorani and Kurmanji make it difficult for the speakers of both varieties in Iraqi Kurdistan to understand each other. Kreyenbroek (1992:71) stated:

From a linguistic, or at least [a]grammatical point of view, however, Sorani and Kurmanji differ as much from each

other as English and German, and it would seem more appropriate to refer to them as “languages”.

Then, how can the Kurmanji speakers in Turkey (Northern Kurdistan) accept Sorani as their standard language?

Vanley, the prominent Kurdish politician and sociolinguist stated:

---, we must admit that differences between the Northern and Southern dialects [Kurmanji and Sorani] are sufficiently important that each dialect is understood only with real difficulties (Vanley 1959:7).

- Kurmanji speakers in Turkey are not acquainted with the Perso-Arabic based writing system, because they use the Latin alphabet.
- Another important point is that Rasul’s concept is based on a theoretical assumption; therefore, I have decided to collect first hand data by doing an empirical study.
- Kurmanji (Bahdini) has been used during the last twelve years as the language of instruction in the province of Duhok, and all elementary and secondary schools are presently using it (Berwary, 2010).

In reference to AL-Basir opinion, I think it is not possible to implement his method for two reasons: the large number of spoken Kurdish varieties and the geopolitical situation in divided Kurdistan.

In relation to Havrest’s study, I would like to comment on two points. First, I think the issue of “regional nationalism” could be proved only by doing an empirical study, and second, Havrest accepts two standards varieties, Sorani in Iraqi Kurdistan (southern Kurdistan) and Kurmanji in the part of Kurdistan within Turkey, but he does not accept Kurmanji as a standard in Iraqi Kurdistan. I think such a solution would further complicate the situation.

The above-mentioned debate shows that there is, in fact, a conflict between those who want to centralize the language and those who want to keep the natural diversity of the language. These attempts reflect Bakhtin's concept of Centripetal and Centrifugal forces working towards or against a unified language that is always imposed (Bakhtin 1981: 270).

To my knowledge, the current situation of division in all parts of Kurdistan and the factor of linguistic differences between Sorani and Kurmanji are two main obstacles that hinder the establishment of a unified standard Kurdish language. Thus, I support the suggestion made by Hassan pour (1992) of considering Kurdish as a bi-standard language. Moreover, I think using two Kurdish varieties has nothing to do with national unity, as some Kurdish linguists think. There are a lot of countries in the world where they use more than one language as official ones, for example Pashtu and Dari are considered, according to the constitution of 1963 of Afghanistan, as official languages. In Belarus, due to the 1996 constitution, both Belarusian and Russian are official languages. In Belgium, there are four different language regions: French, Dutch, the bilingual region of Brussels, and the German region. These have been fixed in the Belgian constitution of 1997 (Spolsky 2004:12).

3.3 Socio-political initiatives promoting standardization of the Kurdish language

Clearly, the attempts to standardize Kurdish were not limited to individual academics; there were also some collective efforts through congresses, which were organized expressly to discuss the issue.

3.3.1 The Congress of Erivan, 1934

The first congress was organized in Erivan, Soviet Armenia, in the summer of 1934. The participants were Kurdish linguists from Armenia, as well as prominent Russian linguists interested in Kurdish. The congress decided that Kurmanji should be the Kurdish national written language. Among the important reasons for that decision were the number of Kurmanji speakers who form a majority in

Kurdistan and the worthy heritage of its literary works, such as those of Ahmadi Khani (Vanley, Nov. 1, 1959:6).

3.3.2 The Congress of Shaqlawa, 1959

The second Kurdish congress was organized in Shaqlawa in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1959. This conference was organized by Kurdish teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan. One of the main goals of the conference was to decide which dialect, Kurmanji or Sorani, should be the national written language. The congress decided that Sorani must be the single Kurdish national written variety (Ibid: 6).

The resolutions of both above-mentioned congresses were contradictory to one another. The first congress demanded that Kurmanji be the Kurdistan national written language, while the second demanded that it must be Sorani. Clearly, neither congress represented the whole of Kurdistan.

3.3.3 The congress of Erbil, 2011

On September 19, 2011, another conference was held in Erbil under the motto “Language is the Kurdish Identity.” The conference lasted three days. The resolutions of this conference were very superficial and seemed not very well prepared. The main resolutions and demands can be summarized in the following points (Kurdish Globe No. 323, October 1, 2011:4).

- The drafting of a language law.
- Establishment of a Higher Kurdish Language Committee consisting of 20 members drawn from all dialects.
- Collection of all Kurdish words and phrases in a Kurdish dictionary.
- Use of both Perso-Arabic based alphabet and the Latin one.
- Kurdish language to be used in technology and on the Internet.
- Academic institutes should conduct research on language.
- Television stations should present their program in both alphabets.

This conference did not have a preference for either dialect to be the national language.

3.3.4 The conference of Diyarbakir, 2012

Another three-day conference on the national Kurdish language was held on March 2, 2012, in Diyarbakir under the motto, “Kurdish is the Language of Democratic Civilization.” About 300 hundred Kurdish academics, intellectuals, writers, and linguists from different parts of Kurdistan and Europe participated in this conference. The central issue of discussion was standardization of Kurdish through a unified alphabet. The following are the resolutions of the conference, published in *The Kurdish Globe*, a weekly English newspaper. (Akgönül. The Kurdish Globe. No 344. Monday, March 12, 2012: 7)¹⁵.

1. The dialects of Kurdish language are the Kurds riches. Protection and development of these dialects is a national task.
2. Kurdish should have a national program and language politics while the Kurdish National Congress remains on the agenda.
3. The delegation of this conference considers the standardization of each dialect necessary and predicate review of oral literature on the protection of local dialects.
4. There is a need for a single alphabet so Kurds can understand each other and create a national consciousness. Until we achieve this aim, both alphabets should be used in every area of education and life due to the current situation in southern Kurdistan.
5. At this conference, education in the Kurdish language is acknowledged as a national and human right. Therefore, we say that Kurdish should be language of education from kindergarten to university. And this is possible with an effective political status of the Kurds.
6. A democratic and pluralistic system of education is recommended for happiness and development of humanity.

¹⁵ Kurdish Globe also available online at <http://www.kurdishglobe.net/get-pdf-file/KurdishGlobe-2012-03-12.pdf?ID=349>.

7. There is a need to establish a language and educational movement in Kurdistan for formation of a national language program that satisfies the needs of Kurdish language.
8. At this conference, all the Kurds are invited to use the Kurdish language in all areas of life.
9. At this conference, we salute and support the struggle of the Kurdish language of our people in the southwestern [south-western] Kurdistan [Kurds in Syria].
10. At this conference, we support Kurdish political prisoners' Demands to defend themselves in Kurdish at courts.

(Akgönül. The Kurdish Globe. No 344. Monday, March 12, 2012: 7).

Of course, there were also other resolutions, but they were more political than linguistic. This conference did not prefer any given dialect, instead recommending that the process of standardization should begin within each dialect.

3.3.5 The diaspora attempt to standardize the Kurdish language

Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan began to come into contact with each other through cultural organizations and academic institutes, and this new situation has brought about different experiences and new knowledge about the Kurdish varieties. Some Kurds even began learning dialects other than their own. One should also not underestimate the role of the Internet, which simplifies communication between intellectuals in Kurdistan and those in exile. Moreover, Internet websites, such as *the Kurdish Academy of Language* “KAL,”¹⁶ contribute greatly to the exchange of experiences, which nowadays is within the reach of almost every Kurd, even in Kurdistan. The academic websites related to Kurdish began to play considerable roles in promoting information about new Kurdish publications as well as other activities, especially for academic purposes related to the Kurdish language.

¹⁶ For further information available at <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/?q=node/1>.

Another interesting activity of the intellectuals in diaspora is the establishment of a committee for standardizing Kurmanji dialect in Europe in 1987 (Akin 2011: 9). The committee consists of 16 voluntary members from different parts of Kurdistan and is financially independent. The members of the committee organize annual meetings to discuss the results of their work. Akin (Ibid) demonstrates the main targets of this committee as being

- to stabilize the Kurmanji vocabularies,
- to standardize both spelling and grammar,
- to codify the written form of Kurmanji, and
- to purify Kurmanji through protecting it from external influence and from internal deviation.

The committee follows the model proposed by Moshe Nahir (2000) as cited by Akin (2011: 16-17).

Kurmanji is the largest variety due to the number of its speakers, but it is not recognized as an official language for the Kurds in Turkey. Therefore, the intellectuals formed this committee to maintain the dialect and standardize it from diaspora (Ibid).

3.4 Language ideology, language maintenance, language policy, and language planning

3.4.1 Language ideology

In recent decades, the term “language ideology” has become increasingly recognized among linguistic researchers. The term was originally used by American anthropologists in plural form as “language ideologies.” Despite the increase in importance of this field of study, there is no unified consensus among sociolinguists on the definition of this term. Michael Silverstein (1979:193; cited by Busch 2013: 83; Woolard 1998:4) defines language ideologies as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use.” Language ideology to him represents the relationship between the structure of a language and the beliefs of the users of that language, meaning cultural presentation whether explicit or implicit. Woolard also

emphasizes that “ideologies of language are not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (Woolard 1998: 3). Furthermore, she urges us “not to distinguish ideology of language from ideology in other domains of human activities” because they are entwined with each other. Woolard (1998:5-7) classifies the ideologies into four categories.

1. Ideologies that embody concepts, beliefs, and ideas
2. Ideologies related to a certain social position
3. Ideology as related to maintenance and social power
4. Ideology as distortion of the reality

Kroskrity says the term “language ideologies” is used in plural because it deals with a cluster of concepts” (Kroskrity as cited by Busch 2013:48). Alan Rumsey defines language ideologies as “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (Rumsey 1990: 346, as cited by Woolard 1998: 4). Irvine defines this concept as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine, 1998: 255 cited by Milroy 2004: 166).

According to the above-mentioned definitions, a common language ideology is the idea of defining people by the variety of the language they use. This includes different aspects of spoken and written language. According to this theory, the manner of speech of a people is a sign of their social affiliation. According to the above-mentioned definition, this ideology links language use to social or political interest and power.

3.4.2 The ideology of national language and standardization

Building a standard language is often problematic and complex, and the degree of complexity usually depends on many factors, such as the nature of the linguistic system and the social environment surrounding that language (William 1998:38).

In fact, there are some factors that make people demand a standard variety of a language for a given society. The diversity of language in the society is among the most important factors that raise the question of a standard language. Rubin (1977) in connection to this context, states:

Demands for language standardization often are preceded by rapid Socio-political changes which lead to a recognition of language diversity. When such diversity is seen as adverse, or uniformation is seen as beneficial, only then may language standardization efforts be demanded (168).

Rubin puts the sequence of social changes, recognition, diversity, uniformity, and efforts for standardization in the form of the following chart:

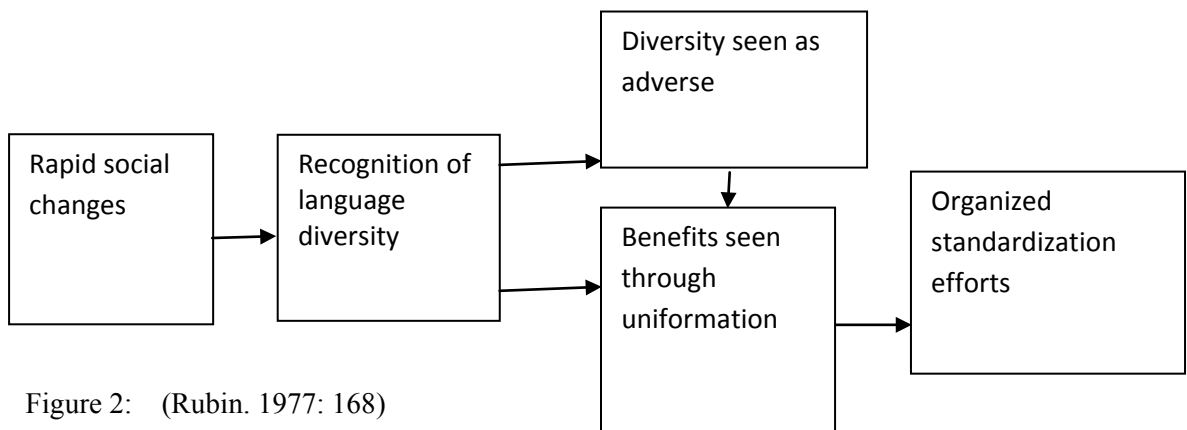


Figure 2: (Rubin. 1977: 168)

Rapid social changes, according to Rubin, could be interpreted through the following four points.

1. Centralization or recentralization of power
2. Mobilization activities connected with modernization
3. Technical specialization
4. Increased exchange of information among technical specialists (Ibid: 169)

In fact, there is an implicit ideology that makes the Kurds demand a standard Kurdish language. The Kurds consider their language as a supplement to their identity as Kurdish people as well as the marker of that identity. They are Kurds

because their mother language is Kurdish. Therefore, the Kurds consider their language as a pillar of their nationality (Kreyenboek 1992:77). It is language that distinguishes them from Turks, Arabs, and Persians. This conclusion is not something accidental but a result of the bitter experiences of the Kurds during their long struggle against the regimes that tried to assimilate Kurdish identity and culture by practicing a hostile policy towards their language (Blau 2006: 108-109). Khasho and Toppel (2009) also confirm that the Kurdish culture and identity have been subjected to oppression by Turkish, Arabic, and Persian regimes. They describe their policy as:

Die kemalistische Politik, die rassistische Ba‘ath-Politik und die offizielle persische Politik fordern die Assimilation der nicht-türkischen, nicht-arabischen bzw. nicht-persischen Kulturen. Sie wollen die kurdische Kultur nicht am Leben erhalten. Sie versuchen, die Quellen der kurdischen Kultur trocken zu legen: und darüber hinaus machen sie große Anstrengungen, die Kurdischen Kultur (er) Zeugnisse zu turkisieren, arabisieren und persisieren. Sie geben sie dann als türkische, arabische oder persische Kulturerzeugnisse aus (226).

3.4.3 Kurdish and the ideology of language and variety maintenance

Kreyenboek (1992: 77) stated that a unified national language or a standard language can maintain the existence of the Kurds; otherwise, the dominating atmosphere of division might lead to the liquidation of their nation. Therefore, a unified national standard language is a means for the unification and protection of their nation, but at the same time it is an instrument for the confirmation of their identity. Fasold (1984: 247) expresses a similar view: “A national language is more than just the language of government or of education. It is the symbol of the people’s identity as citizens of that nation.” That is why we see the demand to legalize the use of Kurdish has always been the priority and was at the top of the list of demands whenever the Kurds negotiated with the regimes that came to power in Iraq. The same could be said about the Kurds of Iran, Turkey, or Syria. I would like to put the relationship between the Kurdish language and the identity of the Kurds in the form of the following chart showing how this ideology links

language maintenance and the preservation of nation identity. The Kurdish language keeps the nation together in four parts of Kurdistan:

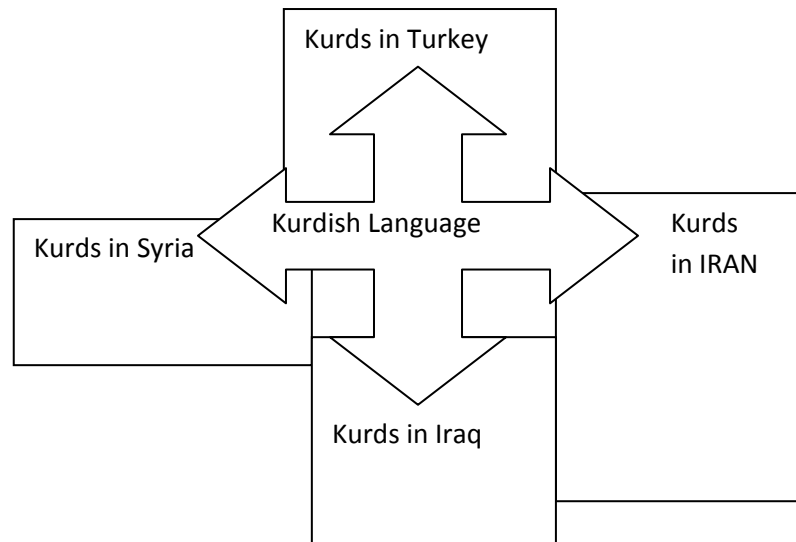


Figure 3: Kurdish language in divided Kurdistan. Source: Author's illustration

It is important to mention that there is also another kind of maintenance ideology, that of variety maintenance. Both Sorani and Kurmanji speakers try to maintain their speaking variety. Havrest (1989) describes this tendency as “regional discrimination.” In fact, it is not regional discrimination but “variety maintenance.” Sorani maintain their variety because they are the minority, but if we take the total number of Kurds in all four parts of Kurdistan, they are the majority in Iraqi Kurdistan. This is why the Kurmanji (Bahdini) speakers maintain their language from the point of being the minority in Iraqi Kurdistan. This kind of maintenance forms an obstacle to establishing a unified national, official, or standard language.

Considering the four points stated by Rubin, I will begin with the first: “Centralization or recentralization of power (Rubin 1977:169)” as one of the reasons that makes people demand standardization of a language. Applying it to the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, we see that the demand for a standard Kurdish

language took priority over other issues after the establishment of a Kurdistan regional government, which was a centralization of power. Of course, it also has to do with Rubin's second point of mobilization activities connected with modernization and with technical specialization and information exchange.

Previously, the Kurdish region was ignored and the people oppressed by the regimes that came to power in Iraq. But recently, education is once again in Kurdish and there are universities and a complete educational system in the *de facto* autonomous Kurdish region. Thus, the new system needs a unified standard language for administration as well as for education.

