KURDISH SELF-DETERMINATION: LINGUISTIC ASPECT

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The article aims at considering the linguistic aspect as one of the factors influencing the Kurdish self-determination. **Methods:** The comparative analysis of Kurdish and Turkish languages was conducted. **Findings and Conclusion:** The ethnic and linguistic diversity of people, united by such concepts as the "Kurdish people" or "people speaking the Kurdish language", is used as an excuse to keep this multimillion people divided among several states. In addition, it hinders it to exercise the right to self-determination and obtain cultural and linguistic autonomy. However, modern linguistics allows clearly defining the Kurdish language as an independent language, which opens up new prospects for the socio-cultural and political development of the Kurds.

Keywords: Kurds. Kurdish language. Turkish language. Turkey. European Union.

AUTODETERMINAÇÃO CURDA: ASPECTO LINGUÍSTICO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O artigo visa considerar o aspecto linguístico como um dos fatores que influenciam a autodeterminação curda. **Métodos:** Foi realizada a análise comparativa das línguas curda e turca. **Constatações e Conclusão:** A diversidade étnica e linguística dos povos, unida por conceitos como "povo curdo" ou "povo de língua curda", é usada como desculpa para manter essa multimilionária dividida entre vários estados. Além disso, o impede de exercer o direito à autodeterminação e obter autonomia cultural e linguística. No entanto, a linguística moderna permite definir claramente a língua curda como uma língua independente, o que abre novas perspectivas para o desenvolvimento sociocultural e político dos curdos.

Palavras-chave: Curdos. Língua curda. Língua turca. Peru. União Europeia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the total number of Kurdish speakers amounts to more than 35 million people (as of 2008), including 20 million in Turkey, 6 million in Iraq, 7 million in Iran and 1 million in Syria (Osipov: 2010). At the same time, scholars studying the Kurdish issues (regional geography or linguistics) note the following paradox. Some researches claim that the Kurds and Kurdish language belong to one of the ancient cultures, while others state that the Kurds are characterized by ethnic and linguistic disunity which would not have allowed the formation of the Kurdish nation and made its emergence impossible at least in the near future. Although language is significant, it is not the only factor for the sociocultural and political identification, as well as the self-identification of some people and nation. Language is part of the historical socio-cultural and political process. The problems of sociocultural and political self-identification are broader than linguistic ones since they cover a wide range of socio-political and other values, attitudes and prospects. In the case of the Kurdish language, the influence of political and ideological factors was so great that this ancient language having written references in Greek sources was persecuted (it was prohibited to speak Kurdish in public, not to mention the prohibition of using it as the language of education and printing) and even denied the status of a language as one of the minor dialects of the Turkish language. The historical development of this language and its linguistic study, especially in comparison with the Turkish language (the largest number of the Kurds live in Turkey where the language-related problems are the most acute), allows getting a general understanding of the current situation with the Kurdish language. If one considers the linguistic factor in a more general context, namely, the Turkish-European relations, they will be able to explain the current changes and determine prospects for the further socio-cultural and political development of the Kurds.

2. METHODS

This study is complex in nature since it comprises various methods of linguistics and sociocultural and political science. Using the means of linguistics (phonetic, grammatical and lexical), a comparative analysis of the Kurdish and Turkish languages was conducted. The main discrepancies regarding the nature, dialectal division and historical development of these languages were revealed (Kurdoev: 1957; Tsukerman: 1962; Yusupova: 1991; Smirnova, Ė͡i͡ubi: 1999; MacKenzie: 1961-1962; Paul: 2008; Roy: 2011).

The Kurdish language was studied in the context of socio-cultural and political factors of decolonization, the formation of nations and attempts to modernize traditional societies in the Near and Middle East according to the European model (primarily in Turkey, but also in other countries where large Kurdish communities reside).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THE KURDISH LANGUAGE

