

Kurdish Language Planning Policy: Linguistics or Politics!

Past, Present and Future

Contents	Page
Introduction	2
Definitions	2
Chapter 1.Past	4
Diagram 1 Geographical Model	4
Diagram 2 Historical Model	5
Diagram 3(a), 3(b) Indo-European Languages	6, 7
Diagram 4(a), 4(b) Indic Languages	8, 9
Diagram 5(a), 5(b) Kurdish Dialects	10, 11
Chapter 2.Present	12
Diagram 6 Kurdish Language Change	12
Table 1 Kurdish Language Functions	13
Identification of the Phenomenon	13
Discussion	14
Chapter 3.Future	16
General principles-Standardisation Project	16
Explanatory notes on Diagram 7	17
Diagram 7 Stakeholder Map	18
Diagram 8 PEST Analysis	19
Diagram 9 M Porter's 5 Forces	20
Diagram 10 SWOT Analysis	21
Analysis	22
Conclusion	22
Warning	22
Recommendations	22
Bibliography	23
Key Words	23
Author's bio data	23

Kurdish Language Planning Policy- Introduction

On the whole, the Kurdish Language is indigenous and non-official pan-Kurdistan except for the Iraqi polity, which is the focus of this case study. But the consequences of its planning there extend beyond its geographical international borders and the linguistic exercise into the larger issues of national rights, diversity and emancipation. As for the population of its speakers, they are significant in percentage terms but are considerable in absolute terms varying from a few to several to a score of millions. The status of Kurdish vernacular has varied from banned to tolerated to promoted to official language in the Iraqi polity, where it is viable now. Currently, the discourse is on the standardisation of the dialect clusters under the popular slogan of "unifying the Kurdish language". In reality, it is tantamount to imposing Sorani on Kirmanji and other dialects. Understandably, there is considerable resistance from the latter to the former's publicity efforts. Consequently, this golden opportunity to plan the language delicately is fraught with threats of dividing the people along dialectal, ethnographic and geographical fault lines. Hence, the need for an objective language planning, which promotes: Cultural and linguistic pluralism in line with political pluralism. Social inclusion, empowerment and mutual tolerance. Education in the actual mother tongue at school, especially at primary level. Integration, bearing in mind that acculturation of the Kurds has already occurred in the official languages in divided Kurdistan, namely Arabic, Farsi or Turkish. Those Kurds about to be assimilated by the latter languages will become difficult to integrate into Kurdish if it severs all links in vocabulary common by etymology from the other languages. Standardisation of the Kurdish dialects constitutes an impending challenge comparable to that of the recent political leadership of the Kurdish people, a bloody conflict, which divided them roughly along linguistic/ethnographic fault lines. At the international level, the Bangladesh/Pakistan bitter experience should be borne in mind. The Bangladeshi language movement led to the war with Pakistan and culminated in separation as another state in 1971. UNESCO has designated the 17th November as the International Day of the Mother Tongue since 1999. Hence, for a peaceful and amicable resolution, all major stakeholders' representatives should be involved in a democratic and objective process with international observers, who can arbitrate in case of disputes.

Definitions:

Culture: Armstrong (1963): "**Culture** is the sum of the answers to the typical questions and problems, which arise in a society, which are couched in the language of that society". Thus, language is like an external cover or mirror that reflects culture.

$$C = \sum A (P + Q)$$

↓
L

Where, C = Culture: (UNESCO) Mexico City declaration, 6th August 1982 "Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs".
A = Answers.
P = Problems.
Q = Questions.
L = Language.
Σ = Sum of.

Language and ethnicity: Ross, J A (1979): "Language becomes the most powerful single symbol of ethnicity as it serves as shorthand for all that makes a group unique". Wakelin (1972), p1: "Language...is assumed to imply a form of speech not on the whole intelligible to other languages"

Dialect: "...is variant, but mutually intelligible, form of one language". Wakelin (1972).

"Next, there is colloquial Arabic, the chain

Literature: (?): is the memory bank of culture.

Poetry: (Chinese Proverb): is the witness to history. If you do not study poetry, you will not be able to converse (Confucius).

Writing (Chinese Poet): is a matter for the thousands of years.

Language and Power. English and British Empire case.

Education (Paulo Friere, 2000): is the essence of practising freedom (Pedagogy of the oppressed).

Vernacular (UNESCO): is the mother tongue of a group, which is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking a different language.

Lingua franca (?): is a language, which is not the mother tongue of either of two speech groups in a communication event.

De jure norms (R T Bell): is a codification of the norms of usage for the variety based on the practice of some socioeconomic or geographical group.

De facto norms (R T Bell): is whether or not the language possesses norms of usage, which though uncoded, are accepted by the community.

A simple test of whether norms of this type exist would be to discover whether there were speakers, who were thought by the community to "speak well", individuals whose competence could be used as a check on standards and, who could therefore act as teachers of the variety.

Koineization:" The sociolinguistic phenomenon of consciously changing a dialect of a language by dropping its distinctive features".

Classicization:" The sociolinguistic phenomenon of consciously changing a dialect of a language towards its classical form".

Chtonolect: Language of the soil. For example, Kurdish dialects pan Kurdistan.

Sorani. Mackenzie, D.N. (1962), Note 790(1), p377 notes "**Badinani** Kurds tend to refer to all Kurds living south of the Gt.Zab as Sorani, although strictly speaking this name only applies to their immediate neighbours living between the two rivers Zab. The people of Suleimaniye province generally call themselves **Goran**, although this is properly the name of non- Kurdish-speaking people settled in the mountains to the north and west of Kirmanshah. In their turn these "Goran" Kurds refer to Badinani and north Kurds generally as **Zaza**, although this is particularly the name of a people(related to the Goran proper) living far to the west of Badinan in Anatolia. To add to the confusion , there is a group of Kurds called the "Seven tribes", or Goran, still speaking a dialect akin to that of the Kurds south of Suleimaniye province, now settled just within Badinan, on the north bank of the Gt.Zab below Akre".

Great (Upper) Zab and Small(Lower) Zab rivers, together with Sirwan (Diyala) are the major tributaries of the Tigris, which, together with the Euphrates, constitute the main arteries of Mesopotamia, the land of the two rivers. The former marks the boundary between Sorani and **Kirmanji**

Iranic is used to classify languages and/or ethnographies, including Afghanistan, in preference to Iranian, which may have political connotations.

Turkic, similarly, covers peoples of or originating from central Asia, including Turkey.

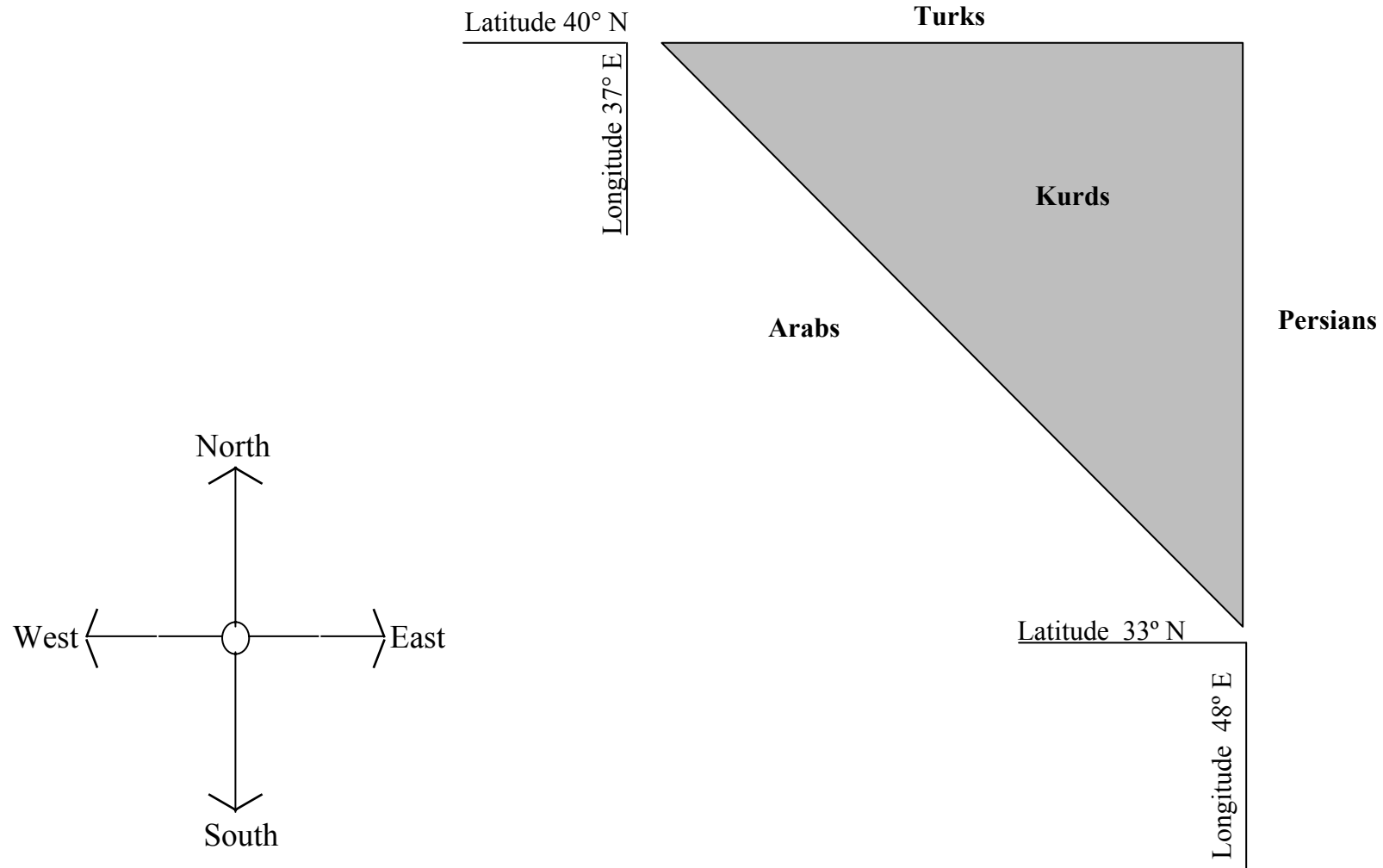
Indic, similarly, covers peoples of the Indian sub-continent, including Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Indo-European, similarly, covers peoples of the continents of America, Australasia, Europe and Asia. Hence, it is a super family of languages.