There is another implicit ideological factor behind establishing a national standard Kurdish language that is related to the issue of building a Kurdish state. Kurdish intellectuals believe that a unified Kurdish language is the most important element that proves that Kurds are one nation, according to the motto "one nation, one language" (Roshani, D. November 5, 2010).

However, the main objective of the process of standardizing Kurdish is to find a solution for the problem of the dichotomy within the language: Kurmanji (northern dialect or Bahdini) and Sorani (central dialect). There is a need for a unified language to be used for instruction in the schools of the Kurdish region and for the media and the correspondence of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Another objective of establishing a single standard language is associated with the costs of using two language varieties instead of one.

In connection with the above-mentioned objectives of the process of standardizing Kurdish, one can divide these objectives into three groups:

a. National objectives:

- A standard Kurdish language keeps the Kurds from assimilating.
- To keep the Kurds united.
- To be recognized as one nation and one identity with one language.

b. Social objectives:

- To solve the problem of using two dialects as languages of instruction in schools.
- To have one variety of language in administration.
- To make communication easier.

c. Economic objectives:

- To reduce the costs of education, media, and administration.

One should keep in mind that the process of standardizing Kurdish and the process of selecting a language of instruction are related because selecting a language of instruction is a part of the process of standardization. Schools remain an important means for standardizing a given language, however, and Fasold (1984) confirms that “one of the most crucial language planning decisions that a country can make is the determination of a language to serve as the medium of instruction in schools.”

3.4.4 Language policy

The term, “language policy”, which emerged for the first time in 1945 as the title of a book, has recently become a major area of study in the field of sociolinguistics (Spolsky and Shohamy 2000: 2). Linguists relate language policy to a bundle of procedures, regulations, laws, and decisions made by authorized people to affect the status of a given language and the linguistic behavior of its users (Spolsky and Shohamy 1999:32-33). However, sometimes the procedures of language policy are used as devices for imposing hostile language policies and ideologies, Shohamy (2006: 69) stated:

Clearly, such declared language laws and regulations are considered aggressive and powerful forms of policy mechanism, since they have the potential for imposition and sanctions.

Language policy will be implemented through different channels: Constitutions, education system, administrative measures, etc. (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999).

However, language policy differs from one country to another, depending on their ideologies (Ibid: 1). In Iraq before 1990, for example, the constitution considered only Arabic language as the official language of the country, but now the new constitution considers both Kurdish and Arabic as the official languages of the country (see chap. 2: 39-41) .

We should not confuse the terms “linguistic policy” and “language policy,” however, which do overlap and can cause ambiguity. Linguistic policy differs from language policy in the sense that the first deals with an action taken within a single language while the second refers to an action taken in a multilingual society, especially those societies with minorities where the government or authorities carry out some political measures to regulate the status of the minority languages (Glück 2000). A well-known example of language policy is the one in France from the era of Napoleon onwards, which promoted French as a national language while ignoring other languages (Matthews 2007).

In fact, language is not only a medium for exchanging ideas and communication, it is also a social and political phenomenon related to community, and an important part of social activities (Pennycook, 1994: 29).

If we go back to the last quarter of the 20th century and review the dramatic changes in Europe and the world, we find that language played an important role in all of those changes. The disintegration of the previous Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, accompanied by a destructive war in different independent national states of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, and Montenegro, and the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia—in all of these changes language ideologies and policies played an important role (Busch 2010: 183-185).

3.4.5 Language planning

Language planning is not new in the realm of language and society. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: ix) state that “In one sense, our knowledge of language planning is probably as old as recorded human history as it is a part of how people use

language.” But the use of the term “language planning” in the field of sociolinguistics emerged for the first time when Haugen (1966) introduced his four-fold planning model, in which he described the four steps of language planning: selection, codification, implementation, and elaboration.

In fact, the models proposed by Haugen (1966) and Kloss (1969) could be used as frameworks for orientation during the process of language planning (Deumert 2004: 2). According to Haugen’s model (1966), standardization of a given language needs to go through four steps.

- Selection is associated with the process of choosing a certain variety that may be a given dialect or a variety of a non-standard language.
- Codification is the process of putting rules, fixing the spelling of words and all other aspects of language, which leads to the stabilization of the written language.
- Acceptance involves all efforts to persuade the members of a society to agree on using the selected and codified variety as a common language or standard language.
- Elaboration implicates different sectors of the community to expand the space by using the selected, codified variety of the language.

	Norm	Function
Society	(1) Selection	(3) Implementation
Language	(2) Codification	(4) Elaboration

(Haugen, E. 1987: 58; Haugen, E. 1983: 270)

On the question of whether these four dimensions are successive, Haugen (1983) says, “Let me first explain that while the four steps in my model show a certain logical succession, they are not necessarily successive, but may be simultaneously and cyclical.” One should take into consideration, however, that the process of language standardization involves both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, and the social factors are not the same.

Kloss (1969: 6-18) differentiates between status planning and corpus planning, stating that a certain variety of a given language may be elected for particular purposes in the society and given official status.

The term “status planning” includes all activities that tend to improve the status of a language to make it an official language, the national language, and the language of instruction, and this is mostly associated with the factor of prestige. Of course, there are some paths by which a certain language reaches that status; schools are one of the important ways of reaching official language status (De Cillia, 2002: 16).

The term “corpus planning” includes all activities to develop and elaborate the language towards a standard language. De Cillia (2002: 17), states:

Unter Corpusplanung versteht man Aktivitäten, die sich sozusagen auf die Qualität und Leistungsfähigkeiten einer Sprache, auf ihr Corpus beziehen. Alle Maßnahmen, die zur Herstellung, zum Erhalt, zur Verbesserung und zur Entwicklung eines sprachlichen Standards gesetzt werden, gehören hierher, also Fragen wie die, ob eine Sprache verschriftlicht, normiert ist, ob sie zu einer Wissenschaftssprache und Literatursprache ausgebaut ist.

Tauli (1968: 27) explains language planning as the “methodical activity of regulating and improving existing languages or creating new common regional, national or international languages.”

In general, most linguists consider language planning as a sociolinguistic process that works in connection with the surrounding social environment. Ferguson (1977: 9) states, “All language planning activities take place in a particular sociolinguistic setting, and the nature and scope of the planning can only be fully understood in relation to the settings.” Language planning influences language use within a given speech community. Concerning the relationship between language planning and society, Cabré (1999) thinks that language and society are firmly associated with each other; when changes occur in the language, the traces of change emerge in the society. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: xi) describe language planning and language policy as:

They actually represent two quite distinct aspects of the systemized language change process. 'Language planning' is an activity mostly visibly undertaken by government (simply because it involves such massive changes in a society), intended to promote systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers (xi).

3.5 The problem of corpus planning in the Kurdish language

It is worthwhile noting that any effort to standardize the Kurdish language will not succeed unless it is accompanied by a clearly planned language policy that undertakes necessary changes in the corpus of the Kurdish language.

However, the absence of effective institutions and language academies, as well as a clear linguistic policy in Iraqi Kurdistan, created a chaotic academic atmosphere in which people began to write Kurdish in their own style (Khaznedar, 26.05.2008). It is not an exaggeration to say that people used words as they desired and, consequently, the language became overloaded with syntactic as well as semantic variation or, as some say, mistakes. In this context, the prominent Kurdish linguist at the University of Salahaddin, Marruf Khazndar, said in an interview with the daily newspaper *Sabah El-Jadid* (Khaznedar 26.05.2008,) in connection with the use of erroneous words in Kurdish,

This problem is a result of two incorrect phenomena. The first is the attempt of some linguists to empty the Kurdish language of all possible existing Arabic words, and the second is the misunderstanding of the meaning of the most of the Arabic words that they replaced with alternative Kurdish words. The attempt of purifying Kurdish from Arabic words is wrong and not scientific. This is not only the case with Arabic words, but with all foreign words in Kurdish.

In connection to the mistakes in school textbooks he said:

After the uprising of 1991, in one page of the textbooks one could find words written in two or three ways. Additionally the texts contained mixed Sorani and Bahdini words, to the point that the pupils were confused and without the help of the parents they would not learn much in schools

These uncertainties are the result of the absence of the codification process. It should be noted that Kurdish is a part of the history of its speakers, and the submission of the Kurds to four states with three different dominant or state languages and cultures has created very complicated interactions between Kurds and the neighboring languages. Thus, the modern Kurdish language is the result of a very complex linguistic situation, where the contact between these languages was of mutual influence (Bucak 1988:104). Kurdish has always been in contact with other neighboring languages and cultures, especially Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Such contact resulted in a lot of words entering into Kurdish, and has always been a natural phenomenon on the Kurdish borders (Khorshid 1983: 21). Currently there is obvious variation in spelling and grammar.

3.5.1 The Problem of different grammars

One of the major difficulties facing the process of establishing a unified language for instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan is the grammatical differences between the two main varieties, Sorani and Kurmanji. There are differences in grammar, vocabularies, and, to some extent, also in the phonological system. Sorani and Bahdini (Kurmanji) have different conjugation, see the following tables.

Table1: simple past in Kurmanji and Sorani (Nebez, J. 1976: 50).

	Sorani	Kurmanji (Bahdini)	Meaning
1 st person singular	min kirîm	min kirî	I bought
2 nd person singular	to kirît	te kirî	You bought
3 rd person singular	ew kirî	wê/wî kirî	He/she bought
1 st person plural	ême kirîman	me kirî	We bought
2 nd person plural	êwe kirîtan	we kirî	You bought

3 rd person plural	ewan kiřîyan	ewan (wan) kirî	They bought
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Table 2: past continuous in Kurmanji and Sorani (Ibid: 51).

	Sorani	Kurmanji	Meaning
1 st person sing.	min demkiřî	min di kiřî	I was buying
2 nd person sing.	te dikiřî	to detkiřî	You were buying
3 rd person sing.	Wi/wê dikiřî	Ew deykiřî	He/ she was buying
1 st person pl.	me dikiřî	êm demankiřî	We were buying
2 nd person pl.	we dikiřî	êwe detankiřî	You were buying
3 rd person pl.	wan/ ewan dikiřî	ewan deyankiřî	They were buying

3.5.2 The dilemma of selecting a Latin or Perso-Arabic based alphabet

When the Kurds were allowed to use their language in the schools of Iraqi Kurdistan, they were forced by the Iraqi regimes to use the Arabic alphabet. However, the Kurdish language has a different phonological system than Arabic. There are some sounds in Kurdish that do not exist in Arabic, for example [g] as in *gul* (flower), [j] like *jin* (woman), and [v] like *nav* (name), (see table 3). Therefore, Kurdish linguists were forced to modify some Arabic letters to match the Kurdish phonological system (see Nebez 1976).

Table 3: Modification of Arabic alphabet to match the Kurdish phonological system (by the author)

Arabic Letters	Example	Phoneme	After modification	Kurdish Phoneme	Example
ب	Like English [b] in book	[b]	پ	[P]	like English [p] in port
ک	like English [k] in king	[k]	گ	[g]	Like English [g] in girl
ف	like English [f] in floor	[f]	ڤ	[v]	like English [v] in cave
ز	Like English [z] in Zero	[z]	ژ	[ʒ]	like French [j] in Journal

Although it has been more than sixty years since the Perso-Arabic based alphabet has been in use in Iraq for Kurdish writing, the Kurdish writing system still suffers from some shortcomings. Those deficiencies are the result of the inability of the existing writing system to represent all of the phonemes of the Kurdish language (Nebez 1976). Such problems hinder the application of a corpus planning policy.

Kurmanji dialect has the phoneme /v/, but this phoneme does not exist in Sorani. The phoneme /v/ changes into either /w/ or /m/; for example the word “Av” (water) in Kurmanji becomes “Aw” in Sorani and the word “Dev” (mouth) changes into “Dem”. Another problem is the short vowel [i] does not appear when using the Perso-Arabic based alphabet, for example in the Kurmanji word کردن (kirdin), meaning “doing”, only the four consonants ك /K, ر /R, د /D, ن /N appear while the short vowels [i] disappear. This linguistic phenomenon creates

confusion in the writing system of the language. These two problems could be solved when using a Latin-based alphabet.

A problem with the Latin-based alphabet, however, is that it has only one L and one R, while the Perso-Arabic alphabet has two: the dark L and light L, and the dark R and light R. So the letter ﻝ stands for the light L, ﻝ̤ stands for the dark L, ﺭ̤ stands for the dark R, and ﺭ for the light R, see table the following tables 2 and 3.

Table 4: shows the use both sounds L and R in Latin alphabet (Authors' explanation)

Latin based Alphabet	One L for two cases (Light and dark) One R for two cases (light and dark)
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Table 5: shows the use of both L and R in Perso-Arabic (Authors' explanation)

Perso-Arabic	Two Ls (ﻝ light L) and (ﻝ̤ dark L) Two Rs (ﺭ light R) and (ﺭ̤ dark L)
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The Perso-Arabic alphabet has the sound ﺡ /ĥ/ which in fact is a borrowed sound from Arabic and is widely used, so much so that many Kurdish speakers think it is original Kurdish. This is especially noticeable among the Iraqi Kurds and the Kurds in Iran, and an explanation for this is that because Arabic words have come into Kurdish under the influence of Islam, these words have been integrated into the Kurdish language and this sound began to look as if it were the original Kurdish one. Of course using the Arabic alphabet plays an important role in this phenomenon that is why we see the sound ﺡ /ĥ/ in Persian as well, which also uses a modified Arabic alphabet even though Persian is an Indo-European language. But if we look at North Kurdistan (the part in Turkey) we see that the sound ﺡ /ĥ/ does exist, neither in Kurdish nor in Turkish, because Turks use a Latin alphabet and the Kurds there use a modified Latin alphabet as well; they are not acquainted

with Arabic. Therefore, I argue that it is not an original Kurdish sound, it is not necessary to use it in Kurdish, and there is not a single native Kurdish word that contains that sound. Therefore, when using a word containing that sound one might use a cursive letter, for example, to denote another pronunciation.

The following table shows a comparison of the use of \hat{c} / \hat{h} / by Iraqi and Iranian Kurds, as neither Kurds nor the Turks in Turkey use that sound:

Table 6: Shows the use of the sound /h/ \hat{c} (Author's explanation)

Kurds in Iraq use the sound \hat{c} / \hat{h} /	The Kurds in Iraq use modified Arabic alphabet .They have the sound \hat{c} / \hat{h} /
Kurds in Iran use the sound / \hat{h} / \hat{c}	The Persian use modified Arabic alphabet so they have the sound \hat{c} / \hat{h} /
Kurds in Turkey do not use \hat{c} / \hat{h} /	The Turks do not have the sound \hat{c} / \hat{h} /, because they use Latin scripts

Despite of the current use of the Arabic-Persian based alphabet for the written language of instruction in schools, there are also a lot of newspapers and magazines that continually use the Latin alphabet for their publication in both of the provinces of Erbil¹⁷ and Duhok. Blau (2006) describes the status of Latin scripts in Iraqi Kurdistan as:

Of interest are attempt to Latinise the Kurdish script, which are under way both in Erbil/Hawler and in Duhok. In Erbil/ Hawler, magazines such as Dicle and Golani Latin have come out in the Kurdish-Latin alphabet, commonly, such as Peyv ('The Word'), Gazi ('The Call'), Metin (the name of a mountain) and Lalish (a Yazidi newspaper), are published in both Latin and Arabic alphabets (111).

¹⁷ Erbil the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan is called Hewlêr in Kurdish.

Table 7: The Latin and Arabic based Kurdish alphabets with IPA transcription based on Bedirkhan (1930), Nebez (1976), and Kurdish Academy of language¹⁸

Bedirkhan	Modified	IPA	Perso-Arabic	Example	Meaning
A	a	[a:]	ا	agir	fire
B	b	[b]	ب	bab	father
C	c	[dʒ]		ceng	war
Ç	ç	[tʃ]	ج	çav	eye
D	d	[d]		dar	tree
E	e	[æ]	ه	ez	I
Ê	Ê	[ε]	ی	bê	without
F	F	[f]	ف	fer	necessary
G	g	[g]	گ	gurg	wolf
H	h	[h]	ه	havîn	summer
None	h				
I	i	[I]	hidden	birdin	taking
Î	î	[i:]	ئی	hîç	nothing
J	j	[ʒ]	ژ	jian	life
K	k	[k]	ك	kar	work
L	l	[l]	ل	lêv	lips
None	ll	Dark l	ل	Lal	Deaf
M	m	[m]	م	mar	snake
N	n	[n]	ن	nan	bread
O		[o]	و	mirov	human
P	p	[p]	پ	pir	old
Q	q	[q]	ق	qaz	goose
R	r	[r]	ر	reng	color
S	s	[s]	س	ser	head
Ş	ş	[ʃ]	ش	şev	night

¹⁸ www.kurdishacademy.org, [Accessed April 20,2013].