From the standpoint of linguistics (developed in parallel with the language itself), scholars began to study the Kurdish language in the late 18th century. However, practical interest prevailed over academic aspirations for a considerable time. When Europeans, including Russians, started to discover new territories, it stipulated the need to interpret communication, compile dictionaries, etc. Gradually, the data accumulated allowed singling out the group of dialects spoken by people living within the borders of *historical Kurdistan* and combining them into a special group, i.e. the Kurdish language. Being related to the Persian language, Kurdish retained its independence and developed alongside the Persian language in the middle of the 19th century. Foreign borrowings were always subordinate to the Kurdish basis and did not have a significant impact on its inner structure (Lerkh: 1856). It has been established by linguistic means (phonetic, grammatical and lexical) that the Kurdish language belongs to the *Western Iranian* languages of the *Indo-European* Language Family. Modern linguists disagree only in minor details, namely a certain group or the further dialectal division of the language. A common viewpoint is that there are two main dialects in the Kurdish language – *Kurmanji* (the northwestern dialect spoken by more than 70% of the Kurds) and *Sorani* (the southeastern dialect). The smaller dialects are Gorani, Luri, Zaza (or Zazaki), etc. (Prokhorov: 1973). The Soviet and Russian linguistics combined the dialects of Kurmanji and Zaza into the northern group (Turkish Kurdistan, some areas of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Transcaucasia and Russia) and formed the southern group of the largest dialects spoken in Iran and Iraq (Sorani, Suleimani, Mukri and Synėi conditionally unified by the term "Sorani"; Gorani, Avramani, Kandulai and Bajalani considered under the term of "Gorani"). There are also less-studied dialects of Kermanshah, Luri, Feyli, Laki, etc. (Kurdoev: 1957; Tsukerman: 1962; Yusupova: 1991; Smirnova, Ėĩĩubi: 1999).

The British scientific community does not doubt the existence of the Kurdish language (rather than a dialect of another language). The latter is defined as the Western Iranian

language belonging to the Indo-Iranian family and spoken as the main language in Kurdistan, the third-largest Iranian language following Persian and Pashto having from 20 to 40 million speakers. Its two main dialectal groups, including northern (Kurmanji) and central (Sorani), are supplemented by a third group – *southern* or southern Kurdish language (sometimes called Pahlavani or Kermanshah) comprising several *understudied* dialects (Encyclopaedia Britannica: n.d.a). In the early 1960s, one of the most prominent British-Iranian linguists D.N. MacKenzie developed a similar model of dialects (and their subgroups) of the Kurdish language close to Persian and it was accepted as a classic one. The Indian scholar S. Roy (2011), determining the number of Kurds at about 30 million people and divided the Kurdish language into two main groups – Kurmanji (consisting of the northern Bakhdinani and southern Sorani) and Gorani. The leading German researcher of Iranian and Kurdish languages L. Paul (2008) conducted his own historical linguistic (both morphological and phonetic) analysis and discovered the significant closeness and mutual influence of the Kurdish language and the Balochi language belonging to the northwestern group of Iranian languages. He revealed many similarities between the Kurdish language and the southwestern Iranian languages. Despite many phonetic, phraseological and syntactic similarities, there are clear linguistic boundaries between the Kurdish language and the Zazaki (the eastern Anatolia region) and Gorani dialects (southwest Iran and northwest Iraq). These dialects are not part of the Kurdish language, but they are two Western Iranian languages. Being different from Kurdish, they mutually influenced each other for a long time. As a result, the scholar defined the core of the Kurdish language which includes the northern (Kurmanji), central (Sorani) and southern (Kermanshah) dialects, excluding Laki (Paul: 2008). The prominent linguist Ph. Kreyenbroek (1994) emphasized that the Kurdish language is only similar to Persian, as part of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family, but differs from Arabic and Turkish languages, just like English differs from French.

Within the framework of Kurdish linguistics (as well as the linguistics of any other language), extensive literature written in the Kurdish language is of great importance. The oldest literary works that have come down to us belong to the 16th century (Allison: 2007) and even the 10-11th century (Kurdoev: 1957). As expected, the sources of the Kurdish literary language were the largest dialects – Kurmanji (the literary form based on the Hakkâri speech) and Sorani (the literary form based on Suleimani). The graphics used for recording, as well as the language itself, is diverse since they have been historically influenced by different linguo-cultural environments. For several centuries, the Kurdish writing system existed based on the Arabic alphabet (Isaev: 1979) that is still used in some dialects of Iraq, Iran and Syria.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the number of graphic systems increased. The active development of Iranian and Kurdish studies in the USSR led to the creation of Kurdish writing based on the Armenian (1921), Latin (39 letters in 1927) and Russian (1946) alphabets. Representatives of the Kurdish intelligentsia who emigrated from Turkey to Syria had created the Kurdish alphabet consisting of 33 letters based on the Latin alphabet by the end of the 1920s. Later they made a third Latinized version comprising 31 letters in Turkey. In general terms, the Arabic script is currently used for writing in Sorani, and Latin is selected for Kurmanji. The first known grammar of the Kurdish language was published at the end of the 18th century (Garzoni: 1787). According to Soviet scholars studying the Kurdish language, its grammar remained largely fragmented despite a significant number of surveys published before the first half of the 20th century (Kurdoev: 1961).

