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The Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Students' L2 Development in Kurdistan Region

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Abstract

This study has been conducted to explore a number of social factors impacting students' language learning fluency in secondary and preparatory public schools of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The aim of this study is to find the influences of socioeconomic status (SES), social factors on students' English language in the Region. The factors included for this study are social class, geographic residence, economy and religion. In the context of the Iraq-Kurdistan region, there has been a lack of concern with the macro level in learning a language. The issue is that some external factors seem to affect students' language proficiency. Such factors could hinder or pave the way for students to communicate a foreign or second language effectively. A survey was used for gathering information. Participants in the study were from grades 7, 8, 10 and 11 of public schools. The participants' English language mean scores were obtained for one year of academic performance, which was calculated by utilising SPSS, version 25. The students' scores were from the official tests for one year given by the school teachers and national exit exams taken in the Region. The findings show that socioeconomic status has the most influence on students' language proficiency. The conclusions reveal that there was a significant correlation between the students' mean score obtained and their social class, residential area and family income. This study consists of four sections. Apart from the introduction, section one which introduces the conceptual framework of social factors, including defining the key terms of classes. Section two presents the methods and tools that were used for gathering the data, while section three presents the data and findings as well as discussion. Section four summarises the main findings, presents conclusions and discusses implications.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Socioeconomic Status, Social class, Gender, Age, Area, L2.

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Introduction

Under the sociolinguistic theory, language exists on two levels. First, on the micro-level, language is defined as a system of facts that are rule-governed; this level is controlled by rules only, e.g. phonology, morphology and syntax. Second, language on the macro level involves different modes of communication, namely auditory (speaking and listening) and gesture (non-verbal communication). Factors such as health and physical development can influence language; for example, an illness may hinder Learning (Mooney and Evans, 2015). In addition to illness, socioeconomic environment, age, gender, social class, and the literacy of those in the household can also influence second language learning. The term social is defined as any kind of possessions that a person has or that change their behaviour, circumstances and attitudes. The change of behaviour or lifestyle could either be positive or negative; it depends on individuals' circumstances and social backgrounds where they come from. However, factors, as mentioned above, can be understood as things or statuses that are derived from society's culture, including family, religion, power and wealth, which influences learners to learn a language. For instance, English as a second or foreign language can

assist learners in thinking, reflecting and also acting in more confident ways (Walliman, 2011). Therefore, many of the problems could be considered outside of school contexts such as learners' family, income, parents' level of education, social class as some students in different hierarchies of society learn languages better than others.

In the context of the Iraq-Kurdistan region, there has been a lack of concern with the macro level in learning. This academic study focused on determining whether or not social factors impact participants who come from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds while they were studying. The aim of this paper is to investigate the impact of socioeconomic status, geographical residence, gender, religion, age and social order /class of learning a second language in three different districts of the cosmopolitan city of Erbil – namely its suburbs of Soran, Rwanuz and Mergasour. The objective of this empirical study is to reveal whether layers of society affect students' language learning in the public schools of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

In this study, a quantitative method was adopted for data collection. A survey was used for gathering information from students, grades 7, 8, 10 and 11 of KRG schools participated in the survey. The participants' English language mean score for one academic year was calculated by utilising SPSS, version 25, t-test and one-way ANOVA comparing the participants' responses with their grades obtained from their English language tests. The findings indicated significant correlations between higher test scores and social classes and the area where participants live. However, there was insufficient evidence to indicate that religious affiliation affects students' achievement in L2 proficiency.

This study adopted deductive methods for testing a particular hypothesis and answering the research questions as follows:

1. How and why do social factors (such as class, family environment, wealth, gender, age, geography, etc.) affect English language learning in Kurdistan?

2. Do the upper-class people in Kurdistan have a better chance of being fluent in their use of the English language?

Having a reasonable hypothesis helps the researchers to validate research actions and know whether the assumption is right or wrong. The researchers will test the following null hypotheses:

1. The social class has no influence on students' language learning in Kurdish society.
2. There is no difference between students from a wealthy family and students from a low-income family in English language learning.

Section one: Social factors-related research

The concept of the social factor of this part of the study shows the existence of social variables. Each social factor is described to know how variable could potentially affect language learning.

1.1. Description of social factors and their possible effect on L2 learning

The factors are categorised into internal and external factors. The internal factors will not be the focus of this study, as they are not relevant to this research. External factors usually refer to social

factors such as age, economy, gender, social classes, race, ethnic identity, culture, religion, politics, geography, power and context (Davies and Catherine, 2004). Social factors are considered as conditions of such things that have an impact on individuals' learning development or change their behaviour and attitude towards Learning (Hou, 2015). Everyone cannot deny the reality that one has evolved within society. The social factors in a situation have an influence on L2 learning processes; therefore, people may be keen to know whether these factors interactively or separately affect learning.

1.2. Social classes

The term "socioeconomic status" (SES) refers to all aspects of family wealth, family size and level of education, as well as job prestige. This term also includes stratification, which refers to social classes of certain groups of people within a hierarchy of society. The social class/order indicates that each group has a different level, in addition to different levels within each group of social status in society (Ellis, 1994). In other words, social class is a layer of society which is categorised by a certain number of social variables mainly, economics, power, job prestige and language use. Trudgill (2000) pointed out that the term "stratification" is used to classify groups of people according to their power, economic status, position and education. According to Trudgill's study, there are five groups of classes: middle-middle class (MMC), upper working class (UWC), middle working class (MWC), lower working class (LWC), and lower middle class (LMC). However, the social orders are generally divided into three main groups, namely higher class, middle class and lower class and they are determined by the criteria of income, level of education, job prestige and position in society (Ellis, 1994; Hou, 2015).

1.3. Economic factor

A great deal of literature has been written about economics, which in the 21st century seems to be the basis for every step in life. Economic factors have been defined as one's possession of money, a house and income. According to Maslow (1943, cited in Salameh, 2014), economics is merely a factor that contributes to happiness and enhances education and motivation among individuals in society. According to Maslow's theory, economics is a factor that involves having safety, and the fulfilment of basic needs such as food; it, therefore, helps people to reach their goals. It is seen as a factor in society that enhances learning. However, it must be pointed out that this does not mean that people from poor economic backgrounds will always do less well than children from good or affluent financial conditions.