T	t	[t]	ت	tij	sharp
Û	û	[u:]		dûr	far
Ü	Ø	like German 'ü'		hûr	small
v	v	[v]	ف	av	water
W	w	[w]	و	wek	like
X	x	like <u>Bach</u> in German	خ	xurt	brave
Y	y	[y]	ی	yêk	one
Z	z	[z]	ز	ziman	language

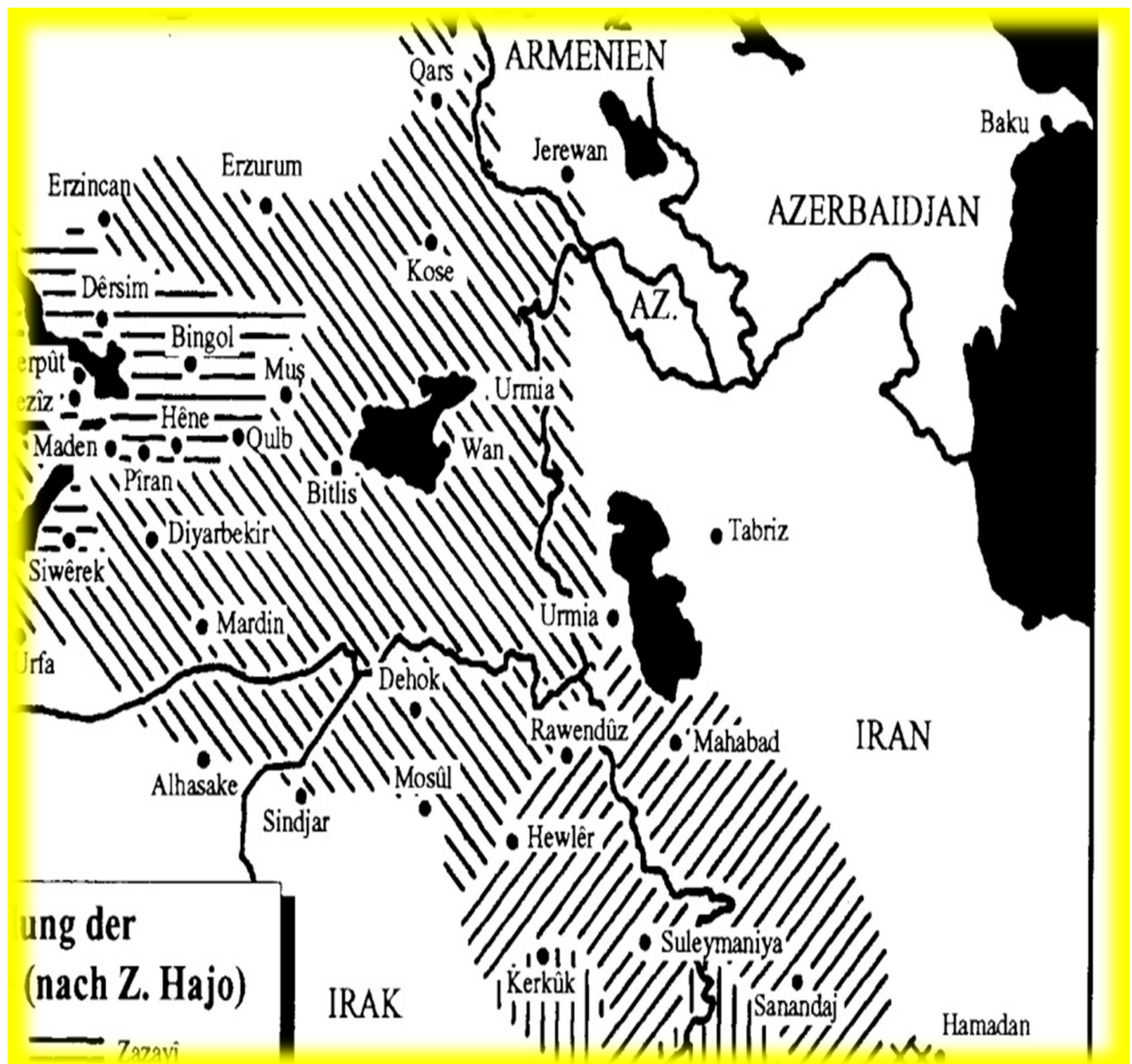
3.6 The classification of Kurdish varieties

Kurdish linguists differ on the issue of classifying the existing varieties of Kurdish language. The case of discrepancy in classification of the Kurdish varieties added more complexity to the issue of studying Kurdish language (Havrest 1998: 76-83).

It should be noted that the aim of this study is not to discuss the problematic of classification of the existing varieties of Kurdish language and to determine which classification is more viable than the other. Since this study deals with the issue of using two varieties of Kurdish as languages of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan, a general approach to the Kurdish varieties seemed to be necessary, because no analysis could be done in this matter without referring to the existing varieties of Kurdish language. The Kurdish varieties are mainly geographical and, for better understanding, mostly named after the areas of their speakers (see map 2). For further information on Kurdish variation "dialects," I would suggest (Harvest 1998). The following chart presents the classification of Kurdish varieties from the points of view of various linguists.

Table 8: Classification of Kurdish varieties. The spelling is identical to their original sources of their authors

Bitlisi 1569	Kurmanji	Kalhuri	Luri	Sorani
Lerch, P. 1858	Luri	Kalhuri	Kurmánji	Sorani
Soane, E.B. 1913	Luri	Kermánji	Soráni	Zázáyi
Wahbi, T 1964	Northern Kermánji [Kurmanji]	Southern Kermánji [Kurmanji]	Kermānshāhi	Zázyi
Nebez, J. 1976	North Kirmanci [Kurmanji]	Middle Kirmanci [Kurmanji]	Sorani/ Zazai	South Kirmanci [Kurmanji]
MacKenzie 1981	Northern Group	Central Group	Southern Group	
Khorshid. F. H. 1983	North Kermanji	Middle Kermanji	South Kermanji	Gurani
Hassanpour. A. 1989	Kurmanji	Sorani	Hawarmi	Kirmashani
Izady, M. 1992	North Kurmânji [Kurmanji]	South Kurmânji [Kurmanji]	Dimili	Surani [Sorani]
Havrest. 1998	Northern Kurdish	Middle Kurdish	Sorani	Southern Kurdish
Yasin, M. 2006	North Kurmanji	Central Kurmanji	South Kurmanji	Gurani



Map 3: Kurdish varieties in all part of Kurdistan Hajo, Z. (1994)

Chapter 4: Empirical study

4.1 The field of the study

The field of this study is the main province city of Duhok in Kurdish “Parezgeha Duhok”, the biggest city of the province of Bahdini (Kurmanji) speakers. Situated at the north of Iraq close to the Turkish and Syrian borders (see Map 1), Duhok, with 840, 000 million¹⁹ inhabitants, is one of the three main provinces besides Erbil and Suliamaniya to be recently administrated by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Bahdini Kurdish is the language of the region, but there are also other language minorities such as Chaldean and Assyrian.

The city has two universities, Duhok University and Newroz University. The students of both universities come from diverse areas of the province, small villages and other towns. The majority of the inhabitants are Muslims, but there are also Yezidies, Christians, and other minority groups.

4.1.1 Why the focus on the province of Duhok

Firstly, I want to clarify why this empirical part of the study focuses on the region of Kurmanji (Bahdini) speakers and not on both Sorani and Bahdini. In fact, selecting Duhok province for this study was not random. As I have mentioned in the first chapter “Study objectives”, Bahdini speakers are mainly concerned with the issue of a unified Kurdish language because they have been using their own language variety since 2003, and recently some intellectuals claimed that using two varieties of Kurdish might damage national unity and suggested that Sorani should be used by both varieties’ speakers (see petition, Chapter 1). Sorani speakers claim that they have no problem with the issue of language of instruction; they have been using their own variety since the beginning of the 1920s, especially in the city of Suliamaniya. They also claim that the Sulaimaniya variety was used in the Bahdini region from 1970 to 1974. Therefore, they think that Bahdini speakers should use Sorani.

¹⁹ <http://www.duhokgov.org/arabic/?page=about> [the official homepage of Duhok Governorate in Kurdish and Arabic] (Accessed on 16th April 2013).

After the establishment of the safe haven (see sub-chapter 1.2), the teachers in the Bahdini region began using available previous Arabic textbooks, but were translating and teaching them in Bahdini. Later, the schools began using a textbook in Sorani with some mixed contents in Bahdini and other varieties (Berwary 2011: 50). This caused difficulties in understanding, and the Bahdini speakers demanded to change it into Bahdini. Recently, Bahdini has been used in this region.

4.1.2 Why a qualitative study

In this section I will briefly refer to the reasons that led me to conduct a qualitative study. To my knowledge no one has yet conducted qualitative research on Kurdish in connection with school language policies; all existing studies are based on theoretical reflections and on sources such as books and documentations. Furthermore, the issue of establishing a language of instruction is not purely one of linguistics, but also a social issue related to national, political, and ideological factors. It is also important to mention that since the later part of the twentieth century, qualitative research has gotten priority status for the researchers because not all questions could be adequately answered by quantitative methods (Kervin, Valle, Herrington, & Okely 2005: 35). One cannot diagnose difficulties linked to specific problems without hearing directly from the people, and exploring the implicit reasons that are difficult to record through surveys and statistics. Kvale (2007: 12) writes: “In qualitative interviews, precision in description and stringency in meaning interpretation correspond to exactness in quantitative measurements”. One should hear directly from people explaining their feeling, as Marriam (2009) states:

Qualitative research is that the research is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Since understanding is the goal of this research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be ideal means of collecting and analyzing data (15).

Through direct interviews one hears descriptions of people’s experiences, narrated by the interviewees.

Of course there were also other reasons that enabled and motivated me to conduct a qualitative empirical study in Iraqi-Kurdistan, summarized in the following points:

- The recent political atmosphere dominating the southern part of Kurdistan (Iraqi-Kurdistan) enabled me to undertake this step. This part of Kurdistan has enjoyed an autonomous status within the Federal Republic of Iraq since 1991, after the establishment of the safe haven. The Kurds practice their legal rights within their own constitution, and democratically elected Kurdish parliament and government. This new situation enabled me to do this study without being observed or chased by the security forces, as was the case during the era of Saddam Hussein's regime.
- My personal knowledge of this region as an Iraqi Kurd also enabled me to better understand the social traditions and living circumstances of the inhabitants of this region.

4.1.3 Selection of participants for the qualitative study

Selecting participants for data collection was not easy. The region of Bahdina has witnessed several changes in education and the language of instruction, so not all people have the same experience with the Kurdish language. Flick (2007: 30) explains that "[i]n most cases you will be interested in finding the most knowledgeable people for giving you information about your topic and you will be looking for different points of view".

In Iraqi Kurdistan we can differentiate between two groups of people who have different experiences regarding the language of instruction:

- A group of people who went to the school before 1990 and had Arabic as the language of instruction
- A group of people who went to the school after 1990 and had Kurdish (Sorani) as the language of instruction

Because of this situation with the language of instruction, I selected participants from both above-mentioned groups:

1. The first group

This group of interviewees had Arabic as the language of instruction from elementary to the end of secondary school. This means that the language used in the classroom and in the textbooks in schools for the entire curricula was Arabic. This group had also for a number of years between 1970 and 1980 (see sub-chapter 2.3.1) only one subject in Kurdish (Sorani variety), which was considered not to be as essential as other curricula. They belong to the generation that was in school during the period of Saddam Hussein's regime, where the majority of schools used Arabic. Their ages are between 30-54 years old and they are working or self-employed.

The selection of these people was interesting for the following reasons:

- The majority of them were bilingual; they spoke Arabic and Kurdish, and some spoke more than two languages.
- They had experience with using another language other than their mother tongue as the language of instruction, namely Arabic and Sorani.

2. The second group

The second group went to the school after 1990; they belong to the period following the establishment of the safe haven for the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, later administrated by the Kurdish Regional Government. This group had Kurdish as the language of instruction from elementary to the end of secondary school. This means that the language used in the classroom and in the textbooks in schools for the entire curricula was Kurdish (Sorani variety). The majority of them were either students or graduated individuals seeking jobs.

Their ages were 20-27 years old, except two participants whose ages were 50 and 52 years old and had Kurdish as the language of instruction at school because they were in one of the few schools that still used Kurdish until the beginning of the

1980s. The participation of students was important for this study for the following reasons

- These students are the first generation that finished their secondary schooling in Kurdish in the province of Duhok.
- They are much more concerned with the issue of language of instruction than other people.
- They represent an intellectual class of society, and it is therefore easier to interview also female students. Women in the household or from another sector of society are more difficult to talk to, because of traditions and restrictions on women's activities in the region.

4.1.4 Method of selecting the participants

After I decided to interview the students, I contacted the dean of the Faculty of Basic Education whom I knew from my work as an assistant teacher at the University of Duhok for four years at the same faculty, and asked her for permission to interview students of the faculty. The dean approved my request, and indeed I received all necessary support from her. Some teachers then informed their students about my study and asked those who were interested in participating to contact me.

As the next step, some students met me and showed their readiness to participate voluntarily in my qualitative study and to be interviewed. After meeting the students and agreeing on an appointment to do the interview, I met each of them once beforehand and informed them of the purpose of the interview. The other participants were organized by the students; they were either relatives or friends. These were selected on the basis of earlier generations who had Arabic as the language of instruction in schools. Among this group there were also three participants who had had Sorani as the language of instruction at the few remaining elementary as well secondary schools that were using Kurdish until the middle of the 1980s.

The majority of the interviews took place in a room at the Faculty of Basic Education, made available for my disposal. I selected six interviewees from those

who had had Arabic as the language of instruction and fourteen interviewees from those who had had Kurdish. Of those who had had Kurdish as the language of instruction, some had had a few years in Bahdini and the rest in Sorani dialect.

4.1.5 Naming the participants

The following tables show the list of the interviewees, their professions and ages. The names are represented by numbers in accordance with the wishes of the participants who wanted to keep their names anonymous.

Table 9: List of participants who had Kurdish as the language of instruction

Numbers	Participants	Profession & degrees	Age	Mother tongue	Gender	Language at school
1	1K	BA degree	24	Bahdini	female	Sorani
2	2K	Student	20	Bahdini	female	Sorani
3	3K	BA degree	25	Bahdini	male	Sorani
4	4K	Student	23	Bahdini	male	Sorani
5	6K	BA Degree	24	Bahdini	female	Sorani
6	7K	BA degree	24	Bahdini	female	Sorani
7	8K	Student	21	Bahdini	female	Sorani
8	9K	Student	23	Bahdini	male	Sorani
9	11K	Teacher	27	Bahdini	male	Sorani
10	12K	Journalist	50	Sorani	male	Sorani
11	13K	Poet	51	Bahdini	male	Sorani
12	14K	BA degree	49	Bahdini	male	Sorani
13	16K	Student	20	Bahdini	male	Sorani
14	19K	BA degree	52	Bahdini	male	Sorani

Table 10: List of participants who had Arabic as the language of instruction

Numbers	Participants	Profession	Age	Mother tongue	Gender	Language at school
1	5A	Teacher	54	Bahdini	female	Arabic
2	10A	Teacher	36	Bahdini	female	Arabic
3	15A	Teacher	30	Bahdini	male	Arabic
4	17A	Shopkeeper	50	Bahdini	male	Arabic
5	18A	Teacher	49	Bahdini	female	Arabic
6	20A	Businessman	52	Bahdini	male	Arabic

4.2 Conducting the interviews

All interviews were conducted in Bahdini on a one-to-one basis and in the relaxed atmosphere defined by the trust and the principle of equality between the interviewer and interviewee as much as possible (Mayring 1990:47). In order to avoid any kind of excitement that might come up during the interviews, I had met all participants at least one time before. The target of such meetings was to acquaint the interviewees with the one-to-one dialogue. During the first eight minutes of the meeting, we spoke about my study, and then we talked about planning an appointment for conducting the interview. The next ten minutes we talked about the circumstances of studying in Iraqi Kurdistan and at the University of Duhok. This method proved to work effectively during the interviews. All interviews were recorded by a digital sound recorder, and in addition to the recording I tried to write down if there was any significant behavior by the interviewees that might be interesting to the study.

During the interview, I cautiously paid attention to the participant, and through my eye contact gave them the impression that I was really interested in what they were saying, and that I was willing to hear more and more from them. Kvale (2007: 7) states:

The interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose determined by the one party-the interviewer. It is professional interaction, which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge.

4.2.1 Difficulties

Doing interviews at the faculty during the students' official working hours was not free of difficulties:

- Interviewing a female student in a room alone was difficult, and I was forced to leave the door of the room open, and hung a sheet of paper on a chair with the caution "*Please don't interrupt, we are conducting an interview*".
- Another difficulty was associated with time; most of the students had little time between lectures.
- An unexpected problem was the Mullah's calls to prayers through the loudspeakers of the Mosques while I was recording the interview. These inappropriate situations forced me to delete the part containing the voice of the Mullah and repeat that part of the interview again.
- The problem of using mobile and reading SMS during the interviews.

4.2.2 Interview Questions

For the purpose of this study I conducted interviews based on open-ended and semi-structured questions. At the beginning of the interviews, interviewees were requested to narrate their own personal experience in the context of the Kurdish language and the language of instruction from very early periods of their life, at primary school, secondary school, university, and current work situation (see Interview Questions in the Appendix). My strategy was to let the interviewees speak about their own experience without interrupting them unless ambiguities came up. Sometimes I asked them questions on purpose about issues related to what they mentioned to show them that I was attentively listening and following what they were saying.

4.2. 3 Transcription of the interviews

All recorded interviews were translated from Kurdish into English without doing transcription in Kurdish, because to me direct hearing and translating gives the translator a better understanding of the meaning of the text than translating it from transcription: “hearing the voice makes the meaning clearer and even suggests different interpretations” (Gibbs 2007: 11).

Each translated interview included the name, age, gender and profession of the interviewee. I used a combination of numbers plus either the letter “K” to indicate that the person had Kurdish at school or “A” for Arabic (see table 8 and 9).

