



## Linguistics Prejudice in Kurdish

Aryan Sidiq Aziz \*

University of Halabja, Halabja 46018,  
Kurdistan Region, IRAQ

Rasti Ayub Hama Saeed

University of Halabja, Halabja 46018,  
Kurdistan Region, IRAQ

---

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received: December 13, 2022

Revised: January 10, 2023

Accepted: February 8, 2023

---

#### Keywords:

Intolerance,

Language

Race

Society

Religion

---

### Abstract

Linguistic prejudice is a hidden message used by speakers of a language in daily conversations, either individually or in groups, through implicature and is fixated later as an idiom. Linguistic prejudice, an output of negative stereotypes and bountiful appearance in utterances, excludes others from goodness and virtues to show itself as excellent and perfect. Now, the Kurdish language is developing and enriching in the linguistic field. Its linguists and researchers always try to purify it from other languages' hegemony and effect to put it on the right track and make it stand firm before other languages, particularly those of neighboring nations. But, mainly for the sake of serving this noble purpose, they followed the same mistakes ways and policies of other languages. Therefore linguistic prejudice has been noticed in various aspects and fields. This research tries to show linguistic prejudice and its types. What do we mean by linguistic prejudice, and what are its types? Does linguistic prejudice is used in language? What is the relation between intolerance of speech and racial, social, religious, scientific ... etc. discrimination? Understanding that relationship will help us to apprehend the general attitude of human beings better than before, which use those solid utterances as they have agreed on them like a collective agreement. The research will pose sufficient examples for each type and discuss each in depth and detail.

---

**To cite this article:** Aziz, A.S., Saeed, R.A.H. (2023). *Linguistics Prejudice in Kurdish*. Journal of Linguistics and Social Sciences,1(1), 15-19

---

## INTRODUCTION

In this study, we have attempted to put forward the relationship between prejudice and language and the different types of prejudice reflected through language. This paper tries to answer the question, "has linguistic prejudice made the Kurdish language violent?". In doing so, it deals with several aspects related to prejudice, such as prejudice definition, linguistic prejudice, and aspects of linguistic prejudice, which include language, rhetoric, religion, ethnicity, and gender. The study uses the descriptive-analytical method.

## PREJUDICE

Prejudice is a dangerous social phenomenon, especially if it leads to violence. It has been there throughout human history until now at different levels depending on the relation between different societies, religions and religious followers, political parties, minorities, and geographical regions (Macmu'e Min Muwalifin, 1993:9). The word "prejudice" consists of the prefix "pre" meaning "before" and "judice" meaning "deciding" which together make up the meaning "preconceived opinion or decision" (Tajfel: 1981: 141). Therefore, people with prejudice make preconceived decisions and do not want to see other people's versions of the truth; this further indicates that prejudice is an inner feeling or opinion to always see oneself as being right even if they are proved wrong with proof.

---

\* Corresponding author: Aryan Sidiq Aziz

Author, University of Halabja, Iraq. ✉ Email: [Aryan.aziz@uoh.edu.iq](mailto:Aryan.aziz@uoh.edu.iq)

© 2022 The Author(s). **Open Access.** This article is under the CC BY SA license ( <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

## Linguistic Prejudice and Linguistic Discrimination

Since both linguistic prejudice and linguistic discrimination are similar in meaning, some scholars have chosen to use the latter (Silva & Maura, 2002: 153-161), which is expressed through language in the forms of linguistic humiliation or hate speech.

Since both overlaps in meaning, linguistic prejudice is indirect discrimination of others to offend the opposite side.

### Aspects of Linguistic Prejudice

An individual in a society and cosmopolitan societies is always in interaction with others, resulting in linguistic consequences related to bigotry beliefs expressed through language (Allport, 1954, p. 9). Language is one of the aspects that is influenced by prejudice, and people, no matter their language, dialect, ethnic background, beliefs, nationality, nation, academic and scientific background, are proud of the language and linguistic style they speak (Thorne, 2005: 152) and differentiate themselves from others through language and take pride in it (Hamasaïd, H. H., & Saheb, B. M. 2020, 71-81).

### Prejudice through Language

Generally speaking, speakers consider their languages the best, the most genuine, and the holiest. For example, the Jews consider their language the language of God and angels; the Arab Muslims believe that Arabic is the language of the people of Paradise: a more extreme group among them think that it is the language of God, whereas it is one of the most recent of the Semitic languages.

There are still others who say that whoever loves God loves the Prophet and whoever loves him loves Arabs and the Arabic language (Althaealibi 2008:25). To promote this bigotry further, they have created a saying in the name of the Prophet which goes, "Love the Arabs for three reasons: I am an Arab, the Holy Quran is in Arabic, and the language of the dwellers of Paradise is Arabic" (Al'clunî Alcrahî 1988:54). Additionally, Arabs call all others "Ajam" meaning meaningless (Ibn Mindhur 1330 A.H: 2825).

