

Language Ideologies and the Process of Borrowing European Words into the Kurdish Language

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ABSTRACT

It is common knowledge that all living languages change over time, which occurs at three levels; vocabulary, grammar and phonemic system. One of the factors that makes languages change is the contact of languages with each another. However, it does not mean that the Kurdish language did not borrow vocabulary from other languages, especially European ones, as there are many European words related to natural sciences and technology that entered the Kurdish language (Bucak, M, 1988:104), and over time became a part of the Kurdish language that one could not distinguish between them and the original Kurdish vocabularies. These words have gone through a process of assimilation that of adopting the grammatical and phonological features of the Kurdish language. However Arabic has been always more influential on Kurdish in comparison to other languages due to the factor of Islam religion and its holy book of Quran which is written in Arabic and the affiliation of the majority of Kurds to it.

The researchers have conducted this study to find out whether the factor of "language ideology" as identified by Michael Silverstein (1979:193); Woolard, K.(1998:4) affects Kurdish intellectuals and makes them borrow lexicon from English and European languages into Kurdish.

To reach convenient results, the researchers have conducted a qualitative empirical study and the data have been collected by interviewing 15 intellectuals from different academic disciplines from the inhabitant of Duhok city. The collected data have been submitted for deep content analysis.

The outcomes of the study have shown that language ideologies play a considerable role in borrowing words from European languages, especially the English language.

Keywords: Language Ideologies, Borrowing European Words, Kurdish Language.

I.0 Introduction

Doubtless, all living human languages change over time, and the Kurdish language is no exception. When languages come into contact and interact with each other, a process of borrowing words follows and causes a change in the language. The change includes both processes; addition and reduction of words in languages.

The Kurdish language has always been in contact with its neighboring languages; Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. And accordingly, a notion of lexical borrowing came up (Khorshid, 1983: 21). However, the degree of borrowing varies from language to language, depending on the degree of how developed is the linguistic system of the recipient language.

Foder, I. (1965:34), thinks that the status of a language whether conservative or not plays a considerable role in deciding the degree of borrowing. If the language is conservative, the language is less likely to be influenced, the more conservative the language, the more isolated from the influence of other languages, the same result in the case of geographical isolation. It is also worthy to be mentioned, that sometimes the influence of contact between two languages brings about the birth of a new language just like Pidgin and Creole languages (Aitchison, J. 1981: 192).

In general, there are a bundle of reasons which make speakers of some languages borrow words from other languages. However, the systems of languages whether phonologically, syntactically, or morphologically are not the same; therefore, borrowed words go through a process of assimilation. This means, that if the borrowing new word contains some sounds that are not in the recipient language, then the sounds will go through a process of change towards integration.

The following words which are borrowed from Arabic are such examples:

The Arabic word ميراث "mirath", which means heritage, changed into "mirat" in Kurdish, and the sound /θ/ changed to /t/.

Sometimes the grammar of the recipient language also is involved in the process of integrating, the new borrowed words will be assimilated into Kurdish by adding to them some suffixes from the recipient language to match its grammatical structure; in other words, they will be submitted to the grammar of recipient language, which is also the case with Kurdish. Below we see a least of some European borrowed words borrowed into Kurdish. The words have been assimilated into Kurdish in a way that one does not recognize them to be foreign words. These words have adopted Kurdish endings.

English borrowed vocabulary after a simulation process in Kurdish Transcription

English vocabulary	borrowed	After a simulation process in Kurdish	Transcription
physic		Fiyza	/fizya:/
Lamp		Lampa	/lampa/
number		Nimra	/nimra/
Budget		Buce	/budʒə/
bus		Pas	/pa:s/
Passport.		Pasaport	/pasaport/

(Wahbi, T. 1966)

The phenomenon of using European vocabulary, especially English, has begun to take an advanced dimension since the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government, where the use of European vocabulary has increased on a large scale, whether at the level of individuals or radios and televisions, as well as in social media. , These words began to invade the names of shops, housing projects, and even the names of restaurants.

The absence of a unified standard Kurdish language and the new status of the Kurds make the Kurdish language changes easily, especially if we take into account the political and cultural freedom in the region. The establishment of this region as a semi-independent autonomous region from the central government of Baghdad grants the Kurds political as well as somehow cultural freedom. (Cook, 1995: 8081).