1.4. The parental level of education

Family or home literacy is defined as the parental tendency towards learning. There has been a strong correlation between the parents' level of education and that of their children, as parental literacy enhances children's Learning (Meng, 2015). This is because the child is motivated to learn the same language. Family is biological; it refers to biological relatives and is the first and primary social relationship which a child begins to learn. The family consists of members such as parents and children, where parents can play a fundamental role in influencing their offspring's learning behaviour. However, single-parent families may also have an effect on learning; this is because children with single parents tend to learn less well than those with two parents, as they usually imitate their parents (De Serf, 2002). Parental level of education is linked to second language learning, especially in the early ages,

because it is a parent (especially the mother) who spends the most time with a child (Baharudin, and Luster, 1998).

1.5. The Impact of Residential Area on Learning

Another factor that influences learning is geographical remoteness. Geographical factor refers to people living and residing in different location types such as towns, rural areas and cities. People in urban areas can be understood as belonging to a kind of social stratification where knowledge is based on social orders in terms of recognition or relationships (Schmitt, 2010). Putting it differently, a person in a rural area is regarded as poor in their education, language and prosperity. Moreover, people who live in rural areas may hardly have access to deep learning (Meng, 2015) learning and resources, or to people from different cultural backgrounds. According to Bell (2006), demographic distribution has a great impact on both language use and language learning. There is a strong relationship between where people live in the world and learning a language.

1.6. The Age Factor

A number of researchers have viewed age as a critical factor in learning, and it is also related to second language learning. Age or ageing is stages of life that people pass through it; throughout the life stages, individuals tend not to be the same in Learning (Mooney and Evans, 2015). Learning is affected by various factors, e.g. age groups have different influences on learning. A relationship has also been found between age and L2 learning. It is thought that older people tend to use and learn language differently from youngsters: young learners tend to learn foreign languages much faster, while older people are more concerned with learning

language rules (Krashen, 1982; Muhammed, 2017). Many researchers, for example, Ellis and Sinclair (1989), have reached the conclusion that children and older learners learn a language by performing in real situations and interacting with their peers to make sense when they are uncertain of the meaning. According to the aforementioned researchers, younger learners are more successful than older learners, as children can achieve more native-like proficiency.

1.7. The Factor of Gender in Learning

Researches into gender differences in learning began in the 1970s and 1980s. Studies were undertaken to discover the learning differences between women and men, as the starting point for empirical investigations. Gender inequality has long been a subject of sociolinguistics; it has been defined as the variations between males and females, as the latter has been socially constructed in language learning and language use (Subrahmanian, 2005). Undeniably, the inequality of gender may affect and hinder learning, and gender may influence and become part of one's identity when it is socially constructed. The other social factor is gender itself, which can also affect language learning. Hou (2015) believes that gender has a great role in learning a second language: for example, female students use affective strategy more than males. A correlation has been found between genders and learning, which is related to social and cultural factors (Davies and Catherine, 2004; Cameron, 2005; Holmes, 2013). It should be understood as to whether religion and ideology affect gender in learning language differently.

1.8. The Factors of Religion, Politics in Learning

Religious affiliation refers to an individual's acceptance of beliefs and faith (Shiraeve and Levy, 2014). Beliefs and values can often influence the way humans learn and use language; in particular, when religion is used politically to impose an ideological basis on the process of learning. In terms of politics, it has long been studied in various disciplines, in the form of political science; and it continues to receive great attention in people's everyday life. Despite the multidisciplinary nature of the previous research, language and politics are not separated; they are intertwined (Giddens, 1984, cited in Gelabert, 2004; Fishman, 2006). Sociolinguists have closely observed the relationship between language and politics, as they have an impact on social orders. There has been a growing amount of research on the importance of actual language when used in an appropriate context: for instance, speech, conversation, and various styles of political discourse.

Section two: Methodology and Research Design

This section explains how research was carried out for this study. It looks at the research design, population, sample, validity, reliability, data collection and data analysis. It presents statistical description and procedures as well as the requirements of data collection in three different areas in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

2.1. Target Population

The target population is defined as total number of participants needed to enhance research validity (Golshan, 2018). The target population of this study was the majority Kurdish learners of

English language in 21 secondary and high schools in Erbil and its suburban districts in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. The 21 schools were divided into three types and three different regions. Over half of twenty-one schools are located in the capital city of Erbil. Each of the schools is located in different areas of the city. The other selected schools are located in the rural and town areas. The respondents of the study belong to grades 7, 8, 10 and 11. The participants were selected randomly and have various levels of English language proficiency. Moreover, the total sample consists of 600 participants and students aged 12–19 years.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

In this empirical research, a quantitative method is used for obtaining data. The instruments utilised can be determined from the survey, tests and observations. The acceptance of tools has level of reliability and validity which is in line with the research content and purposes.

2.3. Questionnaire

Questionnaire, as one of the most common tools used among researchers, is very popular for collecting empirical data. The rationale for utilising a questionnaire includes its ability to obtain reliable data; there is no hardship in its use; and it has a lower cost (Golshan, 2018).

2.4. Validity

The validity of a questionnaire is determined by how content and questions are measured and what they are estimated to be. The content validity is the degree to which data can be collected using a particular instrument. Golshan (2018) points out that validity refers

to external results of the research that could be generalised to people. Generalising to people is called population validity and generalisation to other things is called natural validity; therefore, this study may apply to all people in all situations in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

2.5. Reliability

For testing a hypothesis, reliability plays an important role and it is critical for any research. For quantitative research, reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and are an accurate representation of the total population under study (Golafshani, 2003). The items of the tools are reliable because the three tools are reliable: they are designed to gain the same result in the same time. That is to say, the tools are constructed, administered and concluded in the same way. Secondly, many of the items or variables that have the same purpose of all three tools are repeated. The reliability coefficient of the students' questionnaire has been scored 0.643 by applying Cronbach's Alpha. Accordingly, the statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Cronbach's Alpha values for all the student survey scales is $0.643 > 0.60$, it is observed that all the values are greater than 0.60. Consequently, the scale method applied for data collection could remain reliable.

2.6. Variability of the questionnaire

According to Golshan (2018) and Walliman (2011), there are three sorts of variation: independent variation, dependent variation and moderate variation. The independent variation is often called the treatment variable. For example, the effects of the economy may influence language learning; whereas a dependent variable is a

kind of variation that indicates the learner's post-test score, which is generally known as the outcome variable. The moderate variable refers to the variable that moderates the effect of the independent variable; such as the effect of gender on learning. Social factors are independent variables which have a direct or indirect effect, while the dependent variable is the score obtained from language learning development as measured through tests and post-tests.

