

A brief inquiry into the linguistic landscape vis-à-vis the official language policy of Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract

The present study seeks in to draw a framework to share most organized and developed landscapes of the Kurdish language and investigate the findings of local and international conferences towards Kurdish language status in Iraqi Kurdistan and other parts. The Kurdish language is a symbol of identity for Kurds in Middle East. Kurdish language consists of different dialects or varieties with varying degrees of demographic distribution in different regions of Kurdistan. Although Kurds had to wage a fierce struggle to possess their own statehood for many centuries, they never succeeded. In fact, Kurds reside in all countries as minority groups in the region including Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. Moreover, a huge number of Kurds as refugee immigrated to western countries and live there. In the forefront of the struggle was a newspaper which is worth mentioning. In April 22, 1898 in Cairo (Egypt) Miqdad Madhet Badir Khan published the first Kurdish newspaper "Kurdistan". The main aim of the newspaper could be framed as a struggle to achieve Kurdistan's freedom and independent. Hence, the editor opened an educational door toward Kurd nation however it was a difficult job and it marked as a brighten point of the Kurdish history. "Kurdistan" was released 3000 newspapers each time 2000 of which were distributed in Kurdistan for free. The present study aims to explore the attempts toward Kurdish alphabetic change inside Kurdish regions and outside. In order to achieve this, Iraqi constitution, Iraqi Kurdistan regional and governmental bylaws and materials of official conferences will be scrutinized. Within this framework, the historical repertoire of Kurdish language will be discussed. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of academic attempts will be among the scope of this study; finally relevant recommendation will be given.

Keywords: *Linguistic landscape, Language planning and policy, Alphabetic change, Kurdish Language, Iraqi Kurdistan*

1. Introduction

An argument about language may start with a definition of the terms "Language Planning" and "Language Policy" which are different aspects within the acronym "LPP". Language planning is a process designed to affect language use within a particular speech community. It is '...mostly visibly undertaken by government' (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997) who may determine '...exactly the language(s) that people will know in a given nation' (Shohamy, 2006).

It could also be referred to some agencies like: educational institutions, local community groups and individual people who take decisions about how language should be used according to different places such as at the workplaces or at the

home. However, language planning refers to a set of ideas, beliefs, rules, regulations, and 'language practices...and management decisions of a society or polity.' (Spolsky, 2004). It is not always clear where policy ends and planning begins; a policy may go so far as to define specific requirements such as how many classroom hours per week are devoted to which language and how it will be taught. This can often be the case in language education policies (Shohamy, *ibid.*) which outline learning targets and teaching methodology for educational curricula. The policy integrated into planning along a continuity of language policy and planning in some cases like this LPP.

A very brief recourse into the history of the Kurdish journalism vis-à-vis Kurdish language movement shows that journalists have historically been in the forefront. Among such journalists were Miqdad Madhet Badir Khan, the owner of "Kurdistan" newspaper (1898), Abdul Karim Effendi, the owner of "Rozhi Kurd" journal (1913),

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Mustafa Pasha Yamulki, the owner of "Bang Kurdistan" journal (1922, Hussein Huzni Mukriani, the owner of "Zari Krmnji" journal (1926), Ibrahim Ahmed, the owner of "Galawezh" journal (1939), Aladdin Sajadi, the owner of "Nzar" journal, Anwar Maeyi, the owner of "Rounahi" journal, Piramerd, the owner of "Zheen" newspaper, Mala Sharif Rengerezhi, the owner of "Azadi" newspaper (1945), Giew Mukriani, the owner of "Hetaw" journal (1954). Besides them, there were a huge number of writers and artist who had a great role in developing the Kurdish journalism area in their days as, Abdullah Goran, Marouf Berzinji, Ghafour Mirza Karim, Jalal Mirza Karim, the well-known poet Qani`e, Shakir Fattah, Muhammad Mawlouid Mem and Saleh Haidari. These people continued their works and publishing each number of newspapers encouraged others to work harder to write and publish their work in Kurdish language. If you focus on the initial numbers of "Kurdistan" newspaper, you realize that Arabic rather than Kurdish was a dominant language. Although the newspaper was published in Cairo, (Egypt), its tremendous impact on the improvement of expressions in Kurdish language was evident. (Shakeli, 2013)

2. Kurdish language situation

The Kurdish language belongs to the northern group of Iranian languages. (Edmunds,1957). The Iranian languages in turn, belong to Indo-European languages. Bildisi in Sharafnama (1981), in the 16th century, divides the Kurdish language into four dialects: Kurmanji, Luri, Gurani and Kalhor. This classification is still valid. However, political circumstances and the socio-historical development of Kurdish society have naturally changed the position of these dialects within the mainstream of spoken Kurdish, on the one hand, and in relation to the standard Kurdish, on the other.