Language, Literacy and Minorities. Declaration of Recife, Brazil (1984)."If a language can not be used, it will not be learned and it is difficult to identify with a language one does not know. Not giving languages any official rights is an indirect way of killing them". Dr Tove Skutnab-Kangas. MRG Report, p30. Also, Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, Barcelona, Spain.6 to 9 June 1996. www.linguistic-declaration.org.

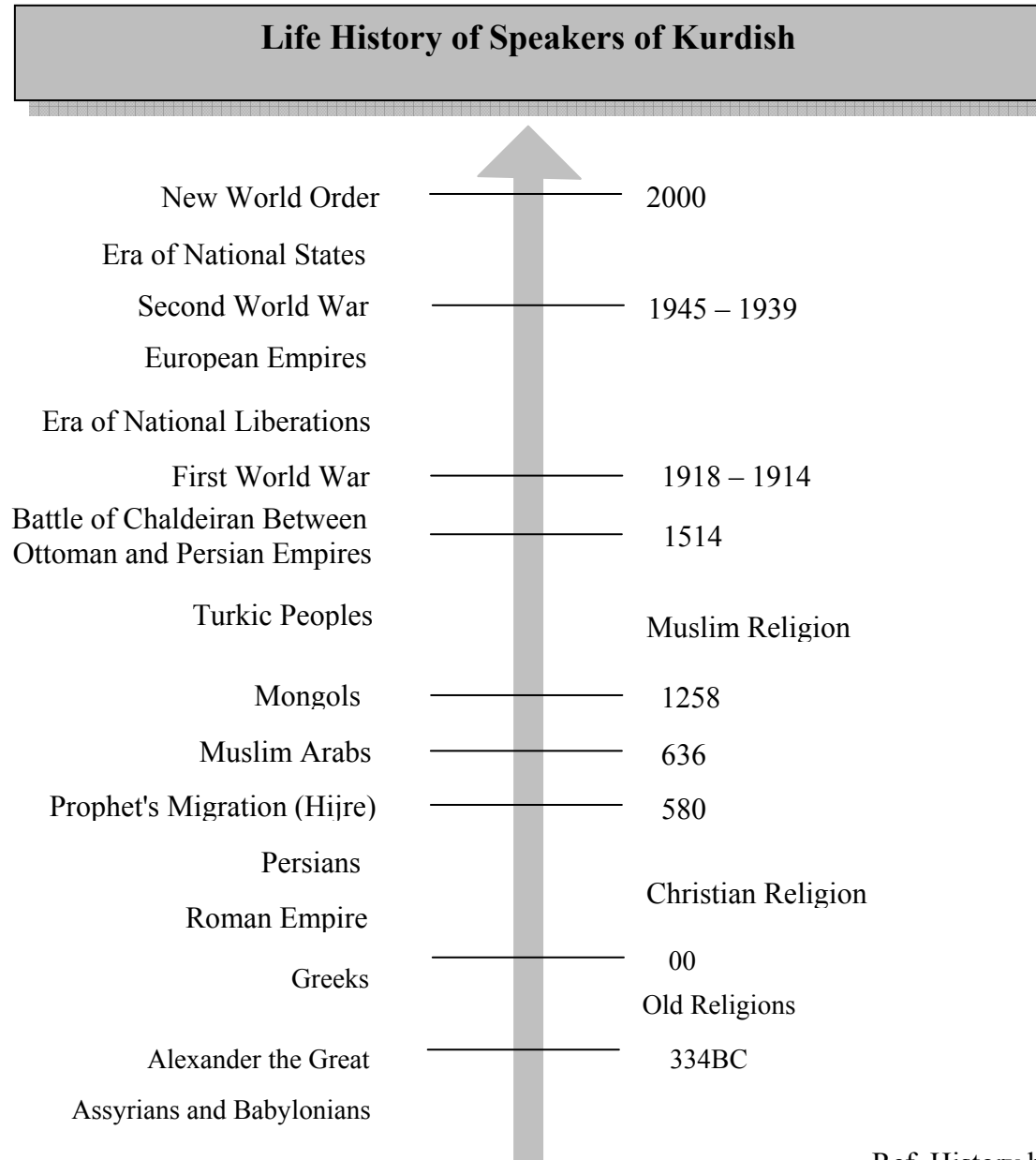
Kurdish Language Planning Policy- Past

Diagram 1. Geographical Model



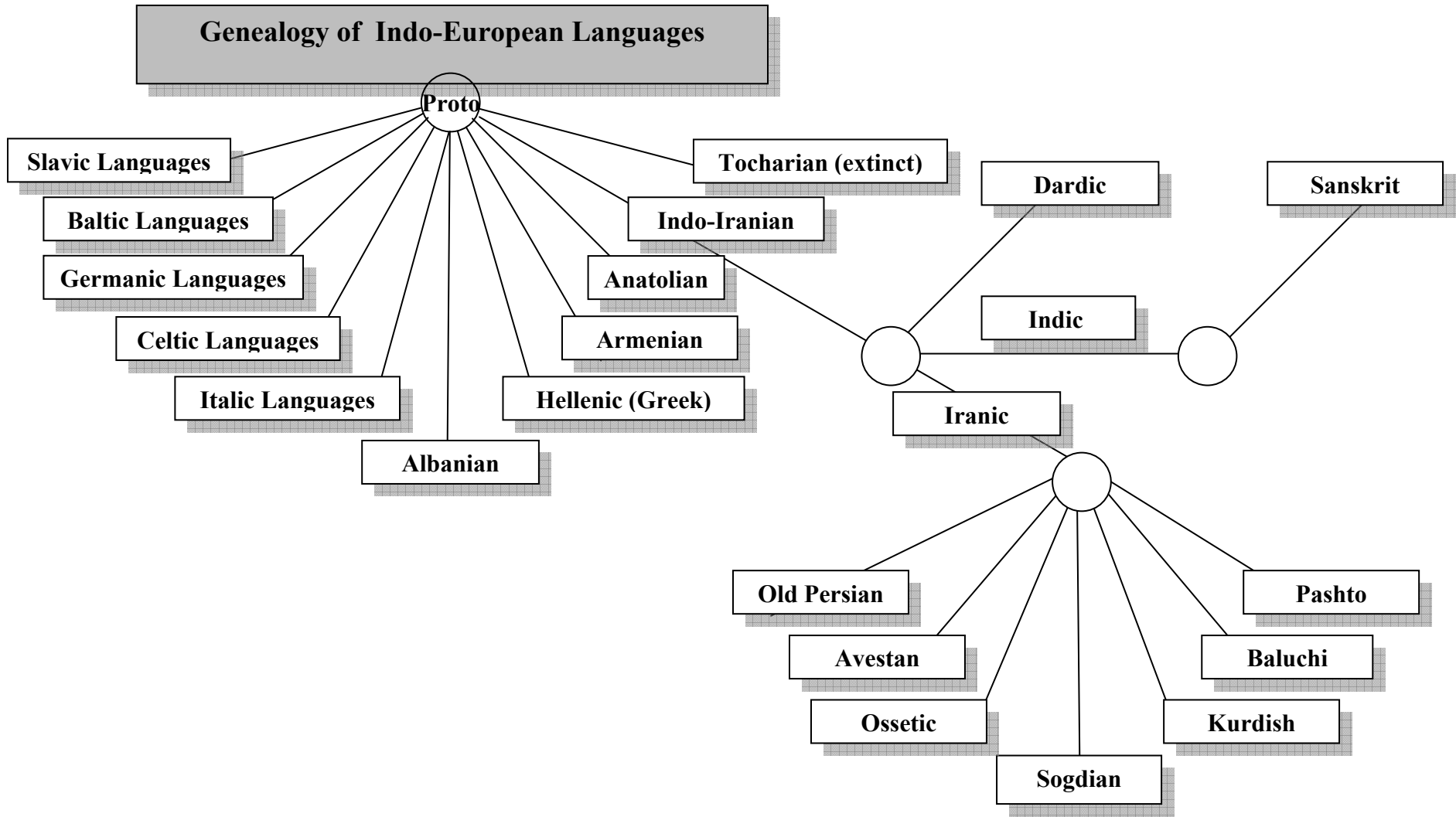
Ref. Geographical maps of the region (Data)
Diagram By: M T Ali (MCIL)