The Kurdish literature also includes works created by the Kurds in other languages, primarily Arabic and Persian, which were created in the 15th century. In addition to prose and poetry, there are also religious and historiographic works, including, the history of the Kurds (for example, the texts of Sheref Khan written in the late 16th century). The first Kurdish newspaper "Kurdistan" was issued in Cairo in 1889 (in Kurmanji using Arabic letters) and was published after long breaks in Geneva and London until the end of World War I. While studying the Kurdish literature, J. Blau noted that it had been developing (first of all, the addition of the author's reflection to classical subjects) since the 1920s due to the acquaintance of the Kurdish writers with the European and Russian literature during a period of certain cultural freedom in Iraqi Kurdistan under the British mandate. A similar situation was typical of Syria under the French rule. In the period between World War I and World War II, a group of Kurdish intellectuals in the "Hawar" magazine discussed the capabilities of the Kurdish language as a modern literary language, using the Latin alphabet modified for the needs of the Kurdish phonetics (Blau: 2017). Since the 1920s, Iraqi Kurdistan and Syria not only developed the Kurdish literature but also contributed to the "Kurdization" of the Kurdish language to *purify* it from lexical and morphological borrowings from the languages of neighboring dominant cultures (Blau: 2017).

THE TURKISH LANGUAGE

The above-mentioned facts about the Kurdish language can be somehow attributed to the Turkish language (as well as Persian, but we will consider only Turkish as most Kurds live in Turkey and the language problem is the most acute there). According to the same

sources, modern Turkish as the official language of the Republic of Turkey and, together with Gagauz, Azerbaijani, Turkmen and Khorasan, belongs to the southwestern (or western Oghuz) branch of the *Turkic* languages, which are a subfamily of the *Altaic* languages. A special country study conducted for the United States Congress in 1996 demonstrated that the Kurds, as a separate ethnic group, are divided according to class, regional and religious features *like* the ethnic Turks (Metz: 1996). Within the Ottoman Empire, whose central part was transformed into the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Turks constituted only one of many linguistic and ethnic groups. In the newly formed Republic of Turkey, the Turks were still in the majority even after a series of ethnic cleansings (including the deportation of all ethnic Greeks, except for those living in Constantinople). This fact was reflected in the Treaty of Lausanne as Turkey's obligation not to hinder the free cultural development of non-Turkish minorities. Modern scholars disclosed four periods in the linguistic development of the Turkic literary language as a descendant of the so-called Old Anatolian Turkish: the old (Anatolian and Ottoman) Turkish language (between the 13th and 16th centuries); the middle (Ottoman) Turkish language (between the 17th and 18th centuries); the new (Ottoman) Turkish language (the 19th century); the modern Turkish language (the 20th century) (Kononov: 1978; Encyclopaedia Britannica: n.d.b). From the linguistic viewpoint, Ottoman Turkish was a developed literary language in the late 19th century but it was very difficult to master, especially in terms of spelling. The reason was the strong influence on its Turkish and Ural-Altaic basis of two other language families – Indo-European (Persian) and Semitic (Arabic). The phonetic, grammatical and etymological foundations of these families are different, and the Arabic alphabet (with elements of Persian) was well suited only for Semitic. In addition to a large number of Arabic and Persian borrowings amounting to 80% (religious discourse from Arabic; the discourse of art, literature and politics from Persian), the Ottoman Turkish language adopted set expressions, idioms and syntactic structures (especially from Persian) (Metz: 1996; Lewis: 2002). These features distinguished Ottoman Turkish from numerous dialects of the Turkish language spoken by poorly educated (often completely illiterate) people and turned a language reform into a means of uniting the Turkish nation (rather than separating it). Turkish nationalists started to discuss this issue in the first half of the 19th century (however, they did not agree on its possible solutions) and 11 linguistic principles (including the return to the morphology of obsolete affixes) were formulated before the victory of the republic by an active Kemalist, Ziya Gökalp. Their implementation was initiated by M. Kemal only in 1928. Alongside a series of other national-republican modernist measures,

radical and rapid linguistic reforms aimed at *replacing the alphabet and purifying its vocabulary and grammatical structures from external borrowings*.