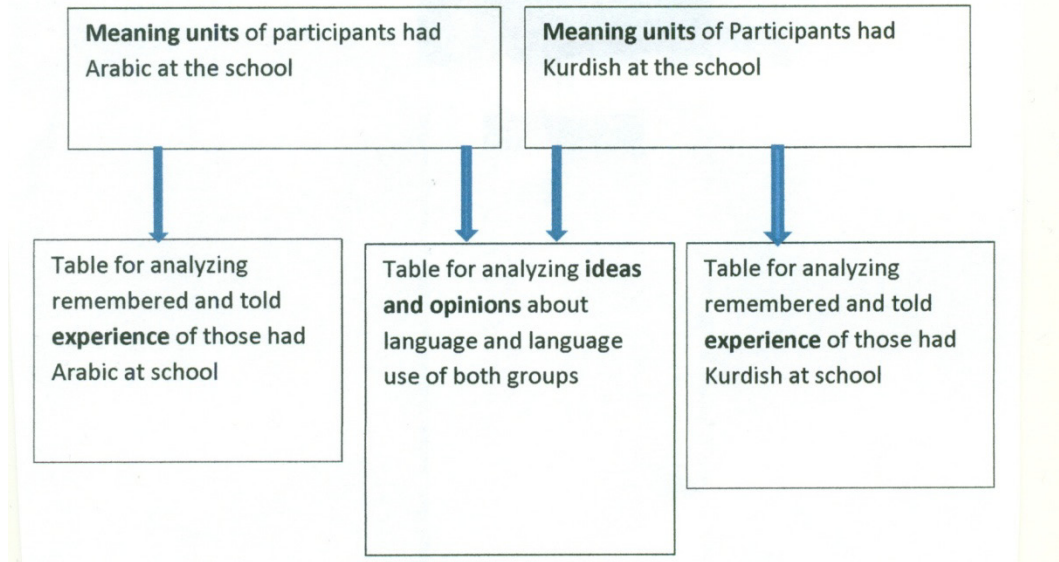
4.3 Technique of content analysis for the study

There are different techniques for doing content analysis, and in order to analyze the content of this research, I have applied the “summarizing and inductive” method suggested by Mayring (2010).

The principle of selecting and extracting meaning units was based on the content analysis. The focus was on whether they said something in relation to the research question and the language of instruction or not. The first step consisted in establishing categories for analysis on the basis of the topics that emerged in the translated interviews. Then I checked these units to see whether they belonged to the collected and told experience of the individual participant or his/her estimated ideas and opinions. Thus, I classified these meaning units into the following groups:

- One for the collected experience of participants who had Kurdish as the Language of instruction
 - One for the collected experience of participants who had Arabic as the Language of Instruction
 - One for ideas and opinions about language and language use of both groups
- For better comprehension, I put them in the following figure:

- Figure 4 : shows the classification of extracted meaning unites (by the author)



The extracted meaning units were paraphrased und summarized by taking the important content without any embellishment. Next, these were generalized and abstracted to become categories. In the final step as proposed by Mayring (2010:69), the coded categories were reduced through the following steps:

- Summarizing the categories
- Putting similar categories together
- Ignoring the repeated categories
- Ignoring the irrelevant categories

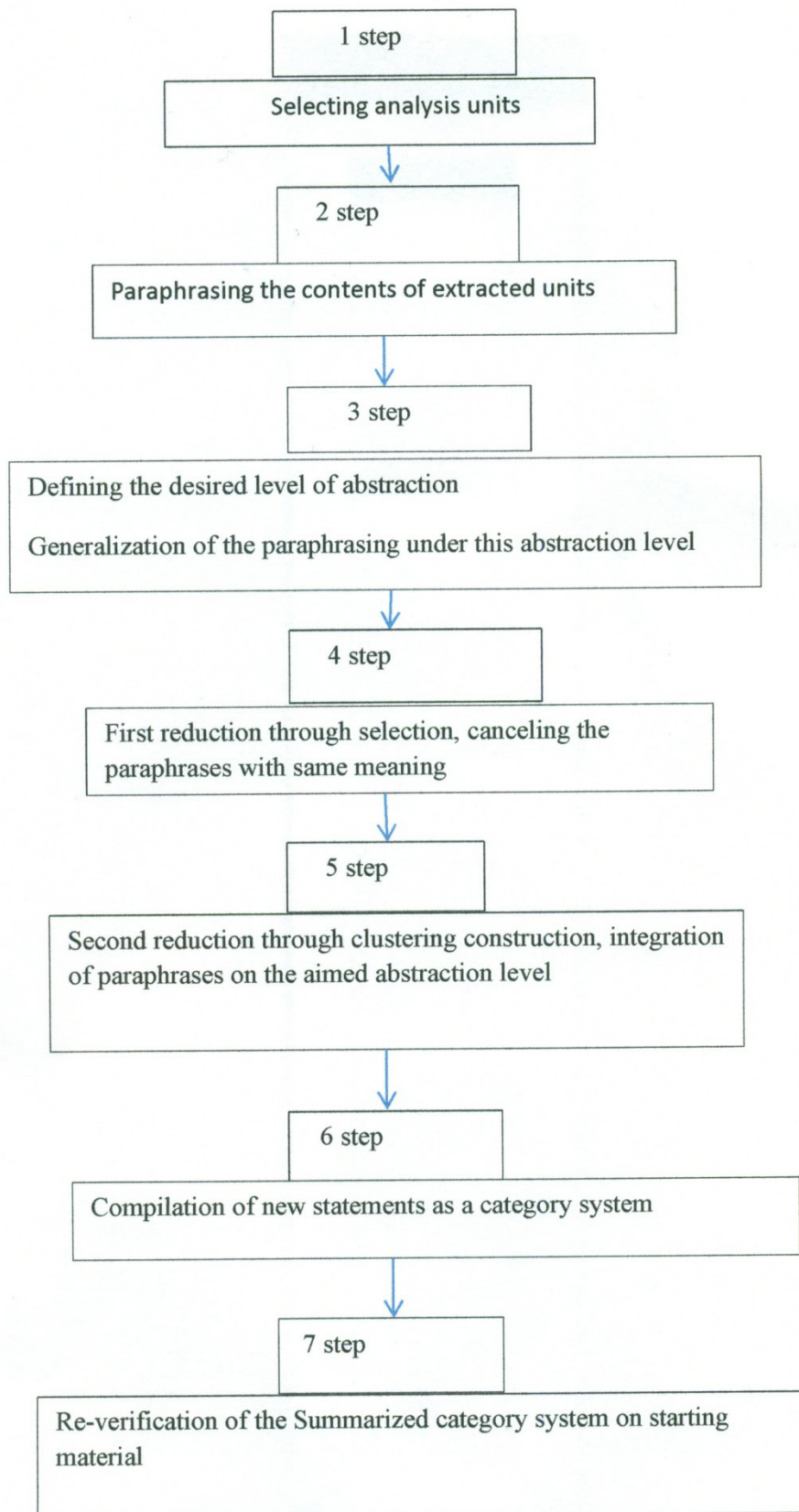


Figure 5: A summary of content analysis suggested by Mayring (Mayring, 2010:68)

4.3.1 The final stage of coding the categories

In this stage all categories of the first analysis went through a similar process again, the outcome categories replaced the extracted meaning units. The categories were then paraphrased in such a way as to take the core of the subject (Mayring 2010:69). All non-important materials were left out. After paraphrasing the categories, they were generalized and reduced. Reducing the number of categories was done through the following steps:

- Omitting the repeated categories
- Combining categories of similar content
- Ignoring categories irrelevant to the research question and theories of the study
- As a final step, the outcome categories after submitting to the process of reduction will be reduced further (Mayring 2010) to 10-50% of the extracted material (See Figure 5).

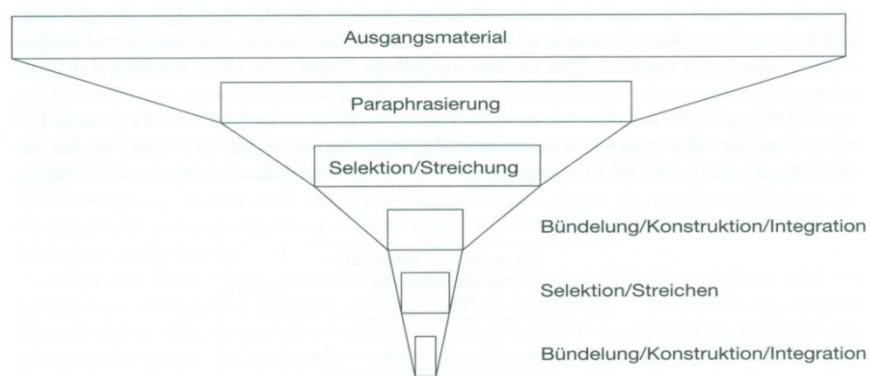


Figure: 6 Mayring (2010:83)

4.3.2 The outcomes of the data analysis

This chapter presents the outcomes of this qualitative study, representing long and deep content analysis of the data collected from 20 participants. The results are reached through analyzing the data, which are classified according to the inductive analysis of the extracts.

Concerning the statements made by the participants, I would like to add that it is true that the opinions of this intellectual group do not represent the opinion of entire Bahdini speakers, but I can say they represent the opinion of the majority of them. This is because the participants, especially students come from different areas and different social backgrounds of the province Duhok. It is also important to mention that big cities of Iraqi Kurdistan after 1990 witnessed a kind of population density, because most of the villages were destroyed by the regime of Saddam Hussein, but also because the available work opportunities in big cities.

After a keen study of all meaning units, units were coded into the final categories which were then put into three separate schedules: one for the experienced categories of participants with Arabic as Language of instruction, the second for the experienced categories of participants with Sorani as language of instruction, and the third for the categories of the ideas and opinions of both preceding groups. I will present the outcomes of content analysis of each of the above-mentioned group separately:

- A summary of statements made by the participants that reflect their remembered and told experience of participants who had Arabic as the language of instruction in their school years, and had only one subject in Sorani:
 1. Sorani is difficult for both Bahdini pupils and teachers
 2. Bahdini children find Sorani a strange language
 3. Bahdini pupils feel comfortable for using Bahdini and want to continue use it

4. Both Sorani and Bahdini speakers should use their own dialects
5. The frequency of change of language of instruction from one language to another, The changing from Arabic to Sorani, then to Bahdini, and then the attempt to change back to Sorani worries the people
6. When using Sorani as the language of instruction pupils rely on teachers to explain the contents of textbooks because they don't understand Sorani
7. Both dialects' speakers use Arabic words when they talk to each other
8. Arabic is easier than Sorani for Bahdini speakers
9. Bahdini speakers refuse to use Sorani and want to keep using their own variety
10. Both dialects are not mutually intelligible
11. Arabization left Arabic words in Bahdini
12. Both varieties need to be developed

- The second outcome of statements on recollected experience of the group that had Sorani as the language of instruction in school:

1. Bahdini teachers simplified Sorani through translating and repeating
2. Bahdini speakers prefer Latin alphabet
3. Having two dialects at the school make pupils learn both of them
4. Standard language should take into consideration all parts of Kurdistan
5. learning a European language make it easy to learn Kurdish Latin alphabet
6. The variation, differences and dialect maintenance cause difficulty for Kurdish people.

7. Despite the different grammars of Sorani and Bahdini, Bahdini speakers try to learn Sorani, but Sorani speakers don't try to learn Bahdini
8. Sorani seems like a foreign language for Bahdini speakers
9. Bahdini pupils cannot understand Sorani textbooks
10. Using Arabic based alphabet makes it easy to learn Arabic
11. Bahdini speakers use mixed language when corresponding with Sorani speakers.
12. The change of language from Bahdini to Sorani makes learning difficult for Bahdini
13. Participants feel that currently used Kurdish alphabet are modified Arabic alphabet and not Kurdish one
14. Pupils do not understand Sorani
15. Because of the difference between both dialects, teachers explain the meaning for the pupils
16. Latin alphabet can be used for both dialects
17. Sorani is like a new language for Bahdini Pupils
18. People use both alphabets for their correspondents
[people use Latin alphabet beside the Perso-Arabic one]
19. Both dialects have different grammar
20. Bahdini students speak Sorani, but not vice versa
21. Bahdini speakers are glad for using Bahdini
22. Both dialect groups can use their own dialect but also should learn the dialect of counterpart

- The third summary represents the opinions and ideas of both groups

1. Both Kurdish dialects should be used
2. Sorani and Bahdini have similarities and differences

3. People can select the dialect they want
4. Sorani is base for spoken Kurdish
5. Bahdini speakers Prefer Latin alphabet
6. rejection of one dialect
7. Both dialects are not mutually intelligible
8. Teaching in Bahdini is easier for Children and teachers and they accept one subject in Sorani.
9. Bahdini refuse Sorani but accept one subject at school
10. Bahdini speakers feel happy using Bahdini dialect instead of Sorani and think both dialect should be cultivated
11. Speakers of both varieties should learn the counterpart variety
12. Competition between both dialects to be standard and Bahdini speakers refuse using Sorani instead of Bahdini.
13. Sorani is difficult for Bahdini teachers and Bahdini speakers don't understand Sorani.
14. Bahdini speakers prefer using mother tongue and they refuse using Sorani instead of Bahdini.
15. Sorani and Bahdini have two different grammars
16. Unified language should use Latin alphabet
17. Bahdini reject the idea of imposing one variety on others
18. Bahdini speakers want the use of both dialects
19. Latin alphabet is easy and better for Kurdish but better to keep Arabic
20. Bahdini speakers rejects the idea of using Sorani
21. Use of two dialects is a good solution
22. Establishing one official language for all Kurdistan [all parts of Kurdistan] better than two languages
23. Sorani has different grammar than Bahdini

24. Latin alphabet might be difficult for Sorani
25. Changing the language from Sorani to Bahdini is a good thing.
26. Imposing a dialect is not good, instead both dialect could be used

4.3.3 The final outcomes of the data analysis

From the above listed statements condensed through the data analysis one can conclude the following outcomes:

- Bahdini and Sorani dialects are described as grammatically as well as lexically distinctive and not always mutually intelligible; Bahdini speakers find it therefore difficult when Bahdini is not the medium of instruction, and they said that they use a mixed language when they talk to each other.
- The interviewed speakers of Kurmanji (Bahdini) of Duhok province and surrounding areas do not agree with the idea of selecting the Sorani variety as the language of instruction
- Speakers of Kurmanji (Bahdini) feel comfortable using their own dialect and think that the correct solution to the current situation of language of instruction is that both varieties should be used; Sorani for Sorani speakers and Bahdini for Bahdini speakers. However, the Bahdini speakers do not refuse having one subject in Sorani in their school, but they think this should be mutual, i.e. Sorani speakers should also get acquainted with Kurmanji.
- The majority of Bahdini participants think that the Latin alphabet should be used for written Kurdish.
- One participant says that Latin alphabet is easy and better for Kurdish, but despite that says however, it is better to keep on using the Perso-Arabic alphabet.

- Bahdini speakers use mixed language when corresponding with Sorani speakers
- Establishing one official language for all Kurdistan [all parts of Kurdistan not Iraqi Kurdistan] better than two languages

4. 4 Language ideologies behind refusing Sorani and preferring Bahdini

After analyzing the content of the collected data, I noticed that in addition to the linguistic reasons, there were a variety of implicit and explicit ideologies within the statements given by the participants as reasons for refusing to use Sorani variety. However, the degree of consciousness of the language ideologies differed from participants to another.

According to Kroskrity, the degree of consciousness is related to both individual members of a given group and the kind of space in which the ideologies will be produced and commented (see Busch 2013: 85). Thus, we see while language ideologies are implicit if produced within the family space, they are explicit if produced in space of institutions like courts and schools (Ibid). Ideologies enable the speakers to connect their own sociocultural experiences with linguistic and discursive means by creating an indexical reference between certain kind of social relationship and speaking characteristics (Busch 2013: 86). Linguistic beliefs are an indication of how speakers of a particular language (variety) construct themselves and the others. These sociolinguistic settings are obvious in the following analysis.

4.4.1 Constructions of linguistic differences

The differences in grammar, lexicon and phonology in Sorani and Bahdini revealed by several participants are considered obstacles for using Sorani as the language of instruction by Bahdini speakers. The difficulty of learning through the medium of Sorani is explained by its difference from Bahdini. The majority of the participants found Sorani to be so difficult and different from Kurmanji that they described it even as a foreign language. In this context, I would like to cite some excerpts from interviews referencing Sorani.

As a response to the question of whether using Sorani at school helped participant 1K to speak Sorani, she said:

I know a few words and some sentences, and if someone speaks Sorani quickly I won't understand, unless she/he speaks slowly so that I concentrate carefully, then I might understand him/her a bit. (L.53)

Regarding the proposal of once again using Sorani varieties as the unified language of instruction instead of the currently-used Bahdini, she said:

In fact, it is wrong, because I had my own experience; I had difficulty understanding Sorani. Usually, I need a long time to understand things in Sorani; I spent several hours asking friends and teachers to explain some Sorani texts to me. When I was at the school, sometimes I was in embarrassing situations: there were some passages that even our teachers could not understand and we were forced to ignore them. (1k: L.121)

The participant supported her opinion by her recollected experience with Sorani variety during her school years. She claimed that it was hard for her to understand Sorani; the difficulty of the language in textbooks was problematic for teachers, as well, because they could not easily explain their contents. She also said that despite the similarities of some vocabularies in both varieties, in general pupils could not understand all of the Sorani words. The same could be said for the Sorani speakers who could not understand Bahdini words:

There are some common words but it does not mean that you can use Sorani; these are daily words that everybody uses. However, there are some words that are very difficult for us to understand. Our words might also be difficult for the Sorani speakers to understand. They might spend hours asking about the meaning of some Bahdini words, just like us when we have spent long time asking about the meaning of some Sorani words. (1k: L. 130)

Another participant referred to another point of linguistic difference between the varieties, related to the absence of gender in Sorani:

Yes, for example, Sorani have no masculine and feminine; they use the same pronoun for "boy" and "girl" but we in Bahdini have masculine and feminine and also we have different pronouns for "boy" and "girl". (3K: L29)

The participant provided an example of the existing differences between both varieties linked to the absence of gender in Sorani. This is a grammatical difference. Bahdini-speakers have different pronouns for male and female, while Sorani has only one pronoun for both male and female. Actually, learning Bahdini could be considered more of a grammatical challenge for Sorani speakers rather than vice versa.

Another participant, 4K, found that the big difference was not in grammar, but rather lexicon. He said: “I think the big difference is not in the grammar but in the words, we don’t understand most of their words and they also do not understand most of ours” (4k: L.40). The participant, who was studying medicine, said, “Believe me I understand English much better than Sorani, I also understand Arabic better than Sorani” (4k: L.51).

