

Kurdish is one of the widely spoken languages in the Middle East. It is in the Indo-European family of languages. The land of the Kurds is called Kurdistan where faced divisions in history between newly formed states 'Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran'. As such, Kurdish language has been faced linguistic and remained as a not standardized language. Kurdish language is been a root for Kurdish nationalism, so it is played a fundamental role in the Kurdish nation-building process. After the 1991 uprisings in Iraq, Iraqi Kurds could build their autonomy region, then Kurdish regrow as a language of administration and education. However, the language still have some internal issues because of its various dialects and not having codified standard language. The two most widely spoken dialects of Kurdish are Central Kurmanji (Sorani) and Northern Kurmanji (Kurmanji). The Kurdistan Region's official languages for government purposes are Kurdish and Arabic. Furthermore, Kurdish has become the formal language in Syrian Kurdistan after the Syrian revolution, and it is currently studied as an optional module in Turkish Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan.



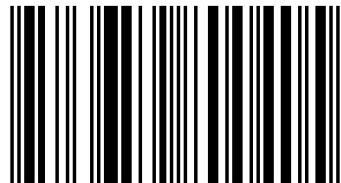
Hewa S. Khalid



Hewa S. Khalid Instructor in Koya University, Studied MA in Kurdish Studies from University of Exeter - Uk, and BA in Kurdish language and literature from Koya University - Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He works in the field of Kurdish Studies in particular Kurdish language, and he is currently PhD student in Dicle University - Turkey.

The Language and Politics of Iraqi Kurdistan

from the 1991 Uprising to the Consolidation of a Kurdish Regional Government Today



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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives of the research

This project has three main aims:-

Firstly, the project seeks to understand the relationship between Kurdish language and Kurdish nationalism since the 1991 uprising. This is because the 1991 uprising is a considerable and transformable point for Kurds in Iraq, and Kurdish language played a significant role to encourage Kurdish people to think differently with other Iraqis. Also, the project analyzes Kurdish language as a root for Kurdish nationalism, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Secondly, the impacts of the outcomes of the uprising on Kurdish language will be argued, Kurdish Civil War in Iraq in the 1990s and building Kurdistan Regional Government will be taken as examples. The effects of using Kurdish dialectical differences to gain more votes in the Iraqi Kurdistan elections on the Kurdish language standardization process will be another argument. Furthermore, it shows that Kurdish voters' views were strongly affected by their dialectical differences.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the project analyze that Kurdish language is multi-dialect language, which is because of some causes. However, not having a Kurdish standard language is partially because of not having language planning in Iraqi Kurdistan, and using Kurdish dialectical differences for political ends by Kurdish political parties. Also, the main suggestions for resolving Kurdish standard issue in Iraqi Kurdistan will be shown; their strengths and weaknesses will be discussed. Eight interviews among Kurdish lectures have been done. Moreover, public opinions about standardization issue will be presented by taking samples from both Duhok and Koya universities. Finally, I will suggest a possible solution to the Kurdish language standardization issue in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1.2.1.1 Research questions

The main question is that how have language and politics affected each other in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991?

Secondary questions:

Kurdish language is supposed to be one of the main roots of Kurdish nationalism, and there is a complex relationship between Kurdish language and politics. When this relationship is been highlighted, some secondary questions should be answered, which are mainly; First, what was the role of Kurdish language in the 1991 uprising? Second, how did the civil war affect language use and planning, and how have dialectical differences has had impact on political views? Third, what are the current governmental plans and public views on the issue of Kurdish language standardization in Iraqi Kurdistan?

1.3 Methodology

The research will utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods. It will elucidate the relationship between politics and language. I will present those theories and concepts that are, in my opinion, most interesting and significant for the purpose of this research, and some data will be displayed. Various examples will be taken:-

First, the role of language in the Kurdish nationalist uprising in 1991 will be examined by analysing those records that had a connection with the uprising and were broadcast on Dangi Gali Kurdistan Radio in March 1991. This is because the radio was chosen as a speaker for the 1991 uprising by Kurdish nationalist parties.

Second, the positive political effects on the Kurdish language, especially the role of the KRG and the Kurdistan Parliament, will be discussed.

Third, the negative political impacts 'the impacts of the civil war' on the language standardization process in Iraqi Kurdistan will be examined.

Fourth, the role of dialect differences in public political views will be observed by looking at the election results.

Finally, the debates over the Kurdish standard language will be discussed. Eight interviews with eight linguists 'Four Sorani speakers, for Kurmanji speakers' have been done. This is because all of them have great experience with the Kurdish standardization issue, and they are specialist in Kurdish language, which basically means that their notion should be taken into account. Moreover, survey data has been collected from 200 students from various departments in the universities of Koya and Duhok. University of Koya and Duhok are chosen because university of Koya is located in Sorani zone, and university of Duhok is located in Kurmanji district. The survey designed to know public view about Kurdish language standardization issue in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1.4 Literature review

After the invasion, Iraq withdrew from Kuwait in February 1991 because of a massive US-led military campaign forces (BBC, 2013). Many Iraqis expected that the United States and its allied army attacks would exceed Kuwait and remove the Ba'athist regime. But it did not occur and President Bush asked the Iraqi people to remove the dictator by their own hands (Reuters, 1991). The Kurds rose up against the Ba'athist government and the Iraqi regime was forced to leave the majority of Kurdish areas in March 1991 (McDowall, 2004, p.371-372). During the uprising, Dangi Geli Kurdistan radio 'The Voice of the People of Kurdistan' was chosen as a speaker by 'Barai Kurdistan' United Kurdistan Parties, and the language of the radio played a considerable role, the radio published some effective private-sphere messages for public-sphere purposes (Mustafa, 2009).

As generally known, there is a complex relationship between language and politics. In this project, some crucial points will be researched to show that how have language and politics affected each other in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991. On the first hand, there are positive effects; Radio Dangi Geli Kurdistan messages and speeches, which were broadcast during the Kurdish uprising and played a substantial role to encourage people against the Iraqi regime in March 1991, and Kurdish governmental system have given a significant chance to use Kurdish language in a formal way since the 1991 uprising. On the other hand, there are negative effects; civil war impacts on the process of language standardization in Kurdistan Region could be the most obvious one. Also, language, in particular dialect differences has had clear impacts on the Kurdish political environment.

Obviously, there is a strong association between language and politics. It is assumed by most of social scientists that members of the same language should seek for their own political identity (Billig, 1995). However, there is another view, which does not mention language as a

necessary requirement for an identity, for example Liebkind (1999). Usually, language commonality is supposed to be an easy tool to get interested by the members of a group. Furthermore, the nationalists often play with language usage to encourage a certain group, for instance in Quebec 1960s, when the French speakers threatened the Canadian unity and propagated to build a new state due to cultural and language rights. As a reaction the Canadian government recognized French as an official language behind English in 1969 (Bourhis & Marshall, 1999, p. 255). The Kurdish circumstance in Iraq is similar with Qubac to some extent; the Kurds have used their language to increase nationalist feelings among Kurdish inhabitants and they wrote their literature in Kurdish language, especially in the twentieth century (Kreyenbroek, 1991). In 1991, Kurdish language played its role in the media. The messages and speeches, which were published on Dangi Geli Kurdistan radio, could be sufficient example (Mustafa, 2009).

Another possible explanation for this relationship is that politics also might have a positive impact on language, in particular when language is used in a formal places and education. Sheyholislami discusses that Kurdish language has been a victim of the invaders' language policies, and he claimed that Kurdish has been a formal language in Iraq since 1992 (2009). Basically, Kurdish language has practiced its rights in Iraq since 1992 due to the fact that Kurdistan parliament in Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government considered Kurdish as a first formal language of the region (Khoshnaw, 2012). However, the language has been recognized as a formal language in Iraqi constitution 1971 and 1990 (Iraq, 1971; Iraq, 1990), which Sheyholislami did not mention it. Although, Kurdish was one of the formal languages in the Kurdish region before 1991 constitutionally, the Iraqi government did not allow Kurdish to practice its rights and it had become a victim of the Arabization process (Khidhir, 2008). Perhaps, it could be the

point that Sheyholislami's opinion may come from. The remarkable development of Kurdish autonomy since 1991 has not only formalized Kurdish language in Kurdistan region, but has provided a new base upon which future social advances in the use of Kurdish might be constructed.

In spite of the fact that Kurds have gained power due to the uprising, and they established the Kurdistan Parliament and the Kurdistan Regional Government in 1992 (KRG, 2006; KRG, 2013), the parliament and the government could not be successful in the 1990s. This is because of civil war, which was started due to internal conflict among the Kurds in the region in May 1994 (Leezenberg, 2005, p. 632). The conflict was mainly between KDP¹, PUK², and IMK³ (McDowall, 2004). This war not only resulted deaths among militants and civilians, but it is believed that the civil war '*shari bra kuzhi*' led to increase social tensions in the region and possibly have had negative impacts on the Kurdish language. Though, the civil war was ended due to American mediation in 1998 under the Washington agreement (Global-Security, 1998). The outcomes of the war are being seen in daily life in the region. Kurdish language could be one of the main victims of these tensions, and the political conflicts are supposed to be very effective snags in front of the Kurdish language standardization process in the region. Even nowadays, political views have clear impacts on the debates of Kurdish language standardization.

Regarding the debates over having a standard language, there are some various ideas; first, there is a view, which is asking for collecting Kurdish dialects and building a new standard Kurdish language 'Surmanji'. Jamal Nabaz is the most famous person who has this notion (Nabaz, 1976). Second, there is another view, which suggests Kurmanji to be a standard

¹ Kurdistan Democratic Party

² Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

³ Islamic Movement of Kurdistan

Kurdish language, they claim that most of Kurdish people in the great Kurdistan speak in Kurmanji. Third, some other linguists in Iraqi Kurdistan believe that Sorani should be recognized as Kurdish standard language due to the fact that Sorani speakers have had cultural and political power for more than a century, while Kurmanji was banned in the most Kurmanji areas (Ahmedzadah, 2009; Khoshnaw, 2012). Forth, Amir Hassanpour and his friends think that the Kurds need to have more than one standard dialect (Hassanpour, 2012), they claim that if Sorani is chosen as a Kurdish standard, other dialects will be victimized (Ahmedzadah, 2009). Theoretically, Einar Haugen formulates four features of a language's development, which are; selection of norm, codification of form, elaboration of function and acceptance by the community (Haugen, 1997). Ray thinks that 'Language standardization is prescription rather than description. Value-neutrality is therefore openly abandoned' (Haugen, 1969, p. 941).

