

Socio-Regional Variations in the Conversation of Kurdish People in Kalar

**Fareeq Ali Hassan (Assistant Instructor)
English Department , College of Education , Kirkuk University**

1.INTRODUCTION

As a matter of fact , language variation is affected by many social and regional factors. Accordingly , different dialects are spoken in different regions and communities. Hall (1969 :339) states that “ language varies not from one individual to the next , but from one subsection of a speech-community (family, village ,town) to another.”

Abercrombie(1973 : 8) says : “ there are some communities in which pronunciation carries indices of social standing as well as of geographical origins . This variation is clearly applicable to the language spoken in **KALAR** which is characterized by its geographical distinctive location as it is surrounded by the town of **DARBANDEEKHAN** from the north whose inhabitants speak standard Kurdish , **JALAWLA'** from the south whose inhabitants speak Arabic and Kurdish , and **KHANAQEEN** from south-east whose inhabitants speak a Kurdish dialect mixed with or greatly affected by Persian language. So, the language variation used there is greatly expected to be of distinctive socio-regional features .

In relation to the social characters in one community , Hall (1969:239) emphasizes that " people of different classes , occupations or cultural groups in the same community show variations in their speech " which are also applicable to the conversation of Kurdish people in **KALAR**.

2.Rule-Governedness

The socio-regional variations used in **KALAR** are not haphazard , but ruled by certain phonological rules which are in turn determined by the situations and some related social factors such as: age, sex, social class and educational background .

Rivers (1981:236) states that “ the variation to which Wilkins and Halliday refer is rule-governed or learned behaviour which is appropriate in some circumstances, but not be in others.” That is, the variants are not used in all words or in all positions, but according to certain rules . For example, the variant [t] which is used in stead of [d] occurs only in initial position and never comes in central or final position as stated in the table below :

Variation Table

<i>The variants</i>	Initial position	Central position	Final position
/w/ → /b/ (/ w / in stead of /b/)	+	+	-
/d/ → /r/	+	-	-
/t/ → /d/	+	-	-
/ʒ/ → /g/	-	+	+
/ʒ/ → /d/	-	+	-
/f/ → /w/	-	+	-
/w/ → /f/	-	+	-
/w/ → /b/	-	+	-
/w/ → /p/	-	-	+
/w/ → /b/	-	-	+
/s/ → /t/	-	+	+

2.1 Age

Like other societies, people of KALAR are different in using their own socio-regional variants . “ in one study of the interaction between ethnic group and age in Boston, a particular pronunciation of [o] was found to be associated with elderly Jews, and with the Italians of all ages. The younger members of the Jewish community who were mostly highly educated , had abandoned it , perhaps because they regarded it as non-standard”.(Aitchison 1992:114)

Unlike the young people, the elderly people in KALAR excessively use the variant [ʒ]in stead of [g] in all situations as it represents the commonest characteristic feature of the common people there , especially the old aged.

2.2 Sex

Kurdish people in KALAR whether men or women use these socio-regional variants , but somehow in a relatively different way . Aitchison (1992 : 116) reports that “ the most consistent difference found between men and women within the western world is a tendency for women to speak in a way that is closer to the prestige standard”.The same thing is applicable to the young ladies , especially university students who tend to avoid these variants in other towns and cities and sometimes in KALAR .They want to show that they are of higher prestige and more educated than the others .

On the contrary to women , men usually stick to use these variants proudly everywhere as part of their originality and culture .Wardaugh (1977:199) quotes Labov (1981:184) saying “ whenever there is stratification by style and class in linguistic usage , one can also expect differences between men and women , with women showing higher values for preferred variants than men , that is a preference for forms that have more prestige in society”.

2.3 Social class

As regards the social class , KALAR inhabitants as a whole tend to be in the same boat in using these variants . High ranking people who are well-known by all are similar to the common people .

Wardaugh (1977: 140) states that “ the more complicated factor of all is social class membership”. But this is not applicable to KALAR inhabitants because the social classes there are similar in many things with very slight difference , not as complicated as other societies.

2.4 Educational Background

Kalarian inhabitants who belong to different educational background use different socio-regional variants according to their levels of education.

In relation to the variants used in the city of Boston , Fromkin (1983: 315) states that “ the educated southerner has no use for an *r* except at the beginning of a word”. Like the manner, the highly educaed people in KALAR who are very rare avoid using the variant [ʒ] which is used very commonly in stead of /g/ thinking that it is distinguishably the symbol for uncivilized people . Whereas others , especially the common people use all the variants very freely and proudly as they think that they are integral part of their originality and culture.