2.7. Ethical considerations

The researcher requested official permission from both the Ministries of Higher Education and Education of Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Since the purpose of the research was well illustrated, the government officials immediately provided official permission letters to all the state schools to assist the researcher in facilitating the study. Then the researchers submitted a consent form to all participants to agree and sign. The researchers met the principals and assistant principals of the selected schools in Erbil and its suburbs and then requested information needed for the research purposes. The researchers assured them that this work is academic and would serve the people in the Region. A formal consent form protocol was presented and signed by the school principal and students for the purpose of this research study.

Section three: Presentations of Data Analysis, Findings and Discussions

This section provides details on the outcomes of the various analyses conducted on data collected for this study. It begins with a focus on the main findings determined by utilising statistical programs. The analysis will determine how socioeconomic status and social classes affect ones' language development. Regarding

this, all variables would be analysed and compared to the Mean by utilising t-test for two independent samples and f-test for more.

3.1. Age Groups

As visualised in the figure below, the age-range of the vast majority of students who took part in this study was between sixteen and seventeen years old, which is about 41% of students were from age 16-17, but only 7.2% of students were from age 18-19. This range may be due to students' failure to pass to the next level. The percentage of students aged 14-15 who participated in the study is 29.0%. Only 23.0% of students were ages 12-13 years, as seen in Figure1.

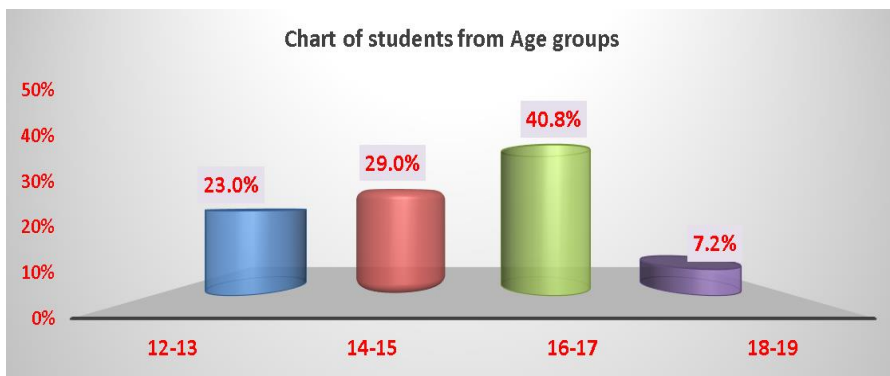


Figure1: Students' Age Range

The results of the ANOVA test showed a significant difference between the score of student age groups. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table1: One-way ANOVA compares students' mean score with Age group

What was your English grade obtained during the last year?				
Age range	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
12-13	138	84.26	13.634	26.726 (0.000)**
14-15	174	82.68	14.153	
16-17	245	75.52	14.067	
18-19	43	66.40	15.691	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

**Sig. P<0.05

A one-way ANOVA test was administered to analyse variances concerning the impact of age on echelons of learning English as a second language. The respondents were divided into four different groups according to their age (Group1:12-13years, Group2:14-15, Group3:16-17 and Group4: 18-19 years.). As is apparent, there was a statistically significant difference at the p-value =0.000, which is less than 0.05 in the scores for the four groups. Despite statistical significances, the actual difference in mean score between four groups is quite different. The score means for Group1:(M =84.26, with an Std. =13.634) was significantly different from Group2(M=82.68, with Std.= 14.153), which was significantly different from Group 3(M=75.52, Std.=14.067), which was different from the Group4(M=66.40, with an Std.= 15.691). The total participants were 600 with an overall score (mean) of 78.96 with a standard deviation of 14.997. Interestingly, the statistical evidence, as shown in table1, demonstrates that age affects language learning. This means that early age is more

important than older age for learning English as a second language in the context of the Kurdistan region.

3.2. The Impact of Gender on English Language Learning

Participants were asked to indicate their gender, as shown in Figure2:

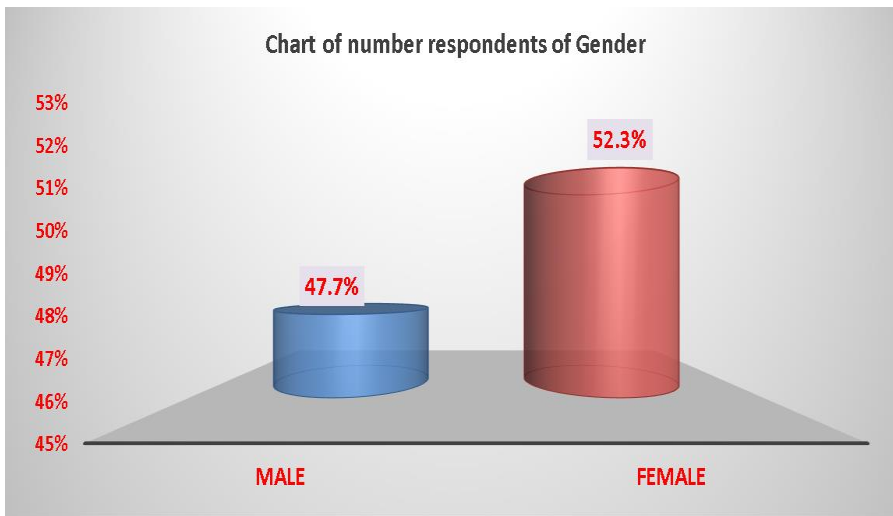


Figure2: The number of students' response based on gender disparity

It is seen that the number of female respondents is greater than male respondents, although there is not a huge difference between them. This difference did not influence the overall results. Table 2 shows the results of gender in learning the English language.

Table 2: Independent sample T-test used to compare students' mean score with their gender

What was your English grade obtained during the last year?				
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test (p-value)
Male	286	76.62	14.855	3.67 (0.000)**
Female	314	81.08	14.831	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

**Sig. $P < 0.05$

An independent-sample t-test was administered to compare the participants' scores based on gender. The results showed a significant difference in scores between males and females as such, for males ($M = 76.62$, with an Std. 14.855) while females ($M = 81.08$, with an Std. 14.831, $T = 3.67$, $P = 0.000 \leq (\alpha) 0.05$). The magnitude of the differences is in the means 78.96, with a total standard deviation 14.997. The table above focused on gender to see whether gender impacts students' English language learning. According to the statistical analysis, there is a significant difference in scores based on gender means; gender does affect students' second language learning as females perform better than males.

3.3. Students' Grade Level of Study

Similarly, respondents were asked to indicate their level of study. Figure 3 shows the participants' level of study at School.