2. Nationalism

Nationalism is a concept that cannot easily be defined. There are various definitions for the term nationalism. One of the best-known definitions is from Anthony Smith who defines the term nationalism as 'an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation' (Smith, 1991, p.73). In this definition, Smith wanted to show the goals of nationalism, which he believes to be national autonomy, national unity and national identity.

Ernest Gellner in his book 'Nation and nationalism' defined nationalism as 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' (Gellner, 1983, p.1). Moreover, Gellner thinks that nationalism is a necessity of the new world (Gellner, 1983). By looking at these two definitions it becomes clearer that there neither is more adequate than the other. This might be because nationalism is different from a place to another.

Also, there are different types of nationalism, for example; cultural, civic, ethnic, political, eastern and western nationalism. These kinds of nationalism, understanding national ideologies and the relationship between nationalism and language will be discussed in the next sections, in particular the role of the Kurdish language in the Kurdish national uprising in 1991. This is because the Kurdish language played a considerable role in the uprising, and it is generally believed that Kurdish nationalism is a linguistic nationalism (Mahmud, 2013), which basically means that Kurdish language and Kurdish nationalism are closely linked.

2.1 Ideologies of nation and nationalism

The word 'nation' in medieval times was used for groups of students who came from the same region (H. Herb & H. Kaplan, 2008). The modern meaning and the idea of being a nation can be traced back to the Eighteenth Century, when philosophers Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) claimed the greatness of the German nation was due to the German language and culture (Taras, 2008, p. 17). However, we could say that the German philosophers' notion was very simplistic and they looked on a nation as having a collective culture rather than looking for political statehood. Nationalism is often discussed with the meaning of nation. This is because one cannot argue the term of nationalism without considering what is a nation. Generally, nationalism is a term used to describe the attachment and feelings of an individual to a particular group, which could be a political group for achieving statehood or an ethnic group, which was related because of their language, history, religion and so on.

There are various views about nations and nationalism because those people who defined both terms had different opinions and ideologies. Also, the term has been extremely debatable because of its importance. Ernest Gellner, in his book 'Nation and Nationalism' redefined the term of nation and nationalism, argued that 'a man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears' (1983, p. 6). In contrast Marx and Engels rejected nationalism completely, and they claim that 'the working class has no country' (Curties, 1997).

Anthony D. Smith defined a nation as 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all' (Smith, 1991, p.14). Smith's definition could not classify nations according to their spirit (Barrington, 1997), for instance distinguish between the nation of Iraqi from that of Kurdish, or Spanish from Catalan and so on. Furthermore,

he included 'common economy', which is obviously experienced in one state (Barrington, 1997). One might ask that about a Kurdish or Turkish nation as Kurds live in various countries which have different economies. If they are not a nation, what does Kurdish nationalism mean? Also, the same explanation is true for Turks who have more than one state. Not surprisingly, Smith made some remarkable changes in his definition of 'nation' in 2002, when he stated that a nation is 'a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs' (Guibernau, 2004). As has been seen, there are some fundamental obvious changes, which Guibernau (2004) also mentioned; he removed the 'mass' character of public culture and a 'common economy', also 'common legal rights and duties' have been swapped with 'common laws and customs'.

Benedict Anderson defined a nation in a different way saying that a nation is 'an imagined political community.' Anderson argues that all members of nations do not know each other even in the smallest nation, but they have an image of their communion (Anderson, 1991, p.6). He criticizes Ernest Gellner who thinks that 'nationalism invents nations where they do not exist' and he discusses that all communities are in fact imagined not by their false genuineness but by the style in which they are imagined and they are distinguished by their imagined style (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). I think Anderson's ideas are more appropriate for the Kurdish community and nationalism. This is because whole Kurds are not similar in culture, faith, country, even they do not have one united language to understand each other, but they feel and imagine they are Kurdish.

2.2 National identity and nation-state

The historian Hans Kohn differentiated between western and eastern nationalism and thought that western nationalism is territorial-civic nationalism because the middle class was active in the west and aimed to create a liberal and rational civil society, but eastern nationalism is ethno-cultural nationalism because of the weakness of the middle class. Nationalism in the west was only 'the dream and hope of scholars and poets' (Kohn, 1982, p. 29-30). As a result of both kinds of nationalism, nation-states were built, and most theorists agree that nation-states are contemporary constructions (Kohn, 1982; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Smith, 1991). Obviously, nation-states were widely accepted and national boundaries were drawn. Following that, the issue of those ethnic groups who do not have a state has appeared and it was theorized under the term 'nations without states'.

Despite there being various theories and views to show what should be called a national identity, one has been compelled to accept one's state as a national identity officially e.g. states are members of the United Nations (United-Nations, 2013). This basically means that the identity of Scots is British, not Scottish, and the identity of Kurds might be Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian or Syrian but not Kurdish. As has been argued by Smith (1991), identity plays a central role in nationalism and according to him national identity 'involves some sense of political community, history, territory, partiality, citizenship, common values and traditions' (Guibernau, 2004, p. 133). Smith's definition also could not include nations without states, and he was criticized for ignoring nations like Basques, Flemish, Kurdish and so on (Guibernau, 2004).

There is no doubt that some nations in the world do not have their own states due to the last centuries' conflicts, in particular both World Wars. Some people think that every nation should have a state, while some others

claim that democracy can give ethnic rights to various nations within a state. One of the biggest stateless nations is the Kurdish nation. They were victims of peace settlements after the Ottoman Empire collapsed (Gotlieb, 1994, pp. 101-104). Kurds and similar nations are generally called nations without states or stateless nations. I totally agree with those people who think that every nation should have their own state because that democracy is not a static term, and those nations who are a minority in a country are looked upon as lower level citizens. The most obvious example could be the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq who were massacred by their own states in 1937 (Demirhan, 2010) and 1980s (McDowall, 2004, p.352).

2.3 Language and nationalism

As I mentioned earlier, there are two main kinds of nationalism:-, civic nationalism, which is also called liberal nationalism, and ethnic nationalism. Liberal nationalism is more about being a citizen than blood (Ernest, 1995). It is a modern mode of thinking about being a citizen in a group without thinking about blood loyalty. On the other hand, building upon the ideas of ethnic nationalism, nationalism is closely linked with blood, meaning individuals are members of a nation because of their common language, culture, color and so on. According to ethnic nationalism, it is believed that language is a national basis and one nation needs to have one common language. Ignatieff argued that ethnic nationalism is based on 'blood loyalty' (Billig, 1995, p. 47). Regarding Kurds, it is thought that Kurdish nationalism is based on ethnic nationalism due to the fact that being Kurdish is linked with language, spiritual thinking, culture and so on.

It is assumed by most traditional social scientists that language communality is a crucial point, and members of a language need to seek for their political recognition to save their language (Billig, 1995). Besides, language has been used by nationalists for political support, for instance, Kurds in Iraq in the second half of last century. They used their language to increase nationalist feelings among Kurdish inhabitants against the Iraqi regime at that time (Mahmud, 2013). In the 1991 uprisings, the Kurdish language played a significant role in various sectors. If media is taken as an example, Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio was one of the most effective voices at that time, especially through those messages and speeches which were propagated to Arabs in Iraq, arguing for ethnic rights and revolution against the process of Arabization (Mustafa, 2009, p. 31-40).

Generally, Kurdish language has been very important tool for Kurdish nationalism. The deputy of the head of Kurdish academy called Kurdish nationalism as linguistic nationalism (Mahmud, 2013). He basically means

that Kurdish language is main or one of the main bases of Kurdish nationalism. Also, Jaffer Sheyholislami believes that 'Kurdistan, as a territorial and cultural nation, has been imagined and defined in terms of a Kurdish language' (Sheyholislami, 2009). Moreover, the modern scholars of Kurdish studies have suggested that 'Kurdish language is arguably the most salient symbol of Kurdish identity' (Sheyholislami, 2009). This fact could be the main factor for linking Kurdish language with Kurdish nationalism and politics strongly. Every political wave in Kurdistan would affect Kurdish language. Also, Every Kurdish language issues might have impact on Kurdish nationalism. This could be the main cause that encourages Kurds to have Kurdish standard language, in particular in Iraqi Kurdistan. This is because this part of Kurdistan is the only place that Kurdish language is formal language and studied widely.

2.4.1 The role of language in the 1991 Kurdish national uprising

After the invasion, Iraq withdrew from Kuwait in February 1991 because of a massive US-led military campaign (BBC, 2013). Many Iraqis expected that the United States and its allied army would go beyond Kuwait and remove the Ba'athist regime but this did not occur and President Bush asked the Iraqi people to remove the dictator themselves (Reuters, 1991). Moreover, Bush's speech was broadcast on opposition radios and the Voice of America. Some people think that this speech played a great role in the Iraqi uprisings in southern Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991 (Fisk, 2006). The Kurds rose up against the Ba'athist government and Ranya was the first town to be liberated on 5th March. Following that, the people and Peshmarga⁴ in most Kurdish cities and towns started to fight against the Iraqi regime and the government was forced to leave most Kurdish areas (McDowall, 2004).