Aelius Galenus, the Greek philosopher and physician, says that other languages, in comparison to Greek, are like the barking of dogs or the croaking of frogs, which is why the term "barbarian" was used to refer to other languages. The Hebrew consider their language the language of God because he communicated with them in their language (Siyuty 1998: 322-332). Kurds also have this prejudice in language, and they date back their words etymologically to Kurdish origin.

Likewise, there is prejudice within Kurdish dialects and subdialects which is seen in-jokes and linguistic sarcasm. Speakers in Erbil make fun of speakers in Sulaimani and vice versa. Both sarcastically refer to Northern Kurdish, and the opposite is true. This prejudice can even be seen at the much lower scale of speakers from the city and the countryside who make fun of each other's way of talking. See more on the Kurdish language and dialects in (Mustafa & Aziz 2021: 20) and (Rasti and Hamid, 2020: 33-50).

### Linguistic Prejudice through Rhetoric

Universally, humans regard their language as the purest seen in conversations. Daily, we hear the following phrases:

1. When we do not understand someone, we ask them to *be rûnî qisebike*, "talk clearly," meaning be as clear as me; however, when the opposite person does not understand us, we say *xo be ferensî qise nakem* which literally means "I do not talk French."
2. At the end of talking, we say *be kurdî w be kurtî*, or *kurdî w koyî* or *kurt w kirmanc* or *be kurdîyekey*, which all mean "in simplest terms." They all indicate that Kurdish is clear, pure, and easy to deliver messages.

Such examples can be seen in other languages, such as English which use the phrase "in plain English." Similarly, Friedrich Nietzsche regards German as a clear language, and Voltaire regards French (Voltaire, 2017: 149). In the same way, Nali, the well-known Kurdish poet, considers Kurdish the clear language for self-expression, as seen in his poems.

### Linguistic Prejudice through Religion

Another form of prejudice can be seen in religion when followers of a religion disapprove of the religious views of another one. Religious bigotry is the worst since massacres have happened many times throughout history in the name of and through religion. The issuing of one religious ruling was all it took for one religion's followers to humiliate or slaughter and exterminate another one's followers. This sort of bigotry is not only between different religions. It can also be noticed within branches of the same religion. Therefore, in the east, there is linguistic and religious prejudice between Islam and Christianity, Sunni and Shia branches of Islam in Muslim countries, and Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox branches, which have bloody records in Europe history. The same can be said for other religions, but it is growing significantly among Muslims in general.

### Examples of Religious Linguistic Prejudice

1. Muslims use terms such as *kafir* "disbeliever," *dûrû*, *mûnafiq*, "hypocrite," *fasiq*, and "impious, venial sinner" to refer to people whose behavior is disapproving.
2. Phrases such as *Nwêjneker*, "non-prayer," *serrût* "a female who does not cover the head," *areqxor* "usual wine drinker" are used to mock, humiliate another person.
3. Words such as *agirperist*, "fire worshipper," *gawir*, "Christian," *xorparist*, "sun worshipper," *şaytanparist* "Satan worshipper" are used to refer to other religious followers and indicate that the speaker is the one on the right path.
4. In Kurdish, the word *jûleke* "Jew" is used as an idiom to mean coward or envious.

### Linguistic Prejudice through Gender

Linguistic prejudice can also be seen as related to biological sex both indirectly and directly (Rubrts & Rîţşard 2006: 264). Such prejudice is common in Kurdish society and rooted in idioms and proverbs.

Direct expressions:

1. *Wekû afret degrî*. "He weeps like a woman."
2. *Dellêy pîrejne debollênêt*. "He wines like an old lady."

The majority of such bad talks are against women.

1. *Pyawbe* "Be a man!", *pyawetîy* "Manhood!", *qsey pyawane* "Men's word/talk."
2. *Qse le qsey pyawanda meke*. "Don't interrupt men's talk."
3. *Pyaw qsedekat!* "Man promises!"
4. *Seg be afret nawerrêt*. "Dog doesn't bark at women." On the face of it, it appears to be an appraisal, but quite contrary, it isn't very comfortable.
5. *Afret bebezeyye, pyaw dillrreqe*. "Women are emotional; men are stone-hearted." This expression indirectly says that women are weak, whereas men are strong (Katherine, 2012. 383).

### Linguistic Prejudice through Social Classes and Racism

Linguistic prejudice in social class appears when the wealthy class does not approve of the poor class as an equal (Linton, 1936: 115). Also, there is another social class division between city people and countryside people who disapprove of each other (Elliott & Merrill, 1961, 635). City people support each other, as do the villagers. They may not have direct contact among themselves but similar interests (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, 18). Similarly, this prejudice is shown through language:

1. *Reşurrût* "the destitute," is used by the upper class to humiliate or offend the lower class.
2. *Ladêyî*, "the rural people," is used by the city people to refer to rural people and gives the meaning of being undeveloped.
3. *Şarî*, "the city people," is used by the rural people to refer to the urban people and gives the meaning of being incapable of doing many things.