When the Kurds began opening schools and using the Kurdish language as language instruction in schools, there were not enough books available in the Kurdish language for pupils. Thus, teachers began to translate the content of Arabic textbooks into Kurdish for the pupils (Goering, July 31, 2003), and these individual translations caused more variation within Kurdish in the absence of a unified standard Kurdish language. The impact of being free from political oppression has been reflected in the works of Kurdish authors in two ways; a free way of thinking as well as freedom of selecting the words they want to use.

This new free atmosphere opened a new horizon for intellectuals and academic Kurds to use European words in both oral and written language. However, this does not mean that the Kurds have not used English words in the Kurdish language during the previous era of Saddam's regime, but, at that time, most of the borrowed English

words were mainly related either to natural science or technology where in most cases they found their way even in the Arabic language too.

If we go back to some literary works of Kurdish poets like Khani in 18 Century and read his work of "Mem u Zin" we will find a lot of Arabic and to some extent Persian loan words. The reason behind that borrowing was not the shortage of those vocabularies in the Kurdish language at that time rather than the factor of prestige; Mastering the Arabic language at that time was considered to be prestigious, Khani tried to tell the readers that he is not only mastering these languages but also can integrate them in his poems and literary works. Furthermore, the factor of Islamic Ideology played a considerable role, because using Arabic words from Quran made its verses more influential to both listeners and readers. There are also some periods in Kurdish history where the Kurds academic has removed Arabic and Persian words from Kurdish and replaced them with Kurdish words, therefore, sometimes one can see two or more words in Kurdish which give the same meaning (Hajo, Z. 1982: 49). Having such examples from the history of Kurdish language make us assume that language ideologies related to national and identity and prestige concepts play a role in borrowing words from European languages.

II.0 Research Question

This researchers want to find out whether the factor of "language ideology" as identified by Michael Silverstein (1979:193); Woolard, K. (1998:4) "set of beliefs about language articulated by users as rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use", affects Kurdish intellectuals and make them borrow lexicon from English and European languages into Kurdish.

II.1 A general Approach to the term language Ideology

The term Language ideology, nowadays, has become increasingly acknowledged by linguists and researchers. This term originally was used by American anthropologists in plural form as language ideologies, and sometimes was used as Linguistic ideology. It is worthwhile saying, that despite the increasing importance of this field of study, there is no unified consensus among sociolinguists on the definition of this term.

One of the most accepted definitions among linguists is that of Michael Silverstein (1979:193) cited by Busch 2013: 83; Woolard, K. (1998:4) defines language ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use". Thus, language ideology to them represents the relationship between the structure of a language and the beliefs of the users of that language, meaning cultural presentation whether explicit or implicit. Woolard also emphasizes that "ideologies of language are not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and epistemology" (Woolard 1998: 3). Furthermore, urges us —not to distinguish ideology of language from ideology in other domains of human activities because they are entwined with each other. Woolard (1998:5-7) classifies the ideologies into four categories:

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

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

According to the above-mentioned definitions, a common language ideology is an idea of defining people by the variety of the language they use. This includes different aspects of spoken and written language. This means that the manner of speech of a people is a sign of their social affiliation. This ideology links language to use to social or political interest and power. It reveals the relationship between the beliefs of speakers and the society and cultural system they belong to. It is the relationship between the structure of a language and the beliefs of the users of that language, meaning cultural presentation whether explicit or implicit.

II.3 Limitation of the study

This study focused mainly on the academic people who speak English or have at least basic knowledge of English language. Some were teaching members of Duhok

University other were absolvents of Bachelor degree. Uneducated participants were excluded, because educated people are mainly concerned with this issue.

II.4 Data collection

To obtain accurate information regarding the objectives of this research, the researchers prepared seven questions that should be directed to the participants through a direct interview or by responding to the questions in a written way. The questions were of an open-ended nature so that the participants could express their opinions without any kind of restriction (see appendix). And since the aim of the research is to reveal the reasons why Kurdish academics are worthy of quoting words from European languages, especially English, the questions have been formulated in a way to find out the stance of the person being interviewed towards using European words in Kurdish, the implicit motives behind quoting and borrowing vocabulary from European languages.

II.5 Selecting the participants and conducting the interviews

Fifteen academics were chosen randomly and voluntarily and from a variety of disciplines. Some of the participants expressed their willingness to be interviewed, so they were interviewed and their opinions were written directly below the questions that were designated for this purpose, while the rest preferred to express their opinion in the written way and hand it over to the researchers later because they were busy and did not have the appropriate opportunity to conduct the interview. The questions were written in both English and Arabic because most of the participants were fluent in Arabic.