It is generally believed that the uprising was the outcome of some other events, which were, firstly, the international reactions against Iraq because of the Iran – Iraq War and the Kuwait invasion. Secondly, the bad internal Iraqi situation was due to the Kurdish genocide and Shiite uprising (McDowall, 2004). Also, language was another spur for the Kurdish uprising. This was because in most multilingual and multi-ethnic societies, language plays a significant role in managing tensions and making political waves. Besides, the media can be used as a tool to send these sort of messages. There are various examples of such usages e.g. the messages of Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio in 1991. During the uprising, Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio 'The Voice of the People of Kurdistan' was chosen as a mouthpiece by 'Barai Kurdistan' United Kurdistan Parties, and its language played a

⁴ It is a Kurdish word, which is used for Kurdish fighters against the invaders of Kurdistan.

considerable role due to the fact that the radio broadcast some effective private-sphere messages for public-sphere purposes (Mustafa, 2009). Generally, the Kurdish language played two vital and effective roles in the 1991 uprising, which were; firstly, the linguistic role of the Kurdish language was because Kurds didn't have linguistic rights. Even though Iraqi Kurds were supposed to have more rights than other Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Syria, they were forced to study and speak in Arabic by the Iraqi regime. In addition Kurdish has been sidelined and the most important languages in those areas where Kurds live have been Arabic, Turkish or Persian (M. Azeez, 2005, p. 553). As a reaction, the Kurdish nationalists have encouraged people to protect their language because it is believed that Kurdish should have the same right as other languages and it is crucial that it is taught, published and printed (Nawkhosh & Khoshnaw, 2011). As we have seen above, people in Iraqi Kurdistan were massacred in the 1980's because of being Kurdish. They were forced to take action when their language also was threatened with linguicide. Secondly, the role of a motivated Kurdish language on regular people, which was used for political ends in the media, flyers, publications, speeches, marches etc. Dangî Geli Kurdistan Radio was chosen as an example because it was the main radio at that time and played a very effective role (Mustafa, 2009).

2.5 Media and Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan

The Kurdish Nationalism Movement has used media effectively since the Ailul revolution '*Shorshi Ailul*', and Kurdish radio broadcasting and newspapers were funded by the Kurdish rebels to encourage the Peshmargas and regular people to fight for freedom (Mustafa, 2009, p. 263). This could be because the Kurds were victimized and their language was not encouraged and used by the Iraqi government before 1991 (McDowall, 2004). Kurdish opposition groups used Kurdish in their publications and it was motivated politically according to their ideology. Dangi Gali Kurdistan Radio⁵ was one of the most significant examples from that time. It was decided that the radio would be a speaker for Peshmarga in 1991 by the Kurdistan Front '*Barai Kurdistanî*' (Abdulla, 2005). Obviously, this role was so important for the radio and made their work harder but it was believed that they could play their role successfully.

The most memorable speeches of the Kurdish 1991 uprising were those hidden messages which were broadcast on Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio. It announced the plan of the uprising and showed the target to revolutionary people and Peshmarga e.g. the radio broadcast a hidden message before 7th May 1991. The message was 'an announcement from Zmnako to Azad 1760, an announcement from Zmnako to Azad 1760. Make sure, friends, you throw a party on the 7th of the month' (Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio, 1991). Some people might call that the role of the media but I believe it is the role of language much more than the media but that does not mean the media did not have a role. This is because the media only sent the linguistic messages and the main characters were linguistic messages. The messages were understandable for the Peshmargas and most of the

⁵ Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio started to publish its programs in Newroz 1979 under name the Voice of the Patrotic Union of Kurdistan "*Ezgai Dangi Yaketi Nishtimani Kurdistan*". The name of the radio was changed in 1985 and it became Dangi Geli Kurdistan Radio (Mustafa, 2009, p.263)

uprising Kurdish people. As a result of the above message Sulaimany, the second biggest city in the Kurdistan region was freed on 7th May 1991 (E-Kurd, 2011), and it was the beginning of opening a way to other big cities. The radio broadcast opened with a revolutionary text which said, 'Here is the Voice of the People of Kurdistan, the Voice of the People of Kurdistan is the voice of those Peshmargas, which are directed by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The Voice of the People of Kurdistan is the voice of the united contenders with the developed forces of Iraq and Kurdistan to gain democracy for Iraq and self-determination for the Kurdish nation'. It was read in a revolutionary manner (Dengi Geli Kurdistan Radio, 1991). As a result of hearing these words, it could be said that Dengi Geli Kurdistan Radio wanted to be patriotic more than a voice of the party. Also, it is obvious that they benefited from the Kurdish language for political ends.

3. Kurdish peoples' political view and dominant dialects in Iraqi Kurdistan after 1991

After the political turmoil in 1991, Kurds in Iraq controlled three Kurdish provinces (Sulaimanyah, Erbil and Duhok) in the north of Iraq and the Iraqi regime took control again of Kirkuk (McDowall, 2004, p. 372-375). It seemed to be acceptable for both Kurds and the Iraqi regime at that time and a safe haven, which was established by the international society, played its role. Despite being threatened by internal political tensions, Kurds in Iraq held their first election in 1992 (McDowall, 2004, p.381). There are various views about the election because of the percentage of falsification e.g. 124% of Duhok province, 98% of Erbil province and 79% of Sulaimanya province voted (Rauf, 2013, pp.16-19). The election was not really successful due to this massive falsification and was not accepted by the two dominant parties at that time. 'Resulting in an almost even split between the KDP and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan' (Romano, 2010, p.1347). Holding the election was the basis of democracy.

The 1992 election formalized the revolutionary forces and the government was made by the leaders of both dominant parties. As a result, they brought their thinking into the government and parliament. There was no opposition and everyone tried to get as much as possible in the government and parliament (Rauf, 2013). The prime minister of the first government was Kosrat Rasul, who was a member of the PUK, but the united government did not last long and the fighting between them was started because of possession of some shops in Qaladza where is a town in Sulaimanya province on 1st of May 1995 (Mustafa, 2009). Nashirwan Mustafa who was the Talabani's deputy in PUK thinks that the tension was serious enough to condone the war, because it was not only an issue of some property. The aggression grew very swiftly and it was spread in the entire region. This civil war opened a way to social divisions and peaked on 31st August 1996 when

the KDP with the Iraqi regime attacked Erbil and established its government, while Kosret Rasul continued his work without the KDP members. The region was divided into two parts, and Kurdish language has become one of the main victims.

At first the KRG provided a chance for the Kurdish language to be practised in formal places and education. Even the *Jash*⁶ leaders pretended to be keepers of the Kurdish language (McDowall, 2004, p.377). Due to Sorani dominance for nearly a century, it has automatically become the declared formal Kurdish language. The 1992 election papers were printed in Sorani (PUK-media, 2013) and both the government and Kurdistan parliament have used it, but when the region was divided, the KDP administration provided an opportunity for Kurmanji primary students to study in their own dialect in 1998 (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 363-371).

⁶ Jash is a Kurdish word, which is used for those people who helps the enemies against Kurdish nationalists. For example, some Kurdish tribal leaders worked for the Iraqi regime in Iraqi Kurdistan before 1991, and they fought against Kurdish nationalists.

3.1 Kurdistan Regional Parliament and Government

It is obvious that the fundamental Kurdish population lives in Iraq, and they gained a semi-autonomous region since 1991 due to some internal and external political waves (KRG, 2013). The most important causes could be classified into four events, which were; first, the, Iran–Iraq War that made the former Iraqi regime weaker and cost millions of lives, destroying Iraq economically (Johnson, 2011). Second, the Kuwait invasion, which created a strong international reaction toward Saddam Husain's autocracy and Iraq fell apart (McDowall, 2004). Third, Internal feuding among Arabs in Iraq, which was because of religious differences, resulted in an unsuccessful Shiite uprising in central and southern Iraq. Forth and the most important factor was the Kurdish nationalism movement and Kurdish unity in the Kurdistan Front, the beginning in the 1990s, which resulted in a mass uprising to expel the Iraqi government and forces in the Kurdish populated areas (Mustafa, 2009). Although, there are some other crucial events after the uprising, for example mass flights and the return of Iraqi forces to the liberated areas (McDowall, 2004, p.372), the uprising was successful to some extent at that time due to the fact that it encouraged the international community to declare a 'no-fly zone' in the north of Iraq at the 36th parallel and refugees could return (KRG, 2013). This was very effective and it was supposed to be the beginning of Kurdish autonomy and self-governing.

The Iraqi regime withdrew from Sulaimani, Erbil and Duhok, and the Kurdistan Front started to rule these areas. Kurds in Iraq were under some obligations and they faced serious economic issues. The Kurdistan Front established a lejan on 28 April 1992 to decide about the first election and as a result the rule of the Kurdistan Parliament election was decided under Article One of 1992 (Khoshnaw, 2013). It is believed that the first election was under KDP and PUK influence due to the fact that it is claimed that they had a revolutionary right because they were freedom fighters (Akreyi, 2010).

According to the declared results, the KDP won 44.51% and the PUK got 44.02%. They divided the parliament seats between themselves, and each party received 50 seats in the Kurdistan parliament (Rauf, 2013). The most significant decision of the Kurdistan parliament at that time was declaring a federal system (Kurdistan-Parliament, 1992).

As a result of the 1992 election, a power-sharing government between both dominant parties was made under the name of the Kurdistan Regional Government (Stansfield, 2003, 133), and it was formalized under Article One of the Kurdistan Parliament on 5th July 1992. The first cabinet lasted less than a year, and the second cabinet was established on 11th April 1993 (Khoshnaw, 2013, pp. 343-346). It is important to say that the government did not have enough power and both parties had illegal fighters. According to Nawshirwan Mustafa, the civil war that started on 1st May 1994 was a result of real tensions between the KDP and PUK (Mustafa, 2009). As a result of the civil war, the region was divided into two parts and each party declared its administration. Gareth Stansfield believe that Kurdish civil war had become a real snag in front of Kurdish development, and he argues that Kurdish region started to develop in 1997, when the civil war was ended (Stansfield, 2003, p.133-134)2005 when the governments united again (Khoshnaw, 2013, pp. 348-350). This is because the American invasion in Iraq was a time of change for the Iraqi Kurds due to the fact that they could gain constitutional recognition for their autonomy, their national differences was highlighted and accepted, the Kurdish language become an official language etc (Romano, 2010, p. 1358). After the invasion, there were second and third Kurdish elections in 2005 and 2009. As a result of the 2009 election, a strong opposition party appeared which did not have a militia and the power-sharing government has remained (Romano, 2010, p. 1357).

It could be said that the Kurdistan Regional Government and Parliament seem to be much more stable than in the 1990s due to the fact that the civil

war was ended in 1997, and there have been democratic elections 'to some extent' every four years after 2005 (KRG, 2013).