Diagram 2. Historical Model



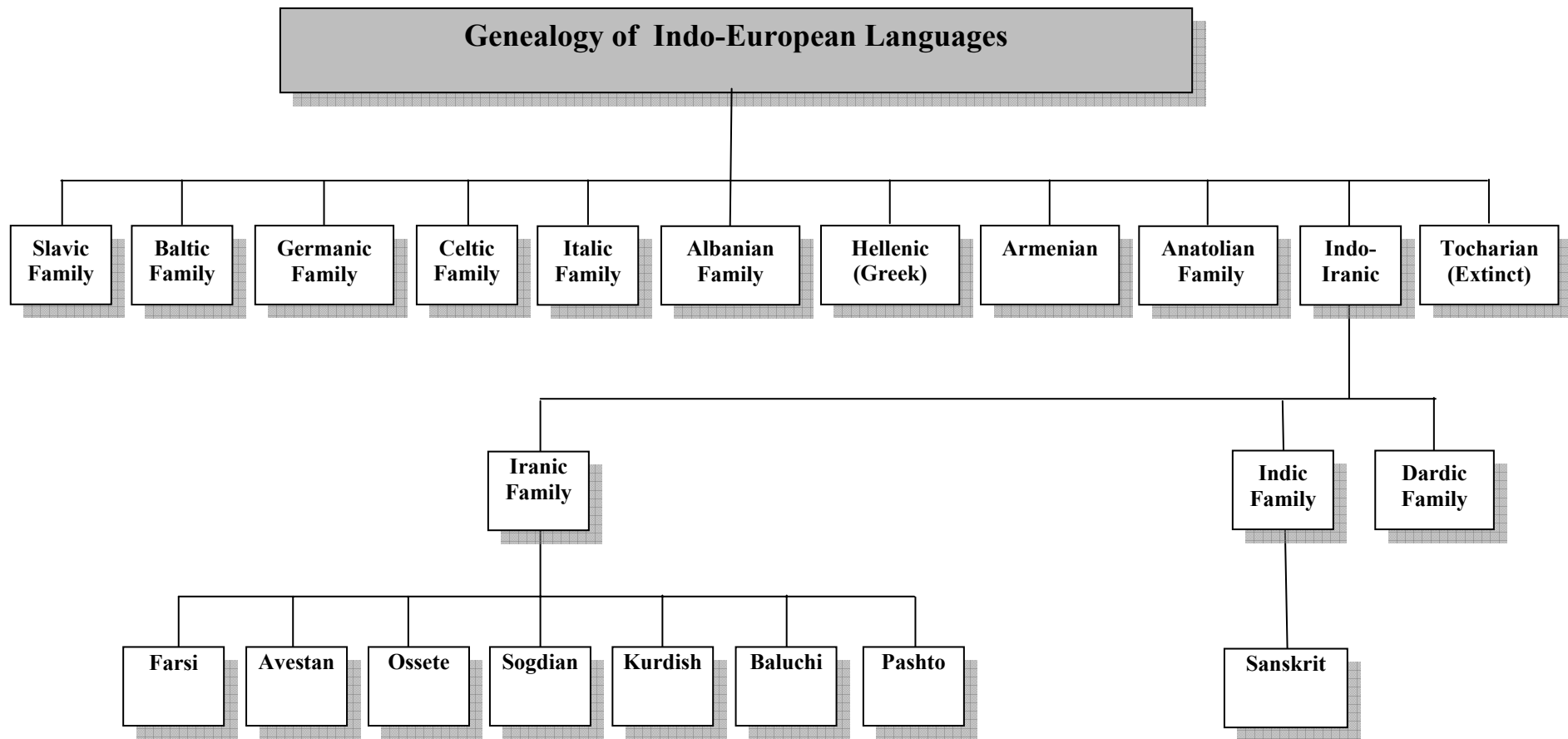
Ref. History books of the region
 Diagram By: M T Ali (MCIL)

Diagram 3(a). Genealogy of Kurdish and other Languages



Data from dictionaries abridged by:
M T Ali (MCIL)

Diagram 3(b). Genealogy of Kurdish and other Languages



Data from dictionaries abridged by:
M T Ali (MCIL)

Diagram 4a. Classification of Iranian Languages by Chronology and Place

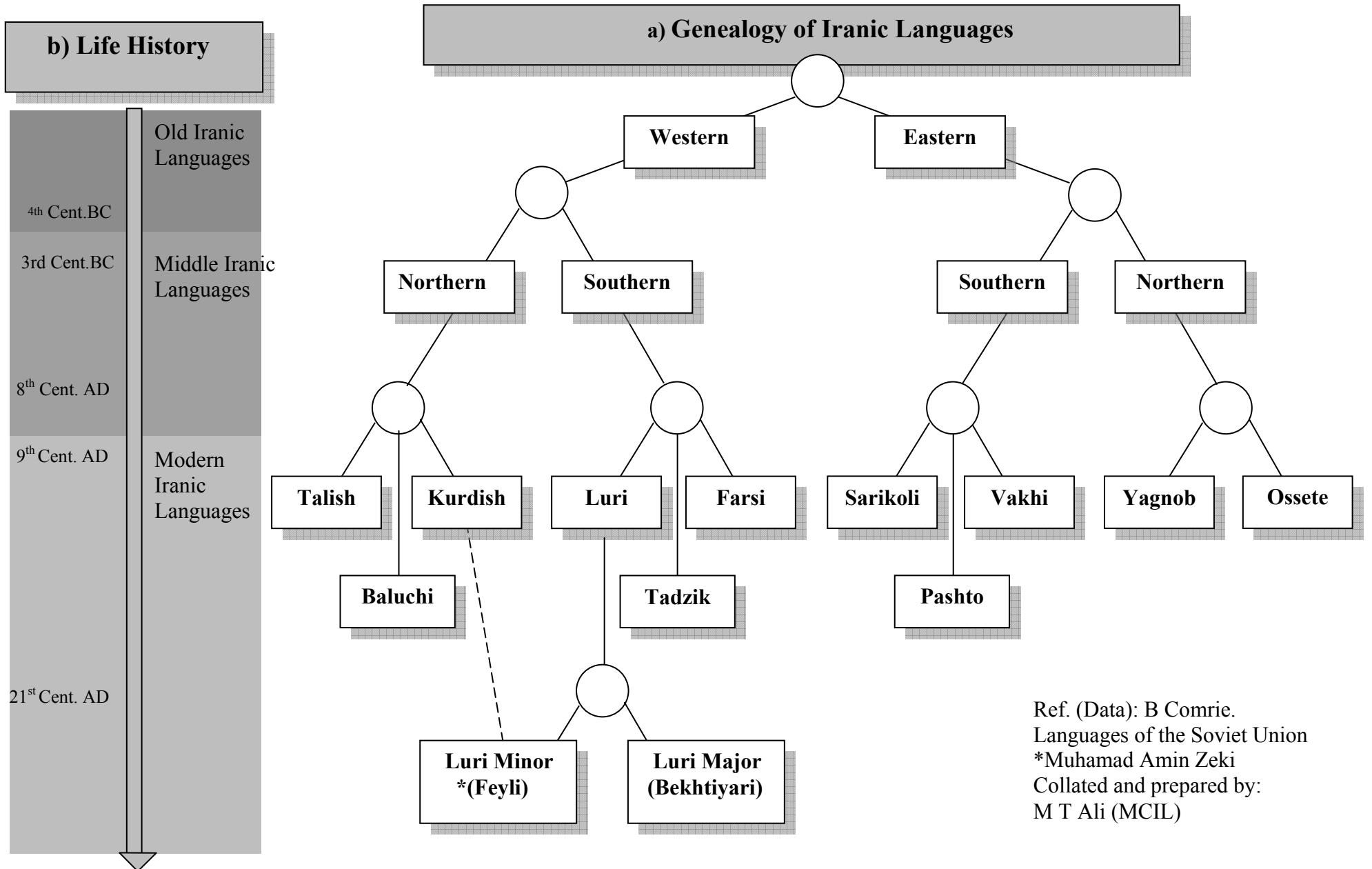
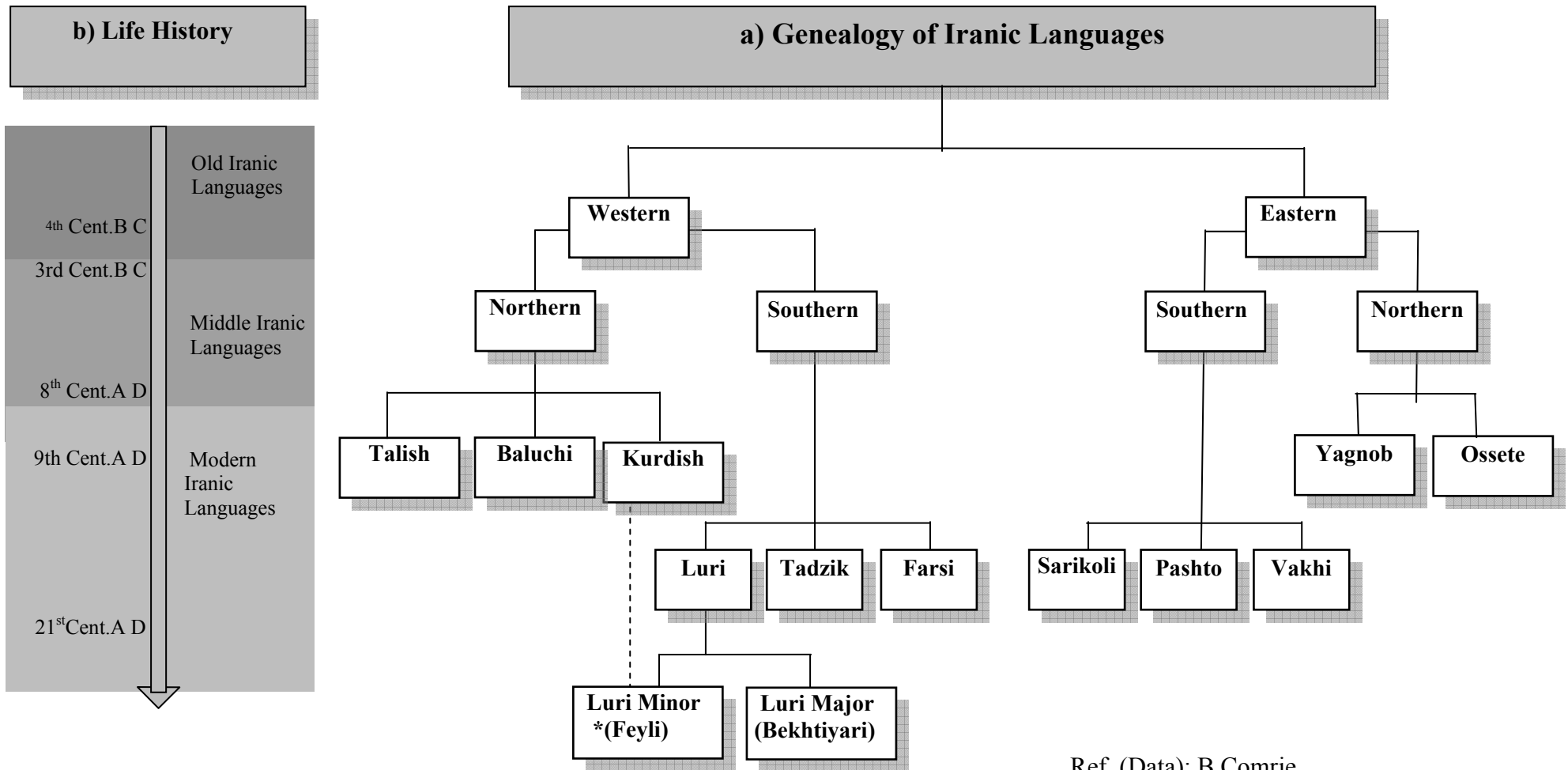