### Linguistic Prejudice in Politics

A political party's member believes that his party is the best in terms of nationalism, whereas the others are bad and are covertly working with the enemies. This type of prejudice is mostly in underdeveloped countries, and the language used for it is as dangerous as the one used for religion.

Kurdish history shows examples of linguistic prejudice in politics that has led to the assassination of political party members.

### Several Examples of Linguistic Prejudice in Politics:

1. Year: *66 or 74*, which refers sarcastically to political parties
2. Day and month: *the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, and the 16<sup>th</sup> of October*, which are used sarcastically for actions done by political parties on those dates (Hamaamin 2021).
3. *Political disloyalty* which all parties use
4. *Party's slave*, which parties use against one another
5. *The bats*, which refers to the Islamist Extremist groups
6. *The Pajama wearer* is used to offend the lesser extreme Islamic groups such as the Kurdistan Islamic Union.

### CONCLUSION

In this study, we obtain that Prejudice is reflected in language, and language is a means for prejudice expression. Linguistic prejudice sometimes results in linguistic discrimination, especially in religion and politics. Linguistic prejudice is reflected in several aspects, such as language, rhetoric, religion, gender, social class, racism, and politics.

### REFERENCES

- Abd Almalik Bin Muhamad Bin 'Iismaeil Almulaqab Bi'abi Mansur Althaealibi. (2008): *Fiqh Allughat Wasiru Alearabiati*, Dar Alkutub Aleilmiati, Beirut, Lebanon
- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Diywanî Nalî, (1976). *Lêkollînewe û Lêkdaneweyi Mela 'Bidalkrîmî Mdrs û Fatî 'Bidalkrîm, Çapxaneyi Korî Zaniyarîyi Kurd*, Baghdad.
- Elliott, M. & Merrill, f. (1961): *Social Disorganization*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 4th ed.
- Esmâ'îl Bin Muhammad Al'clunî Alcrahî. (1988): *Kşf Alixfa  Wmzîl Alalbas 'Ma Aşithr Min Alahadith Ala Alsinat Alinas*, First Chapter, Third Eddition, Dar Alktib Alilmiye, Beirut, Lebanon
- Hamaamin, S. (2021). A new interpretation, of political idioms, from a semantic and pragmatic vision. *Journal of Garmian University*, 8(1), 82-92.
- Hamasaid, H. H., & Saheb, B. M. (2020). Challenges Experienced by Kurdish EFL Student-teachers during their Teaching Practicum. *Halabja University Journal*, 5(4), 71-81.
- Ibn Mindhur. (1330A.H.). *Lsan Al'rb*, Dar Alm'arf. Cairo, Egypt
- Jalaladin Siyuty. (1998) *Almzihr Fî 'Lum Allxe WaNwa'ha*, Almktibe Al'aasriye.
- Katherine A. Collins and Richard Clément. (2012). Language and Prejudice: Direct and \_ Moderated Effects. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. 31: 376 originally published online
- Linton, R. (1936): *The study of man – An Interaction*, New York. Appleton.
- Macmu'e Min Muwalifin (1993) *Azzwa Ala ALtaasub*, Dar Amwaj, Beriut, Lebanon
- Mahmood, R. R., & Mustafa, S. K. (2021). Meaning-Implication And Inference-Formation In The United States Presidential Press Conferences. *Journal of Language Studies*, 4(3.), 48-73.
- Mustafa, M. R., & Aziz, A. S. (2021). Passive voice in the Kurdish language, The Structure, and phenomena (Comparative Research). *Halabja University Journal*, 6(3), 18-30.
- Rubrts, M. & Rîşard W., (2002) :*Mdxl Alî 'Lm Alinfs Alactma'î* , Tircme Yasmîn H dad Waxirun , Altabb'e Alawlî , Dar Wail Llinsr , 'Amman, Jordan
- Saeed, R. A. H., & Hamid, T. S. (2020). A Phonological Appraisal of the Central Kurdish Writing Systems. *The Scientific Journal of Cihan University–Sulaimaniya*, 4(2), 33-50. <https://doi.org/10.25098/4.2.19>
- Silva, F bio Lopes da & Moura, Heronides Maur lio de Melo (2002). Introdu o. [Introduction.] In F bio Lopes da Silva & Heronides M. de Melo Moura (Eds), *O direito   fala – a quest o do preconceito ling stico* [The right of speaking – the question of linguistic prejudice], 2nd, revised edition (pp. 9–15). Florian polis: Insular

- Tajfel, H. E. (1978). *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel and W. Austin (Eds.) *Psychology of inter-group relations*.
- Thorne, S. (2005). Accent pride and prejudice: Are speakers of stigmatized variants really less loyal? *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics*, 12(2-3), 151-166.
- Voltaire. (2017): *Volter's Philosophical Dictionary*, Translated by: Youssef Nabil, Hindawi Foundation