3.2 Sorani domination

In spite of the fact that during the last century Kurds were under pressure politically and the Kurdish language faced various and serious challenges, the Sorani dialect has had a better chance than other Kurdish dialects. This is because of some vital political events which have made Sorani more vital. The most significant events were:-

- After the First World War most Kurds were divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria (V.Bruinessen, 1992, p.11). As a result most of Kurmanji speakers live in Turkey and Syria, while Sorani speakers are in Iraq and Iran (H.Khurshid, 1985, p. 41). This division has helped the Sorani dialect to some extent due to the fact that Iraq was not an independent empire before the war like the Ottoman Empire. Kurds could obtain some ethnic rights and they were promised local autonomy within Iraq (McDowall, 2004, pp. 151-181). Furthermore, the government of Shaikh Mahmud⁷ in Sulaimanya played a crucial role (Khoshnaw, 2013). On the other hand, Kurds in Turkey were never mentioned in the Turkish constitution and according to the Turkish constitution of 1924 the Turkish people who speak the Turkish language are the only nation in Turkey (Sabir, 2008, p. 41). Other Kurdish dialects, obviously, could not compete with Kurmanji and Sorani. Obviously, the division provided Iraqi Kurds, who mostly speak Sorani a better opportunity to use their language and publish in Kurdish.

- The short-lived Republic of Kurdistan in Iran in 1946 was a crucial historical event for the Kurds and its capital was Mahabad City. Notably the Kurdish language was taught in schools and in addition books in Kurdish were published (Abdulla, 2011). This could be a point which

⁷ During Shaikh Mahmud's authority (1923-1924), the Kurdish language 'Sorani dialect' was used widely in government, schools, publishing and so on. Also Kurdish was permitted to be studied in mosques and be written in literature, but they did not use it in the government (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 319-321)

helped the 'Sorani dialect' to take another step because the Kurdish standard language in the republic was the Sorani dialect (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 328).

- Iraqi Kurds started to fight against the Iraqi regime intensively after the failure of the Republic of Kurdistan in eastern Kurdistan in 1946. On 11th March 1970, both sides reached a short-lived agreement, which provided some essential rights to Kurds in Iraq, including linguistic rights, for instance Kurdish became an official language in Kurdish areas, and a second language in Arabic areas (McDowall, 2004, pp. 327-328). The Iraqi government wanted to provide education in Kurmanji in some areas of Kurdistan, aimed at making feuds among Kurds, and Mulla Mustafa Barzani, who was the head of the Kurdish movement at that time, was a Kurmanji speaker. He rejected the Iraqi claim and Sorani became the language for education in the whole of Kurdistan autonomous areas (Sabir, 2008, p. 53). It is believed that Barzani took this step because Sorani had had a continued history and it was the strongest Kurdish dialect educationally. However, after the collapse of the Ailul revolution in 1975 some Baathist people were against the Kurdish language and they succeeded in converting education back to Arabic again in the Kurmanji areas (Sabir, 2008, p.53). As a result, education in Sorani, as the only Kurdish dialect to be studied, has continued.

- The 1991 uprising and Kurdish self-rule was supposed to be the best opportunity for the Kurds to rule their lands. In the region, Sorani became the undeclared standard language due to its previous history and the above- mentioned points. It has been used by the government, parliament and every sector in the region, excluding Duhok province since 1998.

3.3 The civil war between KDP and PUK in Iraqi Kurdistan

As mentioned above, the second cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government faced serious challenges because each party had illegal militias, which resulted in fighting between the KDP and PUK that started on 1st May 1994 in the town of Qaladza (Mustafa, 2009). Internal feuding among Kurds in Iraq was nothing new, especially the fighting between the KDP and PUK, which had happened before many times e.g. in 1976, and 1977 (McDowall, 2004, p. 344). However, it is believed that the 1994-1998 Civil strife was the most dangerous struggle between the Kurdish parties because they were ruling in Kurdistan region and as a result of the war the region faced a serious division. According to David Romano, the conflict 'almost ruined the entire trial in Kurdish autonomy' (Romano, 2010, p. 1347). The KDP had a majority in Duhok and the PUK in Sulaimanya (Rauf, 2013, pp.17-19) and they implemented their hegemony very soon. The KDP controlled Bahdinan 'Duhok province' and the PUK controlled Sulaimanya in the very early days of the feud (Mustafa, 2009). Erbil, which is the Kurdistan Region capital, was a shared city between them till 1996. But the region divided completely into two geographical areas on 31st August 1996 (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 346). Both parties were helped against each other by the regional governments such as Turkey, Iran and Iraq (Mustafa, 2009). But, it is believed that the attack on 31st August 1996 was very different due to the fact that the KDP brought the Iraqi army and weapons to attack the opposition, the 'PUK' (Abdul-Khalq, 2011). As a result of the latter events the Kurdistan region was divided between both parties and Erbil and Duhok were controlled by the KDP and they announced their government. Kosrat Rasul Ali who was Prime Minister after 1993 and a member of PUK continued in government with some ministerial changes in the Sulaimanya district (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 346).

Obviously, when the governments separated, their decisions would differ. Regarding the Kurdish language, the PUK government did not make any fundamental changes. This might be because the majority of people in Sulaimanya are Sorani speakers (H.Khurshid, 1985, p. 41). On the other hand, the KDP government was in Erbil and Duhok, and as is generally known people in Duhok are Kurmanji speakers of the 'Bahdini sub-dialect' (H.Khurshid, 1985, p. 41). Moreover, the KDP has been driven by Barzaniees (McDowall, 2004) who are also Kurmanji speakers. As a result of these factors Bahdini was invited by the authorities to be studied in primary schools in Duhok, and the KDP government accepted their demand in 1998 (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 363-371). This decision could be one of the main steps that moved the Kurdistan region backwards. This has been said because people in Duhok had studied in the Sorani dialect for seven years, and their education dialect was changed in 1998 when the Kurdistan region was unstable politically because of the outcomes of the civil war. It has been argued by those people who signed for Sorani standardization in 2008 that the Kurdish language might become two languages in the future if it is not standardized. Also, not having a Kurdish standard has affected Kurdish nationalism in a negative way (Sabir, 2009, pp. 13-16). But, the Duhok governorship took another step in 2009 when they changed the dialect of another three classes into Kurmanji without government approval, which basically means that there was a hidden acceptance by a political party (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 385). Obviously, as has been shown, only the KDP has such power in Duhok and they might have been behind these steps. Here are the survey participants' views:-

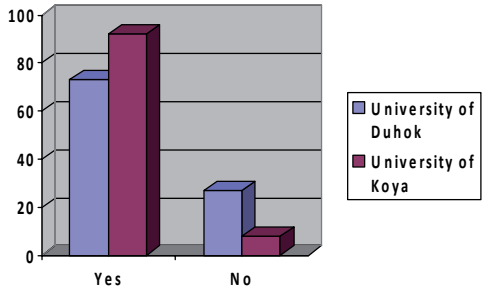


Figure 1; did the Civil War have a negative impact on Kurdish language standardization?

3.4. Diversity between dialects due to political motivations

Generally politics has affected the Kurdish language in all parts of Kurdistan because Kurdish has been seen as a threat for the unity of those countries where Kurds live. For example, Turkish policy toward Kurdish language was based on a long-term object of changing the ethnic structure of the Kurds (Hassanpour, 2010). This basically means that the Kurdish language has been oppressed politically by non-Kurdish governments. On the other hand, it could be argued that the Kurdish language was also victimized politically by the Kurdish authorities in Iraq after 1991 in a different way. This is because the Kurdish governments, which have ruled Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991, could not implement a suitable language policy and the gap between Kurdish dialects, in particular between Sorani and the Kurmanji 'Bahdini sub-dialect' can still be seen markedly.

Political relations between the Kurdish parties could be the most significant factor in this diversity. As a result, this negative usage of Kurdish dialects has exceeded linguistic arguments between academics, and it can be seen among regular people clearly. It even divided the speakers of dialects between certain political parties. Regarding elections, most people in Duhok county vote for the KDP because the head of the KDP is a Kurmanji speaker while most Sorani speakers vote for Sorani parties, such as the PUK and Gorran Movement because both the PUK and Gorran Movement are led by Sorani speakers. For example, the KDP was chosen by 75.6% in Duhok and they got 26.3% in Sulaimanya in 1992. But, in the same election the PUK gained 6.8% in Duhok and 59% in Sulaimanya. After 18 years of Kurdish autonomy this gap is still huge and the 2010 elections are evidence of this. In 2010, the KDP achieved 69.8% in Duhok and 10% in Sulaimany while the PUK and Goran Movement, which separated from the PUK in 2009, gained around 67% together, and they got 14.7% in Duhok. It might be important to say that other votes were mostly for Islamic parties (Rauf,

2013, pp. 17-19). I believe that this division among Kurdish society is not a normal division and it seems to be because of dialectic alliance.

Furthermore, many researchers believe that the authorities do not want to solve the issue between Kurdish dialects, especially the issue of a Kurdish standard language and they do not give this linguistic role to a Kurdish Academy that should be looked on as mainly responsible for such problems. For example, Dr. Azad Mahmud who is a deputy of the head of Kurdish academy believes that the civil war has led to social division and even divided language and land. Nowadays, the effects of the war and bad political relations are seen in the Kurdish language and dialects (Mahmud, 2013). Also, Dr. Nazanin a teacher at Duhok University thinks that the issue between Kurdish dialects is politicized (Ahmed, 2009). Moreover, the government has been blamed for differentiating between Kurdish dialects due to the fact that education in primary schools in Duhok province is in Kumanji (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 487), but there is no such right for Gurani speakers in the Kurdistan region which is mainly in Sulimanya province (H. Khurshid, 2008, p. 41). This might be because Gurani speakers do not have any political power. It could be well proven that the issue between Kurdish dialects is a matter of power, not a matter of right.