Diagram 4b. Classification of Iranian Languages by Chronology and Place



Ref. (Data): B Comrie.
 Languages of the Soviet Union
 *Muhamad Amin Zeki
 Collated and prepared by:
 M T Ali (MCIL)

Diagram 5a. Kurdish Dialects

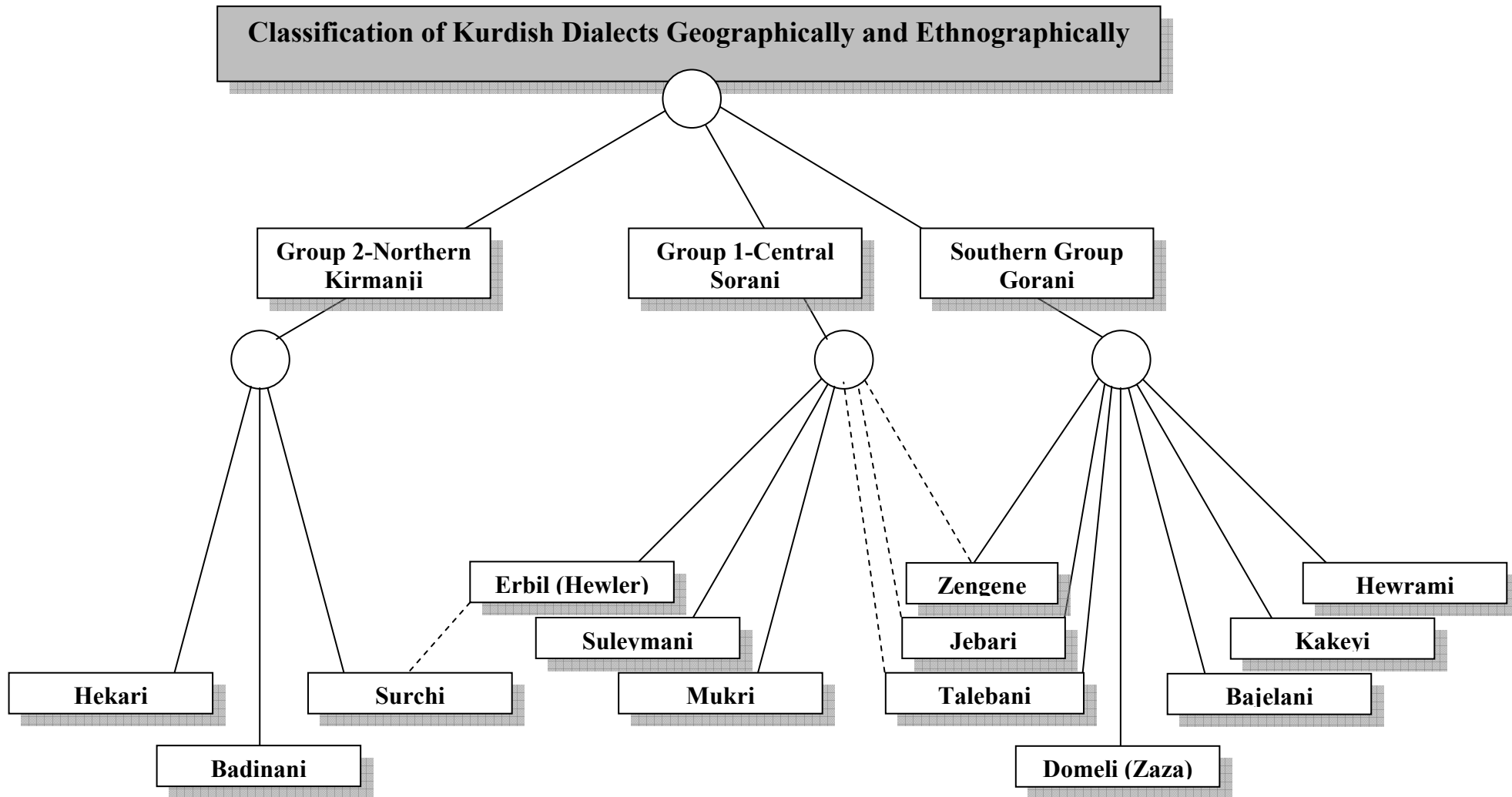


Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)
Ref. D N Mackenzie (Data)

