

# The discourse of Kurdish traditional textiles

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## ABSTRACT – REZUMAT

### The discourse of Kurdish traditional textiles

*Verbal communication is not the only way by which people can interact; people communicate with each other through different signs, colours, cultural symbols and costumes. One of the ways that people can communicate through is clothes or textiles. The language of textiles and its covert discourse have not been studied profoundly. Each bit of textile has its specific meaning. Through the discourse of their clothes, people try to show their nationality, age, gender, social status, geographical belonging etc. Kurdish traditional clothes are believed to be culturally rich, since they are dressed by a large number of people in the past and present. This study is an attempt to examine the relationship between discourse and clothes. It tries to study the hidden discourse of Kurdish traditional textiles. The study seeks to answer several questions, including: What do the clothes say about the people who wear them? How different types of clothes show different forms of people's identity? How do clothes reveal the people's nationality, age, gender, geographical territory and social class? The principles of discourse analysis, more specifically Foucault's approach of material discourses, are used to investigate the collected data. The study uses a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. The data are collected in three ways: by analysing the photo albums, a survey and a site visit to Kurdish Textile Museum in Erbil. The study concludes that the pieces of textiles can be seen as linguistic elements in communications and Kurdish traditional clothes embraces specific cultural codes and symbols that can be used to reveal the discourses they embrace.*

**Keywords:** discourse analysis, language of textile, Kurdish culture

### Discursul textilelor tradiționale kurde

*Comunicarea verbală nu este singura modalitate prin care oamenii pot interacționa; oamenii comunică între ei prin diferite semne, culori, simboluri culturale și costume. Una dintre modalitățile prin care oamenii pot comunica este îmbrăcămintea sau materialele textile. Limbajul textilelor și discursul ascuns al acestora nu au fost studiate în profunzime. Fiecare bucată de material textil are semnificația sa specifică. Prin discursul îmbrăcămintei, oamenii încearcă să-și arate naționalitatea, vârsta, sexul, statutul social, apartenența geografică etc. Se crede că îmbrăcămintea tradițională kurdă este bogată din punct de vedere cultural, deoarece este purtată de un număr mare de oameni din trecut și din prezent. Acest studiu este o încercare de a examina relația dintre discurs și îmbrăcămintă. Se încearcă să se studieze discursul ascuns al costumelor tradiționale kurde. Studiul caută să răspundă la mai multe întrebări, printre care: Ce spune îmbrăcămintea despre persoanele care o poartă? Cum diferite tipuri de articole de îmbrăcămintă arată diferite forme de identitate a oamenilor? Cum dezvăluie îmbrăcămintea cetățenia, vârsta, sexul, teritoriul geografic și clasa socială a oamenilor? Principiile analizei discursului, mai precis abordarea lui Foucault privind discursul despre materiale, sunt folosite pentru a investiga datele colectate. Studiul folosește o abordare mixtă de metode cantitative și calitative. Datele sunt colectate în trei moduri: prin analiza albumelor foto, un sondaj și o vizită la Muzeul Textil Kurd din Erbil. Studiul concluzionează că piesele de îmbrăcămintă pot fi văzute ca elemente lingvistice în comunicare, iar îmbrăcămintea tradițională kurdă prezintă coduri și simboluri culturale specifice, care pot fi folosite pentru a dezvălui discursurile pe care le exprimă.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** analiza discursului, limbajul materialului textil, cultura kurdă

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## INTRODUCTION

One way people can display themselves to their surroundings is through the language of the textiles. This kind of language is an interesting way of communication that can be used to convey various messages. Each piece of Cloth, fibre or textile has its special discourse. This discourse is universal and found in in all modern and traditional clothes all over the world. People send messages by wearing different types of clothes in different occasions and rituals, such as, religious rituals, wedding nights, graduation ceremonies, etc. [1]. Kurdish people also dress spe-

cial traditional clothes in exceptional occasions nowadays, though some of them wear these kinds of dresses in their everyday life.

Clothing communicates various meanings that sometimes it is difficult to be deciphered. Alison Lurie, an American professor, points out that understanding the meaning of clothes is not easy, since they consist of a complex system of secret codes that have a crucial role to communicate the personal and collective discourses. She believes that communicating with the clothes' codes comes before language. Long before communicating through verbal codes, people

could reveal their gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, personality and social class through what they were dressing [2].