3.5 The Kurdish alphabet issue

As I have discussed, the political system has affected most sectors in Kurdistan. Regarding the Kurdish language, there is another fundamental issue, which is mostly a result of political issues, and it has become a serious snag for Kurds in all areas. This problem is the alphabet issue or not having a united writing system. It could be a result of the political system in Kurdistan due to the fact that Kurds are obliged to write in an invader's alphabet in each part of Kurdistan (Sabir, 2008). According to the Kurdish Academy of Language, there are four writing system among Kurds, which are; a modified Latin-Turkish alphabet 'used by northern Kurds', a modified Arabic alphabet 'used by Central Kurds', Kurds in the former USSR use a modified Cyrillic alphabet while Kurds in South-eastern Kurdistan still largely use the Persian alphabet (Kurdish Academy of Language, 2013). Also Hussein Aziz raised this issue and discussed these four alphabets but he thinks that the Kurdish central alphabet is not modified Arabic, it is a modified Aramaic alphabet, which has become a basis for various language alphabets including Arabic and Kurdish (M.Azeez, 2005, p. 354).

In spite of the fact that the Kurdish writing system in Kurdistan Region in Iraq has been the Aramaic alphabet 'modified Arabic' for many decades and it is the only Kurdish writing system in education, official places, publications and so on (Mala-Karim, 2008), the issue of the Kurdish alphabet is often discussed among academics and writers. Maybe Kurds are afraid of having various writing systems and most of them would prefer having a united alphabet because most Kurds cannot read each other's writing (Kurdish Academy of Language, 2013; Sabir, 2008; M.Azeez, 2005).

To solve this issue there are various views, Dr. Rafiq Sabir who was one of those people who asked for a Sorani standardization decision in 2008 (Sabir, 2009, p.17) thinks that alphabet issue is between Kurmanji and Sorani speakers (Sabir, 2008). His notion might come from two obvious

causes which are firstly, Kurds in Iran are influenced by Kurds in Iraq and they use a very similar alphabet as Iraqi Kurds nowadays. Secondly, the Kurdish population in Russia is not as big as in other parts, and they are detached from the Kurdish community to some extent. The Ministry of Culture in the Kurdistan Regional Government held a conference for Kurdish language on 19th-22nd September 2011, and the conference suggested using both alphabets in the region (Habib, 2011). Moreover, the Kurdish language conference in Diyarbakir like Sabir classified the Kurdish alphabet into both Latin and Aramaic and asked the Kurdistan Regional Government to use both writing systems in every area of education and life (Akgönül, 2012). These decisions are only the conclusions of such conferences and are not a reflection of reality. Obviously, both Kurmanji and Sorani speakers use the Aramaic alphabet in the Kurdistan region and Latin usage has not escaped from television headlines.

Most writers and linguists in Iraqi Kurdistan prefer the Aramaic alphabet and Rafiq Sabir believes that the Aramaic alphabet is better than the others because it has gone through Kurdification and is very different to the other language's alphabet but the Latin alphabet grew under the Kemalist influence and its first use was in Hawar magazine in 1932 (Sabir, 2008, pp. 63-66). The former Minister of Culture Jamal Abdul argues that the Latin alphabet is one of the obstacles before the Kurdish standardization process (Muhammed, 2008, p. 201). Also, Marf Khaznadar, Sherko Bekes, Amjad Shakali, Muhammadi Mala Karim and some other linguists and famous Kurdish writers prefer the Aramaic alphabet. On the other hand the Kurds in Turkey and some of the Kurmanji speakers prefer the Latin alphabet and they request using both writing systems nowadays. This is because they think that Kurds need to know both alphabets because now none of them are standard (Habib, 2011; Akgönül, 2012).

3.6 Kurdish dialects in general

Kurdish is a multi-dialect language. Due to the fact that Kurds do not have their own state their language has been victimized and they have not yet had a united language. Many people have classified and talked about the Kurdish language and there are various views about Kurdish dialects. This could be because most of those people who wrote about Kurdish dialects were not linguists. Historically, there are orientalist's views about Kurdish dialects e.g. Basil Nikitin claimed that the Kurdish language is a Persian dialect. His notion has been totally refuted by some other orientalists and Kurdish writers (H.Khurshid, 2008). Another orientalist who researched the Kurdish language is a trained linguist Mackenzie, who classified Kurdish dialects into three groups, which are the northern group 'Kurmanji', the central group 'Sorani' and the southern group 'Kermanshahi, Ardalani and Laki'. He claimed that the Sorani and Kurmanji differences are the result of Gurani influence in the past. Moreover, Gurani and Zaza were not classified as Kurdish dialects but Iranian languages (MacKenzie, 1961, pp. 68-85). Martin V.Bruinessen (1992, p. 47-48) in his book 'Agha, Shaikh and State' thought in the same way and categorized Kurdish dialects into the same groups. Also he showed some significant differences between Kurmanji and Sorani. Although, those non-Kurdish researchers demonstrated some essential points in their projects, they could not hit the target. It might be because of the political structure of Kurdish society or not knowing Kurdish language fluently. Nikitin's bias is also possibly due to the fact that his notion is completely non-scientific.

On the other hand, Kurdish writers classified Kurdish dialects in various ways and criticized some foreign researches about the Kurdish language. Professor Fuad Hama Khurshid, who is a Kurdish linguist, believes that those writers who separate a Kurdish dialect from the Kurdish language might do so because of the influence of Kurdistan's invaders e.g. Iran

wanted to split Luri 'Gurani' from Kurdish, and the academics should be aware of these things (2008). There is an acceptable classification among Kurdish linguists, which Prof. Khurshid, also mentioned, and I think it is the most successful classification, It classifies Kurdish language into four main dialects, and each dialect is divided into some sub-dialects, which are:-

- Northern Kurmanji; it is the biggest Kurdish dialect, its sub-dialects are; 'Bayazidi – Hakari – Botani – Shamdinani – Bahdinani - Western sub-dialect'.
- Central Kurmanji, Sorani or Cetral Kurdish; it is the dominant Kurdish dialect in Iraqi Kurdistan, its sub-dialects are; 'Mukri – Sorani – Ardalani – Slemani – Germiani'
- Southern Kurmanji; most of its speakers are living in Iranian Kurdistan, its sub-dialects are; 'Pure Lure – Bakhtyari – Mamasani – Kohglo – Lak - Kalhur
- Gurani; its sub-dialects spread in different places, for example Zaza speakers are living in Turkey, but the Hawrami speakers are in Iraq and Iran. Gurani sub-dialects are; 'Pure Gurani – Hawrami – Bajalani - Zaza' (H.Khurshid, 2008, p. 41; Khayat, 2011, pp. 48-49).

3.7 Kurdish as a multi-dialect language

As we have seen, the Kurdish language has many dialects and sub-dialects. All these varieties are linguistically equivalent. Having a language with many dialects isn't unusual because most languages have many dialects, for instance English (Trudgill, 2001), and Arabic (Benmamoun, 2000). However, Kurdish faced more problems because of its dialects and perhaps this was because Kurds do not have one 'standard language' and don't have a state. Furthermore, a Kurd is a linguistic national, which means that Kurdish nationality based on its language (Mahmud, 2013). There are some crucial factors, which have diversified Kurdish dialects more.

Firstly there are political reasons, which I think is the most significant factor in diversifying Kurdish dialects. Hama Khurshid believes that political the situation has been very effective due to the fact that Kurds never had united political power in the whole of Kurdistan (1985). The most effective time to make the differences bigger was possibly the split of 1514 because of the Chaldiran War between the Ottoman and Safavid empires, when Kurdistan faced a significant political division between both the Ottoman and Safavid empires (McDowall, 2004, p.26). Dr.Hussein Aziz thinks that the invaders of Kurdistan have worked systematically to destroy the Kurdish language, and most of them banned the Kurdish language in the education system; even speaking Kurdish was illegal in a part of Kurdistan. Furthermore, the Kurdish alphabet also faced this division because Kurds in Turkey have used the Latin alphabet but this alphabet is prohibited in other parts of Kurdistan (2005). Even though Kurds have a semi-autonomous region in Iraqi Kurdistan, they could not have effective language planning and make a decision about their formal language to their government because of the political feud among the different parties (Mahmud, 2013; Sabir, 2009) I agree with most of the Kurdish linguists that the political factor has been the main cause for this diversity among Kurdish dialects and resulted in us not

having a standard language (Hama-amin & Ali, 2006; Mahmud, 2013; Sabir, 2009).

Secondly, the geographical factor is often highlighted because Kurdistan is a mountainous region and people could not make contact between themselves easily. Most linguists and writers discussed the nature of Kurdistan as a significant factor (Muhammedpour, 2008; Hama-amin & Ali, 2006; H.Khurshid, 1985).

Thirdly, the Kurdish community was tribal community to some extent in social, cultural and economic sectors (Hama-amin & Ali, 2006).

There are some other factors, such as emotions in phonetics, which is discussed by Aladin Sujadi (Khayat, 2011), and trade because people in the western lands traded with the west and people in eastern Kurdistan traded with nations in the east. As a result they might have been influenced by those languages in which they traded.

4. The Kurdish Language standardization issue after 2008

It is obvious that 2003 was a time of change for Kurds in Iraq due to the collapse of the Ba'sist regime. As such, constitutional changes were made, and many people think that Kurds were one of the main winners. This is because the political change gave Kurds some significant opportunities. Kurds merged their administration in 2005, which had been divided because of the civil war (Romano, 2010, p. 1349). Regarding language, the Kurdish language has become an equal official language with Arabic (Iraq, 2005, p.1). Although, it was a great achievement for Kurds, some serious issues appeared because of merging the administrations. For example, the administrations had different decisions about the Kurdish language, the KDP administration provided some dialectical rights for people in Bahdinan to study in their dialect in primary schools, while there were no such decisions in the PUK administration (Khoshnaw, 2013, p. 479). In spite of the fact that the Sorani dialect is used as an official and standard language in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish United administration could not make a decision about a Kurdish standard language yet.