After all interviews have done the Arabic and Kurdish answers to the interview questions have been translated into English, names of the interviewee are kept secret, instead they were given names as P.1, P2.e.t.

II.6 Method of data analysis

To analyze the data and obtain reliable results, we have applied the "summarizing and inductive" method suggested by Mayring, Ph. (2010) for qualitative research; the method focuses on the statements whether are related to the research question or not. The extracted meaning units which were taken from the collected data related to the research question are entered into the analysis table, which could be summarized in the following point:

- First step: Selection of Analysis units
- Second step: Paraphrasing of the extracted units
- Third step: Generalization of the paraphrasing under the Abstraction level
- Fourth step: First reduction through selection, canceling the

- Fifth step: Paraphrases with the same meaning
Second reduction through clustering construction,
Integration of paraphrasing
- Sixth step: Re-verification of the summarized category system
on starting material

III. Outcomes of analysis:

A summary of analysis results of the statements made by the participant of the study

- P1. A. Kurds prefer borrowing words from English than neighbouring languages because it's international language and has prestige
- P2. A. English words are alternative to missing Kurdish words.
 B. Turkish and Persian are not desired, Arabic is acceptable, because it is international
 C. Culture contact
 D. Impact of international organisation
 E. Education
- P3. A. Borrowing words from English is a sign of Kurdish development,
 B. Words are borrowed when needed words
 C: Social media cause their spread
 D. English should be a source for borrowing
- P4. A. Indo-European words match Kurdish
 B. English words expand mantel field, enrich the language, a sign of good
 C. Education, and give the image of being international
- P5. A. Foreign words make it easy to understand idiom.
 B. Turkish words should be excluded
 C. Words from Persian are allowed
 D. English words don't fulfill the demand yet.
 E: Globalization, organization, and business cause borrowing from European languages
- P6. A. Kurds like European words
 B. Words similar to the Kurdish are easier to be used.
 C. Direct contact to Arabic causes borrowing from it
 D. Education causes borrowing from European languages too.
 E. Kurds are opened to other culture
 F. Immigrant brought European words into Kurdish.
 G. English is international language

- P7. A. Using English or Arabic words is good
 B. is a tool for development
 C. Kurds find Latin and English words proper to be used.
- P8. A. English helps people to find jobs
 B: Kurds admire European cultures.
- P9. . A. English is good alternative for Kurdish missing words,
 B. and words inter Kurdish through: Technology, media, and published Articles
- P10. A. European words enrich Kurdish, are alternative to missing
- P11. A. European words enrich Kurdish;
 B. Therefore words from Kurdish family of language are Preferred to be borrowed
 C. Technology and media cause borrowing.
- P12 A. Borrowing words from the international language “English” is good.
 B. International businesses, culture exchange.
 C. And adding to them that Kurds accept European culture
- P13. A. European words should be borrowed, because they belong to the same family of
 the Kurdish language.
- P14. A. Kurds accept English words
 B. They also attract customers.
- P15. A. Using English is a sign of modern life
 B. It’s better than using Arabic or Turkish words which affected the Kurdish negatively
 C. English is International
 D. It links the Kurd to the world
 E. Using English words related to the political freedom
 F. Kurds are interested in European cultures.

III. 1. Discussion

If we have a look at the above-mentioned outcomes of the statement made by the fifteenth participant, we find out that all of them evaluate the use of English words in Kurdish positively, See the outcomes statements of the following participants above: (P1, A),(P2.A), (p3, A), (P4.A),(P5, A),(P6, G), (P7, B), (P8, A), (P9, A), (P10, A),(p11, A), (P12, A), (P13, A), (p14, A), (P15, A &C)

All the participants have shown positive reactions to using English words. The notion of highly evaluating the use of English words as a result of being an international language dominates the whole reasons given by the participants. The argument "English being an international language" is a language ideology, which is " the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine, 1998: 255 cited by Milroy 2004:166).