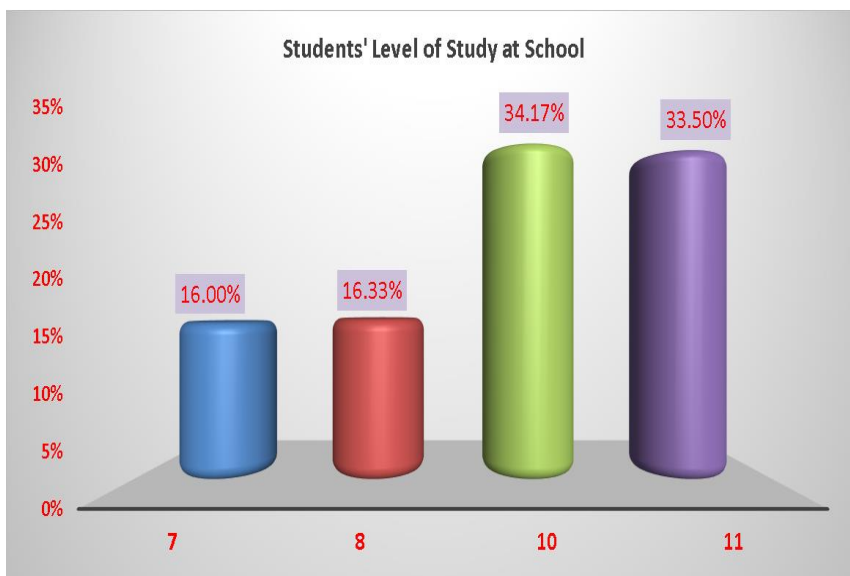


Figure3: The students' grade level of study at school

The above chart displays those students in four different school grades. Grades seven and eight are basic schools, while grades ten and eleven are considered post-secondary schools. As one can notice from the above chart, grades 7 and 8 participated less than grades 10 and 11, which is about 33% who participated in the study, but only 16.33% from grade 8 which is more than grade 7 but this is not a case. As for grade 10 and 11, they are almost similar. The highest rate of participation was in grade 10. Yet, the difference between participation and their level of study is understandable in age and level of study. The researcher seeks to know whether the level of study of students affects their second language learning. The table below illustrates how the level of participants' study affects their language learning.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA compares students score mean to grade level of Study

What was your English grade obtained during the last year?				
Level of Students Study at School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
7	96	82.43	15.186	9.205 (0.000)**
8	98	81.91	15.066	
10	205	80.11	13.189	
11	201	74.68	15.706	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

**Sig. $P < 0.05$

The table above suggests that there is a significant difference between students' level of study and the score achievement in English language, based on one-way ANOVA f-test used to compare the students' mean to their level of study. The comparison made between one-way ANOVA f-test used is equal to 9.205 with $P\text{-value} = 0.000$, which is less than Alpha (0.05). That means, there is a statistically significant difference between students' mean score and levels of study. The number of students who took part in the study in grade seven is 96; grade eight is 98, grade ten 205 is while grade eleven is only 201. Statistically, the data found that students in grade seven scored higher than other grades in the level of English language learning. The results presented in table 3 show that there is a statistically significant difference between the students' level of study and the mean score.

Accordingly, younger learners at schools recorded the highest level of learning language achievement. It seems that more effort

has been given by grades 7 and 8 than grades 10 and 11 in the public schools of the Region.

3.4. Effects of Religion Belief Affiliation on English Language learning

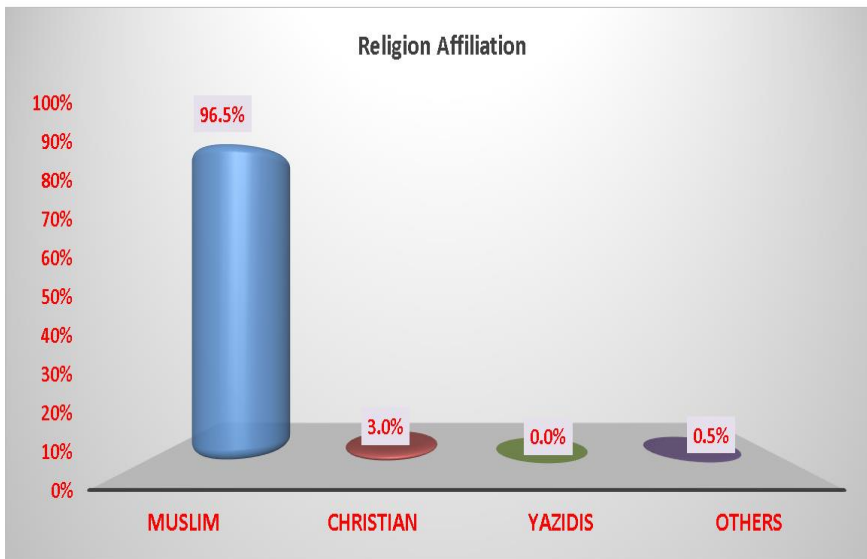


Figure4: The Rate of Participants' Religion Affiliation

According to the aforementioned figure, a vast majority of responders were Muslim which is about 96% of all participants while Christian participants were only 3%, whereas others. There were no Yazidi participants, and half percent belonged to other religious groups. The results of students' religion have been calculated statistically to determine whether religious affiliation has any significant influence on learning a second language. The findings are revealed in the table below.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA compares Religion Affiliation to students' score mean

What was your English grade obtained during the last year?				
Religion Affiliation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
Muslim	578	78.77	14.985	1.286 (0.277)
Christian	18	84.44	13.448	
Others	3	81.33	27.301	
Total	599	78.95	15.009	

Based on the f-test, which was administered statistically, the f-test is equal to 1.286 and P-value 0.277, which is greater than Alpha (0.05). The total participants mean score is equal to 78.95, with an Std. 15.009, P-value $0.277 > \text{Alpha}$. Thus, results found that religion has no impact on students' English language learning and development.