Some famous writers in the region have had doubts about the government steps in solving the issue and they asked the Kurdistan Regional government to make Sorani a standard language officially in 2008 (Sabir, 2009, p.13). The message was signed by some very well-known people, such as Asos Hardi, Mariwan W.Qanih, D.Kamal Mirawdaly, Sherko Bekas, Bakhtyar Ali, Dr. Faraidon A.Barznji and so on (Sabir, 2009, p. 16-18). This demand aroused some serious reactions and those people who were against the claim called it 'Sorani fascism' (Sabir, 2013). Amir Hassanpour is one of those linguists who claimed that Sorani is a dialect with an army and parliament and he argues that there should be two standard languages for Kurds (Hassanpour, 2012). On the other hand, some other people think that Sorani has been victimized. Sorani is a standard language in reality, but the

KDP i.e. the dominant party in Kurdistan region and driven by Kurmanji leaders, does not allow Sorani to be practiced and use this issue for political ends (Hama-amin, 2013; Sabir, 2013). Also, most of the participants of the survey prefer to have one Kurdish standard language for Iraqi Kurdistan.

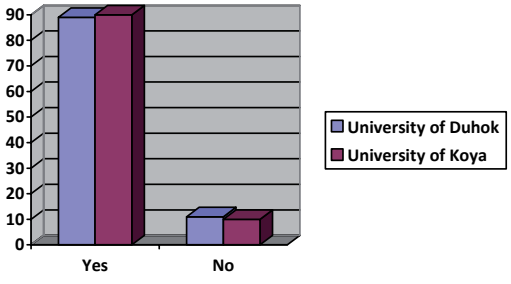


Figure 2; would you prefer to have one Kurdish standard language?

4.1 Language standardization theories

In spite of the fact that most languages have various dialects and sub-dialects, they have chosen a dialect to represent the language, which is called a standard language. A Standard language is closely linked with nationalism. It could be because languages have followed the politics of state-making (Billig, 1995, p.33). Obviously, creating a standard language is different from one language to another. Some dialects have become a standard for their languages without linguistic planning e.g. the dialect of the Qur'an has become a basis for the Arabic standard language due to its usage in the holy book (Shaalán, 2010, p.12). On the other hand, there are some dialects, which became standard languages because of language planning and political power, for instance Turkish. Standard Turkish is based on Atatürk's reforms in the last century as he standardized Turkish and purified it with words from other languages, especially Islamic languages. He even changed the Arabo-Persian alphabet into the Latin alphabet in Turkey (Lewis, 1999, pp.40-57).

There are various theories about standardizing languages. Ferguson defines a standard as a single, widely accepted norm, used with only minor modifications or variation for all purposes of language use (Ferguson, 1961). His definition lays emphasis on a single language, which should be accepted widely. Following Ferguson, Ray suggested his theory for language standardization. He believed that a language standard process will go through two phases, which are, firstly, an accent will be made and it is used with other types of language. The second stage is that other types are influenced by this accent or linguistic type (Khoshnaw, 2013). In other words, a single dialect wins the competition and becomes a standard language. Furthermore, there are other definitions and theories for standardizing a language. Following those aforementioned theories, Einar Haugen suggested his theory for standardizing a language.

The theory of Einar Haugen about language standardization is one of the most well-known theories. According to him language 'can refer either to a single linguistic norm, or to a group of related norms' (Haugen, 1966, p.923). He believes that nation, language and identity are socially constructed ideas and all of them are the issue of sameness and diversity. Also, he argues that 'national languages have offered membership in the nation' (Haugen, 1966, p.933). In other words, it can be said that Haugen believed that any nation must select a linguistic norm or set of norms, and knowing a 'national language' is vital for being a part of a nation. To make a decision about the standard language, "The four aspects of language development that we have now isolated as crucial features in taking the step from 'dialect' to 'language,' from vernacular to standard, are as follows: (1) selection of norm, (2) codification of form, (3) elaboration of function, and (4) acceptance by the community" (Haugen, 1966, p. 933). It might be important to analyze that both 'selection norm and acceptance by the community' are social roles, while 'codification of form and elaboration of function' are more associated with the language.

4.2 The demands for standardizing Sorani dialect officially

As has been discussed above, Kurds achieved a lot through the American invasion in 2003 and the Kurdish language was chosen as an official language for all Iraq (Iraq, 2005, p.1). It basically meant that Kurdish should be used with Arabic in every sector and Iraqi documents. Obviously, this opportunity could not be put to the side because of the internal feud among Kurdish dialects. As has been discussed by most Kurdish linguists and writers in Iraq, Sorani has been the Kurdish standard language in this part of Kurdistan for decades and we can't change history (Hama-amin, 2013; Sabir, 2009; Sabir, 2008). Those people who signed the 2008 message to standardize the Sorani dialect by law argue that Sorani is not a local dialect any more. It represents the Kurdish language; the authorities cannot make or remove a language and they only have ability to accept reality. Furthermore, they asked the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Kurdistan Regional Precedency and the Kurdistan Regional parliament to do what they should do (Sabir, 2009).

The message was largely accepted by most people in the Kurdistan region, hundreds of other writers wanted to include their names, but it was believed that the Kurdish standardization issue is not a matter of numbers (Sabir, 2009). As a result some people in Duhok province have had a strong reaction against the message (Khoshnaw, 2013). Furthermore, some writers who lived in other parts of Kurdistan or abroad were against it such as Hassan Qazi, Jafar Shaikhulislami and Amir Hassan-pour (Nawkhosh, 2010; Hassanpour, 2012).

Following this message, some conferences were held to address the issue and solve it but none of these conferences achieved much e.g. the 2011 Erbil conference and the 2012 Diarbakir conference (Peshdasti-group, 2012) because they could not agree on the main issues. As a reaction, a group published a message that was signed by 471 people, including ministers,

parliamentarians, linguists, writers etc. The group criticized the conferences and they argued that the conferences were not academic. Their main point was that most of those people who attended the conferences were there due to allegiance to a political party, not because they were linguists. Secondly, the outcomes of the conferences were political statements. Thirdly, they did not take the history of Kurdish language into account (Peshdasti-group, 2012). Furthermore, the Kurdistan Regional president invited some linguists to discuss the issue and asked them to create a united Kurdish alphabet and work for towards a standard language (Hawler-newspaper report, 2012, p.2). I should add that the Kurdish Academy, which has a right to decide about the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan by law, is a main player in this issue (Kurdish-Academy, 2012), but they were not invited.

4.3.1 The suggestions for Kurdish language standardization and their bases

As we have seen, there is not any official Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan. In Article 14 of the draft constitution the Kurdistan Regional observed that Kurdish is the official language without saying which Kurdish dialect or how many Kurdish dialects (KRG, 2013). Many writers in the Kurdistan region believe that Sorani is the standard language in reality. This notion comes from some usages of the dialect e.g. it is used in documents such as in the official newspaper of the Kurdistan Regional government (KRG, 2009) and for Iraqi passports (Iraq, 2013). However the Kurmanji dialect is widely used in Bahdinan governmental offices (Khoshnaw, 2013, p.385). Also, Surmanji was used by the Ministry of Education for a while in the last 10 years, but it did not last (Ahmed, 2013). A multi-standard is another option. These suggestions confuse both the people and the government. The main question, which has frequently been asked, is that if the Sorani dialect is suitable and is widely used by both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi government, why do not they declare it as the Kurdish official language? (Sabir, 2009; Sabir, 2008; Hama-amin, 2013). Moreover, those people who think that Sorani should not be the standard Kurdish, blame these wide usages of the Sorani dialect and think that Kurmanji also should be used after Sorani (Hassanpour, 2012; Ahmed, 2013).

To clarify the situation, all the four main options will be discussed;

1. Surmanji
2. Kurmanji
3. Sorani
4. Multi-standard

Here is the mother dialect of those participants surveyed about the standardization of the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan, and their suggestion to standardize Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan: -

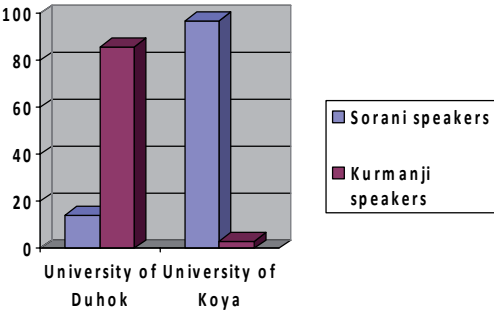


Figure 3; the survey participants' mother dialect

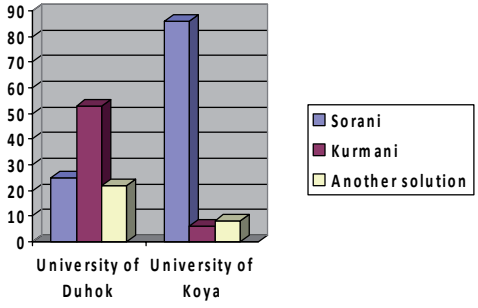


Figure 4; which dialect would you prefer as the standard?

4.3.1 Surmanji

In the field of linguistics there are languages that are made for various purposes. Those created languages were called a world, universal or auxiliary etc. The main aim of creating such languages was to make a universally understandable language (Blanke, 1997, p.1). One of the most well-known languages that was created was Esperanto, which was published in 1887 by L. L. Zamenhof. Esperanto has gained full recognition from international organizations (Tonkin, 1997, p.71) but it is generally believed that Esperanto and other created languages have not succeeded because they could not achieve the purpose they were designed for. Regarding the Kurdish language, one of the main options for solving the issue of Kurdish language standardization is Surmanji 'Sormanji', which is a created dialect. Looking at the word it is clear that it is a combination of the names of the Kurdish dialects Sorani and Kurmanji. Dr. Jamal Nabaz has suggested some bases for this dialect, and he even wrote some texts in it in 1976 (Nabaz, 1976; Kaki, 2007). Moreover, the Kurdistan Regional Government started to use it in the Ministry of Education, but it was refused and aroused student protests (Chalki, 2009).

The Surmanji grammar roots are based on Sorani and Kurmanji dialects. Also the words have been collected (Khoshnaw, 2013, p.410); even the created dialect borrowed some vocabulary from other Kurdish dialects to make a pure Kurdish. Ara Ahmed, who is a lecturer in university of Duhok, argues that Surmanji is a very good dialect and it might be a suitable dialect for solving the Kurdish standardization issue (A.Ahmed, 2013). Dr. Sherzad S.Ali is another ally of the Surmani dialect and he believed that Surmanji largely succeeded in university, by which he means Duhok University, but it faced a lot of difficulties in the Ministry of Education (S.Ali, 2013). In spite of the fact that it seems to be a complex dialect and has faced challenges and student protests, this dialect still has allies among the public and linguists.