In response to my question of using Sorani instead of Bahdini, he said:

I think that will be a mistake, because we already did that experiment When we were at school we had a lot of difficulties using Sorani, that is why I think it will not be good. It is possible to use it as language of instruction, but it will not be good. (4K: 65)

Just like participant 1K, he referred to his previous experience with Sorani.

Participant 5A, a teacher at an elementary school in Duhok, considered Sorani to be difficult for the Bahdini children, because speaking and articulating Sorani is strange to them:

It was very difficult for the Bahdini children to learn Sorani, because the articulation and speaking of Sorani were strange to them. It’s true that both are Kurdish, but they differ from each other. (5A:L.20)

She interpreted the case of changing the language of instruction from Sorani to Bahdini as the result of the difficulty of Sorani. The pupils could not learn Sorani easily. She confirmed that currently, after changing the curricula to Bahdini, teaching became easier for both teachers and pupils:

Yes, at the beginning it was in Sorani, it was difficult, and they [the government] knew that it is not possible for our pupils to learn in Sorani, therefore, they changed the curricula from Sorani to Bahdini. Now it’s easier for the teacher and the pupils, pupils begin to understand better, because there is nothing ambiguous in the texts. (5A:L.35)

When I asked her about her thoughts on the demand of some intellectuals to return to the use of Sorani in the schools of the Bahdini region, she answered:

I don't agree with that, because our children can't understand it. The new Bahdini books are very good and generally the children understand them very well. (5A:83)

When I asked another participant, 6K, who graduated from the University of Duhok, the same question about what she thinks of the possibility of the schools in Duhok using Sorani again, she said, "I do not agree with that, but if they want, they can add a subject in Sorani to the rest of the curricula which should be in Bahdini" (6K: L.42).

Another student who was studying English at the University of Duhok explained her opinion of both varieties as such: "I think both are Kurdish, but different dialects with different structures" (7K: L.102).

The participant 8K, a student at the College of Basic Education, described the difficulties of Sorani as follows:

It was strange for us, we had no contact with the Sorani language and we had no experience with it, so it was very difficult for us. And although the teachers tried to explain things for us, we could not understand them; therefore, I memorized the texts without understanding them. (8K: L.30)

The participant related the difficulty of Sorani to the issue of its strangeness, which was the result of having no contact with Sorani speakers and also having no previous knowledge of Sorani. Some of the participants referred to the subject of contact with Sorani speakers as well because both varieties are geographically separated, and before establishing the safe haven for the Kurds in Iraq, there was no direct connection between the Sorani and Bahdini regions without traveling through "Mosul", a third province of Arab majority (see Map). The participant said that she had memorized the texts, because she could not understand them.

As far as the issue of the contact between both Bahdini and Sorani regions is concerned, currently the Kurdish government has connected all Kurdish provinces through a network of roads that enables the people to travel from one province to another without the need to travel through Arabic provinces. This will definitely

increase contact between the speakers of the two varieties, which will also have consequences in language use.

Another participant, 9K, referred to the existing differences between the grammars of both varieties and considered them to be so large that he could not understand Bahdini grammar even he was Bahdini speaker, because he had learned Sorani grammar at school:

I have learned Sorani in school. Sometimes when my sister, who has learned in Bahdini, shows me some grammatical matters in Bahdini Kurdish, I do not understand them. They seem strange to me, I can't understand them. (9k: L.65)

Participant 10A, a teacher at one of the elementary schools in Duhok, mentioned that she previously taught her subject in Bahdini for the pupils because she could not speak Sorani:

. . . , the pupils used Sorani books in school, but I could not speak Sorani, therefore, I used Bahdini language. I was explaining most of the issues in Bahdini for the pupils. (10A:L.98)

As a contradictory case, participant 11K referred to the reaction of some Sorani peers at school after changing the curricula from Sorani to Bahdini:

When our curricula changed to Bahdini, the Sorani speakers did not understand and had always complained about it. They said that they did not understand. When the teacher explained something in Bahdini to them, they said they wanted to be explained in Sorani. (11k: L.84)

It is worth mentioning that education in the schools must cater to all learners and foresee such situations. Creating new minorities who are excluded from the learning process is not a solution.

Participant 12K, a journalist and a native Sorani speaker who speaks both Sorani and Bahdini fluently and has been living in Duhok (Bahdini province) for a long time, said, "... , in fact, there is a big difference between the both dialects" (12K: L.52).

Another participant, 13K, a poet and native Bahdini speaker, speaks both varieties fluently and had Sorani as the language of instruction during his school years. He described his feelings on his first day of school as:

The school was opened, and it was in Sorani dialect. The Sorani dialect was something new for us, because there are differences between Sorani and our dialect, a lot of things were new for us, and it was just like learning a new language. (13K: L.23)

As we can see, different participants compare using Sorani as the language of instruction to learning a new language. It seems that they succeeded in learning both varieties during the course of their education.

Participant 14K, who had Sorani as the language of instruction in school, described Sorani as “another language.” The participant said that Sorani is very difficult and despite the existence of common words in both varieties, it seems to be another language:

I can say Sorani somehow is another language; there are some words in Sorani that we never use, it’s very difficult, as if it is another language. There are also some common words similar to Bahdini. (14K: L.78)

When I asked him about the difference between the two varieties, he provided the following example:

There are differences in words and in grammar, for example we differentiate between masculine and feminine. For example; we use word *Pismam* to mean a male cousin and *Dutmam* to mean female cousin, but in Sorani they use one word, *Amoza*, for both cases. (14K: L30)

Participant 15A is a teacher at the College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok, and he spoke about his previous knowledge of Sorani when he was at school. “I say it frankly; I could understand Arabic better than Sorani. Sorani was difficult to read” (15A: L.35). In fact, the participant had Arabic as language of instruction in school. He continued to demonstrate the difficulties of using Sorani:

There were difficulties as we began learning Sorani for the first time; we could not understand it. It was strange for us, Arabic was

easier for us...it [Sorani] was difficult. Its lexicon and the way of writing were different from our dialect. (15A:L.49)

In connection with the possibility of abolishing the use of Bahdini and returning to Sorani, participant 16K said:

I do not think that the Bahdini speakers accept that. Maybe the Sorani speakers will agree but not the people of our region. The pupils don't understand Sorani, they all complain about it. (16K:L.50)

He thinks that Bahdini speakers will not accept a return to Sorani, because the people do not comprehend it, so they will complain about it.

Participant 17A, who has spent many years living in Europe and speaks several languages, emphasized that there is a big difference between the Sorani varieties used in Sulaimaniya and Bahdini variety of Duhok , and reiterated that Sorani is difficult to understand:

Yes, there is a difference between Sulaimaniya, Erbil and Duhok [varieties]. And the difference between Sulaimaniya and Duhok is very big. I think it is very difficult to understand it unless you have learned that dialect since childhood. (17A:L.58)

Although he did not have much knowledge of Sorani grammar, he said:

In fact, I have no good knowledge of Sorani grammar, I learned to speak the language but not systematically, but I know there are differences in words but also in the grammar of that dialect. (17A:L.62)

He emphasized that the both varieties differ from each other grammatically as well as lexically.

Participant 18A had Arabic as a language of instruction and explained the difference between Sorani and Bahdini:

I think the differences are mainly grammatical ones, of course words are also different, but somehow understandable, for example we say *co* [went]—sorry, not this word, for example we say *Av* [water] they say *Aw*, somehow similar. You know because both belong to the

Kurdish language, therefore words are somehow easier, but the grammar is very difficult, there is a big difference between the grammars of both dialects. (18A: L.58)

The participant thought that the major difference lay in grammar of both varieties.

Participant 19K also demonstrated that there is a big difference between Sorani and Bahdini and emphasized the absence of gender in Sorani, saying:

Honestly there are big differences between Sorani and Bahdini, for example, Sorani has no gender while this exists in Bahdini dialect. There are also differences in pronouns. (19K: L.83)

Participant 20A, like some other participants, revealed his difficulty with Sorani and described it as such: “It was not our dialect, and we had much difficulty; it was something new for us.” (20A:L.18)

4.4.2 Conclusion

As we have noted from the aforementioned statements, there are two important points to be emphasized: first, the participants consider the difference in vocabulary, grammar, and phonology of both varieties, Sorani and Bahdini, to be obstacles to comprehension and use Sorani as the language of instruction in schools; and, second, that Sorani is difficult for children to understand during their early school years.

Both varieties have differences and similarities in their vocabularies. One can find the same words in both varieties but also totally different words; for example, both variety use the word *nan* to mean bread, but Sorani speakers use the word *kere* for butter and Bahdini speakers use *nîvhişk*.

Grammatically, there are differences on several levels, in conjunctions, genders, and articles (see chap. 3).

The case of gender is one of the essential differences between both varieties. In Sorani variety there are no inflective morphemes and therefore, no distinction in

grammatical gender or case (see Mackenzie 1961). While gender is one of the significance features of Bahdini grammar, things are either masculine or feminine, this is not the case with Sorani; for example, the same article is used for man and woman. In Bahdini they say *Korek ê bi lêz* (a strong boy). The suffix “ê” is a masculine article. In *Kiçek a bi hêz* (a strong girl), the suffix “a” is a feminine article. In Sorani they say *Korek i bi hêz* and *Kiçek i bi hêz*. The suffix “i” is used as the article for both gender, whether masculine or feminine.

There are also some phonological differences between both varieties (see chapter 3: 76). Bahdini has some phonemes that do not exist in Sorani.

Concerning the issue of children difficulty to understand Sorani, it is plausible that Sorani could be seen as a strange language because of the existing differences between both varieties. Thus it is important that children use their mother tongue, at least in their early school years.

4.4.3 The claim for recognition as a distinct social group of speakers

The interviews show that conceptual language ideologies are evident in the arguments of the participants in both their opinions and when describing their recollected school experience with Sorani. Woolard (1998:16) stated:

In multilingual communities where there have been self-consciousness struggles over language, researchers have long treated language ideologies (in one guise or another) as socially, politically, and linguistically significant.

Using the term ‘language ideologies’ in this analysis is based on the following definition by Michael Silverstein (1979:193 cited by Woolard 1998:4) as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use”. Gal (1998: 323) stated “..., the importance of linguistic ideologies for social research lies exactly in the fact that they are not only about talk. They envision and enact connections between aspects of language and other arenas of social life.”

Participant 1K, a graduated female student from the College of Law in Duhok, stated, “I write in Bahdini, because I know this language and I can use it better than both Sorani and Arabic” (1K: L.90). As a response to the question about using Bahdini in Duhok schools, she said:

To me it is a good thing, we are Bahdini and Bahdini is our language, we can better explain our ideas when using Bahdini. We can also better understand the curricula when they are in Bahdini; we don't need someone to translate it for us. Furthermore, we need no help from others, we would be able to manage everything in Kurdish; this makes the process of developing ourselves easier than in Sorani. (1K: L.113)

This extract from her interview contains a conceptual ideology of affiliation to a certain group of society. Furthermore, it is an ideology that aims to help Bahdini speakers reach a kind of linguistic independence and a better social position, and not relying on others. This kind of ideology is also revealed by Woolard (1998:5-7).

Participant 2K, a female student in the department of English, explained the reasons for preferring Bahdini over Sorani by saying:

I think if we take the number of the speakers of Bahdini in all Kurdistan, then they are the majority, but if we take into consideration the number of Sorani speakers only in Iraq, in this case they will be the majority. To me it makes no difference. There were times, in which we were forced to learn Arabic, and we have learned Arabic and now we have the possibility to select the dialect we want. (2K: L. 145)

Her ideas reflect an ideology related to the idea of power and better social status, because Bahdini is the variety spoken by the majority of Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan. The participant continues:

Sometimes we have discussed this topic in the lectures, and most of the students think that we should have a standard language, because we in Iraqi Kurdistan have our own flag, and own institutions therefore, a standard language is a necessity. However, we should not forget that we are a part of the whole Kurdistan, and there are also Kurds who live in Turkey, Syria and Iran and we should not ignore their dialects. We should think a lot before selecting one dialect. (2K: L.84)

She emphasizes the necessity of having a standard language and relates that to the actual status of Iraqi-Kurdistan being a semi-independent state with its own flag and institutions. Her words also comprise a hidden ideology, however. That Bahdini is the language of the majority of Kurds if taking the Kurdish speakers in all parts of Kurdistan into consideration: “we should not forget that we are a part of the whole of Kurdistan.” Her explanation also reflects a category of ideology targeting a certain social position for Bahdini variety. Woolard (1998: 7) says: “Ideology is seen as ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power”. The participant wants to say that Bahdini speakers form the majority of Kurds in the whole of Kurdistan, while in Iraqi-Kurdistan the number of Sorani speakers is more than Bahdini speakers.

Participant 3K elucidates his idea about the petition of a group of intellectuals who demanded making Sorani the standard language as follows:

In fact, this is difficult matter, because there are two dialects and they have an approximately similar number of the speakers; they can't impose one of them on the speakers of other dialect. (3K: L. 65)

The participant clearly expresses his stance of opposing any attempt to impose a certain variety on others. This represents an ideology of power and refusing the use of another variety to be the standard language. The participant said that “they have an approximately similar number of speakers”, which means that Kurmanji should be equally treated to Sorani. It is an ideology of recognition. Dirim (2010: 100) also confirms that language could be used as a means for social recognition:

Sprache ist nicht nur rein >> technisches<<Kommunikationsmittel, sondern auch ein Mittel der Herstellung und Artikulation gesellschaftlicher Anerkennung. Wer ist befugt wann, wie, zu wem und über wen und was zu sprechen.

Participant 4K explained his recollected school experience regarding the use of Sorani:

I began to learn Sorani. It was like a foreign language to me; I could not understand it. And it was not only difficult for me, but many pupils had the same difficulty and all of my schooling was in Sorani until I finished secondary school. (4K: L.16)

This participant describes learning Sorani akin to learning a foreign language. The participant also reveals that it was difficult for the teacher as well, and says that the problem was that they spoke a different dialect than what was used in school. The message he wants to give is that Bahdini pupils cannot understand Sorani, because they are distinctive varieties. This reflects the ideology of the necessity to be recognized as a distinctive variety group.

Another participant, 4K, also mentioned that there is a big difference between Sorani and Bahdini, and that the Bahdini students used a third language, either English or Arabic, as “lingua franca” when they spoke to Sorani students because they could not understand each other:

There are big differences, believe me. Now at our college we have some Sorani students and when we speak to each other in our varieties we can't understand [each other]; therefore, we'll be forced to speak either in English or Arabic, so we understand much better. (4K: L.36)

Language ideology can appear in different forms, because it is a bundle of concepts or cultural presentations that are the results of interaction between language and human being (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 84). The idea of using a third language, English or Arabic, when speaking to Sorani students contains an implicit ideology of being distinctive varieties.

Participant 5A recounts her previous experience with the obligatory use of Sorani in school. She mentions that Sorani was difficult and strange for Bahdini children. The participant confirms that both varieties are Kurdish but that they differ from each other. She also connects the language use to language learning by force. This is an implicit ideology of refusing the use of Sorani:

In 1971 the Kurds signed an agreement with the Iraqi government. At that time, we were forced to use Sorani as the language of instruction in schools. So we began to learn Sorani step by step, and at the beginning it was difficult for us and for all teachers to understand it. It was very difficult for the Bahdini children to learn Sorani, because the articulation and speaking of Sorani were strange to them. It's true that both are Kurdish, but they differ from each other. (5A: L.17)

Participant 6K, in response to the question of what she thinks about the return to Sorani instead of Bahdini in school, answered:

Frankly, I would prefer to learn Arabic rather than Sorani. I could understand Arabic better, at least, Arabic is an international language and is spoken in many countries, but Sorani is restricted only to the area of Sulaimaniya and Erbil. I want to have either Bahdini or Arabic, but not Sorani; I do not like to use that dialect. (6K: L.36)

The above-quoted response shows a clear case of language ideology linking language to authority and power. Busch (2013: 84) in relation to Kroskrity (2010, 2005) four overlapping levels of language ideologies states:

Sprachideologien repräsentieren eine Sichtweise auf Sprache und Diskurse, die im Interesse einer bestimmten sozialen oder kulturellen Gruppe konstruiert ist. Was innerhalb einer Gruppe als wahr, moralisch richtig oder ästhetisch gefällig erscheint, ist oft an politisch-ökonomisch Interessen gebunden.

The extract of participant 6K reflects that language use and beliefs about language use reflect power and economics. She confirms that Sorani variety is used only in restricted areas of Sulaimaniya and Erbil. She does not want to give up her variety of Bahdini for Sorani, and in fact prefers Arabic over Sorani because it is an international language.

The next participant, 8K, relates the difficulty of Sorani to the idea of the strangeness of Sorani. The strangeness was the result of not having contact with Sorani speakers. It was very difficult for these pupils; they memorized Sorani texts without understanding them.

It was strange for us, we had no contact with the Sorani language and we had no experience with it, so it was very difficult for us. And although the teachers tried to explain things for us, we could not understand them; therefore I memorized the texts without understanding them. (8k: L.30)

Describing Sorani as strange and adding the issue of having no contact and no experience denotes an implicit ideology of refusing Sorani variety.

Participant 13K, a poet, finds that using Bahdini variety as a language of instruction in the Bahdini region as an important, because it might help to bring the main two dialects closer to each other or even bring all dialects together. The idea of bringing dialects [varieties] closer to each other is a language ideology:

I think using Bahdini in school is an important step; the development of this dialect might help bring both main dialects closer to each other. I am glad to see that more attention has been paid to this dialect. I think also that if this dialect is cultivated and developed, it could be a ring for connecting all of the dialects together. (13K: L.61)

The same participant thinks that Bahdini speakers will not accept Sorani variety if it would be imposed on Bahdini speakers: “if they try to do so, the people will say no, and when the people say no, nobody can force them to accept that, that is why, I believe that it will not work” (13K:L.73)..