The Turkish linguists were involved in reforms and developed a new alphabet based on the Latin alphabet that became phonetically superior to the previous Arabic one, which facilitated the study of the language and contributed to the rapid spread of literacy. Symbols of the new alphabet matched the sounds of speech used by educated inhabitants of Istanbul, i.e. the new Turkish language was built over its Istanbul literary dialect. However, vocabulary and semantics faced a difficult situation that has not been resolved to this day. Under the influence of revolutionary nationalism, the campaign for *purifying* the Ottoman Turkish language took an extreme and scientifically ill-founded form, managed to solve some problems but gave rise to new ones. On the one hand, the Turkish Language Association (Türk Dil Kurumu) was founded in 1932 to organize the collection of native Turkish words, phrases, idioms, etc. as an alternative to foreign borrowings. During the following year, thousands of such new words were recorded that were extracted from old texts and dictionaries, as well as from colloquial dialects. In 1934, the first list of new Turkish words was published. In 1935, newspapers began to use these words in all areas of life (Metz: 1996). However, most of the words collected were already archaic and out-of-use even in common speech. In addition, their dialectal diversity caused the need to select a substitute for Arabic or Persian words from a long list of synonyms in Turkish dialects. For instance, instead of the commonly used Arabic word kalem ("quill"), it was suggested to choose one from the following list: yağuş, yazgaç, çizgiç, kavrı, kamış, yuvuş. To find a synonym to the word hediye ("gift"), there is a list of 77 words (Lewis: 2002). On the other hand, borrowings happen because there are no correspondences in some native language. Indeed, the national language was lexically rich but its words described everyday life, which was not enough for the presentation of scientific, religious and artistic concepts. Thus, an alternative source of "real" Turkish words was new formations, i.e. complex, tricky to pronounce and difficult to understand structures made up of old semes. The most active promoter of such a new language was the new government consisting of non-professional scholars and non-linguists. A famous journalist and writer of that period, Nurullah Ataç, invented and introduced hundreds of neologisms, including yanit ("answer") or sorun ("problem"). He even joked about his ignorance which was supposedly ineradicable at his age. The use of such words caused difficulties and even chaos, which had made communication more difficult by the middle of 1936, and, finally, M. Kemal had to intervene again. At the beginning of 1937, he (anonymously) published a pamphlet on geometry, whose terms were invented and are

regularly used now. As a radical solution, he proposed to resume the use of some borrowings, firstly, from European languages (mainly from French and English since the 1960s) and, secondly, scientific and technical terms. The justification for adjusting the language reform was pseudoscientific and political: the authorities referred to the Sun Language Theory, according to which the Turkish language was the "mother of all languages" and, therefore, all borrowings were Turkish in their origin. If it was impossible to find a suitable Turkish equivalent for a foreign word, such a borrowing could be used without violating the purity of the Turkish language. In the early 1950s, some borrowings of a non-technical nature began to appear in official publications more often (Metz: 1996).

The above-mentioned language reform brought different results. In the political sphere, it broke with the imperial Ottoman heritage, its aristocratic education and literary language, as well as with the Islamic legacy. According to M. Kemal, this process laid the basis for moving from a backward Asian life to an advanced European style. The exclusion of the corresponding vocabulary, almost completely borrowed from non-Turkish languages, and its replacement with new words together with political reforms reduced the linguistic gap between social strata and contributed to a gradual transition to a unified language and national literature. However, new problems appeared in addition to the solved ones (see a detailed linguistic analysis of the Turkish language reform and its difficulties in Kononov: 1978; Lewis: 2002). There was a significant problem with the lexical underdevelopment and insufficiency of modern Turkish which could not express and describe a wide range of phenomena and processes. This difficulty is inherent in any language that naturally develops in the environment of other languages, constantly exchanging information with them, especially in lexical terms. One more problem was the alienation of the Turkish youth in the post-war period from the significant Ottoman literary and linguistic heritage. Although some pre-republican works were transliterated in the new alphabet, their vocabulary and syntax were poorly understood by those who speak modern Turkish. In addition to the mentioned scientific borrowings in the technical sphere, the Arabic and Persian vocabulary and even Persian syntax started to return to religious texts due to a new wave of political Islam in the 1990s (Metz: 1996). Being one of the most prominent Türkologists, J. Lewis described the history of the Turkish language in his separate monograph on the language reform and referred to it as a "catastrophic success". The transition from the past (Ottoman, imperial, multicultural, Islamic and conserved) backwardness to the innovations of the modernizing West was effective. This break was regarded as the "purification" of the "original" Turkish language. It was described as "catastrophic" because the language became impoverished