The concept of traditional textiles which is central to this study, need to be explained, since this concept is not static. It changes its discourse over time and place. What Kurds living abroad (diaspora) wear as traditional Kurdish clothes is a cloth that is dressed daily by Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan region or what Kurds wear as a national symbol in Nawroz (the new Kurdish year and festival) is the same cloth that dressed by peasants in their daily life. Baizerman et al. [3] discuss the concept of traditional clothes in western civilization. They believe that dress outside the boundaries of west, in Asia and Africa, for example, has not changed very much and that's why it can be regarded as 'traditional'. The western dress is originated from western traditional clothes but it has been changed. Nowadays, the western dress is a universal dress; it is dressed by people all over the world as the modern dress not traditional. Many Kurds now dress the suits, pants, shoes and the other western clothes, but they do not regard them as western traditional clothes.

Since Kurds are the largest nation without having their own state or country, their culture, materials and language, are influenced by the host countries and their dress is also influenced by the local clothes of these countries. Furthermore, Kurdish people still have numerous garments that differ from one Geographical area to the other, in a way that it is possible to differentiate between them and the ethnic groups, or even, to recognize the area in which the Kurds live by having a closer look at their clothes. This is one of the variables that this study is trying to investigate. Kurds live in Kurdistan which lies around the mountain of Zagros that is currently divided between the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria [3].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted to examine many aspects of textile and clothing. In this section some of the relevant studies are consulted. Starting from ancient history, in the 7th to 5th BC, when different ethnics, such as, Medes, Persian and Mitanni were living in the Middle East, their clothes were different. One can differentiate between Medes and Persians by the clothes they dressed, [4].

Nowadays, textiles can be regarded as a marker of group differentiation. The marker can be seen as national, ethnic, geographical, gender or social identity. Nash [5] regards this marker as a secondary group identity that allows members of the group to know each other and have a sense of belonging. "Difference in dress, from whole costumes to single items of apparel, serves as surface markers of group differences" [5].

Textile design and materials give meanings to the textiles, but they are not the only elements of clothing language. Colour is another sign in the language of

clothes that can convey different messages to the eye of the viewers. People from different backgrounds and groups tend to wear different coloured clothes. Urban clothes are every so often made in colours that echo the shades of cement, stone, smoke, grey skies and wet asphalts, which are grey, black, white and darker, while rural people and villagers tend to wear soft and fuzzy clothes which are made from wool, tweed and cotton that echo the roughness of pasture and bark and leaf, [2].

Discourse analysis is a multi-disciplinary approach. Its principles can be used to analyse different types of texts in different fields of humanities; it is a well-established method in the humanities. There are different methods and ways by which researchers can do discourse analysis, some of them are qualitative and others quantitative. It is difficult "to achieve an accurate identification of all these different schools or fields which are employed or tackled while doing discourse analysis" [6]. One of the definitions of discourse is the study of the abstract concepts within the texts. One of the leading figures in the field of discourse analysis is Michel Foucault. He had his own understanding to discourse meaning and discourse analysis. He argues that "discourses", i.e., historical knowledge formations and narratives, emerge according to a vast and complex set of discursive and institutional relationships that manifest themselves in language [7]. The analyses in this study mainly depend on his views on discourse.

Discourse analysis is a suitable method to study the covert discourse of textiles, since clothes have coded symbols and these codes need to be analysed in the cognition of the human brain. This coded sensorium interacts with nonverbal messages that are continuously sent from these textiles that aids human interaction in space and time. The signs of the clothes or textile include different visual symbols, such as, images and colours that interact with abstract sensorium, such as taste, smell, sound and feel, [5]. "Discourse thus gives sense to the material world through the way it differentiates, names, labels, classifies and categorizes, and thereby produces, recognizable objects" [8].

In Foucault view of material discourse analysis, the textiles are abstractions that are changed into reality through the process of attributing particular meaning to them [9]. So, Foucault [7] believes that discourses "systematically form the objects of which they speak". The discourses do not just describe the world; they create it through bringing the phenomena into being and attaching meaning to them. Foucault's theory and understanding of discourse focuses on language materiality at all its scopes [10].