Another participant, 15A, a teacher at the College of Basic Education, had Arabic as the language of instruction in elementary school and later Sorani as the language of instruction in secondary school. He describes his collected experience as follows:

Schools were in Arabic, then changed to Kurdish, and the Kurdish was not Bahdini, it was Sorani, which we did not understand. When the teachers explained things for us, we understood, but when we came to write in Sorani, it was very difficult for us. (15A:L.23)

Furthermore, he exaggerated the situation of using Sorani in Duhok by saying that they felt as if they were in Erbil or Sulaimaniya and not Duhok. He felt strange and not home. In this context he said:

Yes, everyone feels happy, especially the pupils in secondary school. Previously, when it was in Sorani we felt as if we were in somewhere else, not in Duhok. We felt as if we were in Erbil or Sulaimaniya. It was difficult to feel strange when you are home. (15A: L.89)

The participant links language use to the space. This means that Bahdini speakers feel to be in their own space only when they use Bahdini; when they use Sorani,

they feel like they are in Sulaimaniya or Erbil. This is a clear indication that space is socially constructed and that language plays a role in this construction.

In connection with the idea of selecting Sorani as the language of instruction, the participant said:

It is not correct when a group of people demand such a thing [selecting Sorani to be language of instruction], because it's not fair to impose a dialect on other dialects. One feels a kind of unfair treatment. (15A:L.67)

Participant 16K, who was preparing for his state examination in secondary school in Duhok, described the reaction of the pupils to the teacher when he was teaching in Sorani and explaining in Bahdini:

For them [other pupils] it was easier, but they were always complaining about the language being in Sorani dialect. They were saying they did not understand, because it was Sorani, although the teacher was explaining in Bahdini. (16K: L.31)

Complaining about instruction in Sorani and saying that they did not understand despite explanations in Bahdini is also a reaction related to the ideology of refusing Sorani.

When I asked participant 19K about her opinion if the schools go back to using Sorani, she said:

No, this is not a correct way; we are all interested in having one unified language like other nations that have one unified language. But our situation is different, because Sorani differs much from Bahdini, and we can't make one language out of both dialects. Previously the language of school textbooks was a mix of Sorani and Bahdini: a sentence was in Bahdini, and the next one was in Sorani. This is not a language, it was neither Sorani nor Bahdini, that was not correct; and it's also not correct to impose a dialect on other dialects. As the first stage, it's good that both dialects be used and linguists should work to develop the language. (19K: L.36)

Participant 20A, who had Arabic as the language of instruction but from 1971 to 1975 had one Kurdish class a day, described his experience with Kurdish. "It was not our dialect, and we had much difficulty, it was something new for us" (20A:

L. 18). This is also an ideology of distinguishing their language from Sorani, in other words refusing Sorani:

Why should Sorani be the standard language? They should give me some reasons. Why Kurmanji will not be a standard language. This is just the opposite, if we take into consideration the total Kurd population in the whole of Kurdistan, we find that three quarters of them are Kurmanji, and only one quarter, or maybe less than one, are Sorani speakers. (20A:L. 46)

Furthermore, it represents an ideology of power and better status, because the participant refers to the entire number of both Kurmanji and Sorani speakers and compares them to each other.

4.4.4 Constructions of ‘otherness’ and competing varieties

As I have mentioned in Chapter 3, the process of language maintenance in Kurdish has two dimensions, external and internal. External, that of maintaining Kurdish vis-à-vis the influence of dominant languages such as Arabic, Persian and Turkish; and internal, maintaining a variety vis-à-vis other varieties. This part of the research will focus on demonstrating the opinions on language maintenance with reference to the data collected from the participants.

The factor of variety maintenance plays a considerable role in the case of Bahdini speakers, who overall refuse the Sorani variety. Participant 2K commented on the issue of each region using its own dialect:

I think it's not good that the pupils learn only one dialect. I think they should learn another dialect too. The Sorani people should learn something in Bahdini and Bahdini also should have something in Sorani so that the speakers of both dialects become acquainted with the dialect of the other. (L.115)

Participant 3K explained why it is difficult to select one dialect or to impose one dialect on the other dialects as the language of instruction; instead he accepts the situation of using two dialects as standard varieties: “We want to have both dialects as standard dialects” (3K: L.67).

Participant 3K also mentioned his refusal to impose a dialect on other dialects and said, “As I told you before I don’t agree to impose any dialect on other dialects. We are all Kurds and every group of speakers can use its own dialect, that should not be a problem” (L. 87). This is a plea for a standardization that respects different varieties.

Participant 6K preferred the use of Bahdini in schools because “the pupils must learn in Bahdini in order to understand the content of the curricula, otherwise it’s useless” (6K: L.43). The participant wanted to uphold Bahdini by relating the issue of using Bahdini to the factor of understanding the curricula. The participant explained further:

It is very good [using Bahdini], the people feel comfortable with it; the pupils understand the language of the books. I think this change will positively influence the process of education in the future. (6K: L.53)

All positive reasons given by participant 6K for using Bahdini in schools are in fact connected to the process of variety maintenance:

Sometimes when we go to Erbil and talk to people in Bahdini they reply in Sorani. They never speak Bahdini unless they are 100% sure that we do not understand Sorani and there is no other means for communicating, then they begin to speak Bahdini. (6K: L.83)

The participant argued that Sorani speakers do not try to speak Bahdini even if they are able. Thus, it looks as if maintaining Bahdini is a reaction to the behavior of Sorani speakers towards Bahdini, and that is why they want to preserve their own variety.

Participant 7K also stressed the same observation revealed by 6K, that Sorani speakers do not speak Bahdini, and therefore the participant did not want to change his variety of language.

I do not change my dialect and speak Sorani to them, because I have never seen a Sorani speaker who speaks Bahdini to Bahdini people. I will speak Bahdini. (7K: L.81)

The participant thought that Sorani speakers preserve their own variety and consequently Bahdini speakers should do the same:

They might know better, but I think it could be a kind of discrimination, or they may feel that their own dialect is better than ours. Or because they had school textbooks already before us, or they think they form the majority of Iraqi Kurds. Anyway, I'll speak Bahdini. (7K: L.84)

The participant has tried to give some reasons for Sorani speakers undermining Bahdini variety, for example discrimination, considering Sorani as a better dialect, or having school books in Sorani before Bahdini. However, she said that she will speak Bahdini.

Participant 8K referred to competition between the varieties. On the one hand she confirmed that all Kurds want to have a unified language, on the other she said that both varieties want to have their varieties as the standard language:

Of course all the Kurds want to have one unified language, but it is a problem because speakers of both Sorani and Bahdini want to have their own language as the standard one. And if they impose Sorani it will be difficult for us, because there are a lot of people who cannot speak Sorani, then what should they do in this case? (8K: L. 42)

She also mentioned that imposing Sorani as a language of instruction would be a problem for Bahdini speakers, because a lot of people will not understand it.

Participant 10A, a teacher at an elementary school in Duhok, said:

I think the Bahdini speakers have also their own rights, and therefore, I think if the Bahdini speakers use their own language in schools it is much better. I know the Sorani speakers do not understand Bahdini, but at least the Bahdini speakers can use their language. (10A: L.83)

She thought that using Bahdini in school is much better than using Sorani and that she knows that Sorani speakers do not understand Bahdini, but at least the Bahdini can use their own language. When I asked her whether she had something else to add, she confirmed that she wants to keep Bahdini:

No, thanks, I just want to say that I hope the people of Duhok keep using Bahdini as the language of instruction, because it's a very good thing. (10A:L.125)

Participant 13K, as respond to a question about the way he thinks if the Kurdish government decides that Sorani variety to be a standard one for the region of Iraqi Kurdistan, he said

If we look all over the world, we find that things that are imposed through dictatorship or nondemocratic ways don't function correctly. This could be said also, if the Bahdini people try to impose their dialect on Sorani speakers. The time of dictatorship is gone and such steps like this will never succeed. (13K: L.69)

This participant links such decisions to dictatorship and non-democratic ways, he indirectly rejects such measures. The participant demonstrates the distinctiveness of both varieties.

Participant 15A also referred to the people of Duhok and said that they want to have Bahdini and they refuse to use Sorani as the language of instruction in their schools. "In general the people of Duhok want to have their dialect to be the language of instruction. They don't want to have Sorani as the language of instruction" (15A: L. 70).

The majority of participants considered having both varieties as languages of instruction a good solution. Participant 16K also mentioned that "I think it's a good solution using both dialects; nobody will have a problem. Sorani speakers will have it easier and we too. Sorani have no problem with Sorani dialect but we have" (16K: L.60). Using both varieties means keeping them from being lost.

4.4.5 Mother tongue as a language ideology

The factor of native or mother language was one of the important arguments mentioned by the participants for refusing to use Sorani as the language of instruction in the schools of the Bahdini region. Most of the interviewed Bahdini speakers consider mother tongue to be important in the learning process and think that Bahdini speaking children understand the curricula better when they are taught in their mother tongue.

Participant 3K considered using Bahdini at the school a good thing because as their mother tongue it is easier than Sorani for the children:

It's a good thing [using Bahdini variety in the schools], because it's easier for the children to use their own mother tongue, they understand it, and they will have no difficulties. However if they use Sorani it will be very difficult for them, because it's strange for them and they will have no mode to learn. (3k: L. 72)

Participant 4K, a medical student at the University of Duhok, commented on using Bahdini at the schools, "I find that is good, because it's the mother tongue of the people and they understand it very well. When they go to school or to the university, it will be much easier for them" (L.59). Participant 4K, like participant 3K, emphasized the importance of the issue of mother tongue, saying, "All people understand it without difficulty and the language is perfect" (L.62).

Participant 7K also confirmed the importance of mother tongue

It depends on what the people think. But I think that Kurdish is our mother tongue and it should be cultivated and developed like all languages of the world. We as a nation should use our mother tongue; it's important for us. (7K: L.75)

The participant says Kurdish is our mother tongue and not Bahdini, because the question was 'how does she think if the government decides to make English the language of instruction'. Therefore, instead of saying Sorani and Bahdini are our mother tongue she said Kurdish is our mother tongue to include both varieties. She links between the concept of nation state and language.

When I asked participant 10A about the current situation of using Bahdini as a language of instruction, she said:

Frankly I am very pleased with that. Everything becomes easier. Bahdini is the mother tongue of the pupils; therefore they will not have any more problems with understanding the subjects. They will get the information without thinking first to understand the language. Thus, I consider it as a very good thing and hope that it continues this way. It's the mother tongue of the pupils so they will understand it quicker than before. (10A: L.56)

The participant felt relief after using Bahdini as the language of instruction in Duhok, because Bahdini is the mother tongue of the pupils. She meant that the

pupils do not need to think about the meaning of the vocabularies anymore. The pupils will understand the content of textbooks without looking for the meaning of the vocabularies. It will accelerate the process of learning.

Participant 11K is a teacher at the University of Duhok, and described the feelings of people after changing the language of instruction to Bahdini (Kurmanji):

It was very easy to understand; it was our language we had no difficulties at all with Bahdini. With Sorani we also didn't have many difficulties but it became much easier for us when the language of instruction was changed to Bahdini. It is our mother tongue. (11K: L. 55)

The participant said that although they had no difficulties with Sorani, using Bahdini made learning much easier because it is their mother tongue. The participant stressed the issue of mother tongue and thought that Bahdini speakers feel happy with this change. He described the situation after changing the language of instruction into Bahdini:

The people were glad with that change, because it is the mother tongue of the people. Before that the people were always complaining and asking "Why do we use Sorani as the language of instruction and the people in the Sorani region do not use our dialect?" And now this problem is solved and pupils go to school without having language difficulties. (L.60)

The participant referred to an interesting point, that of Bahdini pupils previously complaining about the use of Sorani and asking why Sorani speakers do not use Bahdini. This indicates that mother tongue is important for Bahdini speakers when selecting a language for instruction.

Participant 12K, a journalist and native Sorani speaker who lives in Duhok for a long time and speaks both dialects, responded to my question on his thoughts on the possibility that Sorani be a standard language once again: "This is a very sensitive issue; I want to have a language which is mother tongue and a Kurdish language. I think we should have a language that people of all regions understand," (L.65). This participant refers to three important points: mother tongue, Kurdish language, and a language that people of all regions can

understand. He thinks that standard language selection should take into consideration all three points.

Participant 15A referred to another aspect of the importance of mother tongue. He considered that using Sorani in the Bahdini region as the language of instruction had negatively influenced their examinations grades. It was to the advantage of Sorani pupils, because it was their mother language, not Bahdini:

Of course there is a difference. Using Sorani has also negatively influenced our grades in exams, because using Sorani made exams easier for them than for us. They used their own mother tongue, but for us it was difficult to use Sorani in the exams, they were not in our mother tongue. (15A:L.44)

Furthermore, the participant added:

Everyone wants to use their own mother tongue in schools. My respect to Sorani, but everyone feels comfortable when using his/her own language. Sorani speakers can have their language and we use ours. (15A:L.71)

The participant favored the use of mother tongue, and thought that Sorani can also use theirs.

Participant 17A thought that using mother tongue from the early years of school makes learning easier: “I think it’s easier if one uses mother tongue at school from the very beginning...” (L: 30). He continues, “Of course using mother tongue is the best”(L: 32).

Participant 18A, a retired teacher in Duhok, also described the change of language to Bahdini as “a good step”, because a lot of the Bahdini inhabitants cannot understand Sorani. She described the change “as a very good thing”, because children will learn in their mother tongue and the results will be much better:

..., changing to Bahdini is a very good step, because a lot of the inhabitants of our area can’t speak two words in Sorani. Therefore, this is a very good thing, so the children begin learning in their own mother tongue, and the results will be 100% better than

learning in another dialect, because they have no knowledge of that dialect. (18A: L.72)

This participant mentioned that the children have no knowledge of that dialect [Sorani] because Sorani is not their mother tongue. Actually, language acquisition theories have demonstrated that the mother tongue plays an important role when learning a second language (Dirim, Hauenschild, & Lütje-Klose 2008:12); therefore, promoting the first language leads to improved acquisition of the second language. In the USA, for example, studies have shown that applying the method of “Two-way Immersion-Models” of the language, which means the use of the language of the majority and minority together for long periods of time in schools leads to obtaining better results (Ibid: 12).

4.4.6 Summary to the ideologies behind refusing Sorani

In summary, the above mentioned ideologies demonstrate the following points:

- Constructions of linguistic differences seem to play a superior role in comparison to other ideologies in refusing Sorani variety to be the language of instruction for the Bahdini speakers (see 4.4.2). Consequently, it is considered to be the main obstacle in the way of selecting Sorani to be the standard language (see chart 1). This argument represents the opinions of both groups; those who had Sorani as the language of instruction as well as those who had Arabic.
- The ideology of being distinctive social group also plays a considerable role in refusing Sorani variety to be the language of instruction for the Bahdini schools. The participants refer to varieties of social settings which make them preferring to use Bahdini variety at their schools instead of Sorani. Arguments like majority and minority, Sorani seems to be strange, linking the space with used language, linking the issue of developing themselves and language, better understanding the curricula when using Bahdini as the language of instruction, using a third language like English sometimes when speaking to Sorani speakers, etc. These ideologies are signals to recognize them as a distinctive social group.

- Construction of “otherness” and competing group is another ideology which shows how the participants maintain their own variety by refusing to use Sorani and preferring to use Bahdini. The Participants of this study claim that Sorani speakers do not like to use Bahdini, consequently, the Bahdini speakers also express their desire to use Bahdini. The participants claim that previously Arabic was imposed on them and later Sorani, therefore, they insist to keep their own variety as the language of instruction.
- Mother tongue is also considered by the participant to be important and should be taken into consideration. Participants thinks that using mother tongue in schools accelerates the process of learning and makes it easier for the children,
- If we arrange the above mentioned ideologies according to their importance to Bahdini speakers, we will have the following sequence:
 1. Linguistic differences
 2. Distinct social group
 3. Otherness
 4. Mother tongue

Participants	11	19K							
	10	14K							
	9	13K							
	8	12K		16K					
	7	11K	20A	13K					
	6	9K	18A	8K		16K			
	5	8K	17A	6K		8K		12K	20A
	4	7K	15A	4K		7K	15A	11K	18A
	3	4K	10A	3K	20A	6K	13A	7K	17A
	2	3K	6A	2K	15A	3K	10A	4K	15A
	1	1K	5A	1K	5A	2K	5A	3K	10A
Language of instruction	Kurd	Arab	Kurd	Arab	Kurd	Arab	Kurd	Arab	
Ideologies	Linguistic differences		Distinct social group		otherness		Mother tongue		

Figure 7: Shows the degree of the important of ideologies which make the Bahdini speakers refuse to select Sorani as the language of instruction.

4.5 Classification of motifs and reasons behind preferring the use of the Latin alphabet over the Perso-Arabic alphabet

The aim of the following analysis is to classify and show which factors made participants prefer using the Latin alphabet rather than the Perso-Arabic.

Participant 1K said that she wished to use the Latin alphabet from the beginning of her studies because she believes it is much clearer than the Arabic alphabet. The participant explained her point of view towards the Latin alphabet as:

I liked using the Latin alphabet very much from the beginning, because it is more obvious than the Arabic alphabet. And a lot of my friends use the Latin alphabet in their correspondence when writing SMS or through Facebook, and this indicates that they want to use the Latin alphabet rather than the Arabic alphabet. (1K: L.144)

The participant considered the use of the Latin alphabet in SMS and Facebook as signaling the desire of the people to use the Latin alphabet rather than the Perso-Arabic.