3.4. Effects of Residential Area on Students a L2

As for the residential area, students were asked to indicate their locations, as shown in the Figure5:

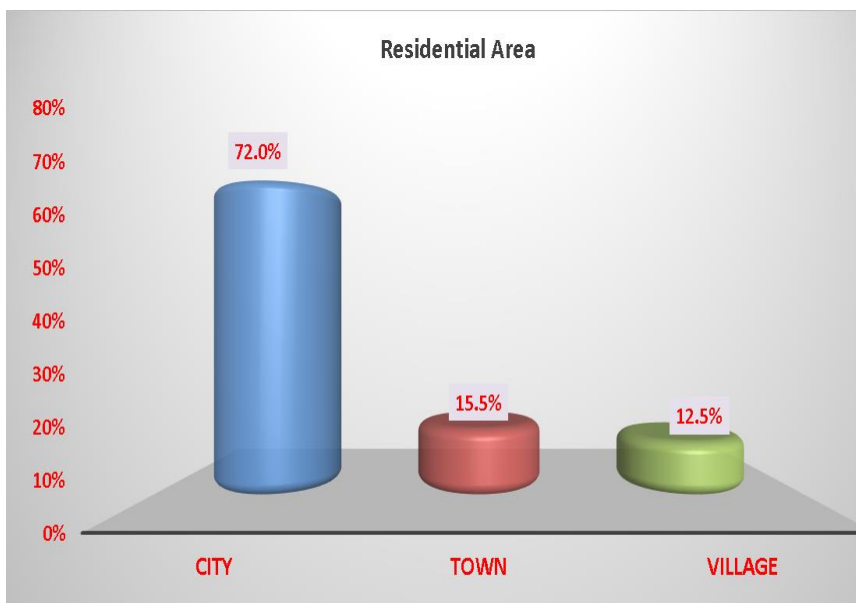


Figure 5: The rate of respondents based on residential area

According to the chart above, 70% of respondents were from a cosmopolitan city, while about 16% of students were from towns and nearly 13% were from rural areas. The rationale behind a larger number of participants being chosen from a city was due to larger populations. The statistical results are presented in the given table to see to what extent residential area affect students English language learning.

Table5: One-way ANOVA compares students score mean to Residential Area

What was your English grade obtained during the last year?				
Residential Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
City	432	80.23	15.222	5.728 (0.003)**
Town	93	75.29	13.364	
Village	75	76.16	14.647	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

**Sig. $p < 0.05$

As one can notice from the table above, there is a significant difference between where students live and their level of English language attainment. The response of students was analysed in a way that f-test ANOVA was administered which is equal to 5.728, and P-value is 0.003. This means that P-value is smaller than Alpha 0.05 with total participants (M 78.96 and with an Std. 14.997). This indicates that there is a valuable difference between students' obtained score and where they live. According to the statistics, the mean score of students who reside in a city is 80.23 with a standard deviation 15.222, which is higher than students who reside in a town or rural areas. Results indicate that participants from towns achieved a mean score of 75.29 with a standard deviation 13.364 which is less than students' mean score in a village as their mean score was 76.16 with a standard deviation 14.647. Based on the findings, learners who reside in a metropolitan city have a better opportunity or "results" in language learning than those who reside in a town and village. Results in the aforementioned table indicate that participants from the study who reside in a rural setting scored

slightly higher mean score than those who reside in a town. Amazingly, the reason could be that students who reside in a village may have more opportunity to take part in class communication as they may have a smaller class size in the School comparing to those who reside in a town, but participants from the metropolitan city may have better opportunities to communicate with foreigners from different cultures which enhances language fluency. Students from metropolitan areas may also have more experienced teachers compared to town and villages.

3.2.1. Measuring Socioeconomic Status

Participants were asked to indicate their financial circumstances, to see how it influences students' language learning. Their responses were analysed by using independent t-test as shown in the table below:

Table6: Independent sample t-test compares students' mean score to the study room

Do you have your own room for study?				
Study room	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test (p-value)
Yes	451	79.73	14.507	2.214* (0.027)
No	149	76.60	16.217	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

*Sig. $p < 0.05$

T-test was conducted to evaluate whether or not students have a study room and how this may impact their language learning. The data analysis found that there is a significant difference between

students' mean score and their study room. The independent sample t-test used is equal to 2.214, and P-value was 0.027, which is less than Alpha (0.05). This means that students who have their own room for study significantly affects their English language learning. As one can notice from the table above, 451 out of 600 participants responded: "Yes" (M= 79.73, with an Std.=14.507) compared to 149 out of 600 responded" (M=76.60 with an Std.=16.217). It can be said that having a quiet atmosphere and comfortable room enhances learning English as a second language.

Table 7: One-way ANOVA compares students' obtained mean score to family income

How much is your family income per month?				
Categories	N. S	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
200,000-500,000	118	75.17	15.164	7.619 (0.000)**
500,001-1,000,000	143	77.89	13.768	
1,000,001-1,500,000	110	78.06	14.993	
1,500,001-2,000,000	32	86.72	12.092	
2,000,000-and more	42	86.67	14.460	
Total	445	78.67	14.838	

**Sig. p <0.000

According to the data in the table above, there is a significant correlation in students' mean scores in relation to family income. The ANOVA f-test which was equal to 7.619 with a P-value 0.000, which was less than 0.05 Alpha, therefore the difference is statistically important. To further illustrate the statistics, results show that participants from a family who received 1,500,001-2,000,000 scored the highest (M= 86.72m with an Std.=12.092)

was different from all the categories. Respondents who selected 2,000,000-and more with (M=86.67 with an Std. 14.460) was significantly different from the family who received 1,000,001-1,500,000 with an (M=78.06 with an Std. =14.993), this was also different statistically from the family income with 500,001-1,000,000 (M=77.89. Std.=13.768), and it was significantly different from the family income with 200,000-500,000 (M=75.17, with an Std. 15.164). This means that the income the parents received per month is an important factor that affected student language learning achievement. In fact, 55 participants out of 600 did not respond to the item due to their lack of information about their parents' income or their reluctance to answer the questions.

Table 8: One -way ANOVA compares students' obtained mean score to their social class

Criteria	N.S	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
Higher Class	109	88.10	11.331	45.802 (0.000)**
Middle Class	316	79.69	14.450	
Lower Class	175	71.93	14.613	
Total	600	78.96	14.997	

**Sig. p <0.000

According to the above table, results revealed that there was a significant difference between participants obtained score and their social classes. For analysis, one-way ANOVA f-test used is equal to 45.802 with a P-value 0.000, which is less than 0.05 Alpha with the total participants (M=78.96 with an Std.=14.997). To further illustrate, the classes were divided into three groups. Group 1:

Higher Class with (M=88.10 with an Std.=11.331), Group 2: Middle Class (M=79.69. with an Std.=14.450), Group 3: Lower Class (M=71.93, with an Std.=14.997). The results show that social class is a significant factor in students' English language learning.

3.6. Determining Students' Social Class

The participants were asked to indicate their parents' level of education, occupation, family properties and earnings. This was examined in three different items of the questionnaire. For each variable, one-way ANOVA was tested to see its effects on L2.