In the study of discourse analysis and materiality, a number of discourse analysts have benefited from the works of Foucault. They have acknowledged that it is important to incorporate discourse and materiality to see how the hidden power of the messages is shared between the participants of a communicative event. They contributed to the debate other relationship between discourse and materials [11–13]. The

emphasis of Foucault's discourse is not only understood in the textuality and knowledge, but in the policy of social and political institutions, in forms of everyday practices [14].

Foucault believes that the relationship between discourses and materials is bilateral, which means that discourse can shape materials and materials can shape discourse. He points out that the relationship is also related to power. "Nothing is more material, physical, and corporeal than the exercise of power" [15]. His focus is also on how epistemologically the discursive and non-discursive forms are interwoven. He believes that "the discursive effects of the material and the material effects of the discursive" are bilateral, [14]. Discourse analysts tried to adopt Foucault's theory on material reading to analyse discursive and physical processes and to look at the way they are constitutive [13, 16], not only to discuss which one affects the other. Nonetheless this kind of understanding helps the scholars to examine power relations [14, 16].

One of the obvious messages in the discourse of textile is the sense of belonging; it is an identity that people try to display through wearing traditional clothes. Humans are social beings and they want to show their belongings to their families, community, country or nation. Gordon [1] points out clothes can function as the national and political identity. He states "National flags, for example, become literal representatives of the national "body" and hold enormous power. In the United States people literally pledge allegiance to a flag. Others flags represent contested identity. "Cloth is central in our lives as social beings. It bonds us to our families, even those who have passed on." Different nations, countries and groups of people have their special dresses that make them different from others [17].

Obviously, national or ethnic dresses have special referents and ethnic groups use them for different purposes to send different messages. In addition to their national purpose, they may have other purposes too, such as, religious, social or occupational. So the national or traditional dress is not static, it can change its messages depending on the context, time and occasion [5]. If we talk about Kurdish traditional dresses, one can see that they can be dressed in different occasions in different periods of time. In the past, Kurdish traditional dress was dressed everywhere by every people, but nowadays only few people dress them in their daily life; the majority of Kurds dress the traditional clothes only for special occasions and festivals like Nawroz and other national days. That's why, analysing the discourse of ethnic clothes is somehow problematic, and they are "among the most complicated, volatile and emotionally charged words and ideas in the lexicon of social science" [5].

The recent studies on nationalism and ethnicity conducted by historians, politicians, and social scientists in academia have anticipated that ethnicity and nationality feelings would fade away by the powers of

internationalization, globalization and ethnic assimilation in the postmodern era. Yet, in reality ethnicity and national identity has been rising over time in most parts of the world contrary to the anticipation. One can see that nowadays these issues have become central in the debates, conferences and academic discourses all over the world, and politicians still manipulate these sentiments in their election campaigns [18–20]. Dressing and redesigning the traditional ethnic and national dresses by the new generation in the present time is another proof that these issues are not fading away.

The traditional textiles are not only dressed by local people, but also by those who live outside their communities, nations and countries. Nowadays the term of transnationalism is used widely in academic discourse. It refers to the national, ethnic, social, cultural, political and economic bonds that people have beyond the boundaries of nation-state [21, 22]. For Kurds transnationalism can include two dimensions. On the one hand, since Kurds do not have a nation-state and they live in their host countries, such as Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, transnationalism feeling is expressed through their textile that can gather all of them together. On the other hand, diaspora Kurds who are scattered outside Middle Eastern countries in Europe or America, they wear the same clothes in special occasions to preserve their national identity. These transnational activities that take place across national boundaries may be conducted by powerful representatives of national governments or by ordinary immigrants living abroad [23].

Banal Nationalism is another area relevant to discourse analysis and textile analysis or material analysis. Billig [24] points out that banal nationalism refers to those signs that build an image of national identity among a group of people. It includes, for example, raising national flag, which is a piece of textile, in national ceremonies or putting national symbols on currency. These signs of banal nationalism are regarded as ideological hints which are interwoven to the discourse to be seen by people and to become part of everyday life of citizens. These signs are very effective because they are repeated systematically.

The approach which has been used in this study is suitable for analysing national, ethnic and traditional clothes. Foucault's theory and underrating of discourses helps in creating a critical framework for the role of materials in shaping the national identity, "embedded in a discourse-historical approach, currently imagined as 'body-politics' in many national publics" [25, 26].