2.4 Situation

As far as this factor is concerned , two situations are dealt with : formal and informal according to which variation is altered . “ Speakers of a language alter their phonology to suit a particular situation ,often without realizing it .For example, someone from Devon is likely to pronounce the / r / in a word such as *farm* when chatting with friends at home , but would probably attempt suppress it in a formal interview in London”.(Aitchison 1992: 112) . And like the manner,Carter(1982 : 57) states that “there are many different ways of pronouncing Standard English (i.e.different ‘accents’), one of which is particularly prestigious in England and Wales , namely ‘ Received Pronunciation’(RP)” . Unlikely , Kurdish inhabitants in KALAR use their own socio-regional variants very proudly almost in all situations in stead of Standard Kurdish as they do believe that it is really a prestigious dialect especially when being in the town (District) .

The District-Director in his governmental office or anywhere else is extremely like the common people in using the same socio-reginal variants .This is exactly what Richards et al (1985 :226) report by saying “the speakers of a sociolect usually share a similar socioeconomic and /or educational background” . This great similarity Makes standard Kurdish very rare even by the elite of the people except when they have a Tv interview in the District .The same thing with the female educated people ,more particularly the female university students who tend to speak standard Kurdish when conversing outside the District as in Sulaimania and Arbil cities or when they want to get jobs outside the District.

3.The Variants Used in KALAR

Many strange and noticeable variants are used by the Kurdish people in KALAR regardless of the previously mentioned social factors. This makes a strange visitor to the District unable to distinguish between the educated and uneducated , the poor and the rich and so on .These variants are used to indicate different functions and in different positions according to certain phonological rules as follows :

3.1 Initial position

A. / w/ in stead of / b /

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/we xwa/	/ be xwa/	by God : “swearing”
/ we šerefim/	/be šerefim/	by my dignity: “ swaering”
/we serçaw/	/ be serçaw/	“with pleasure: “ agreement”
/we xêrbên/	/ be xêrbên/	welcome : “greeting”
/we seyare/	/ be seyare/	by car : “ means”
/we çaw /	/ be çaw/	with eye : “means”

/we pare/	/ be pare/	by money : “means”
/we xoî/	/be xoî/	happily : “somebody’s state”

II. /d/ instead of /r/

/dahatin/	/ rahatin/	“adaptation”
/dayxist/	/ rayxist/	“laid down”

c. /t/ in stead of /d/

/têm/	/ dêm/	“I’ ll come”
/têt/	/ dêt/	“He’ ll come”

3.2 Central Position

many variants are used in KALAR in central position such as /f/ in stead of/w/ , /w/ instead of /b/ and [ʒ/ instead of /g/ and /d/ as follows:

A. /f/ in stead of /w/

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/heft/	/ hewt/	“seven”
/neft/	/ newt/	“oil”
/mizgift/	/ mizgewt/	“mosque”
/xeftin/	/ xewtin/	“sleeping”

B./w/ instead of /b/

/xewer/	/ xeber/	“news or idea”
/qewr/	/ qebr/	“tomb”
/sewr/	/ sebr/	“slow or patience”
/ewrê/	/ ebrê/	“cut”
/ewa/ or /ewat/	/eba or ebat/	“take”
/ewê/ or /ewêt/	/ ebê or ebêt/	“may be or possible”
/ewête/	/ ebête/	“be or become”

III.

/ʒ/ in stead of /g/

/eʒer/	/ eger /	“if”
/meʒer/	/ meger/	“if not”
/neʒbet/	/ negbet/	“completely unlucky”
/seʒekan/	/ segekan/	“the dogs”



D. / ʒ / → / d /

/beʒbext/	/bedbext/	“unlucky”
/beʒkar/	/bedkar/	“ill- doer or evil”
/beʒnaw/	/bednaw/	“ill-reputed”

3.3 Final Position

Kurds use some variants absolutely in final position such as / ʒ / in stead of /g/ and others very restrictedly such as /w/ in stead of /b/ or /p/ as follows :

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
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A. / ʒ / → / g /

/seʒ/	/seg/	“dog”
/reʒ/	/reg/	“root”

B. /w/ → /p/

/xraw/	/xrap/	“bad / out of service”
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C. / w/ → /b/

/qesaw/	/qesab/	“butcher”
/hesaw/	/hesab/	“account”

D. /m/ → /w/

/neem/	/neew/	“half”
/peem/	/peew/	“fat or ghee”
/deem/	/deew/	“side”
/tom/	/tow/	“seeds”

3.3.1 Strange Variation

That strange variation is clearly represented by the variant /s/which is characteristically a distinguishable socio-regional variant used in KALAR because variation usually indicates substituting one sound for another. But what makes this variant noticeable is its substitution for two sounds in final position . It is usually applicable when the word ends in (...ye) as follows:

Kalarian Dialect Standard Kurdish Meaning

A. Question :

/ewe kês/ /ewe kêye/ who is that ?