3.7. Presenting Level of Father's Education

Table 9: One-way ANOVA compares respondents' fathers' level of education to student mean score

The father's level of education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
University	126	86.92	13.477	20.339 (0.000)**
Institute	52	85.12	11.616	
Higher school	127	78.72	14.617	
Basic school	199	75.31	14.063	
Did not attend School	80	72.61	14.661	
Total	584	79.06	14.845	

**Sig. n < 0.05

As can be seen from the table above, one-way analysis of variances indicates that there is a significant difference in a father's level of education and a student's mean scores obtained. The father's level of education was divided into five levels. Level 1:

University, Level 2: Institute, Level 3: High School, Level 4: Basic School and Level 5: Did not attend School. As Table 9 shows, there is a significant difference between the participants' mean score and the level of their fathers' education. F-test was used, which is equal to 20.339 with a P-value is $0.000 \leq$, which is less than 0.05 (P-value $\leq \alpha$). Therefore, there was a highly significant statistical difference seen in the above table for all levels with the overall mean levels: (M=79.06 with an Std.=14.845). The mean score for Level 1 (M=86.92, with an Std.=13.477), is significantly different from Level 2 (M=85.12, with Std.= 11.616). The Level 3 (M=78.72, with an Std.=14.617) is statistically very different from Level 4 (M=75.31, with an Std.=14.063). This is also a significant difference from Level 5 (M=79.06, with an Std.=14.661). However, 16 out of 600 respondents did not answer the question. The results obtained from the preliminary statistical analysis of father's level of education as presented in the above table indicates that it has the most influence on students' language learning and development.

3.8. Presenting Level of Mother's Education

To investigate whether mothers' level of education affects students' development English language, the table below illustrates the results.

Table 10: One –way ANOVA compares students' mean score to mothers' level of education

Mother's level of education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
University	77	90.12	10.146	26.197 (0.000)**
Institute	54	85.28	14.131	
Higher school	72	81.67	13.386	
Basic school	185	78.22	14.882	
Did Not Attend School	205	72.90	13.955	
Total	593	78.99	14.904	

**Sig. p <0.05

The One-way ANOVA f-test was used to analyse the data obtained from the participants of this study. As can be seen, the statistical analysis revealed that there was a highly significant difference between the level of mothers' education and students' mean scores. According to the above table, there is a significant difference between students' obtained scores and their mothers' level of education as it is clear that f-test used which is equal to 26.197 with a P-value 0.000 which is less than the value of Alfa (0.05), for that reason the difference is statistically significant. The mother's level of education was divided into five levels. The Level 1: University (M=90.12, with an Std.= 10.146) which was significantly different from Level 2: Institute (M=85.28, with a Std.=14.131) which was statistically different from the Level 3: Higher School (M=81.67, with an Std.=13.386) which was significantly different from Level 4: Basic School (M=78.22, with an Std.=14.882) which was also significantly different from the Level 5: Did not attend School (M=72.90, with an Std. 13.955).

Seven of the participants failed to answer the question which did not affect the overall results since f-test used which is equal to 26.197 with a P-value 00.000 which is less than the value of Alpha (0.05). For that reason, the difference is highly significant statistically.

Based on the statistical analysis, the level of the mothers' education significantly impacts the participants' language learning. When considering whether the mothers' or fathers' level of education has more impact on students' language learning, it is indicated that a mothers' level of education has more impact. The analysis shows that students with a university-graduate mother score about 4% greater than students with a university-graduate father. This means that mothers' level of education significantly influences children's language development. The data shows that the higher the level of parents' education, the language learning and school performance of their students are better. The reason could be that parents with good command of English could perhaps communicate in English with their children and can also share their educational experiences with their children.

3.9. Father's Occupation Impact on English Language Learning

Table 11: One –way ANOVA compares respondents' father's occupation to students obtained score

Father's occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
Businessman	37	81.86	15.201	5.156 (0.000)**
Teacher	55	85.73	11.691	
Doctor	7	81.86	16.638	
Lawyer	6	84.83	17.702	
Engineer	23	93.13	6.283	
Peshmarga	139	76.41	12.515	
Government Employee	152	78.00	16.082	
Farmer	5	83.00	19.799	
Jobless	22	77.36	16.256	
Other Specify:	135	76.63	15.187	
Total	581	79.01	14.862	

Statistics of one-way ANOVA *F*-test was reported to compare fathers' occupations to students' mean score. The results showed that there was a very significant difference between fathers' type of profession and students' obtained mean score in English language learning since the *f*-test utilised is equal to 5.156 with a *P*-value is 0.000 which is less than Alpha (0.05). This is with total respondents' (*M*= 79.01 with an Std. 14.862). Therefore, the difference is statistically critical.

To further elucidate, the father's occupations were placed into ten groups based on the highest mean score, respectively. Group 1: Engineer (M= 93.13, with a Std. 6.283), Group 2: Teacher (M= 85.73, with a Std.= 11.691), Group 3: Lawyer (M=84.83, with a Std. 17.702), Group 4: Farmer (M= 83.00, with a Std.= 19.799), Group 5: Businessman (M=81.86 with a Std. 15.201), Group 6: Doctors (M=81.86 with a Std.=16.638), Group 7: Government Employee (M=78.00, with an Std.=16.082), Group 8: Jobless (M=76.63, with an Std.=16.256), Group 9: Peshmerga (M=76.41with an Std.= 12.515), the Group 10: Other Specify (M=76.63, with an Std. 15.187). However, 19 out of 600 respondents did not answer this question but did not affect the overall results.

From the analysis in the table, it is clear that the occupation of fathers affects students' learning of English language at public schools. The most influential job which has the most impact on language learning is the fathers' occupation, "engineer", a relatively prestigious job.

3.10. Mother's Occupation Affects English Language Learning

A similar question was asked to find out how mothers' jobs impact their children in learning the English language. The finding illustrates in the table below:

Table 12: One-way ANOVA compares students' mean score to mother's occupation

Mother's occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-test (p-value)
Businessman	8	73.38	15.278	6.428 (0.000)**
Teacher	87	86.60	13.251	
Doctor	14	86.79	15.542	
Lawyer	3	88.33	4.933	
Engineer	9	94.22	7.396	
Government Employee	52	79.92	15.037	
Farmer	1	81.00		
Jobless	390	76.79	14.519	
Other Specify	27	75.81	16.548	
Total	591	78.99	14.941	

**Sig. p < 0.05

One-way ANOVA F-test was used to analyse the data above to determine how mothers' occupations impact their children's English language development. It is obvious from the data above that the variance indicates there was a significant correlation in participants' mean score when scores were grouped by mothers' occupations (M= 78.99, with Std.=14.941). According to the aforementioned table, f- test used is 6.428 with a P-value=0.000 which is less than Alpha (0.05). Consequently, a significant difference is seen.