Discussing the relationship between gender and dress, in all cultures, the difference in male and female dresses is obvious. Gender and dress are interlinked. Issues related to gender involve showiness, cover-up and disclosure in clothes. Issues that often related to ethnic group norms and traditions; how the societies see the suitable clothes for men and women within their culture considerations. The

focus is more on women's clothes rather than men in these cultural norms and traditions [27].

Belonging to a geographical area is another sense that people try to show through their clothes. People from different geographical places dress different types of clothes. One can recognize the place of living of people through their dresses. Gordon [1] believes that one function of clothes is to act as a tangible expression of people's extensive and diverse geographical and political territory.

Social status which is the honour or prestige that attached to someone in a certain social position or rank can be shown through textile. Throughout history high ranked and rich people wear different clothes. They want to separate themselves from lower and poor people. Their dresses send various messages to their surroundings to say that their political, economic or social status is higher than the others. Gordon [1] provides examples for the cost of higher status people's dresses. For example, for a Baroque tapestry a number of people need to work for around a year, or to complete a very fine Kashmir around thirty men have to work for around nine months.

Nowadays, Asian and African societies consider the types of clothing people dress to represent their social class. In South Africa and Lesotho, for example Sotho men and women dress brightly colourful blankets with decorative configuration in important occasions, or, some type of clothes, such as Seana Marena "King's blanket" show fertility and richness [28]. The relation between clothing and social class has a long history. It was usual in the history of mankind that the clothes of kings and monarchs were different from the clothes of ordinary people. For thousands of decades, some kingdoms passed orders known as 'sumptuary laws' to prohibit the dressing of certain clothes by certain social classes. In ancient Egypt merely those from high class and position could wear sandals; the Romans and Greeks organized the kind, colour, and amount of the garments dressed [2].

Kurdish textiles have some characteristics of Middle Eastern textiles, since Kurds are regarded as original people of the area who mainly live in four countries in the region: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, though there are Kurdish minorities living in other countries. Historically, Kurdistan, the land of Kurds, was part of the two large empires, Persian and Ottoman. The people of Kurdistan have a long tradition of cultural symbols; one of them is the unique clothes they wear. Though Kurdish people survived many invasions, one way to preserve their cultural inheritance is through wearing their own traditional dresses. The native Kurds who live in different countries in the Middle East are regarded as indigenous people, but those who live in the west are regarded as diaspora migrants [29].

## METHODOLOGY

Foucault's approach to discourse of materials is used as the theoretical base for this study. According to

this approach the material discourses are abstractions that are changed into reality through acquiring meaning. The study focuses on the textiles discourses in the areas of nationality, age, gender, geographical territory and social class. The data are collected in three ways, through:

- Site visit to the Kurdish Textile Museum: it is a private non-profit museum established by Mr. Lolan Mustafa in 2004 in the house of Mr. Hashim Dabagh, reconstructed in the 1930s and located at the historical site of the Erbil Citadel.
- A survey: it consists of 22 questions. The questions are divided into five parts, including questions on nationality, age, gender, geography and social status. One hundred responses are received and analysed.
- Analysing the content of photo albums of two different Kurdish online sites Facebook page: Kurdish Clothing, and Kurdish cloths [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).

This study is not expected to examine all aspects of Kurdish traditional textiles. It restricts to the study of discourse with these materials. It targeted the Central Kurmanji (Sorani Kurds) Culture and tradition that's why the three sources of data were from Erbil, since the city is the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and recently it has got a political and diplomatic state internationally. One hundred people participated in this study by email. The participants were members of the academic staff of Erbil polytechnic university, who were native speakers of Kurdish. They have been randomly chosen. The study uses a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study is not a historical study of ancient Kurdish textile, it focuses on the messages these materials convey. It also does not study the types and classifications of the Kurdish traditional clothes; nevertheless, it is an attempt to reveal different discourses found in different types of clothes.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### Results of analysing the site visit

As stated in the methodology section, a site visit was done by the researcher to see thousands of textile pieces. Site visits are regarded as fundamental for this kind of study to collect data, since the researchers can use several senses to examine the data, not only the visual sense. He can feel, taste and touch the textiles, examine their weights, read the captions written under the pieces, and see the real colour of the materials. The following results were obtained from the visit:

- One can feel the meaning of the messages the textiles sends and the uniqueness of Kurdish clothes and its special characteristics that vary in colour, design and material. The traditional Kurdish clothes are made differently depending on the geographical region. Thus the discourses of these clothes are apparent. For example, the clothes worn by Hawramis are different from that worn by Hawleris.
- The textiles used by men are different from those used by women. Depending on the geographical

region, they vary in shape, design and colour. Generally, the men dress short tight jackets over lined shirts and a clothing belt (sash) that surrounds the waist. They wear wide baggy pants (shalwar) that are comfortable for all seasons.

