

THE ATTITUDES OF NON-KURD STUDENTS IN SANANDAJ, IRAN TOWARD KURDISH LANGUAGE TEACHING UNIVERSITY COURSES

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Abstract

Kurdish is a minority language in Iran, spoken by a minority ethnic group known as Kurds, mainly living in some western provinces, including Kordestan. In the capital of Kordestan (namely, Sanandaj) the official and national language (that is, Persian) is used in academic interactions. The present survey is trying to assess and interpret the attitudes of non-Kurd students of universities in Sanandaj toward the idea that their universities hold courses of Kurdish language teaching. Based on the cluster sampling method, the data were collected in a dormitory, where all forty-three non-Kurd residents were presented eight-item questionnaires developed based on the Likert scale. Applying the one-sample t-Test to the collected data revealed that the overall findings were statistically significant at the 0.001 level, which implied generally positive attitude. Analyzing individual items showed significance at the same level for half of them: on the one hand, the necessity to learn Kurdish to be able to cope with everyday social interactions, and the tendency to learn it in order to get acquainted more easily with the culture were found to be major contributing factors to the overall approval; on the other hand, the ideas that non-Kurd students avoid using the language, and that they find it unnecessary to learn a language they might never use after graduation were both disapproved of. Furthermore, through the t-Test for independent samples, the hypotheses that Persian students' responses would be significantly different from those of students with other mother tongues were rejected for all the items as well as the overall attitude. Apart from supporting the idea of holding such courses in the universities in Sanandaj, the survey suggests that similar studies be performed in societies with minority, or less common, languages, and a more dominant language used in academic interactions.

Key words: minority languages, Kurdish language, university students' attitudes.

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