as a means of cultural expression and broke with its cultural and linguistic past from the linguistic perspective (Lewis: 2002).

THE LINGUISTIC ASPECT AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES FOR TURKEY

Despite many common linguistic aspects, the interaction of the Turkish and Kurdish languages had and still has a clear political nature. The formation of the Turkish nation as the basis of a sovereign state that emerged after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire assumed (following the example of the French Revolution) the establishment of single citizenship that would abolish all other (religious, family, national) differences and express itself in a *single language*. This idea turned out to be very effective and the Turkish Republic signed the Treaty of Lausanne on completely different conditions than the Sultan government joined the Treaty of Sevres facilitated by the successes of the Turks and inspired by national self-determination. After the collapse of the multilingual and multi-confessional empire, not all of its nations, peoples and ethnic groups gained independence in their historical territories. The different level of their development from the position of the Western European sociology and political science (nation, people, ethnos, ethnic group, tribe, etc.), as well as regional and geopolitical changes in connection with the formation of Soviet Russia, allowed colonialists to establish the boundaries of new states and explain their presence as a factor contributing to the formation of new nations (in particular, Arab) (Dyurre: 2019). The reforms conducted by M. Kemal were republican but democratic in nature. In 1926, Turkey adopted the Civil Code based on the Swiss legislation. In 1928, the church was separated from the state. Since the formation of the secular state, women had received voting rights and all the Turkish surnames had been replaced with feudal titles and other forms of address. However, the linguistic aspect of nation formation took on an extremely harsh form, i.e. new Turkish was fixed as the only state language and all other languages were banned. Since some cultural rights were established for minorities under the Treaty of Lausanne, nationalists began to pursue a policy of assimilation and even denied the very existence of minorities. This is primarily related to the largest minority, namely, the Turkish Kurds. It was announced that they were "mountain Turks", the Kurdish language and even wearing the Kurdish national clothes in public places were banned (since 1932), the very words "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" were removed from print and common use. Of course, there was no chance for mass media or education in the Kurdish language (Dobaev: 2003; Lazarev: 2005). This policy was met with resistance, including armed riots, which was not only harshly suppressed by the Turkish

army but was also accompanied by the massive resettlement (since 1934) of the Kurds from places of their traditional and compact residence to new cities where they found themselves surrounded by the Turkish majority. Therefore, the literary development of the language (mainly Kurmanji in the Latin alphabet) started in the mid-1920s outside the territory of Turkey.

Between 1950 and 1971, the bourgeois-democratic development of Turkey also liberalized the use of the Kurdish language, albeit only spoken, which had a positive effect on the formation of a new generation of the Kurdish intelligentsia who again tried to create print media. After the military coups of 1971 and 1980, legislative bans and deportations resumed. Only Halil Turgut Özal (Prime Minister since 1983 and President since 1991) began to violate these taboos. He mentioned the Kurds in his speeches and supported the law that lifted the ban on the use of the Kurdish language and Kurdish materials in 1991. The most important factor in these changes was the submission of an official application by Turkey to join the European Economic Community in 1987. For the same purpose, Ankara ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1991 but made several serious reservations (Ergin: 2018).