On the other hand, those people who oppose this dialect believe that Surmanji is not an appropriate Kurdish language and it cannot become an alternative to other Kurdish dialects. Most of them linked their nation with grammar differences (Taeab, 2013; Mahmud, 2013; M.Karim, 2013; J.Ahmed, 2009). This is because the differences between Sorani and Kurmanji are not only vocabulary, there are dissimilarities in grammar too (O. Ahmed, 2013). Also, I must add that there are not clear rules for this dialect, which is important for any language to be stable and successful. As a result of student and teachers opposition (Chalki, 2009) the government reverted to the Sorani dialect in school books and Kurmanji in some stages in Bahdinan. Obviously, Surmanji did not succeed in its first trial in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq but personally I think it could have been the result of not having linguistic planning. This is because the government and its ministries would not gain any benefit in a year or two years. Linguistic changes need long-term plans.

4.3.2 Kurmanji

Kurmanji or Northern Kurmanji is the biggest Kurdish dialect, which is spoken by Kurds in south-east Turkey, south-west Armenia, northern Syria, Duhok and Musil provinces in Iraq, and both Khui and Qutur cities in Iran (H.Khurshid, 1985, pp. 58-60). This dialect was very developed at the beginning of the last century, the first Kurdish newspaper was in Kurmanji and the grammar of Kurmanji was written before the other Kurdish dialects. The first Kurdish modern poem was in Kurmanji (Nawkhosh & Khoshnaw, 2011, p.27), but Kurmanji faced serious challenges when the republic of Turkey was established and Kurds could not obtain independence or autonomy in the 1920's. This is because most Kurmanji speakers live in Turkey and they are not given any ethnic and linguistic rights in the Turkish constitution (Earle, 1925, pp.89-100). As a result, Kurmanji could not become an effective language and was not used in education and formal places. It was only occasionally used in some foreign publications (Sabir, 2008, p.51). Inside Turkey, even the words Kurd and Kurdistan were banned for a while and Kurds were called mountain Turks (Hassanpour, 2010).

Regarding Kurmanji speakers in Iraq, their dialect was not developed compared to Sorani. This might be because of the fact that Kurmanji has some sub-dialects - Bayazidi, Hakari, Botani, Shamdinani, western dialect and Bahdinani (H.Khurshid, 1985, p.61). Kurmanji speakers in Iraq use the Bahdinani sub-dialect but the historically dominant sub-dialect was Botani e.g. the texts of Ali Hariri, Faqe Tairan, Malai Jaziri and Ahmedi Khani (Saeed, 2008, p.10; Khoshnaw, 2013, p.421). In addition, Kurmanji is a minority Kurdish dialect in Iraq and its speakers were influenced by the Sorani dialect, which has been dominant in the east and south of Kurdistan since the Nineteenth century (Khoshnaw, 2013, p.404). Moreover, when education became Kurdish in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1970, Mal Mustafa Barzani, who was the head of the Kurdish revolution at that time, selected Sorani as

a united Kurdish dialect. Since the failure of the Ailul revolution in 1975, education in Kurdish has continued but some people in Bahdinan asked to study in Arabic, which was accepted by the Iraqi regime and made the gap bigger between both dialects and made Kurmanji weaker (Sabir, 2008, p.52-53).

There are some arguments for making Kurmanji a standard dialect for Iraqi Kurdistan. Firstly, the majority of Kurds in greater Kurdistan are Kurmanji speakers and their dialect has played a fundamental role in Kurdish history e.g. the nationalist poems of Ahmedi Khani and the publishing of the first Kurdish newspaper etc. These claims really compete beside Sorani domination and that is why those people who are against Sorani standardization suggest other options. For instance, Dr. Baez Ahmed, who is a lecturer at Duhok University, believes that Kurmanji should be a standard language after Sorani. As he said, 'the time of dictator's decisions has gone and expired.' Everyone has a right to study in their own dialect. Furthermore, he thinks that Kurds need to have one united dictionary (O.Ahmed, 2013). Also multi-standard and Surmanji options could be looked at as two possibilities for the revival of Kurmanji and make it equal to Sorani.

4.3.3 Sorani

Sorani is the second Kurdish dialect and it is also called Central Kurmanji or Central Kurdish. Most people in southern and eastern Kurdistan, 'Kurds in Iraq and Iran', speak Sorani (H.Khurshid, 1985, p.61). Despite the fact that Gurani and Kurmanji have an older written history and literature (Saeed, 2008; Khaznadar, 2001), Sorani is the dominant Kurdish dialect nowadays. Sorani gained power in the Nineteenth Century due to the Baban administration at that time and since then it has continued its domination because of the Kurdish administrations in southern Kurdistan in the last century and Republic of Kurdistan in the east of Kurdistan in Mahabad (Khoshnaw, 2013, p.404). Some Kurdish linguists and writers believe that Sorani has declared its standardization (Sabir, 2008; Sabir, 2009; Hama-amin, 2013; Karim, 2013). However, it has not been recognized as a Kurdish standard dialect by law yet.

Some people think that Sorani should be declared as a Kurdish standard language officially in the Kurdistan region in Iraq. There are considerable factors to support this, notably that there is a standard Sorani, which is used and accepted by all of its sub-dialects (J.Ahmed, 2009). It basically means that despite various accents, the Sorani sub-dialect speakers have one united standard language. But, this unity is not seen in other dialects e.g. people in Zakho, which is a town in Duhok province and speak in Kurmanji, are speak and write in a different accent from Duhok city centre (J.Ahmed, 2009). Secondly, 'Sorani is a language of thousands of books, and hundreds of newspapers and magazines'; it is the language of science and politics in Iraqi Kurdistan; it is an understandable language for all (Sabir, 2009, p.13). Thirdly Sorani has a continuous history. Also, it was chosen as a united Kurdish language for education at the agreement of 11th March 1970 (Hama-amin & Ali, 2006, pp.16-17). Lastly, Sorani is the dialect of the majority and the capital of the Kurdistan region (H.Khurshid, 1985, p.41).

On the other hand, there are other suggestions, which do not deny that Sorani domination, but suggest that there should be a central option to resolve the Kurdish standard issue. For example, Dr. Haval Taeeb, who is a lecturer and the head of the Kurdish department in the College of Education in Duhok University, argues that having two standard dialects might resolve the Kurdish standardization issue (Taeeb, 2013). However, these opinions are rejected by most of the Sorani alliances.

4.3.4 Multi-standard

No nation in the world is monolingual and that might be because of the way that modern states have been composed. However, some nations officially consider themselves to be monolingual e.g. Greece (Meyerhoof, 2007, p.103). The multi-lingual societies can generally be classified into two groups which are, firstly, those states that imposed a language and have worked to eradicate other languages e.g. Turkey, which made Turkish its official language and has linguicided other languages in Turkey (Hassanpour, 2010). Secondly, those states that accepted the reality of their population and provided linguistic rights, for instance, both English and French are official languages in Canada nowadays (Billig, 1995). By looking at those countries that have two standard languages or more, it becomes more obvious that a multi-standard solution is acceptable for multi-ethnic societies. Regarding the Kurdish language, it is obvious that Kurds are one ethnic group, but they have different dialects. There is only one state in the world that makes two dialects official languages, which is Norway. However, it is important to say that Norway has had effective language planning which will unite Norwegian dialects in the future. This chart shows the changes in the percentage of Norwegian primary schools which use both dialects as their main language (V.Elswijk, 2011, pp.51-52):

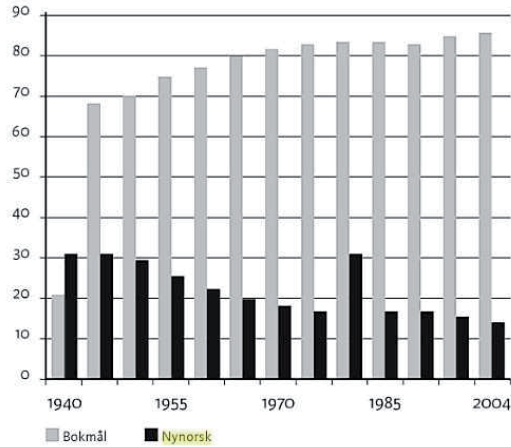


Figure 5; the changes in the percentage of Norwegian primary schools

Concerning the Kurdish language, there is an argument for standardizing both Kurdish dominant dialects in Iraqi Kurdistan similar to Norway. Those people who suggest a multi-standard for Kurds in Iraq claim that the Sorani dialect is difficult to learn and studying in their mother dialect is a basic right for everyone (A.Ahmed, 2013; O.Ahmed, 2013; Hassanpour, 2012). For example Hassan Ghazi, who is one of the multi-standard's allies, believes that 'Promoting one Kurdish dialect to become a standard Kurdish language is undemocratic, because the rest would be left as second class dialects. No dialect is capable of becoming a standard language at this point' (Fatah, 2003). Amir Hassan-pour who is another ally of having two standards or more argues that Sorani is a dialect with an army and parliament, and it should not be declared as a standard language in Iraqi Kurdistan because the structure of the Kurdish language is multi-dialect, and a multi-standard should be accepted (Hassanpour, 2012). There is an opinion, which emphasises that all Kurds need one united dictionary, not one standard language (O.Ahmed, 2013).

On the other hand, there is an opposite view, which believes that a multi-standard is a way of dividing the Kurdish nation into two groups or more. They think that the Kurdistan Regional Government should take responsibility and accept the reality of the Kurdistan region (J.Ahmed, 2009; Sabir, 2008; Sabir, 2009; Khoshnaw, 2013). As a reaction to those people who champion a democratic solution, Salam Nawkhosh said that 'If working for uniting a nation and its language, and being against tribal thinking and locality is undemocratic thinking, I will be proud to be undemocratic' (Nawkhosh, 2010). Moreover, he criticizes Dr. Amir Hassan-pour for his thinking about the Kurdish standardization process and the multi-standard. He argues that although most of languages are multi-dialect orally, for example, Arabic, English, French. They have only one standard language (Nawkhosh, 2010).