- Women's textile is different from men's dress. The differences again depend on the region. Unlike men's dress, they are mostly colourful. They have several layers. They wear baggy trousers, just like men, but the material and the design are different. They also wear a long shirt which is called "Kras" in Kurdish, a long transparent dress with long sleeves. On the top of the Kras, women wear a short button less covering called "Sukhma" and in winter time they wear a long jacket called "Kewa" which is sometimes made of velvet tissues. A black Haba is worn by older women in Iraqi Kurdistan region, which is a sign for age. In general, Kurdish women traditional clothes are more colourful and decorated.
- Kurdish older generation men put a kind of hat or Kufiya (jamadani or jamana) on their tops, often covering their heads as a regular turban. The shape of the turban changes depending on the geographical region, generation and social status. Regarding the colour, for example, Barzani Kurds wear a red turban, while the men from other areas of Erbil wear a black turban. Women older generation put on a traditional hat on their heads, but some of the younger generation put on a kind of scarf and hijab which are not regarded as Kurdish clothes; they are more Arabic and Islamic.
- Looking for the clothing discourse relating to geographical locations, one can find many examples of different types of clothes used by different people from different cities in Kurdistan, for example, the Duhoki men bottom pants (Sharwal) is much wider from that of Hawleris.
- Concerning the social status discourse displayed through clothes. The richer people wear more

expensive clothes than the poor people, for example, Kurdish richer men wear a kind of expensive suit (Rank u chogha) which is hand made in goats' hair.

### Results of the analysing the survey

For analysing the responses to the 22 questions of the survey, first the questions are classified into five groups according to the areas identifies in the methodology section: nationality, age, gender, geographical territory and social class, and the numbers are converted to percentage. Some of the questions are applicable to more than one area; therefore, they are repeated in more than one table. Then a table for each group is drawn.

For nationality: ethnicity and nationality are clear codes that can be detected in the discourse of textiles and clothing. Table 1 shows the results of the survey with regard to nationality.

By analysing the results of table 1, it's evident that textiles worn by people can convey the nationality of the wearer. The majority of people, around 55%, believe that they can identify the nationality of men and women through their clothes. Therefore, Kurds try to wear their traditional clothes.

Table 2 analyses the date by age: Kurdish grown-ups wear different textiles from the fresh people and children. The signs and codes found in the Kurdish traditional clothes signify the age of the wearer.

Analysing table 2, one can point out that age is an important factor in the discourse of Kurdish traditional textiles, especially the differences between the children and adults' clothes colour, and older versus younger generations clothes. The participants believe, 87%, that children wear more colourful clothes compared by adults who wear more colourless clothes. The majority of the participants, 80%, also believe most of the older generation wears Kurdish traditional clothes, compared to the younger generation who wear less, 35%, traditional clothes. Regarding knowing the age of grownups, men and women, the

Table 1

THE DISCOURSES OF NATIONALITY IN KURDISH TRADITIONAL CLOTHES				
No.	Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
1	Do you identify the nationality of a man through his clothes?	56%	13%	33%
2	Do you identify the nationality of a woman through her clothes?	54%	11%	35%

Table 2

THE DISCOURSES OF AGE IN KURDISH TRADITIONAL CLOTHES				
No.	Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
1	Do you know the age of a man by his clothes?	23%	31%	46%
2	Do you know the age of a woman by her clothes?	25%	27%	48%
3	Do Children wear colourful dresses?	87%	4%	9%
4	Do Children wear colourless dresses?	12%	60%	28%
5	Do older generations wear Kurdish traditional clothes?	80%	2%	18%
6	Do younger generations wear Kurdish traditional clothes?	35%	20%	45%