Answers:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1./ ewe meedyas/ | /ewe meedyaye/ | <i>That is Midia</i> (a female proper name) |
| 2./ewe wiryas / | /ewe wiryaye/ | <i>That is Wiria</i> (a male proper name) |
| 3./ ewe bras / | /ewe braye/ | <i>That is a brother</i> |
| 4./ewe mamostas/ | /ewe mamostaye/ | <i>That is a teacher</i> |

B. /sermas/ /sermaye/ *It is cold*
 /germas/ /germaye/ *It is hot*

In relation to Grammar , the variant /s/ is used more distinguishably in association with some specific tenses and cases as follows:

3.3.1.1 Present Simple

The variant /s/ is used restrictedly in the final position substituting /t/ in the suffix /...eti / as in the examples given below:

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/ ehmed brsêsi/	/ehmed brsêti/	<i>Ahmed is hungry</i>
/ew xoşêsi/	/ ew xoşêti/	<i>He/She is happy</i>

So the variant /s/ is used in stead of /t/ to indicate (is + adj.).

3.3.1.2 Present Perfect

The variant /s/ is used also in stead of /t/ in the final syllable represented by / ... tewe/ accompanied by changing the gliding consonant /w/ and the two vowels in both sides into / O/. Thus, /t/ becomes /s/ and /..ewe/ becomes /o/ and as a result /...tewe/ becomes /so / as in the examples below:

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/ali çoso/	/ali çotewe/	<i>Ali has gone</i>
/sur boso/	/sur botewe /	<i>It has turned red</i>
/reş bosol	/reş botewe/	<i>It has turned black</i>

So the variant /s/ here indicates : (have/has + p.p.)

3.3.1.3 Demonstratives

The variant /s/ is well distinguished in demonstratives denoting singularity as below :

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/emese/	/emete or emeye/	This is it
/ewese/	/ewete or eweye/	That is it

3.3.1.4 possession

The same variation is well reflected in possession including only the possessive pronouns denoting singularity, i.e. his , her and its as clarified in the examples below :

<u>Kalarian Dialect</u>	<u>Standard Kurdish</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
/ewe brakeyesi/	/ewe brakeyeti/	That is his brother That is her brother He/She is his/her brother
/xetay xoyesi/	/xetay xoyeti/	It is his/her mistake

So variation occurs only with the mentioned possessive pronouns and never occurs in the case of possessive ('s) , that is to say : [That is Ahmed's or Nada's brother] in stead of [That is his/her brother] .

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Summary and Conclusion

The foregoing pages reveal the following :

- 1.Variation is an inevitable socio-regional and linguistic phenomenon in KALAR.
- 2.Some variants are used more commonly than the others .
- 3.Variation represents the sense of originality and prestige for most of the people in KALAR .
4. Common people consider Standard Kurdish inferior to the socio-regional dialect used in KALAR , but the opposite with the educated females especially the university students .
- 5.Variation occurs mostly in consonants and very rarely in vowels.

Notes

¹This variant is used very commonly in Sulaimania in pronouncing the proper names like [Ehme ʒ] for Ehmed and [Muhemme ʒ] for Muhemmed .

² The term high ranking people does not refer the most educated people , but to the wealthiest families who have large properties.

3 This is the only socio-regional variant used in Kalar in this way.

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ملخص البحث الموسوم

المتغيرات اللفظية الاجتماعية والإقليمية في محادثة الكرد في كلار

المدرس المساعد : فريق علي حسن

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية – كلية التربية – جامعة كركوك

يتناول هذا البحث المتغيرات اللفظية في محادثة الكرد في مدينة كلار مقارنة بالكردية الفصحى . وهي دراسة في مجال علم اللغة الاجتماعي تتناول المتغيرات اللفظية تبعا للموقع الجغرافي للمنطقة والعوامل الاجتماعية المؤثرة في استخدام هذه المتغيرات اللفظية كالعمر والجنس والطبقة الاجتماعية والخلفية الثقافية للمتحدثين . كما تتناول الدراسة المواقف التي تستخدم والتي لا تستخدم فيها هذه المتغيرات اللفظية فضلا عن مكانة هذه المتغيرات عند اهل المنطقة .