Participant 4K related the issue of preferring the use of the Latin alphabet to ease in writing, saying, “I would prefer the Latin-based alphabet, because it is easier to use than the Arabic one” (4K: L.71). The participant also said, “Because we know the English alphabet already and we study English that is why it [using the Latin alphabet] will be better for us” (4K: L.73). He justified his point of view by referring to their knowledge of the English alphabet, because English uses the Latin alphabet.

Participant 5A, just like 4K, related selecting the Latin alphabet to its easiness and consistency with the Kurdish writing system: “In fact, using the Latin alphabet is better than using the Arabic-based alphabet, because the Latin alphabet is easier and matches the Kurdish language” (5A:L.115).

Participant 6K, just like 4K and 5A, said that he prefers using the Latin alphabet “because the Latin alphabet is easier than Arabic scripts and matches our language better” (6K: L.70).

Participant 8K had the same opinion as the above-mentioned participants, but added that when using the Perso-Arabic alphabet there is a big “variation in the way of writing”, adding: “yes, when we use the Arabic-based alphabet there is a huge variation in the way of writing, but the Latin alphabet doesn’t accept that, it matches the Kurdish language better” (8K: L.67). What the participant meant by variation is the fact that there is no uniformity of writing when using the Perso-Arabic alphabet. The same words can be written in different ways, which is not the case with the Latin alphabet.

The interviews in this study have shown that most of the reasons given by participants for preferring the Latin alphabet were related to language ideologies rather than linguistics. Participant 2K explained the reason why she preferred Latin over Perso-Arabic as:

Because I was interested in languages since my childhood, now I can speak six languages. One of them is Turkish. The Kurdish Latin alphabet is very similar to the Turkish one, and because I can speak and write Turkish, I have no difficulty with using the Latin alphabet for Kurdish. I speak other languages also like Hindi and few European languages. This enables me to understand and use the Latin alphabet very well. Moreover, we also learned at the university and in secondary school how to use the Latin alphabet. We have read Kurdish Latin newspapers and magazines and we benefited from them. (2K: L.94)

The participant referred to her knowledge of other languages and to the similarity between the Kurdish Latin alphabet and the Turkish alphabet in order to show that Kurdish is also a distinctive language; it is not Arabic.

Participant 3K said, “Yes I have, and I prefer using the Latin alphabet, because it is international and easier for us to be use” (3K: L.61). The concept of “international” represents an ideology of better status and power.

Participant 6K also preferred the Latin alphabet, saying,

I think we should have used the Latin alphabet from primary school, but unfortunately we did not. It would have been good if

they taught us from primary school how to use this alphabet. (6K: L.66)

She added, "...using the Latin alphabet gives us the feeling that we write in our language, but using the Arabic alphabet does not give us that feeling" (6K: L.70). She associates between the used Perso-Arabic alphabet and the Arabic language, therefore using this alphabet makes her feeling as if writing in Arabic. This is another clear case related to "otherness" language ideology.

Participant 10A, as a response to my question of what she would think if the schools were to use the Latin alphabet instead of the Perso-Arabic one, answered:

That will be a very good thing if they [the Kurdish authorities] do that, because using the Latin alphabet matches the Kurdish language and makes the language easier. It makes the process of learning English, which is an international language, also much easier. The other alphabet is Arabic; it is not Kurdish. (10A:L. 102)

The participant thinks that using the Latin alphabet makes writing Kurdish easier, but at the same time she links the use of the Latin alphabet and learning English, which is an international language. This sentence implies an ideology of power. This means that English is an international language and uses the Latin alphabet, and thus the Latin alphabet will improve the status of Kurdish internationally. The participant also pinpointed that the recently-used alphabet is Arabic and not Kurdish. This explanation embodies an ideology of the necessity of recognizing the identity of the Kurdish language.

Participant 12K, in connection to the use of the Latin alphabet, said, "...to me it is very important to use the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic one. Now the majority of our intellectuals use the Latin alphabet for their writing" (12K: L.67). This also reflects an ideology of prestige. The participant relates the use of the Latin alphabet to it being used by intellectuals and this embodies a prestigious concept aiming to improve the status of the Kurdish language.

Participant 13K referred to some clear cases of language ideologies as reasons that made him prefer the use of the Latin alphabet:

These letters are deficient for writing Kurdish, but many people consider them to be the letters that were used in the holy Quran. I have respect for Islam and the Quran, but the Kurds should think academically and linguistically by taking the national interests of the Kurds into consideration. If we use the Latin alphabet also for Sorani dialect, this makes us [not only] closer to European culture and to the industrial countries, but also makes us closer to the world of the computer. I find it's good that the "Kurd sat TV" from the very beginning used the Latin alphabet. The Latin alphabet will serve the Kurdish nation and nationality better. This alphabet links us to European countries, while the Arabic alphabet limits our international relations. (13K: L77)

The participant stressed the issue of "national interest" when referring to the religion of Islam. The participant thinks that using the Latin alphabet makes the Kurds closer to European culture, but also to the world of computers. He also thinks that it makes the Kurds closer to European countries and cultures. All of these reasons point to the ideology of better status, recognition and power.

The interviewee 17A also confirmed the aspect of Kurdish identity. He said:

We should have used the Latin alphabet from the beginning. That would be the best thing for the Kurdish language, because that is the basis of the Kurdish language. The Latin alphabet is the correct one that should be used for Bahdini; the Arabic-Persian based alphabet is not suitable for Bahdini Kurdish. I hope that our linguists undertake this responsibility in the future and establish the Latin alphabet to be used in our region and in all of Kurdistan. (17A:L.81)

He considered the Latin alphabet as the basis of the Kurdish language; therefore, it is an issue for linguists to solve. When the writing system is related to the identity of the Kurds, then the Latin alphabet becomes a means of unifying Kurdistan. This is an ideology of power and better status.

Participant 18A explained her opinion of using the Latin alphabet:

In my opinion, I have nothing to do with what the others think, but I think it's a very good thing to use the Latin alphabet, because people all over the world can read it— people from everywhere in Germany, Holland, Sweden or in America. Of course they will not understand it, but at least they will be able to read it. In comparison to the recently-used alphabet, only Kurds can read it, nobody else, even the Arabs can't read it. This alphabet is also easier for learning Kurdish, and so it is. (18A:L.90)

The participant said that using the Latin alphabet is a good thing, because people from other European nationalities will then be able to read Kurdish; the currently-used alphabet can be read only by Kurds, even Arabs cannot read them, because they have been changed to match the Kurdish phonological system. This explanation also represents a language ideology that aims to improve the status of Kurdish among other languages.

Participant 19K responded to my question in relation to using the Latin alphabet in this way: “That would be good, because it would bring both dialects a bit closer to each other, but I think it would be a bit difficult for Sorani speakers” (19K:L.74). The idea that using the Latin alphabet will bring the varieties closer to each other is an ideology of power and better status. Furthermore, the participant emphasizes that Kurdish writing system differs from Arabic, thus he finds no reason that makes the Kurds use Arabic alphabet. Instead, he prefers to use Latin alphabet because it is used also by European languages like German, French or English and this is an ideological reason:

I am not an expert in the field of linguistics, but I think it would be better to use the Latin alphabet, because a lot of languages use it. Because our language differs from Arabic, and there are some Kurdish sounds that don't exist in the Arabic language, we have changed some Arabic letters and use them, so it's an Arabic Kurdish and not a Kurdish alphabet. In the future it is better if we use the Latin alphabet; it helps our children, instead of learning two different alphabets. Normally, they learn another foreign language like English, German or French, and these languages use the Latin alphabet too. Therefore, it is better to learn the Latin alphabet from the very beginning. It will be easier also to learn other languages. (20A:L. 80)

The following participants think it better to use the Latin alphabet instead of Perso-Arabic but they did not give any reason for their opinions.

Participant 9K said, “Despite the fact that we have learned the Arabic alphabet, I think it is very good to change it to the Latin alphabet” (9K: L. 100). He supports the idea of using the Latin alphabet even though Kurdish has already used Perso-Arabic, but he did not give any specific reason.

Participant 11K had the same position, saying, “I think it will be a good thing, especially if they begin from the first grade, because all things which pupils learn from the beginning of primary school will be learned very well and will be successful” (11k: L.89).

Participant 15A considers the Latin alphabet easier than the Perso-Arabic one, but at the same time is the only one who thinks that since the Kurds have no problems with using the Perso-Arabic alphabet, it is better if they continue using it. “In fact the Latin alphabet is easier and might be better for Kurdish, but I think because we had already used and learned the Arabic based alphabet and we have no problem in using it, therefore it’s better if we keep on using it” (15K: 102).

4.5.1 Summary to the Ideologies which make the Bahdini speaker prefer Latin alphabet

The majority of the participants found using the Latin alphabet better than using the Perso-Arabic one. The ideologies which made the participant prefer the Latin alphabet was obvious and explicit for the reader and could be summarized in the following points:

- It is more obvious and easier than Perso-Arabic to use
- Its consistency with Kurdish written system
- Less variation in writing when using Latin alphabet
- Similarity between the Latin alphabet and the alphabet of European languages
- The feeling that Perso-Arabic alphabet is not Kurdish
- The Latin alphabet is international and modern
- The Latin alphabet is prestigious used by intellectuals
- The Latin alphabet is used in modern communication like internet
- Using Latin alphabet makes European be able to read Kurdish
- When writing system will be linked to the Kurdish identity, then Latin alphabet can be a means for unifying Kurdistan

All those above mentioned statement contain ideologies denote the demand of recognition of being other nation with different culture and language than Arabs. They also represent the ideology of better status and power. Furthermore, they

embody the ideology of opened to the other developed international and European cultures.

4.6 Analysis of understanding Sorani by Bahdini

One of the main arguments that motivated the Bahdini speakers to refuse replacing Bahdini by Sorani as the language of instruction was the major linguistic differences between the varieties that make Sorani difficult for Bahdini speakers to understand well. Therefore collecting data on this topic was important. One of the questions of the interview aimed to find out the gradation of understanding of Sorani by Bahdini speakers. Although the degree of understanding Sorani in the percentages given by the participants is a relatively subjective issue, it is not measured through linguistic test; it gives an impression of how the participants evaluate their own knowledge of Sorani. Despite that, I found it necessary to know their estimated level of knowledge of Sorani. The answers were given in percentage form and then put into two charts; one for those who had Sorani as the language of instruction and one for those who had Arabic. (See Tables 11 and 12) If we look at both tables, we come to the following conclusions:

1. The lowest estimated percentage of understanding Sorani among this group of participants was 40% and the highest percentage was 99%. This means there is an average of about 74% in understanding Sorani; in other words that most participants understood about 74% of spoken and written Sorani.
2. The lowest estimated percentage of understanding Sorani among the next group who had Arabic as the language of instruction was 10% and the highest percentage was 90%. This means there is an average of about 61% in understanding Sorani in this group.
3. Although the first group had Sorani as the language of instruction, there is not a significant difference between them and the group that was taught in Arabic.

Table 11: percentage of understanding Sorani by participants had Sorani as the language of instruction.

	Participant	Line	Gender	Age	Degree of understanding	Profession/academic level	Mother tongue	Language of instruction
1	1K		F	24	40-75 %	B.A.	Bah.	Sor.
2	2K		F	20	75%	Student	Bah.	Sor.
3	3K		M	25	80%	BA	Bah.	Sor.
4	4K		M	23	70%	Student	Bah.	Sor.
5	6K		F	24	80-85%	BA	Bah.	Sor.
6	7K		F	24	70%	BA	Bah.	Sor.
7	8K		F	21	70-75%	Student	Bah.	Sor.
9	11K		M	27	85%	Teacher	Bah.	Sor.
11	13K		M	51	99%	Poet	Bah.	Sor.
12	14K		M	49	80%	BA	Bah.	Sor.
13	16K		M	20	50%	Student	Bah.	Sor.
14	19K		M	52	95%	BA	Bah.	Sor.

Bah.: Bahdini Sor.: Sorani

Table 12: percentage of understanding Sorani by participants had Arabic as the language of instruction

	Participant	line	Gender	Age	Degree of understanding Sorani	Profession/Academic level	Mother language	Language of Instruction
1	5A		M	54	90%	Teacher	Bahdini	Arabic
2	10A		F	36	10%	Teacher	Bahdini	Arabic
3	15A		M	30	70%	Teacher	Bahdini	Arabic
4	17A		M	50	75-85%	Shopkeeper	Bahdini	Arabic
5	18A		F	49	60-65%	Teacher	Bahdini	Arabic
6	20A		M	52	65-70%	Businessman	Bahdini	Arabic

Chapter 5: Discussion, conclusions and desiderata

The main target of this study was to find answers to the following research questions mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation. The main question was:

Is the current implementation of two varieties of Kurdish as official languages in Iraqi Kurdistan an adequate solution? Then the question was followed by three sub questions:

- To what extent does this solution find acceptance among Kurdish speakers, within the scientific community, and at the political level?
- Do the differences between the two varieties of Kurdish present an obstacle to the possibility of establishing a unified language in the long term perspective?
- Which writing system is appropriate and can find acceptance among Kurdish speakers in Iraq?

In the second chapter, within a theoretical framework, I revealed the historical background of the development of the status of the Kurdish language. In Chapter 3, I reviewed the available studies on the Kurdish language and its unification, both on an individual as well as on socio-political initiatives. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated the method of selecting participants, conducting interviews in January, 2013 in Duhok, Iraqi Kurdistan, data collection, method of content analysis, and pinpointed first outcomes. In analyzed this chapter I will discuss the results of this study to show in how far it gives answers to the research questions. I will also compare the results of my study to other related studies and explain what new insights this study can add to the currently available knowledge. This chapter also explains the limitations of this study and recommends further investigations.

5.1 The result regarding the main research question

The study found that, according to the participants, the current implementation of two varieties of Kurdish as official languages is the preferred solution for Bahdini speakers. This means that the current use of two varieties of Kurdish in Iraqi Kurdistan as the languages of instruction and official languages of administration should continue. Bahdini (Kurmanji) should be used in Duhok province and in the areas surrounding Mosul province, and Sorani in the provinces of Suliamaniya and Erbil.

The outcomes of the content analysis in Chapter 4 of this study showed a clear case of refusal by Bahdini speakers to return to the use of Sorani variety as a language of instruction. Consequently, it was important to find out which factors made the participants prefer the use of Bahdini and refuse Sorani. After examining the arguments given by the participants, the following arguments seemed to play a considerable role. The factors are put in sequence according to their importance to the participants below (compare to Chart 1:118).

- Linguistic differences
- Distinct social group
- Otherness
- Mother tongue

These four factors were put in the form of a chart (see chart 1, chapter 4). The chart shows that linguistic reasons related to linguistic differences supersede other arguments. One can see that 19 of the 20 participants gave linguistic reasons for preferring Bahdini and refusing Sorani. Among these nineteen participants there, were twelve who had had Kurdish as the language of instruction and seven who had had Arabic when they were at school.

Participants mainly mentioned the difficulty in understanding Sorani as an argument when speaking about linguistic differences. This indicates that the varieties are not always experienced as mutually intelligible. Especially people who had no previous contact with Sorani speakers pointed out that they had difficulties understanding it. Thus, for Bahdini pupils in elementary school, using

Sorani feels like learning a foreign language, and this was confirmed by the majority of participants. Sorani and Bahdini have different vocabularies, grammars, and, to a certain degree, phonological differences, as well (see chapter 3).

Regarding the problem of understanding Sorani (see chapter 4, table 11 and 12), both tables show the estimated percentage of understanding Sorani by both participant groups. The estimated percentage of average understanding of both groups was not very different. While the average level of understanding by those who had had Sorani in school was 74%, with those who had Arabic it was 61%. This indicates that although one group had had Sorani as their language of instruction for twelve years and the other group had Arabic as their language of instruction, we see there is no big difference between them in understanding Sorani. Thus, one can conclude that Sorani cannot be an alternative to the mother tongue for Bahdini speakers.

The next important argument for refusing Sorani was the feeling of being distinctive. This argument of being a distinctive group as a reason for refusing to use Sorani once again as the language of instruction was mentioned a bit less than the linguistic arguments. However, these mind sets still played a considerable role. Bahdini speakers felt ignored and neglected during the whole period of the previous Arabic regimes, before the establishment of the Kurdish Regional Government. Sorani was used in Bahdini schools during the 1970s, but the majority of Bahdini participants feel that it was imposed on them, and they had no option of selecting their own variety.

There were many ideologies put forth by participants, including an identification with the variety spoken by the majority. Bahdini speakers in Iraqi Kurdistan are part of the majority speakers of Kurmanji in all parts of Kurdistan, forming about 75% of Kurdish speakers. It is true that Sorani speakers number more than Bahdini speakers in Iraqi Kurdistan, but they form a minority in comparison to the total number of Kurmanji speakers in the whole of Kurdistan.

Maintaining Bahdini as a language was another reason that impelled the Bahdini speakers to prefer using their own variety. Bahdini speakers pointed out in the interviews that they think Sorani speakers do not want to speak Bahdini even if they can. Therefore, Bahdini speakers express the need to make a special effort to preserve their variety. They think using Sorani might lead to the loss of Bahdini. The issue of mother tongue is also important to Bahdini speakers. They believe using one's mother tongue as the language of instruction makes learning much easier. The participants revealed their own experiences when they were in school and how difficult it was for them to speak and understand Sorani. But, at the same time, the participants showed their readiness to learn Sorani. They were not against having one Sorani subject at school to become acquainted with it.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, this is the first empirical study investigating the issue of language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan. There are some studies on the situation of the Kurdish language, but none of them investigated the problem empirically. These studies mentioned the problem of the lack of a unified Kurdish language and suggested solutions. Their proposed solutions, however, were based purely on theoretical reasons and individual evaluations by the researchers. Consequently, there is variation among Kurdish linguists in this concern.