The legal aspect is generally important in the issue under consideration and the Kurdish problem in Turkey needs to be resolved, first of all, at the constitutional level (Barkey, Kadioglu: 2011). On the one hand, the fourth Constitution adopted in 1982 resumed civil administration instead of the military one functioning after the coup. On the other hand, strict control over the freedom of speech, organization and political activity was introduced. Several generations of politicians have tried to amend this Basic Law. The current leader of Turkey R.T. Erdoğan came up with initiatives to draft a new constitution, which has raised the corresponding expectations of the Turkish Kurds. Since that time, several referendums have taken place, at which several constitutional amendments were adopted but they did not change the situation with the Kurdish language and did not solve the Kurdish problem in general. As a result, Barkli and Kadioglu concluded that the Basic Law of Turkey does not comply with the EU requirements, including the legal obligations assumed by Turkey under the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. This document was adopted at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Paris between November 19 and 21, 1990. It put an end to the confrontation on the continent due to changes in foreign policy made by the new Soviet leadership. According to this Charter, the state guarantees the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities, and persons belonging to them have the right to freely express, preserve and develop this identity (OSCE: 1990).

Publications in the Kurdish language appeared in 1991. At the beginning of 2000, training (in private institutions) and television and radio broadcasting were conducted in the Kurdish language at the initiative of the European Union. Under R.T. Erdogan's rule, Kurdish broadcasting has become around-the-clock and on state channels (Roy: 2011). Today, four universities have curricula in the Kurdish language, and it has become possible to conduct election campaigns in Kurdish since 2013. However, the European Commission highlights legal restrictions in Turkey, namely in relation to the possibilities of teaching in the mother tongue in primary and secondary school (Manis: 2016). Europe offers a certain variability in building a national identity. Some European countries have the same state language, for example, German or French, and Russian in Belarus. At the same time, such countries preserve their sovereignty and nationality, cultural and political identity (Makhmutov, Litvak: 2020).

CONCLUSION

From the viewpoint of modern linguistics, the Kurdish language is an independent language and is directly opposite to Turkish in some aspects. However, it is declared a part of the Turkish language for political reasons (apart from unique phonetics, Kurdish is inflectional and analytic, while Turkish is agglutinative and synthetic according to the Greenberg Scale).

The Kurdish language was not acknowledged, was severely persecuted and even banned during the formation of different nations in the Near and Middle East in the 20th century. This happened in Turkey and Iran within the policy of assimilation. In the first case, it was about a secular republic; in the second case, it concerned monarchy and then Shia theocracy (most Kurds are the Sunnis). In the territory of Iraq, the Kurdish language was less oppressed but under Saddam Hussein, the Kurds were subject to the most brutal repression since World War II, including the use of chemical weapons. In addition, the Iraqi Kurds went through deportation, i.e. expulsion from oil-bearing regions, primarily Kirkuk (as well as areas bordering on Iran in connection with the Iran-Iraq War), where the Arabs from other regions of Iraq were resettled. It was Iraqi Kurdistan that became the first region where the Kurdish autonomy was formed (the capital of Erbil) and enshrined in the Constitution of Iraq (2005). There the first elections to the regional Kurdish parliament were held and *Kurdish became the state language*.

However, the language problem is still closely connected with the ethnic one: the Kurdish language is defined as the language of the Kurds living in historical Kurdistan, who are regarded as speaking Kurdish. Even linguists who undoubtedly define the Kurdish language as a separate and independent language often use political arguments for generalization. Thus, S. Roy noted that the Kurds lacked a common language and professed different religions that hindered the formation of Kurdistan alongside their inner disagreements. L. Paul believed that the Kurdish language was not a stable and standardized linguistic unit, representing a continuum of closely related dialects. To determine the nature of Kurdish and its singularity, it is necessary to consider both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. It is more surprising that there are groups belonging to one or another religious cult or confession among modern peoples and even nations understood as civil communities living in Europe or the United States. K. Alison emphasized that the language should be standardized and unified to be real from the Kemalist perspective and that is why the Kurdish language cannot exist. The same can be said about Arabic and even English which also contain dialects that are mutually incomprehensible to those who speak only one of them (Allison: 2007). Among those supporting the free cultural development of the Kurds, some people consider the Kurdish language non-existent, referring to "some outstanding linguists". For example, they cite S. Cigerli (1999) who is not even a linguist.

Since almost everything said above about the Kurdish language can, to varying degrees, be attributed to Turkish, Persian and other languages, there is a *political* use of the linguistic aspect in the self-determination of the Kurdish people. At the same time, the existence of a people as a historical socio-cultural community depends not only on the linguistic factor. On the contrary, the existence and development of any language are critically influenced by political factors.

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