Table 3

THE DISCOURSES OF GENDER IN KURDISH TRADITIONAL CLOTHES				
No.	Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
1	Do Kurdish women dress colourful clothes?	78%	3%	19%
2	Do Kurdish men dress colourless clothes?	33%	25%	42%
3	Does the Kurdish older male generation wear Kurdish traditional dress?	82%	6%	12%
4	Does the Kurdish older female generation wear Kurdish traditional dress?	82%	4%	14%

participants are not sure whether they can know that through the clothes. A lot of them, 46% for men and 48% for women, said maybe which means they are not sure. Concerning the question of whether children wear colourless clothes or not, only few of the answers 12% were positive, 60% said no and 28% said maybe.

This means that the elderly may find pride in their traditional textiles; they have not been affected by the modern trend of preferring western style in clothing. The effect of the host country style and westernization on the younger generation is more prevalent. Now and again young people may choose to integrate to foreign values by taking on Western dress codes.

The analysis by gender: the language of gender is observable in Kurdish traditional textiles. The discourses conveyed by these materials enable people to distinguish men from women easily. Table 3 demonstrates this variable.

Table 3 shows that the design, style and colour of clothes of men are different from that of women. The participants believe that Kurdish women, 78 %, tend to wear more colourful clothes compared to men who tend to wear darker clothes. The participants' answers on whether Kurdish men dress colourless clothes were not clear, 33% said yes, 25% said no, and 42% said maybe, which means they were not sure. The results of the above table tell that most of the Kurdish older generation 82% wears Kurdish traditional clothes. The same is true for the older female generation. The design and style of women's clothes are more complicated than that of men. Women tend to put on accessories and jewellery.

The analysis by geographical region: people from different regions wear different textiles and clothes. The discourses of Kurdish traditional clothing can reveal

the geographical identity of people. Table 4 shows the differences in the language of clothing with regard to the place where people live.

Table 4 illustrates that the geographical place of people is not easy to be identified through their dresses. The answers of the participants are not very direct. The proportion of 46 percent say that they can distinguish the place of living of people through their dresses, 42 percent say they are not sure (maybe) and 12 percent say they cannot make this distinction. Regarding the difference between the dress of people from mountains and those from plain areas, the majority of participants, 69 percent, believe that people from mountains wear different clothes from those living in plain areas. The portion of 55 percent can distinguish the dress of urban residents from countryside residents. The same is true for the differences between the clothes of city and village women.

The analysis by social status: social class codes and symbols are another clue that textile discourses can signify. The following table illustrates the way clothes tend to send messages on the social class of people. Table 5 shows that Kurdish traditional textiles language is a factor in identifying the social status of people. The portion of 56% of the participants are certain that they can distinguish the rich people from the poor through their clothes, but they are not sure whether they can distinguish educated people from uneducated ones through their clothes or not; 28% say they can do that, but 38% say they are not sure (maybe) and 34% say they cannot do that. This is true for distinguishing literate and illiterate people too, with few variations. Concerning the differences in the clothes of literate and illiterate people, the participants were not sure whether they can differentiate between them or not, 47% said maybe. In answering the question whether they can distinguish high

Table 4

THE DISCOURSES OF GEOGRAPHICAL REGION IN KURDISH TRADITIONAL CLOTHES				
No.	Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
1	Do you know the geographical place of a man by his clothes?	46%	12%	42%
2	Do you know the geographical place of a woman by her clothes?	34%	20%	46%
3	Do men from mountains wear different clothes from men from plain?	69%	10%	21%
4	Do women from mountains wear different clothes from women from plain?	69%	10%	21%
5	Do you know whether a man is from city or village from his clothes?	55%	10%	35%
6	Do you know whether a woman is from city or village from her clothes?	51%	9%	40%

THE DISCOURSES OF SOCIAL CLASS IN KURDISH TRADITIONAL CLOTHES				
No.	Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
1	Can you distinguish the rich people from the poor through their clothes?	56%	13%	31%
2	Can you distinguish educated people from uneducated ones through their clothes?	28%	34%	38%
3	Can you distinguish literate people from illiterate ones through their clothes?	15%	38%	47%
4	Can you distinguish high ranked officials from others through their clothes?	44%	14%	42%

ranked officials from others through their clothes or not, some of the participants, 44%, say that they can do that, 42% are not sure (maybe) and 14% admit that they cannot distinguish high ranked officials from others through their clothes.