4.4 Kurdistan Regional Government and the issue of Kurdish language standardization in the region

The Kurdistan Regional Government is supposed to be mainly responsible for the language standardization issue. This is because the challenges in front of the standardization process are political more than linguistic. As has been discussed, the political environment in Iraqi Kurdistan played a very negative role towards the Kurdish language. In other words, it could be said that the Kurdistan administrations and parliament did not have a governing power and those political parties that fought against the former Iraqi regime used their revolutionary right to decide about anything in the region including language. For example, the local governorship in Duhok decided to convert their primary education books '7-9' from Sorani into Kurmanji without the Kurdish Academy's permission, which is the formal place to make such decisions by law (Mahmud, 2013). Also, Khoshnaw emphasises that the Directorate of Education in Duhok converted the books without the government's permission; even the Ministry of Education in Iraqi Kurdistan had not been notified about the content of the books (Khoshnaw, 2013, p.385). One might ask how and under which formal article did the Directorate of Education spend this budget to convert books from a dialect into another in Duhok? Where is the role of law, government parliament and Kurdistan Regional precedency in such cases?

In spite of the fact that there is political a party in Iraqi Kurdistan which has more power than the government and could play with Kurdish dialects to gain more votes in elections, the government and its official institution have run some conferences in Erbil to discuss the issue, such as 'Kurdish formal language in the Kurdistan region' which was run by the Kurdish Academy in 2009. There were two main suggestions for standardizing the Kurdish language, which were 'Sorani and multi-standard'. But they could not find a solution and the conference did not succeed (Khoshnaw, 2013, pp.395-396).

The Ministry of Culture and Youth held another conference in 2011 under the name '*Konfransi zanstee zmani Kurdi*' Academic Conference for the Kurdish Language. The conference highlighted the issue of the Kurdish alphabet and asked all sectors in the region to use both Latin and Aramaic alphabet till a decision had been made (Khoshnaw, 2013, pp.399-401). The second Academic Conference for Kurdish Language was run by the Ministry of Culture in 2012. The conference asked the Ministry of Higher Education to check the Kurdish school books and purify them (Kurdistan Media Website report, 2012).

Most of those writers and linguists who believe that Sorani is the standard Kurdish dialect say that the Kurdistan Regional Government should take this responsibility and not obey a certain political party. The deputy of the Kurdish Academy blames the government for its alliance and he thinks that the political parties are hurdles in front of the Kurdish language's achievements. Also, Kamyar Sabir, who signed the 2008 message to standardize Sorani, criticizes the government and he asks them to make a professional decision to resolve the issue. Furthermore, Dr. Sherko Hama-Amin said that there is opposition against the Sorani dialect in Duhok, whose authorities are responsible. He clearly criticizes the KDP in this feud in Iraqi Kurdistan because they only govern Duhok province (Hama-amin, 2013). Also, the majority of the participants in the survey asked the government to solve the issue independently. According to the survey most of them accept the government's solution.

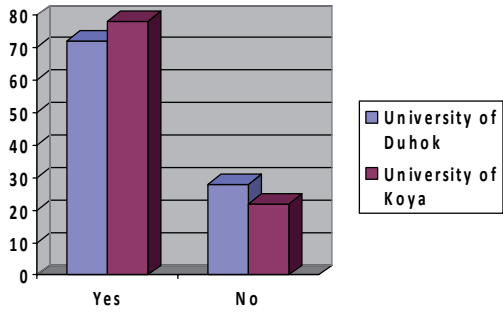


Figure 6; If the government choose another dialect 'not your dialect' to be the standard, will you accept it?

4.5 What would be a possible solution?

As a result of analyzing all suggestions for standardizing the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan, some essential points can be observed. Personally I think the main point is that linguists and those people who are working to resolve the Kurdish standardization issue in Iraqi Kurdistan should differentiate between the great Kurdistan 'all parts of Kurdistan in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria', and the Kurdistan region in Iraq. This is because of an obvious fact i.e. only Kurds in Iraq study in Kurdish and have the constitutional rights to use the Kurdish language as an official language throughout Iraq, while other parts of Kurdistan do not have such rights and they use the dominant language in their countries, which are Turkish, Persian and Arabic.

The Kurdish language does not have an alphabet issue in Iraq and Kurds have used the Aramaic alphabet historically, for example Ahmadi Khani wrote his famous text in the Aramaic alphabet. Also, the Kurdish Aramaic alphabet went through Kurdification in the 1920s and 1930s, which made it independent and different from Arabic and Persian Aramaic (Sabir, 2008, p.64), and has been widely used in eastern and southern Kurdistan. The Kurdish Latin alphabet, which was established by Badrkhans in the 1930s in Hawar magazine (Sabir, 2008, p.66) was crucial for some historical stages due to the fact that the Kurdish language was banned and Kurds could write and read in this alphabet. In addition, I believe, Kurds in Iraq including Sorani and Kurmanji speakers do not have an alphabet issue. Moreover, if Kurds in Turkey were given an opportunity to study in their mother tongue, it would be better to choose Aramaic alphabet to liberate them-selves from Turkish language domination.

Regarding the Kurdish language standardization, I think the Sorani dialect should be declared as the Kurdish standard language but with some conditions. This is because Sorani is the dominant Kurdish dialect in Iraqi

Kurdistan and it is understandable to other Kurdish dialects as well. For example, Hawrami speakers use Sorani in formal places while their dialect is still alive and is used in their public life. I personally think that the issue between Sorani and Kurmanji is political more than linguistic. It is not a matter of human rights, as is claimed by some people. This is because the same right is not provided to Hawrami speakers in the same region. Another fact is that Bahdini is not the dominant Kurmanji sub-dialect. If a multi-standard is accepted in Iraqi Kurdistan, it would make another division among Kurmanji sub-dialects. Furthermore, Sorani has a continuous history, and it is by far the most developed Kurdish dialect.

As I mentioned, there should be some conditions. Firstly, every child should be allowed to study in its own dialect in primary school and they should be prepared to study in the standard Kurdish language in secondary school. This right should be given to other dialects as well, not only Kurmanji speakers. Secondly, the Kurdistan Regional Government needs to have clear language planning and create one united Kurdish dictionary from all Kurdish dialects.

5. Conclusion

As has been discussed, language and politics are much linked, and in this project the relationship between them has been discussed in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurdish language played a considerable role in Kurdish nationalism movements and it is been one of the main bases for Kurdish national feelings. The role of the Kurdish language in encouraging the Kurdish people against Arabic domination in Iraq in 1991 is very obvious. Kurdish nationalist movements could profit from their language to encourage the Kurdish people successfully, and Dengi Geli Kurdistan Radio records are undeniable evidence. As a result of the uprising Kurds could obtain self-government in Iraq after 1991. It is believed that the Kurdish United Government had not been successful in protecting the Kurdish language, and it has clear language planning to work with Kurdish diversity academically. Kurdish political parties overrode the dialectical differences for political ends. Moreover, the Kurdish Civil War, which was between the KDP and PUK, made the gap between Kurdish dialects bigger, in particular between Kurmanji and Sorani. Furthermore, the region was divided into two parts. During the division, the KDP administration which was driven by the Kurmanji speakers, converted primary school books from Sorani into Kurmanji in Duhok province in 1998.

After the former Iraqi regime collapsed in 2003, The Kurdish federal system was recognized in the Iraqi constitution by the new Iraqi government in 2005. Both the KDP and PUK administrations have united again. However, there were different plans and decisions for everything including the Kurdish language because of their former administrations. As a result, the official Kurdish language needed to be reformed due to the fact that it was decided to be an official language for all Iraq. Following that, the debates over the Kurdish language standard became more serious and each dialect wanted to become the Kurdish standard language. Some very well-known Kurdish

linguists and writers asked the Kurdish United Government to accept the reality of the Kurdish language in Iraq, and make Sorani the standard Kurdish language officially in 2008. The suggestion created a serious reaction in Bahdinan and people there asked the government to convert other school books into their sub-dialect in 2009. Although, their demand was not accepted by the government. The Duhok Directorate for Education and governorship converted the books without the government's permission. This debate still continues and both sides ass the government to make a decision to rescue the Kurdish language.

After analyzing the effects of language and politics on each other in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991 it becomes more obvious that the relationship between the Kurdish language and Kurdish nationalism and the political system in Kurdistan is very complex. The Kurdish language is one of the foundations of Kurdish nationalism and had a considerable role in the 1991 uprising. Also, Kurdish autonomy has made a very positive environment for improving Kurdish language. However, the political differences have had some negative impacts on the Kurdish language and the political parties have used Kurdish dialectical diversity for their own ends. Moreover, the Kurdistan Regional Government could not make a clear decision about the Kurdish language and it is believed that the government was influenced by the dominant political parties, which made the government weaker than the parties. Generally, the government have powered some linguistic conferences, but these were not successful and they could not suggest a clear linguistic plan for the Kurdish language. Furthermore, they raised some other side issues which hid the main issue, which is Kurdish language standardization.

To conclude, it is proven that Kurdish nationalism are closely connected but the Kurdish political system in Iraqi Kurdistan could not be successful in saving the Kurdish language from localism. The civil war in the 1990s had a

very negative impact on the Kurdish language and some Kurdish political parties use this diversity to win more votes in the elections nowadays. I believe the Sorani dialect has declared its domination and it is the Kurdish standard language. Primary school students need to study in their local dialect and be prepared to study in the Kurdish standard language in secondary schools and at university. The most important point is that the Kurdistan Regional Government have a long-sighted language planning to unite Kurdish dialects in the future. I completely agree with most of the interview participants who think that the issue of the Kurdish language standardization will not be resolved in the near future (Taeab, 2013; S.Ali, 2013; Mahmud, 2013; Hama-amin, 2013; M.Karim, 2013; O.Ahmed, 2013), because there is not any structured language planning by the Kurdistan Regional government for the Kurdish language.

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