The data in Table 12 was also grouped into nine different groups based on the higher mean score obtained by students in English language during the study. As one can see the following scores were achieved: Group 1: Engineer (M=94.22, with a

Std.=7.396), Group 2: Lawyer (M= 88.33, with a Std.= 4.933), Group 3: Teacher (M= 86.60, with a Std. 13.251), Group 4: Doctors (M=86.79, with a Std.=15.542), Group 5: Farmer (M=81.00), Group 6: Government Employee (M=79.92, with a Std.=15.037), Group 7: Jobless (M=76.79, with a Std.=14.519), Group 8:Other Specify (M=75.81 with a Std.= 16.548), Group 9: Businesswoman (M=73.38 with a Std. =16.548).

Results show that mothers' occupations have significant influence on their children's English language learning. Based on the data above, mothers with an engineering career, scored on the highest level as compared to mothers with a business career which has the least influence on their children's English language learning in public schools. The results are surprising, the jobless mother might spend more time with their children and they have more opportunity to stay at home. This means that mother who does not have any a job outside home are more available compared to mothers who have their own business.

3.2.3 Discussion

Based on the research findings, it can be said that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds compared to higher socioeconomic backgrounds seem to learn a language poorly, whereas children from wealthy families tend to learn a second language better and speak more fluently. The reason could be that learners with economic background are more likely happier than those with less financial advantages. Students from upper classes are more likely to be more knowledgeable when they come to school, as they may have had more past experience of learning than those from the lower classes. The higher classes' prior learning experience can enable them to perform their activities and tasks

more quickly; therefore, economic factors can affect students' mental satisfaction. Moreover, learners whose parents had completed higher education performed better academically. Obviously, when a person has a higher level of education and is wealthy, they may speak quite differently from someone in a lower position, such as working in a factory. Thus, the distinction can be noticed in their language learning ability, word choice, and their foreign-language speaking fluency.

A professional parent is more likely to be able to allocate more means of education and has more influence on students' plans and time management. It should be noted that all factors have an independent influence on students' second language learning. For example, the socioeconomic status of students can play a vital role in learning a language fluently. This has also been confirmed by a number of researchers such as Salameh, (2012) and Hou, (2015) indicating that higher socioeconomic status has a positive influence on students to learn a language since more needs of students, such as travelling to communicate with native speakers, can be met. Educated parents are better equipped to communicate with their children and inquire about their academic work, activities and tasks.

On the other hand, poor socioeconomic status may lead to poor academic performance in many situations. The economically disadvantaged parents tend to be less able to manage to pay for resources of quality education. Having a reasonable hypothesis helps the researcher to validate research actions and know whether the assumption is correct. In reply to the null hypotheses, the first hypothesis is rejected because social classes have been found to make a difference in language learning. Indeed, based on the empirical evidence found in this study, there has been a

relationship between student's social class and their grades obtained from a school in a way in which those students in higher classes tend to have the time, resources and space to set aside for second language learning. As the results found, they tend to learn faster than those in the lower classes since they have difficulty with more basic needs. Gender and age groups can also make a difference in learning the language. Younger children can learn faster than older learners and females have been found to learn a language better than males. However, religious affiliation has not made a difference in learning a second language. Unexpectedly, results are surprising because Muslim believers believe that people should learn more than one language, for example, Arabic as it is the language of Holy Quran. Despite that, when one wants to convert their religion need to learn the religious language and these kinds of people tend to be cleverer than the other people to learn a language linguistically. Hence, the second hypothesis was also rejected.

As mentioned previously, social factors can be regarded as "outside factors" in determining one's success at language learning. Social factors associate the students' social and socioeconomic background with their academic achievement. Most of the factors can be considered outside the control of the students. So, the results reveal that learning another language is not an easy achievement. It requires a considerable investment of resources. It can be pointed out that learning a second language is not totally dependent upon the students' willingness and their choice. Factors around them play a huge difference in students' success.

Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

This study has examined the most influential social factors on students' second language development. There are various social factors that exist outside of the school context, including social class, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, and age, level of study, power and financial status. The statistical program SPSS was utilised, and comparison was made in relation to students' obtained mean score via studying the English language in governmental schools and social factors in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The findings from the literature indicated that students' ability to become proficient in a second language is affected by various social factors. Each factor appeared independently, affects participants' ability to utilise the English language more effectively. Results from statistical analyses confirmed that students' social class is a strong indicator of the success of the study of the English language in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The findings indicate that family income, social class, parents' level of education; age and geography have a significant effect on ones' second language learning. Low income of the family is a major impediment to learning a second language. Students' language learning success can be related to socioeconomic factors such as residential area of parents. Parents' education and social classes were revealed to have the strongest correlations to students' language learning and achievement while parents with business or other jobs had the weakest effect on their children's language learning proficiency. In other words, more educated parents appear to have more influence on their children's language achievement and their learning outcomes.

4.2. Recommendations

This study highly recommends linguists, educators, and language policy makers to be aware of macro level factors as they impact learners of English language learning in Kurdistan. They should take the individual's background into account since the outside factors either hinder or enhance students' ability to learn English as a second or foreign language in the Region as there exists a great diversity among students in terms of culture, social class, gender, economy, family size and power. Instructors should be aware that students' failure is not necessarily the result of their capacity for learning, but maybe the result of social factors beyond the students' control. The government should provide fees to students who live in harsh economic conditions. This paper has a number of limitations including obtaining recent resources for the research purposes. Therefore further research needs to be undertaken in the area of students' micro variables of language use in the school contexts to know how micro-level factors impact on students' language use and variations in public school contexts.

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پوخته:

ئەم لىكۆلئىنەۋەيە، كە لەژىر ناۋىشانى (كارىگەرى ھۆكارە كۆمەلاتىيەكان لە سەر قوتابى بۆ فېربوونى زمانى ئىنگىلىزى لە ھەرئىمى كوردستان-عێراق) دا، لىكۆلئىنەۋەيەكى ۋەسفى - كردارىيە، كە تىشك دەخاتەسەر ئەو ھۆكارە كۆمەلايەتییانەى، كە زۆرتىن كارىگەرىيان لەسەر فېربوونى زمانى ئىنگىلىزى ۋەك زمانى دووھم، يان زمانى بىيانى لە قوتابخانە گشتىيەكانى ھەرئىمى كوردستان، ھەيە. ئەو فاكتەرە كۆمەلايەتییانەى كە لەم تۆيژىنەۋەيەدا، سەرنجيان خراۋەتەسەر، برىتتىن لە: چىنى كۆمەلايەتتى قوتابى، دوورەدەستى جوگرافى، ھەلكەۋتى كۆمەلايەتتى - ئابوورى، ئاستى رۆشنىبرى و پىشە و بەرپرسىارىتى دايك و باۋكى قوتابى، تەمەن، رەگەز، ھىز و ئايىن و كولتور.