### The results of analysing the photo albums

The content of the photo albums conform to the results of the site visit analysis and the survey. The differences can be summarized as follows:

- One thing was found which is different to the materials of the museum which is hijab and scarfs. It seems that in the past few decades, under the influence of Islamic movements in Iraqi Kurdistan Region, women wear a kind of hijab which are close to the Arab and Muslim world clothes.
- Traditional Kurdish men dress varies according to the community they belong to. Since the photo albums contained clothes from all parts of Kurdistan, Men's clothes' colour, design and even names in Iraqi Kurdistan Region is different from the other parts of Kurdistan. In this region the main dress of men is a kind of outfit called "Rank u Chokhar", which is regarded as an iconic and a prototype for Kurdish traditional clothes in general. In this part of Kurdistan, wide trousers are favoured.
- In national festivals, especially in Nawroz, the beginning of Kurdish New Year and the beginning of spring, people dress special clothes as an indication of national belonging and beginning new life.
- Modern Kurdish textiles, which are found in the photo albums, are originated from the traditional ones. They contain traditional characteristics often complemented with new elements of western clothes and they are designed according to the desire of individuals. They discourse may embrace westernization, modernization and internationalization.
- The Kurdish traditional clothes were worn everyday by some people in their daily life, for work and leisure times, at the present time some people wear them in their daily life not only in festivals and occasions, especially the older generation and people from countryside, but younger generation and urban people wear these dresses only for special occasions.
- In the past and even in the present Kurdish women put on accessories and gold jewellery with the traditional clothes, because it is a sign of wealth and social status.

- The younger generation of women tends to wear brightly coloured clothes, while the older generation wears darker colours. This may be not true for men, since both generations tend to wear same colours. The colour of the Kurdish dress can be regarded as a symbol of tribe, alliance, region, or political party.

### CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

- The main purpose of wearing textiles in the beginning of the history of humankind might be protection and covering, but nowadays these clothes convey messages. They have codes, signs and symbols that imply meaning, ideas, discourse and concepts.
- National identity is decoded in the textiles of many nations or ethnic groups. Kurdish traditional textile can be dressed in different occasions in different periods of time. In national festivals, especially in Nawroz, the beginning of Kurdish New Year and the beginning of spring, people dress special clothes as an indication of national belonging and beginning new life.
- Textiles can have transnational dimensions too. For Kurds transnationalism can include two dimensions. On the one hand, since Kurds do not have a nation-state and they live in their host countries, such as Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, transnationalism feeling is expressed through their textile that can gather all of them together. On the other hand, diaspora Kurds who are scattered outside Middle Eastern countries in Europe or America, they wear the same clothes in special occasions to preserve their national identity.
- With regard to generation differences, most of the older generation wears Kurdish traditional clothes, compared to the younger generation. The elderly may find pride in their traditional clothes; they have not been affected by the modern trend of preferring western style in clothing. The effect of the host country style and westernization on the younger generation is more prevalent.
- Gender and textiles are interrelated; women like to wear more different and colourful dresses than men. Through their clothes, women want to send messages showiness, cover-up and disclosure. Men's textile is different from that of women. This

may be related to ethnic group norms and traditions; how the societies see the suitable clothes for men and women within their culture considerations. The focus is more on women's clothes rather than men in these cultural norms and tradition. It seems that in the past few decades, under the influence of Islamic movements in Iraqi Kurdistan Region, women wear a kind of hijab which are close to the Arab and Muslim world clothes.

- Kurdistan geo-cultural landscape has affected the way people design and wear clothes. Some type of clothes can convey the geographical identity of their users. For example, people from mountains wear different clothes from those living in plain areas and the dress of urban residents are different from countryside residents' dresses.
- Social status which is the honour or prestige that attached to someone in a certain social position or rank can be shown through textile. Throughout history high ranked and rich people wear different clothes. They want to separate themselves from lower and poor people. Their dresses send various messages to their surroundings to say that their political, economic or social status is higher than the others.
- The relationship between discourse and clothes are reciprocal, since discourse adds new meanings to clothes and vice versa. Each piece of Cloth, fibre or textile has its special discourse. People send messages by wearing different types of clothes in different occasions, rituals and even in their daily life.

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