Diagram 5b. Kurdish Dialects

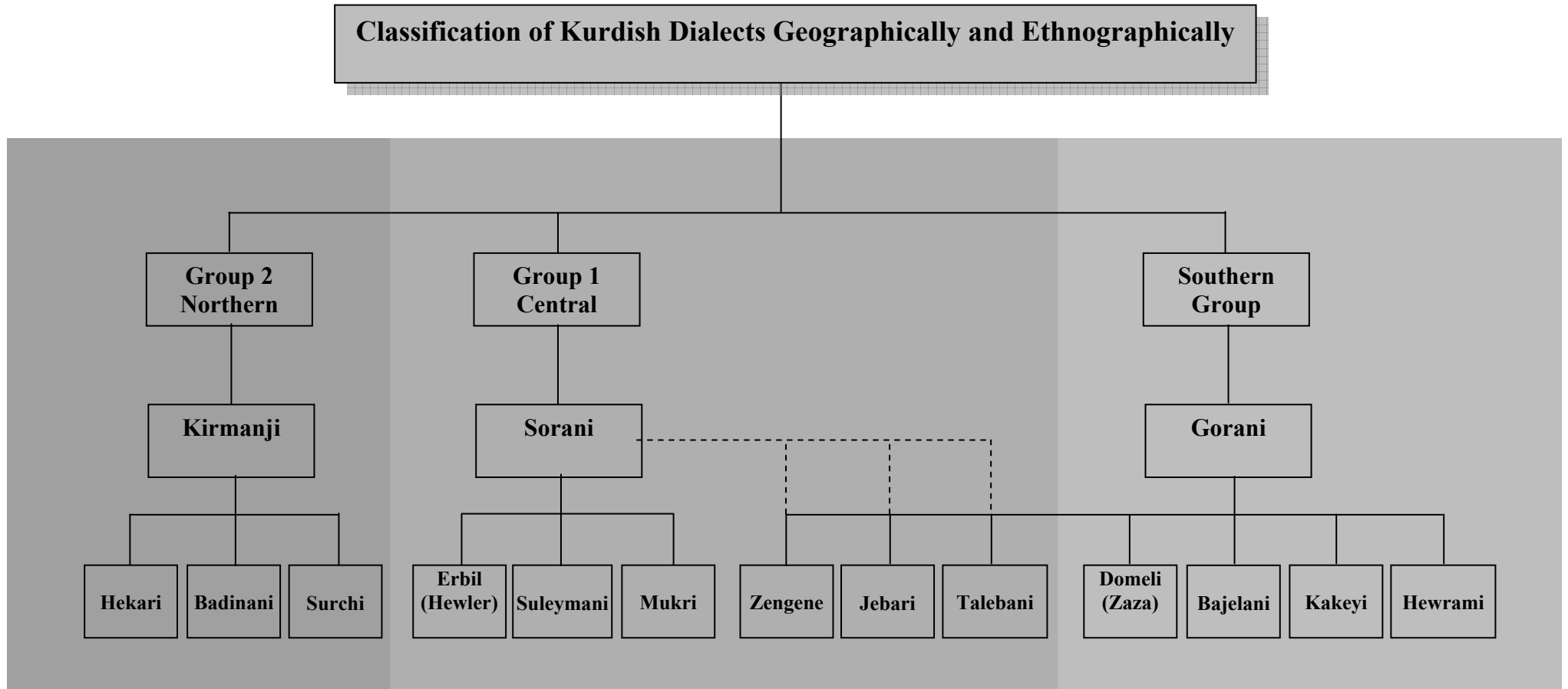
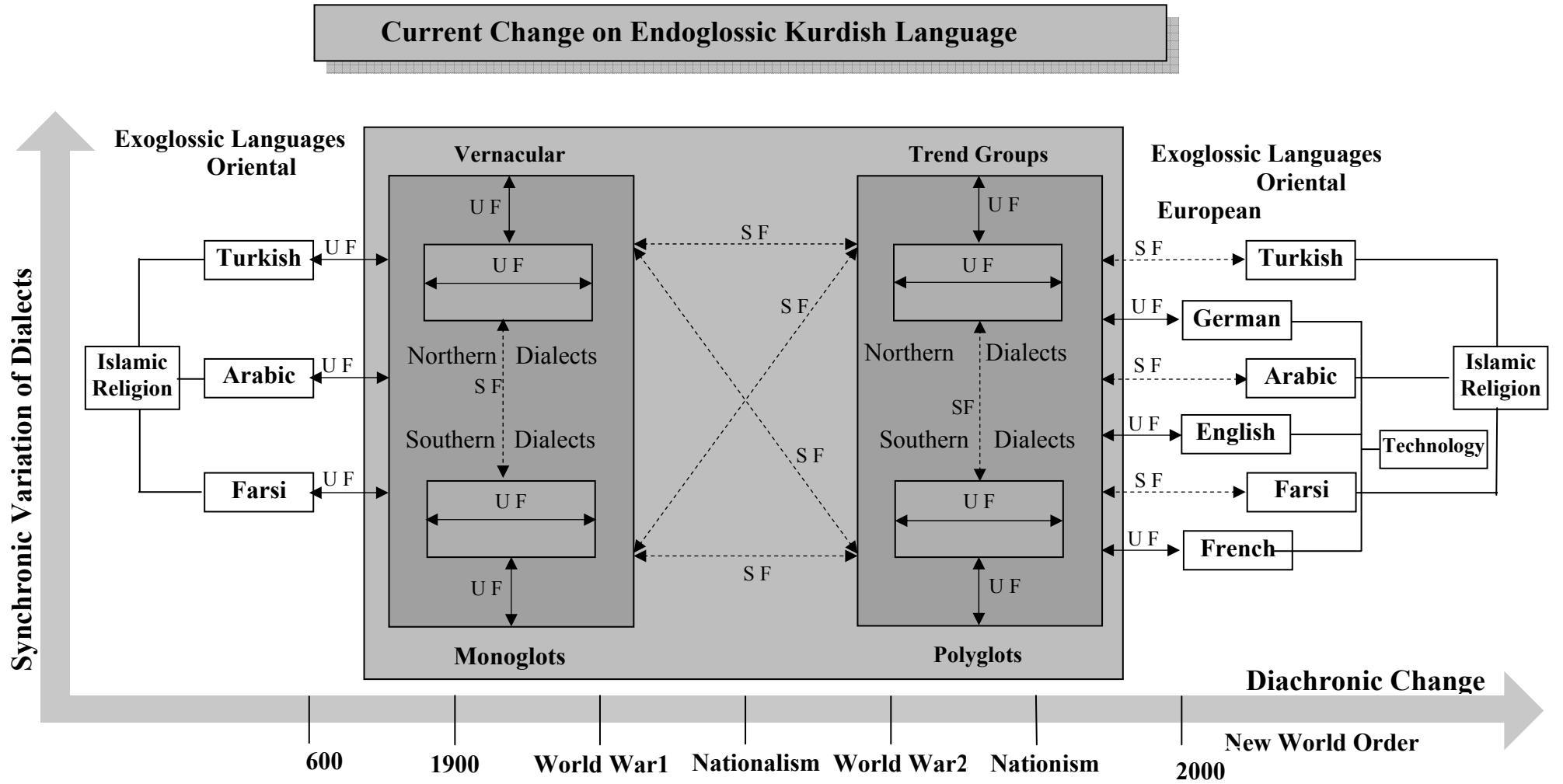


Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)
Ref. D N Mackenzie (Data)

Kurdish Language Planning Policy- Present

Diagram 6. Synchronic Variation, Diachronic Change and Language Functions in Kurdish (Model)



Legend:

- UF (Unifying Function or Force, also Copying-Interlingua)
- SF (Separating Function or Force, also Substitution-Interlingua)

Model by: M T Ali (MCIL)

Table1. Summary of Effects of the Current Change in Kurdish on Language Functions

Legend: + Denotes positive influence or increase in value of function

- Denotes negative influence or decrease in value of function

Level →	Trend	Geographical	Vernacular	European	Oriental
Function↓	Group	Dialect	Dialect	Languages	Languages
1.Expressive	-	-	-	+	-
2.Communicative	-	-	-	+	-
3.Participatory	+	-	-	+	-
4.Unifying	+	+	+	+	-
5.Separatist	-	-	-	-	+

Inference: It is evident from the above tabulation that the main effect of the change phenomenon is positive for the unifying function of Kurdish and negative for the remaining language functions. But, the unifying, and separatist functions, are secondary functions compared with the remaining ones, which are the primary social functions of language. See diagram 6. Prepared by: M T Ali (MCIL).

Identification of the Phenomenon

In the introduction to his Kurdish Dialect Studies for his PhD thesis in 1954-55, the late D N Mackenzie noticed "A new factor disturbing dialectal purity is the spread of the `official` Suleimani dialect throughout its home province and neighbouring Erbil. Thus the Warmawa (War.188-207) Bingird (Bin.299-313) and Erbil speakers had all either attended school or done their military service, and adopted certain Suleimani forms as a result. In the main, however, the pure dialect forms are clearly discernable in all the texts". As for other authors, Mackenzie comments "Edmond's descriptions unfortunately not yet in print, was made available to me by the author as invaluable introduction to the study of Kurdish. My description of Suleimani, although it may differ in the manner of presentation, is essentially the same as that of Mr Edmonds, only where he intentionally errs, from the point of view of dialect purity, in favour of normalisation, has it been necessary to note the divergence". Mackenzie adds "The most recent description of a single Kurdish dialect is that of Dr McCarus. His descriptive analysis of the Kurdish of Sulaimaniya is an interesting exercise in modern linguistic description. It is regrettable, therefore, that the writer soon parts company

with fact and never fully regains touch. As an analysis of the dialect its value is thus somewhat impaired". As for Kurdish grammars and grammarians, Mackenzie noted that "The grammars written by Kurdish scholars are of another stamp, being primarily **prescriptive** in character. An early attempt is that of Sa'id Sidqi. Although his analysis is somewhat naïve, and leans towards the Arabic grammatical system, the result is an honest and useful description of Suleimani dialect at a time shortly after its rise to the dignity of an official written language. Tawfiq Wahbi's first grammar, published in the following year, is more scientific in character. The writer is, however, concerned to **purge** the language of its non- Kurdish elements and is accordingly prone to theorise. For this reason he must be followed with caution". The late Dr Maria T O'Shea (1996) said: " Faced by the need to demonstrate a clear Kurdish identity, Kurdish scholars have made several attempts in modern times to create a unified, but more or less **artificial** written language, where a rich profusion of dialects in fact exists". The change phenomenon identified above in Kurdish are the universal ones of:

Koineization:" The sociolinguistic phenomenon of consciously changing a dialect of a language by dropping its distinctive features".

Classicization:" The sociolinguistic phenomenon of consciously changing a dialect of a language towards its classical form".

Ferguson (1970) observed" Next, there is colloquial Arabic, the chain of regional dialects, which constitute the Arabs' mother tongue today. The extent of variation among these dialects is greater than that between what are recognised in other circumstances as separate languages (eg, Norwegian and Swedish) but the speakers of these dialects have a strong sense of linguistic unity, and speakers of Arabic recognise that speakers of other dialects are also speaking Arabic".LLMS No.23, p355-368. For a comparison, one may simply substitute Kurdish for Arabic.

Discussion

Notwithstanding D N Mackenzie's description of the Hekari and Mukri dialects as the "purest" forms of Kurdish in the Kirmanji and Sorani clusters, respectively, any geographical dialect is potentially appropriate for adoption as the standardized Kurdish. What is not appropriate is the imposition of a class dialect artificially selected solely on the criterion of the **etymology** of the word. What is even less appropriate is for the latter to be elevated to the status of official not only in writing, but also in speech. The ensuing phenomena of Koineization and Classicization of the geographical dialects are the biggest internal **threat** to the Kurdish language, more so than the external influence of Arabic, Turkish and Persian combined. Admittedly, the resulting dialect sounds more authentic Kurdish. But, there are adverse side effects, too, manifesting in experiencing difficulties in comprehension, expression and even grammar by native speakers. It is **analogous** to cosmetic surgery, which, if the operation is successful, improves the physical appearance of the person, and if unsuccessful, it can seriously damage the psychological, if not the physical health of the patient. Such drastic clinical surgery may be reversible, not so with linguistic surgery. During translations from Arabic, *Formal typology* inflexional, S-V-O, NA and English, positional, S –V-O, AN, the two languages with which they are familiar, word order is rendered likewise in Kurdish, positional, which should be S-O-V, NA. This is unforgivable for adult native speakers. Word order is more rigid in positional languages and relatively flexible in inflexional languages. For example, Arabic can be V-S-O in the past tense, but in English only with poetic licence as in "Said who? Said I". Neither one can be verb final, nor can the object precede the subject. Ironically, target syntax is not changed when translating from Kurdish into the other languages, which is understandably more likely universally. Noun phrases, NA and AN, are rarely changed from source to target language. As for morphology, the influence of Arabic is little compared with that of its vocabulary. As the language of Islam and the **lingua franca** of Muslims, its influence on their cultures and languages is **analogous** to that of Latin on the Christian peoples. Their early linguists even tried to apply the grammar of Latin and classical Greek to their own. It was less so in the former