Some linguists, such as Rasul, think that Sorani should be the basis of a unified Kurdish language for all of the Kurds in Kurdistan. Rasul argues that Sorani has a long history in the field of education and publication but ignores the ideological and linguistic factors as perceived by the speakers. Bahdini speakers did not have the opportunity to use their language, because (as I mentioned in the first chapter) the first Iraqi government and the British mandate promoted Sorani as the official Kurdish language in the areas where the majority of the inhabitants were Kurds. The government did not ask Kurdish intellectuals for their input.

Rasul suggests the model proposed by Haugen (1966) for standardizing languages. However, as this study shows, Bahdini speakers do not accept Sorani variety as the standard. Thus, one can say that the four steps proposed by Haugen (1966), (1) selection, (2) codification, (3) implementation, and (4) elaboration,

cannot be universally applied. A certain variety should first find acceptance by the people in order for it to be selected, and not vice versa.

While there is a discrepancy between the results of this study and the solution proposed by Rasul, we find that this study does support the concept advanced by Hassanpour. In his study, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985*, Hassanpour (1992) considers Kurdish to be a language with two standard varieties. Hassanpour states:

Although many Sorani speakers consider their norm to be the standard language, the data presented in this study suggests that, like Armenian, Norwegian, Albanian and a number of other languages, Kurdish must be considered a bi-standard language (166).

Havrest (1998) acknowledges, as well, that Bahdini (Kurmanji) is also standardized but the difference between his concept and that of Hassanpour is that Havrest suggests Sorani be made the standard for Iraqi Kurds and Kurmanji the standard for the Kurds in Turkey. Havrest (1998: 266) says:

Das dritte Modell ist bereits Realität; es besteht darin, verschiedene, aber mindestens zwei Varietäten – Kurmanji in Nord Kurdistan und Mittelkurdisch [Sorani] in Zentralkurdistan- als Standard zuzulassen.

Nebez (1976) thinks that it is possible to establish a unified language for Kurds by creating a new variety mainly from Sorani and Kurmanji. Such a hypothesis can be answered by qualitative research, because it involves the grammar, phonology, and vocabulary of both varieties. In reference to that, however, some participants criticized the language of school textbooks before adopting Bahdini, which was an attempt to create a mixed language.

We see in the language conferences held that the Conference of Erivan in 1934 selected Kurmanji as the standard language while the Congress of Shaqlawa in 1959 selected Sorani. The Conference of Diyarbakir of 2012 did not prefer any variety, demanding instead that both dialects should be standardized (see Chapter 3).

The Congress of Erbil in 2011 also did not prefer one of the Kurdish varieties over the other and proposed that both alphabets should be used. Generally, the majority of the attempts are devoted to standardizing both varieties.

5.1.1 The result regarding the first sub-research question

The results of this study showed that all participants, the majority of whom were intellectuals and students, thought that using both varieties, Sorani in Erbil and Suliamaniya and Bahdini in Duhok and the surrounding area, to be the correct solution for speakers of both varieties. They related the case of using Bahdini with the issue of mother tongue. For the majority of the participants, Sorani was experienced as a foreign language. They are pleased that the pupils in elementary school will not have a problem understanding the textbooks since they are now in Bahdini. In his study, Havrest (1998) also confirmed that Bahdini speakers do not accept using Sorani as the standard language.

It is interesting to note that in April 2008 a number of Sorani intellectuals sent a petition to the presidency of the Kurdistan Regional Government demanding the adoption of Sorani variety as the standard language for Iraqi Kurdistan. This resulted in large protests by the Bahdini intellectuals, who responded by sending their own petition to the presidency of the KRG contradicting the claim made by those Sorani intellectuals (see chapter 2:49). In their petition, the Bahdini intellectuals demanded of the Kurdish governments that it grant the Bahdini variety equal status with Sorani (Ibid).

5.1.2 The result regarding the second sub-research question

The second sub-research question asks whether the differences between the two varieties present an obstacle to the possibility of establishing a unified language in the long term.

The results of this study show that there are a large number of linguistic differences between the varieties. The differences are grammatical, lexical, and, to some extent, phonological. These linguistic differences form a real obstacle to establishing a unified Kurdish language. This was confirmed on both levels;

empirically, through the data collected from the participants, as well as theoretically, as explained in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

The participants considered Sorani to be difficult for Bahdini speakers because of its differences in grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. Grammatically, there are differences on the level of verb conjugation and gender. Study participants repeatedly confirmed difficulties due to these differences. It is difficult to establish a unified language from two varieties with differences in grammars. As I have explained in Chapter 3, verb conjugation in Sorani is not the same as in Bahdini. Therefore, any attempt to establish a unified Kurdish language must take into consideration which grammar of the two should be used. This will present a significant challenge because acceptance of one variety by both Bahdini and Sorani speakers will not be easy. An additional problem is gender. Bahdini has two genders, masculine and feminine, while Sorani has none.

Some linguists, such as Nebez and Kurdeov, think it possible to establish a unified Kurdish language by mixing both main varieties, but that is difficult to do since it might create a new variety of Kurdish. The participants referred to such attempts when they described the language of instruction used before implementing Bahdini variety as a mixed language—as being neither Sorani nor Bahdini. The Bahdini speakers complained about that variety, and the Kurdish government changed it to Bahdini in 2003.

5.1.3 The result regarding the third sub-research question

The results of this qualitative study clearly show that the interviewed Bahdini speakers prefer to use the Latin alphabet instead of the currently-used Perso-Arabic. If we read the arguments given by the participants for preferring to use the Latin alphabet rather than the Perso-Arabic one in chapter 4, we find that there are many ideological and linguistic reasons. However, as opposed to the reasons behind refusing Sorani, here the linguistic factors seemed to be less important in comparison to the ideological factors. Among all participants, only one participant said it would be better to keep the Perso-Arabic alphabet, although she said that the Latin alphabet is easier to use than the Perso-Arabic one. The participant

backed her argument for using the Perso-Arabic alphabet by saying, “because we have already learned them.”

Regarding the other studies, Nebez (1976: 87), in his study, *Towards a unified Kurdish language*, confirms that the Latin alphabet is the proper one for the Kurdish writing system; however, he demands that the current Latin alphabet should be developed.

Yasin (2007:388), in his book, *The Kurdish Language and its Grammar*, describes the Latin alphabet as more accurate when used in Kurdish writing.

Berwary (2011: 344), in his research paper, *Project of unification of the Kurdish Language*, proposes the use of the Latin alphabet by all Kurdish varieties, because this alphabet would serve the development of science in Kurdistan.

Havrest (1998), as well, believes that it is better for the Kurds to use the Latin alphabet; however, he thinks that the recently-used Latin alphabet put forward by Bedirkhan (1930) is an imitation of the currently-used Turkish alphabet and should not be used. Therefore, he proposes establishing a new Latin alphabet for Kurdish.

In the resolution of the Congress of Erbil of 2011, the congress agreed on the necessity of using both alphabets. The Conference of Diyarbakir in 2012 also found that both alphabets should be used; however, the conference emphasized the necessity of working hard to use one alphabet for all Kurds as a first step towards language standardization.

As I mentioned in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, neither alphabet is ideal. Both the Latin and Perso-Arabic alphabets need changes, but linguistically the Latin alphabet is more accurate than the Perso Arabic one, because the later does not have short vowels such /i/. Therefore, they disappear when using it. Although the Perso-Arabic alphabet has been used for the language of instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1922, it still has a lot of deficiencies

5.2 Limitations of this study

This study has focused mainly on Bahdini speakers, because some intellectuals demand the use of Sorani as a unified Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan. Therefore, it was important to find out how Bahdini speakers feel about the possible return of Sorani after ten years of Bahdini as the language of instruction. My conclusion after performing this study is that it could have been better had I also tried to find out how Sorani speakers feel about using the Latin alphabet versus the Perso-Arabic one.

5.3 Research contribution

The results of this study contribute to the knowledge of other studies in the following ways.

- The majority of Bahdini speakers who participated in the study refuse to give up their own Bahdini variety in favor of Sorani.
- Establishing a unified Kurdish language is not a task only for linguists. There are other factors that play important roles when deciding to establish a unified language for all Kurds. Language ideologies play a significant role and should be taken into consideration. A unified Kurdish language cannot be realized through administrative regulations or political decisions alone.
- Although Sorani and Bahdini are considered by the majority of Kurdish linguists as two varieties (dialects), they are not always mutually intelligible by all speakers.
- Sorani cannot be considered a mother tongue of Bahdini speakers, because, as the results of this study show, those interviewed estimate the amount of Sorani understood by Bahdini speakers who had had Sorani as their language of instruction to be, on average, not over 74%, and those who had had Arabic, at 61%. This means that Bahdini speakers will be at a disadvantage compared to Sorani speakers, who would be using their own mother tongue.

5.4 Recommendations for further studies

This study's limitation to Bahdini speakers necessitates further studies in the Sorani provinces to investigate the following issues from the Sorani speakers' points of view.

- How do Sorani speakers feel about using two varieties of Kurdish?
- Which alphabet do Sorani speakers prefer?
- Would Sorani speakers accept Bahdini as the language of instruction and the standard language for all Kurds?

5.5 Future Perspectives

In connection with the current situation of the Kurdish language and its future perspectives in southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan), I would like to advance some proposals that might be useful were they to be considered with regard to the future of language of instruction. These proposals include language policy, and linguistic and education strategies.

First of all, one should know that there is no single ready-made recipe for a good language policy, but rather it varies from one country to the next. In Iraqi Kurdistan we have two main varieties of the Kurdish language, Sorani, and Bahdini, and other sub-varieties. Both main varieties have their own literary heritage and thousands of books, magazines, and other publications.

Currently, the Kurdish government implements a policy characterized by the equal promotion of both varieties. Both varieties are recognized and used in official institutions, and in mass media like TV, radio, and print.

I consider the following points to be of importance.

The Kurdish government and the concerned institution should follow a language policy focused on bring both varieties closer to each other; this could be achieved through following measures:

1. Adaptation of the Latin alphabet as the writing system for both varieties instead of the currently used Perso-Arabic alphabet. Using this alphabet will give the speakers of both varieties the impression of having an alphabet that matches the Kurdish sound system and the feeling of having their own alphabet.

However, the *Kurdish Language Academy* should make a great effort to undertake the necessary changes to the existing alphabet to make it suitable for use with both varieties. And here I would like to add that it is not necessary for every phoneme to have its own distinctive letter, because it complicates the writing system, and, as we know, variations in the pronunciation of many phonemes exist in many languages; for example, in English we have one [L] whether dark [L} in long or light [L] in light. Therefore, there is no need for some Kurdish linguists to try to find a symbol for each shift in pronunciation of a given phoneme. This is a crucial issue and different language symposiums need to be organized to discuss it.

2. The K L A should avoid creating or translating new idioms linked to science, modern technology, computers, internet, social science, etc., and instead integrate the existing common European and international idioms into Kurdish language to be used by both varieties. Thus, words like, format, floppy, hard desk, opposition, reportage, and others, which have already found their place in the Kurdish language, should be accepted and need not be replaced by other, newly created words. Keeping the international idioms and vocabularies increase the degree of similarity of both varieties and make studying at the universities easier for the students, since English is already the language of higher education at Iraqi Kurdistan's universities in all scientific branches, such as Medicine, Engineering, Biology, Mathematics, Physics, etc.

3. The schools of both the Bahdini as well as the Sorani regions should teach each other's variety as an independent subject from elementary to the end of secondary school.
 4. The K LA or any other authorized institution should undertake the process of coding the Kurdish vocabularies in both varieties. This can only be done by appointing qualified linguists with an excellent knowledge of the Kurdish language and its varieties. Coding must include both vocabularies and grammar.
 5. The school textbooks of both varieties should give priority to the vocabularies both varieties have in common.
 6. Working on a Kurdish-Kurdish academic dictionary for both varieties is very important.
 6. The Ministry of Education in Kurdistan should encourage teachers and pupils exchange between the two regions to make them more acquainted with each other's variety.
- The Kurdish mass media should play an important role in backing the language policy. This would tend to bring both varieties closer together and not vice versa.

At present, establishing one unified Kurdish language for the whole of Iraqi Kurdistan is not possible and presents a variety of challenges, but if the above mentioned steps were to be implemented, it is possible over time that both varieties will grow closer to each other and become mutually intelligible for all Kurdish speakers. It would then be possible for the Kurdish people to decide and select the one variety they want to use as the language of instruction.

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7. Appendix

The main questions of the interviews

1. Thank you for participating voluntarily in this interview, I am interested very much to hear about your life experience in connection to the Kurdish language. Please! Take time and tell me whatever you want to say from your childhood, at the primary school, during the secondary school and present time.
2. You have said that the teachers mediated the subjects to you; can you tell me how did the teacher do that? How could he/she explain them to you? What was his/her method?
3. When they were giving you texts in Sorani, were the words of the texts very different from Bahdini, your dialect?
4. How did you learn Arabic?
5. Did learning Sorani in the school make you speak Sorani fluently?
7. Why did you use Sorani Kurdish in secondary school and Arabic at the university, can you explain this to me?
9. How do you see the attempt of some intellectuals to change the language of instruction from Bahdini to Sorani again?
10. When some people speak Sorani in TV, how much percent do you understand?
11. What do you think if there will be referendum on selecting Arabic or Latin alphabet which alphabet do you think the people will select?
12. Do you think that Sorani and Bahdini share commonality in terms and vocabularies?

13. If you want to write something like your diaries, how do you write them?
14. You have talked about difficulties in Sorani dialect during your school times; could you tell me what kind of difficulties they were?
15. Can you tell me why the Bahdini speaker try to speak Sorani, but Sorani speakers do not try to do that?
16. What do you think about the Latin alphabet?
17. How do you see using Bahdini as the language of instruction in the schools of Duhok?
18. You had used Arabic and Sorani at the school; can you tell me something about that?
19. Do you have something to add?
20. You began to study in Arabic at the university, and you had learned speaking Arabic before that time, however it was slang Arabic, how did you manage to study in Arabic then?
21. If the pupil could not understand the meaning of some words, what did you do?
22. How could you overcome the difficulties of understanding things in Sorani?
23. Why do you think they behave like that?

Zusammenfassung

Eine große Herausforderung der kurdischen Regionalregierung im irakischen Kurdistan ist, dass es keine einheitliche Unterrichtssprache für das gesamte Bildungssystem gibt. Stattdessen werden zwei geografische Sprachvarietäten, Sorani und Bahdini (Kurmanji) als Unterrichtssprachen verwendet, die von ihren Sprechern in den jeweiligen Regionen gesprochen werden. Kurmanji spricht eine Mehrheit der Kurden in allen Teilen des geteilten Kurdistan, während Sorani von rund 25 % der kurdischen Sprecher in allen Teilen Kurdistan gesprochen wird.

Einige Intellektuelle unter den Sorani-Sprechern vertreten die Ansicht, dass Sorani als Unterrichtssprache von allen Kurden akzeptiert werden sollte, da, wie sie betonen, Sorani während der Zeitepoche des britischen Mandats im Irak in den 1920er Jahren als Unterrichtssprache gewählt wurde und für längere Zeit Unterrichtssprache in Sulaimaniya und einigen anderen Sorani-sprachigen Gebieten war, aber auch in der Region Bahdini für einige Jahre in den 1970er Jahren. Allerdings verwenden die Bahdini-Sprecher seit 2003 in den Schulen ihre eigene Sprache als Unterrichtssprache. Derzeit ist Bahdini in allen Grund- und Sekundarschulen die offizielle Unterrichtssprache.

Ziel der Studie war es, festzustellen, ob die derzeitige Sprachpolitik, die Implementierung von zwei Varietäten im irakischen Kurdistan, eine adäquate Lösung ist. Hierbei stellt sich die Frage, inwieweit und in welchem Umfang dies durch Bahdini-Intellektuelle und -Politiker akzeptiert wird. Ferner analysiert die Untersuchung, ob die sprachlichen Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Varietäten Hindernisse auf dem Weg zur Schaffung einer einheitlichen Sprache bilden. Schließlich wird analysiert, welches Alphabet von den intellektuellen Kurden eher akzeptiert werden könnte, das lateinische oder das auf dem persisch-arabischen basierende. Um aussagekräftige Ergebnisse zu erreichen, stützt sich die Studie auf theoretische Diskussionen und empirisches Material. Im theoretischen Teil wurden verfügbare Literatur, Forschungsergebnisse sowie aktuelle und historische Dokumente einbezogen. Der empirische Teil basiert auf einer vom Autor im irakischen Kurdistan durchgeführten qualitativen Studie (Interviews mit 20 Studenten und Intellektuellen).

Die Auswertung der Untersuchung hat gezeigt, dass Bahdini-Sprecher die Rückkehr zur Sorani-Varietät als Unterrichtssprache nicht akzeptieren. Die Teilnehmer der qualitativen Studie lehnten Sorani ab, weil sie die Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Varietäten in der Grammatik und dem Vokabular als zu groß erachteten. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass sprachliche und gesellschaftliche Ideologien eine wichtige Rolle in der Ablehnung einer Rückkehr zu Sorani spielen. Bei der Wahl des Alphabets bevorzugten die Teilnehmer den Gebrauch des lateinischen Alphabets. Das persisch-arabische hingegen fand kaum Befürworter. Auch hier spielten die genannten Ideologien eine wichtige Rolle.

Dem Forschungsthema dieser Arbeit entsprechend werden Vorschläge zur Angleichung beider Sprachvarietäten gegeben, deren Umsetzung zu Gunsten des gesamten Bildungssystems in der kurdischen Region sein werden.

Die vorliegende Arbeit enthält zusätzlich eine CD und die Transkription der durchgeführten Interviews auf Englisch sowie Tabellen mit der Inhaltsanalyse, die zusammen mit der gebundenen Druckversion abgegeben werden.

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Übersetzungen

“A Year in Hell”, a book by MahabdQaradgy, from Kurdish to English, published in Iraqi-Kurdistan

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