لە ھەرئىمى كوردسانى عێراق، ئەو گرنگىيەدانە نەبوو، كە سەرنجى ئەو بەدات، چۆن ھۆكارە كۆمەلايەتتىيەكان كار دەكەنە سەر فېربوونى زمان. كىشەكە لەۋىدايە، كە ھەندىك لە خەلك لە ئاستى جىاۋازى كۆمەلگادا، پىدەچىت باشترو خىراتر لەۋانىتر فېرى زمان بن. ھەندى فاكتەر كار دەكەنە سەر فېربوون، ۋەك: چىنى كۆمەلايەتتى، باروودۇخى ئابوورى، ئاستى خويندەۋارى دايك و باوك، شوئىنى نىشتەجىبوون و دوورەدەستى جوگرافىي، كە ئەمانە لە دەرەۋى تواناى قوتابىين بۆ زالبوون بەسەرياندا. ئەم ھۆكارانە رەنگە دەرەفەتتى قوتابى كۆنترۆل و سنووردار بكەن، لەۋەى كە ببىتە قسەكەرىكى باش و كارىگەر بە زمانىكى بىيانى (بە نموونە ئىنگىلىزى).

بۆ كۆكردنەۋەى داتاۋ زانىارىيەكان، ھەردوو رىبازى لىكۆلئىنەۋەى چەندايەتتى و چۆنايەتتى، لە رىگەى راپرسى و لىستى پىداچوونەۋە و بىنىن و سەرنجدان لە ناو پۆل و چاۋ پىكەۋتن و گەفتوگۆكردن، بەكارھىتراۋن.

ئەو كەسانەى كە توڭزىنەۋەكەيان لە سەر ئەنجامدراۋە، برىتتىن لە ٦٨٠ بەشداربوو، كە لە نۆياندا ٦١٠ قوتابى و ٧٠ مامۇستا لە قوتابخانە ناۋەندى و دواناۋەندىيەكان، لە پۆلەكانى ٧و ٨و ١٠ و ١١ بەشدارىيان كىردۈۋە و، دابەشكراون بۆ سى جۆر لە سى ناۋچەى جىاۋازى شار، شارۋچكە و لادىي ھەرىمى كوردستان.

ئەو نمرانە لەو تاقىكىردنەۋە ھەرمىيانەۋە ۋەرگىراون، كە لە لايەن مامۇستايانى قوتابخانە و لە تاقىكىردنەۋە دەرەككە نىشتامىيەكاندا، كراون. دواتر نمرەكان بە سوۋدۈەرگرتن لە پرۆگرامى (SPSS) قىژنى ٢٥، بەراۋرد كراون لەگەل ھەلومەرجى كۆمەلايەتى قوتابىيەكان.

دەرئەنجامى ئەم لىكۆلىنەۋەيە، ئەۋەى ئاشكرا كىردۈۋە، كە باروودۇخى ئابوورى و كۆمەلايەتى، زۆرتىن كارىگەرەيان ھەبوۋە لەسەر فېربوونى زمانى ئىنگلىزى لە لاي قوتابى. زانىارىيەكان لە رووى ئامارىيەۋە ئەۋە دەخەنەروو، كەۋا پەيوەندىيەكى گرنگ و بەھىز ھەيە لە نىۋان نمرەى بەدەستھاتووى قوتابىيان و چىنى كۆمەلايەتى، شوينى نىشتەجىبوون و داھاتى مانگانەى بنەمالەكانيان. ئەنجامە بەدەستھاتوۋەكانى شىكارى ھەلومەرجى بەشداربووان، ئەۋەيان ئاشكرا كىردۈۋە، كەۋا فاكترە كۆمەلايەتئىيەكان، چ لە رووى ھاندان يان بەرەبەست دروستكىردن بۆ فېربوونى زمان، زۆر كارىگەر بوون. بەتايىبەتى ئەم راستىيە پىشاندىراۋە، كەۋا قوتابىيانى چىنى بالاي كۆمەلگا، تا رادەيەكى زۆر لە گەشەپىدانى فېربوونى زماندا، باشتىر بوون. پىۋىستە بگوتىر، زانىارىيە ئامارىيەكان، ئەۋەشيان خستۈۋەتەروو، كە پىشەى باۋانى قوتابىيان و ھەروەھا شوينى نىشتەجىبوونيان، رۆلىكى بەرچاۋيان گىپراۋە لە فېربوونى زماندا لە ھەرىمى كوردستان.

ملخص:

أجريت هذه الدراسة لاستكشاف عدد من العوامل الاجتماعية التي تؤثر على إتقان تعلم الطلاب للغة في المدارس الحكومية الثانوية في إقليم كردستان العراق. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن تأثيرات والعوامل الاجتماعية على اللغة الإنجليزية للطلاب في المنطقة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس مدى تأثير العوامل الاقتصادية و الاجتماعية في أداء طلبة مدارس الحكومية. تم تصميم هذا البحث على أسس كمية و نوعية. استخدم في هذه الدراسة التحليل الإحصائي الذي يعتمد الطرائق الوصفية و الاستنباطية و لقياس أثر العوامل الاجتماعية على أداء الطلبة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية ، العوامل المشمولة في هذا العمل هي الطبقة الاجتماعية ، والبعد الجغرافي والاقتصاد والدين. في عموم إقليم كردستان العراق ، كان هناك قلق بشأن المستوى الكلي في تعلم اللغة. المشكلة هي أن بعض العوامل الخارجية يبدو أنها تؤثر على إجادة اللغة للطلاب. مثل هذه العوامل قد تعيق أو تمهد الطريق للطلاب للتواصل مع لغة أجنبية أو لغة ثانية بشكل فعال. المشاركون في الدراسة من الصفوف ٧ و ٨ و ١٠ و ١١ من المدارس الحكومية. تم الحصول على درجات اللغة الإنجليزية للمشاركين لمدة عام واحد من الأداء الأكاديمي ، والتي تم حسابها باستخدام. تبين النتائج أن الحالة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لها أكبر تأثير على الكفاءة اللغوية للطلاب. تكشف الاستنتاجات عن وجود علاقة معنوية بين متوسط درجات الطلاب الذي حصلوا عليه ودرجة مستواهم الاجتماعي ودخلهم السكني ودخل الأسرة.