case because of the vast differences between the structures of Semitic and Indo-Iranic languages. The driving forces behind Arabic and Latin were Arab and Roman empires, respectively. During a talk on this topic to a focus group of Kurdish postgraduates and British academics at the University of London, SOAS, I asked the former to identify any such mistake on a colourful publicity leaflet by the Kurdish community. As they couldn't, I pointed it out to them. The reaction of one of them was "It is Kurdish, which we understand. What are you on about? What is your problem?" Although I didn't reply, I said to myself: You, my compatriots, are my problem. I charge you readers with aiding and abetting the writers in "The cold-blooded murder of the... [Kurdish] language", A. J. Lerner, **My Fair Lady**. Another Kurd objected to the geographical tribal classification of the Kurdish dialect speakers and a British one objected to that of languages by reference to their peoples as racial hierarchy. Morphology is also changed in some instances. Incidentally, only one of each group managed a modest definition of language. I was unpleasantly surprised. The most recurring such syntax mistake is the penultimate standard sentence: "If you require further details, please *contact* the following address". Whereas, testing British students to translate from Sorani Kurdish into English, there was no such mistake. I am not sure whether it is a Kurdish specific one or more universal in verb final languages, which exhibit information flow difficulties, and/or it is an inevitable consequence of literal translation. Another universal factor is that of copying others in actions, speech and writing. In the Kurdish case, it is a social phenomenon of **copycat** emulation of political, literary and social peers, resulting in a not user friendly language. The real culprit is their **attitude** to language, which is derived from their understandable nationalism. The **perception** that poets and literature authors are necessarily good grammarians is **analogous** to that of racing drivers being good mechanics or even automobile engineers. It takes a whole team of the latter to repair engine faults and change a tyre for the former. The perception is limited to the etymology of the word and its status as the only linguistic unit with nothing smaller. The whole philosophy may be called the Suleimani school of thought, a juggernaut, which crushes any variants on its path. It believes that raising the status of Kurdish from vernacular to standardised elevates the social status of its speakers and political status of the nation. *De jure norms*: "A codification of the norms of usage for the variety based on the practice of some socioeconomic or geographical group", Bell, R.T. (1976c:155-6) as different from De facto norms. The most pervasive mistake in writing and consequently in speech is the addition of the consonant[d] to nouns following prepositions. This is probably copied from Turkish, an agglutinative language with vowel harmony, which is postpositional in noun phrases, or has case in word endings. For example, London+ [e], London+ [de] and London+ [den] mean in or at, to or for and from London, respectively. In Kurdish, they have adopted the middle form of the Turkish suffix over and above the preposition. The only ending in the Kurdish noun should be a vowel [e] or [a] depending on the dialect. Ironically, this import is more common in Sorani than in Kirmanji, whose majority speakers are more familiar with Turkish. This is probably due to the founding fathers of modern written Sorani, who were former army officers or civil servants in the Ottoman Empire. There is a useful universal import of the Turkish suffix [chi], which renders some nouns of consumer goods lexicon to those of their trade. For example, [sheker] is sugar; [shekerchi] is trader in sugar or confectioner. Incidentally, the Turkish Republic's change of alphabet from modified Arabic to modified Roman is regarded as a success. Although it also camouflages Arabic words in writing, it doesn't affect speech, as in *merheba*, greetings, hello! Moreover, it is undeniable that the Suleimani dialect had the lion's share in poets and scholars throughout the twentieth century and beyond. But, by the same token, the modern, if not the old, English of Shakespeare's birthplace should have been adopted as the official language. Furthermore, Warwickshire is not only in the West Midlands of England, but is near the geographical centre of the United Kingdom. Even the influence of Oxford and Cambridge on English is due more to the political power of their clients than to their academic excellence. As for the universal status of English as World language number 1, it is hardly attributed to the works of **Shakespeare**, Chaucer and others; rather it is thanks to the British Empire, which ruled the

waves. In other words, power dictates the status of language/ dialect, and not the other way round. The **obsession** with the purity of the language, leading to linguistic cleansing, may have connotations with that of the race, whose influence is being purged. Linguistic cleansing is misguided, it may be understandable reaction to linguistic chauvinism and racial genocide, but can never be justifiable. Ironically, it only achieves linguistic suicide. As the social status of a language is associated with the political status of its speakers, Sorani is, and will continue to be, more developed written in the modified Arabic alphabet in the near future. On the other hand, as the development of language is associated with the writing system, Kirmanji is, and will continue to be, more developed written in the modified Roman alphabet in the distant future. Kreyenbroek, P. and Sperl, eds. *The Kurds: A contemporary overview*, p76 state "In the past 10 years or so, there has been a marked improvement in the standard of written Kirmanji. It has become more flexible and authors have a larger vocabulary at their disposal for abstract terms. As a literary language, Zaza is still underdeveloped". The association of language with alphabet makes writing Sorani in the modified Roman alphabet and Kirmanji of Turkey in the modified Arabic alphabet appear as illegible as transliterating between Arabic and English. Ethnographically, Kirmanji has a closer claim to Barzan, the spiritual symbol of Kurdish nationalism. Culturally, Sorani has a closer claim to Suleimani, its literary symbol. Administratively, Erbil (Hewler) is the de facto capital and geographically the centre of liberated Iraqi Kurdistan. Hopefully, it will continue to be a happy compromise between Barzan and Suleimani. Incidentally, the ruling Barzani dynasty of three generations has made an effort to blend their native Kirmanji with some Sorani vocabulary and a few Kurdish neologies when speaking in public. The end result is a voluntary unifying form of the language, which most Kurds can relate to and understand. Ironically, this is not reciprocated by even the ordinary Sorani speakers. Their attitude is similar to that of English speakers, who have the luxury of a World language number 1 courtesy of a former empire and a present major power. Furthermore, the Kurdish case is a complex mixture of diglossia, bilingualism and multiculturalism, which require delicate consideration by experts. As education "is the essence of practising freedom", Paulo Freire (2000), *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, it is a basic human right. As such, it should be in the native language of children at primary school stage. "It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue" (UNESCO, 1953). In the absence of a standardised variety, their respective dialects constitute their mother tongue. As change is difficult to manage even for adults, alphabet change from modified Arabic to Roman should be in the same language variety. Having mastered the alphabets, then learning another dialect, then a regional language, Arabic, then a European language, English, would be the optimum path for their language acquisition and educational development.

Kurdish Language Planning Policy: Future

General Principles

Declaration of Recife, Brazil (1984). "If a language can not be used, it will not be learned and it is difficult to identify with a language one does not know. Not giving languages any official rights is an indirect way of killing them". Dr Tove Skutnab-Kangas. MRG Report, p30. Also, Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, Barcelona, Spain. 6 to 9 June 1996. www.linguistic-declaration.org. Quoting Howell, p197 "Languages used on air gain credibility and legitimacy in the minds of audiences, especially children and minorities". *Linguistic Equal Opportunities*: Quoting Foder (1975), "Any language is potentially appropriate for being the literary, scientific and hence official language of a modern state whatever its phonemic and grammatical structures".

Implementation:

Quoting B Ndiaye (1983). "It is not necessary to wait till the languages have been fully modernized in the sense defined above (Expressive functions) to use them for official purposes at national or regional level. The best way to promote a language is simply to use it".

Copying: Quoting Le Page (1964:51), "If anything, bringing a language `up-to-date' has been, and to some extent still is a necessity for most of the European languages. One such example is that of French, particularly in the eighteenth century, which copied from English, German and even languages of its colonies. Language can be `engineered' (Alisjahbana, 1971) to make it more expressive in a particular field".

Limits of Change:

Quoting B Ndiaye (1983), "Linguists should nevertheless avoid creating a new and **artificial** language [Esperanto], which would fail to be understood by the majority of the population to whom it is destined. The language thus standardised should provide a dynamic framework within which it can evolve freely as the socio-cultural environment of the speakers' changes".

Prerequisites:

Quoting R T Bell (1982), "The existence of grammars and dictionaries, then, is necessary but not sufficient condition for standardization".

Quoting Piaget "Language is necessary but not sufficient for intellect".

Kurdish Language Planning Policy.

Diagram 7. Stakeholder Map. Explanatory Notes

This diagram is in landscape format. Hence, the Power (Horizontal) axis portrays the variation in the positions of the data categories, which is considerable. By contrast, that along the Interest (Vertical) axis is much less and is exaggerated for spatial necessities only. In other words, it should be more squashed if true to scale. The main dialect clusters of Kurdish as well as the other languages spoken in Iraq are herewith simply enumerated but not quantified. The participation of Kurds in other parts of divided Kurdistan is bound to be considerable in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the sole official language is Farsi, Kurdish is just about tolerated, the alphabet is modified Arabic and their dialect variation is similar to Iraq. In the Syrian Arab Republic, where the sole official language is Arabic, Kurdish is not even tolerated, the dialect is Kirmanji and the alphabet is Arabic. However, in the past Kurdish was written in the modified Roman alphabet due to the Turkish connection. Their participation is bound to be significant or even considerable if Arabic is chosen as the language of this debate. Similarly for the Kirmanji speakers in Iraq, where some claim that the marginalisation of their dialect is a result of the foreign policy pressure from the Turkish Republic as shown on diagram 9. Conversely, this will affect their counterparts in Turkey and Iran adversely. In the Republic of Turkey, where the sole official language is Turkish, Kurdish was banned and only recently been decriminalised, the dialect is mainly Kirmanji and the alphabet is modified Roman. Consequently, participation is bound to be little and only significant via English or other European languages. The latter scenario applies to their Kurdish speech communities in the Diaspora as shown by their relative position on the Stakeholder Map, Diagram 7. As polyglots, they have the advantage over monoglots and enjoy better access to the media and IT. Literary writers and poets may be grouped as wordsmiths, whereas journalists and publishers may be grouped as wordmongers. In general, there is considerable overlap between most of the categories with few that are mutually exclusive. Some others display a dichotomy within an invisible square or block.