Other arguments of the participant are related to the culture, they link between culture and land and the process of borrowing, Arguments like "Kurds like European culture, or admire it" has been mentioned by more than one of the participants, see (p6, E), (P8, B), (P12, C), (p15, F), the participants wants to say that they accept European culture because they are opened to other culture, therefore they use their words in Kurdish language. They link between culture, ideas and linguistics, which is an ideology being referred to by Irvine. (Ibid),

Some of the participants have exposed that words should not be borrowed from neighboring languages like Turkish and Arabic, because these languages have negatively influenced the Kurdish language, and others have expressed their willingness to borrow words from English and other European languages. It is worthy to be mentioned here that speech is the work of society through initiatives of its individual (Whitney, W, D. (1971: 18). Such statements denote that there is an implicit ideology that makes the Kurdish speakers accept borrowing from English and other European languages and rejecting from Arabic and Turkish, see (P1.A), (P2.B), (P3, C), (P4, A), (P5, B), (P7, C), (P8, A), (P9, A) ; (P10, A), (P11, A),(P12, A), (P13, A), (P14, A),(P15, B)

Some participants mentioned that borrowed words should belong to the same family of languages because they better fit Kurdish than from another family of languages (P4, A), (P11, B). This is an implicit ideology of otherness. Here we see how the interviewee links between language and identity, language is not only means for communication, it is a symbol of the people's identity (Fasold, 1984:247). Words could be borrowed from Indo-European languages which the Kurdish and Persian belong to, therefore we see one of the participants saying that "Words are allowed to be borrowed from Persian", (P5, C).

All the arguments mentioned by the participants, comply with the definition of language ideologies by Michael Silverstein (1979:193) as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use".

V. Conclusion

As the researchers assumed that language ideology may have impact on increasingly entering European loan words into Kurdish, the research outcomes show a clear cut results denoting that ideologies play a considerable role in this phenomenon, which could be summarized and classified under the following categories:

1. The ideology of internationalism
2. The Ideology of otherness
3. The ideology of belonging to the Indo-European family of languages.

Through these ideologies the Kurdish intellectuals want to have better connection to European countries and their languages and cultures, which at the same time makes the process of reading and understanding books in English easier, especially at the advanced levels of education.

It is also worthy to be mentioned that the finding of this reached might be of advantage for studies related to developing Kurdish language towards standardization by taking into consideration the issue of language Ideologies, and not only focusing on linguistic factors, because language is not only a tool for communication.

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Appendix

An extract (sample) from 25 pages of the first stage of data analysis of this study

participant	Line	Extract Unit	Paraphrase	Category	Reduction
P.1	7	Foreign words are frequently used in Kurdish language. They are very common nowadays even among the laypersons.	Everybody uses foreign words in Kurdish, even lay persons use them.	Kurds people frequently use foreign words in Kurdish language.	C1 Kurdish speakers who speak more than one language have no difficulty borrowing words from other languages, and mostly its English
	19	Therefore, I think that language is no more limited to the speakers of its own speech community since there exists a bigger speech community which is online and which cannot be constrained by geography anymore. Accordingly, I think that Kurdish native speakers who can't find the equivalent will resort to substitutes which are commonly used in multimedia language.	People who speak more than one language can find a proper word from other language if they don't have it in their language, while people speaking one language have no such possibility, however, they can get use of social media.	It is easier for people speaking more than one language to find an alternative word when it doesn't exist in Kurdish than those speak only one language.	because it's an international language ,it has prestige among people and are preferred than using words from neighboring languages.

A extract (sample) from 7 pages of the second stage of reduction through clustering construction, and Integration of paraphrasing

ID	Category	Paraphrasing	Generalization	Reduction
P1	C1	Kurdish speakers who speak more than one language have no difficulty borrowing words from other languages, and mostly its English because it's an international language ,it has prestige among people and are preferred than using words from neighboring languages.	Kurdish speakers speaking more than one language have no difficulty borrowing words from other languages and almost it is English. Because it's international and has prestige, and is preferred than borrowing from neighbouring languages.	Kurds prefer borrowing words from English than neighbouring languages because it is international language and has prestige.
P2	C2	English Words are alternative to missing Kurdish words.	English are alternative to missing Kurdish words, but Turkish and Persian have negative effect on Kurdish words. - Turkish and Persian have negative effect on Kurdish - English and Arabic are good International	English words are alternative to missing Kurdish words. - Turkish and Persian are not desired. - Arabic is acceptable, because it is international - culture contact - Impact of International organisation - Education
		Turkish and Persian loan words have negative effect on Kurdish	Turkish and Persian loan words have negative effect on Kurdish	
	C4	Borrowing from International languages; English and Arabic is good thing.	English and Arabic as. international language are acceptable	
	C5	The case of having English words in Kurdish is something positive.	Repetition	

	C6	The impact of translation, culture contacts, and international organization made English words to come into Kurdish.	Culture contact and international organisation caused borrowing English words	
	C7	Using foreign words in Kurdish is not good.	Irrelevant	
	C8	English is used in wring researches.		