Kurdish Language Planning Policy. Diagram 7. Stakeholder Map

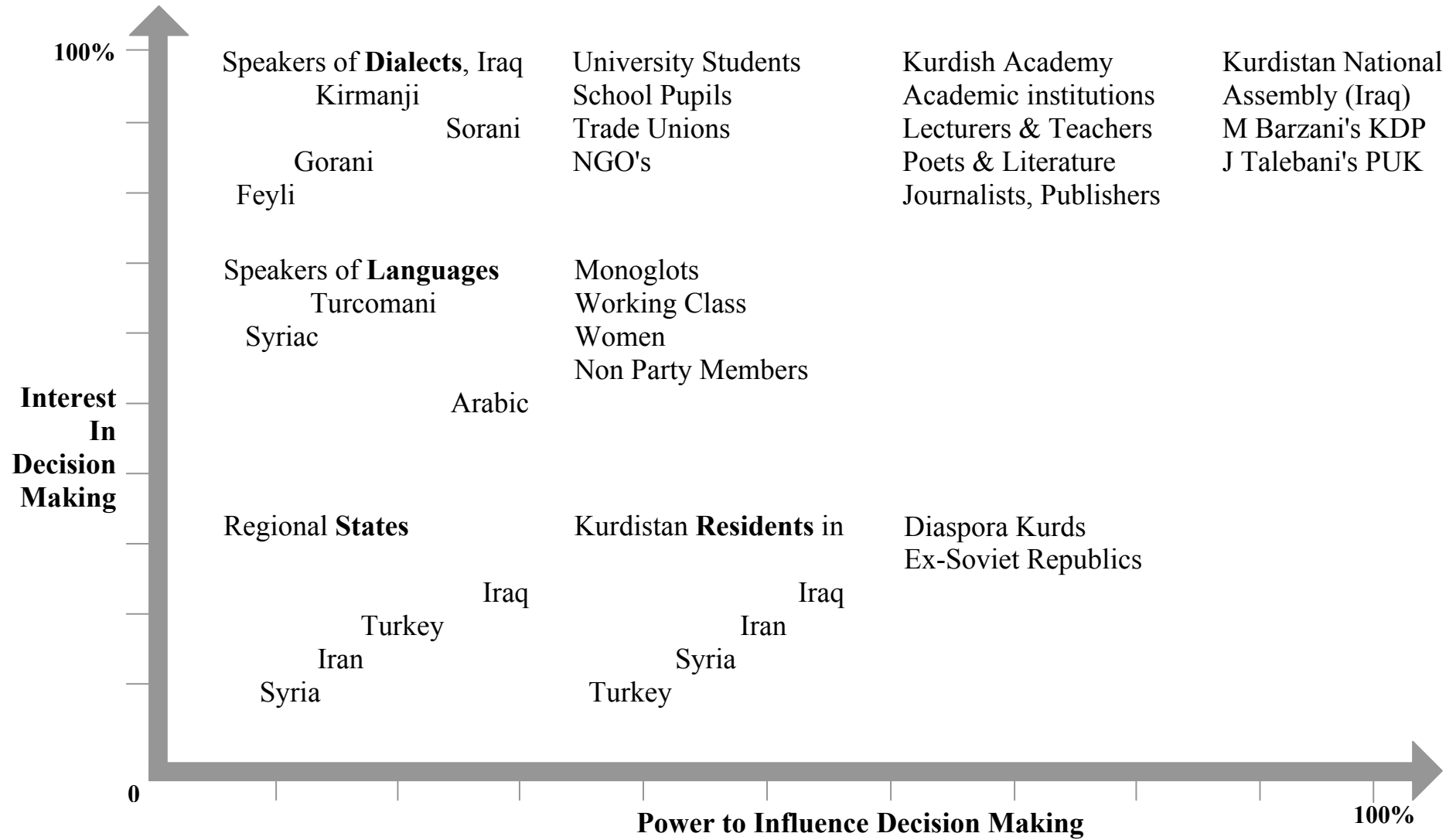


Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)

Kurdish Language Planning Policy.

Diagram 8. PEST Analysis

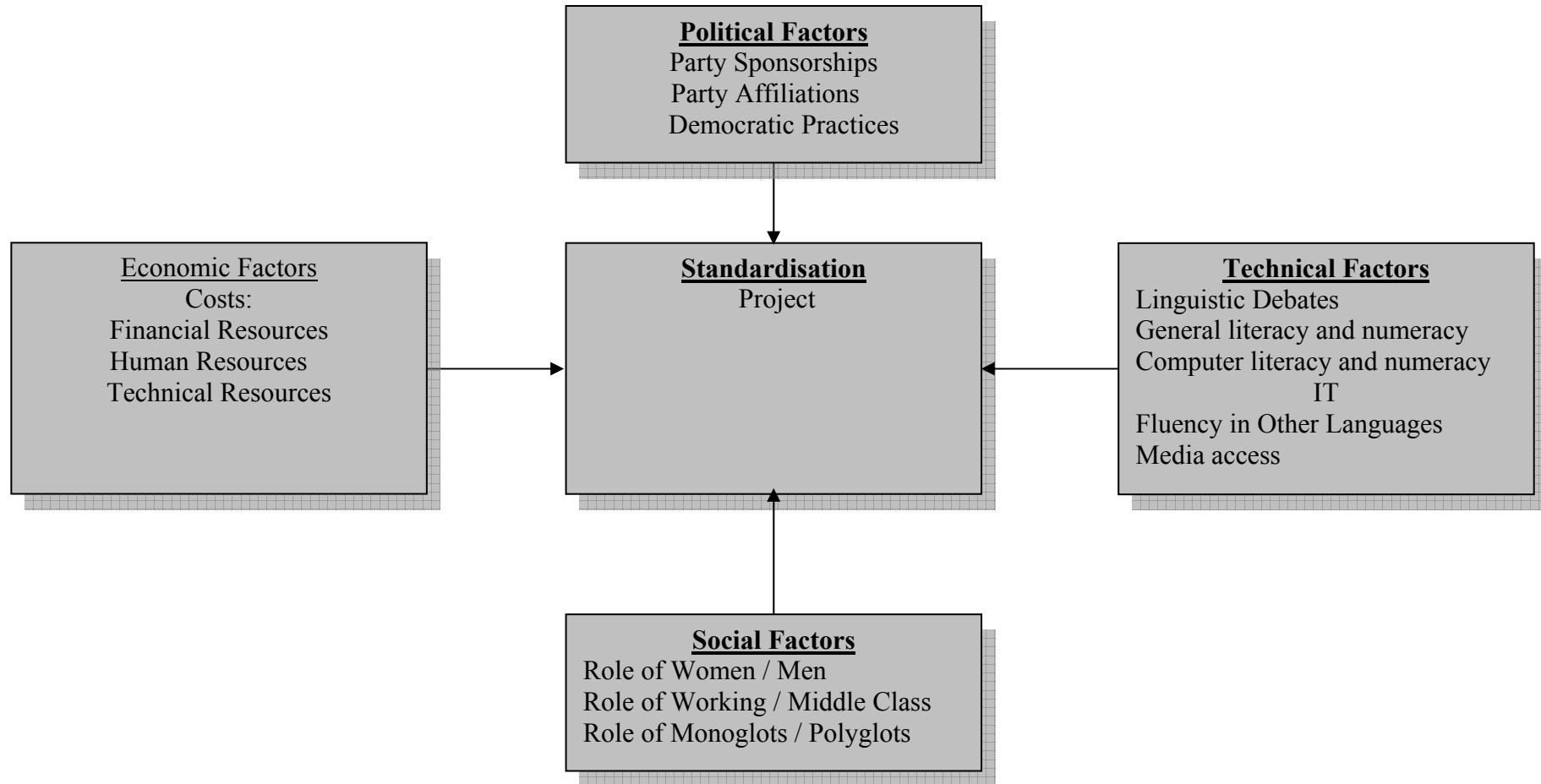
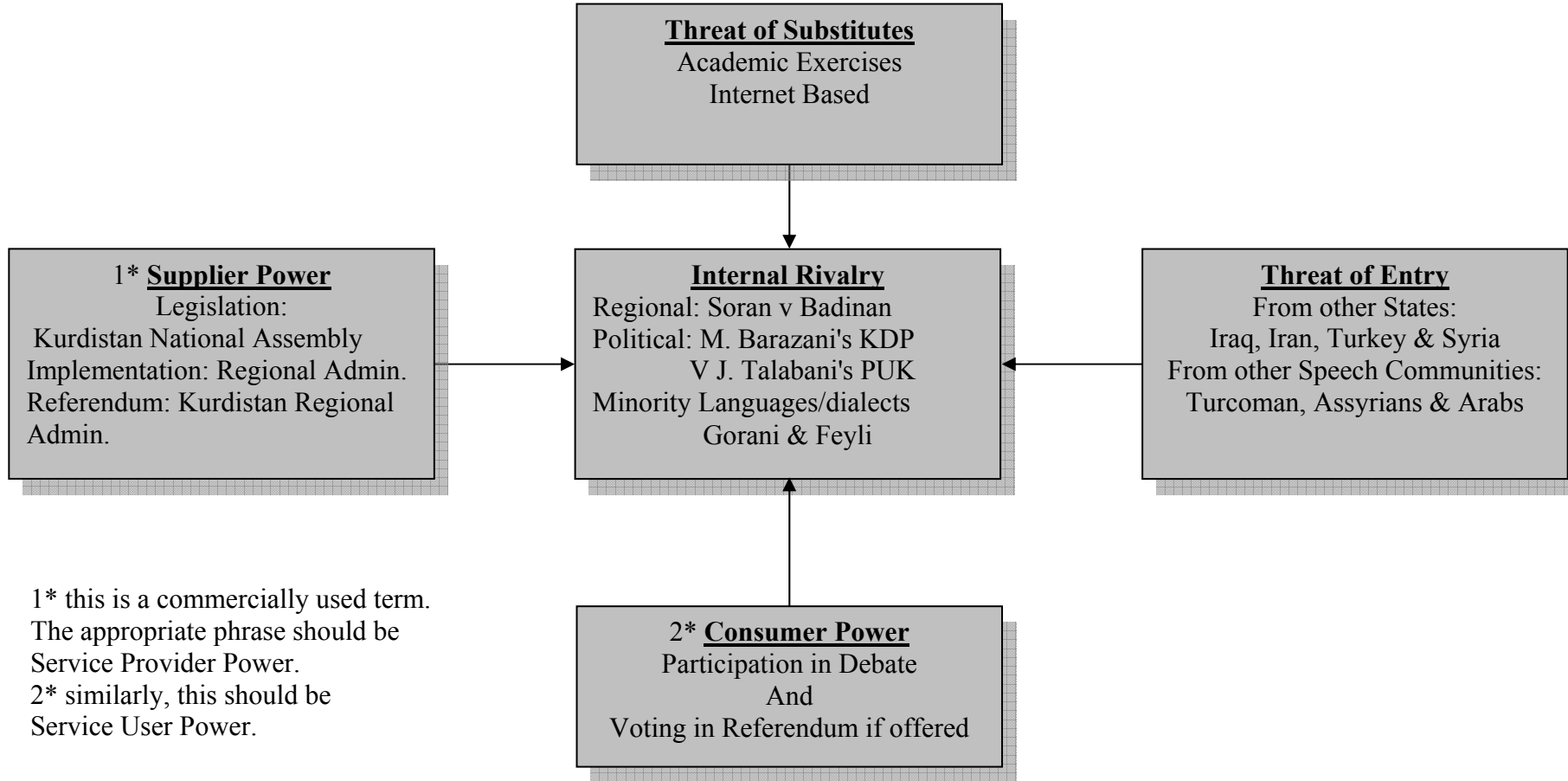


Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)

Kurdish Language Planning Policy.

Diagram 9. M. Porter's Five Forces



1* this is a commercially used term.
The appropriate phrase should be Service Provider Power.
2* similarly, this should be Service User Power.

Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)

Kurdish Language Planning Policy.

Diagram 10. SWOT Analysis

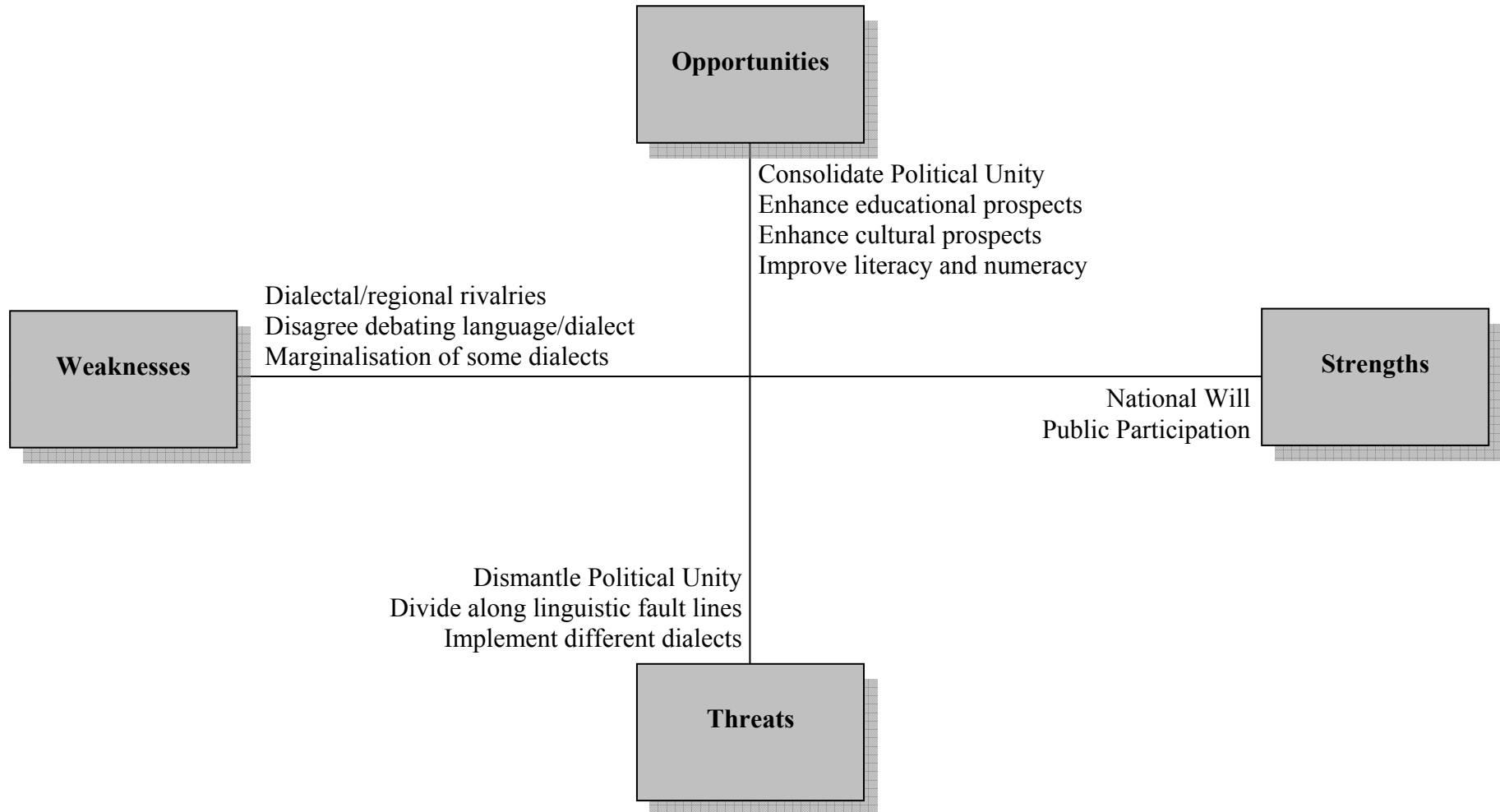


Diagram by: M T Ali (MCIL)

Analysis

In his Kurdish Dialect Studies, Vol. 2, p227, Mackenzie, D.N. (1962) describes Surchi as: "Their dialect is compounded of both Northern (Badinani) and Central (Sorani) elements". In Vol.1, p29, he states:" The Surchi dialect has the same phonemic system as the Arbil dialect, but the realization of certain phonemes are appreciably different". On p27, he states:" The dialect of Arbil, together with those of Koya, the Khoshnaw and Rewandiz areas, and probably the Biradost area north of Rewandiz, has the following phonemic system Of twenty-seven consonants(including two semi-vowels) and eight vowels..".

Conclusion

Language and ethnicity: Ross, J.A. (1979) "Language becomes the most powerful single symbol of ethnicity as it serves as a shorthand for all that makes a group unique". This is manifested most obviously in the Iraqi Kurdistan polity.

Having objectively described the genealogy of the Kurdish language and its diversity of dialects, its present transformation and the political culture prevailing in the Kurdistan polity, we conclude that it is being irrationally overloaded with unnecessary neologisms at an unmanageable rate of change, which normally takes generations to achieve. The phenomenon is contrary to the principles of linguistic theory and the experience of other speech communities. Therefore, it is detrimental to the natural development of the spoken dialects and the standardisation of the written language. Kurdish is thus transformed into an artificial language, **Esperanto**, and a clumsy one at that. Its form may sound more authentic Kurdish, but its language functions are unmanageable in daily life. The effects of this change on Kurdish are caused by mixing secular political thought with linguistics, which is **analogous** to mixing spiritualist religion with politics by some governments and states. This article constitutes the latest in a series of similar ones on the topic in English and Arabic in the press and on the internet. Thus, an Arabic version of this one is hoped to be considered as a modest draft for public discussion by all those concerned and this English one by the experts.

Warning. As mentioned in the introduction earlier, beware of the escalation of the language/dialect issue to war as in Pakistan/Bangladesh. At the international level, the Bangladesh/Pakistan bitter experience should be borne in mind. The Bangladeshi language movement led to the war with Pakistan and culminated in separation as another state in 1971. UNESCO has designated the 17th November as the International Day of the Mother Tongue since 1999.

Recommendations.

To this end, I recommend the adoption of the findings of the former by the Kurdistan National Assembly, leadership by Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq and ownership by the appropriate ministry. Similarly, I appeal to the non- Kurdish experts to get involved in this challenging but worthwhile project as advisors or at least as neutral arbiters in cases of disputes.

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