2.1 Classification of Kurdish language and dialects.

2.1.1 North Kurdish (Kurmanji)

Northern Kurdish, also called Kurmanji, is a group of Kurdish dialects predominantly spoken in southeast Turkey, northwest and northeast Iran, northern Iraq and northern Syria. It is the most widespread dialect group of the Kurdish language. While Kurdish is generally categorized as one of the Northwestern Iranian languages along with Baluchi, (Ludwig, 2008; Gernot, 1975), it also shares many features with Southwestern Iranian languages like Persian, apparently due to longstanding and intense historical contacts, and some authorities have gone so far as to classify

Kurmanji as a Southwestern or "southern" Iranian language. (White, 2002; Michael M, 2009).

2.1.2 Central Kurdish (Nawerast)

Central Kurdish is spoken in Iraq, mainly in Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as the Kurdistan Province and West Azerbaijan Province of western Iran. It is one of the two official languages of Iraq, along with Arabic, and is in political documents simply referred to as "Kurdish" (Christine, 2012). The term Sorani, named after the former Soran Emirate, is used specially to refer to a written, standardized form of Central Kurdish written in the Sorani alphabet developed from the Arabic alphabet in the 1920s by Sa'îd Sidqî Kaban and Taufiq Wahby. (Joyce, 2000).

2.1.3 South Kurdish (Xwaru)

Southern Kurdish is a Kurdish group of languages/dialects predominantly spoken in western Iran and eastern Iraq. In Iran, it is spoken in the provinces of Kermanshah and Ilam. In Iraq it is spoken in the region of Khanaqin (Xaneqîn), all the way to Mandali, Pehle. It is also the dialect of the populous Kurdish Kakayi-Kakavand tribe near Kirkuk and most Yarsani Kurds in Kermanshah province. There are also populous diasporas of Palewani-speakers in the Alburz mountains. Native speakers use various alphabets to write Southern Kurdish, the most common ones are modifications of the standard Kurdish alphabets. The extension consists of an extra vowel, "j" for the Arabic-based Sorani script and "ü" for the Latin-based Kurmanji script.

2.1.4 Goran/Hawrami

Gorani is a group of Northwestern Iranian dialects spoken by groups of Iranian and Iraqi citizens in the southernmost parts of Iranian Kurdistan and the Iraqi Kurdistan region. It is classified as a member of the Zaza-Gorani branch of the Northwestern Iranian languages. Hawrami (Horamî), one of the main groups of dialects of the Kurdish language, is a subgroup of Northwestern Iranian languages. Like all other Gorani dialects, it has some phonological features which distinguish it from Kurdish dialects, though it is surrounded by Kurdish dialects and has been affected by them.

Despite the fact that Kurds used to have their own alphabet that they were proud of, they had to use the Arabic alphabet being used by the Ottomans or Iranians as the occupying forces. Thus, Kurds till 1930 were used Arabic alphabetic for Kurdish writings. In Turkey after formal assertion of Turkey's Latin alphabetic, Jaladet Ali Badir Khan in 1932 modified the Latin alphabetic

for Kurdish language which is known as Hawar Alphabet or Badir Khan Alphabeti. But beside the political conditions it is obvious that Kurdish alphabetic was under the influences of superpowers. In fact, in Turkey and some places in Syria Kurds were using the Latin alphabet and in Iran and Iraq they were writing in Kurdish alphabetic which is similar to Arabic and Persian alphabets.

The History of Kurdish language is not fixed and it always changed. Now, 40 million Kurds in the world speak with different Kurdish dialects. In fact, Kurds who have been divided into four parts remain as one of the stateless nations in the heart of the Middle East. Therefore, establishing connections among Kurds is always problematic and difficult. Despite the borders erected to separate them, since the end of 1970s, Kurds have attempted to establish connections among different dialects. (Shakeli, 2013)

3. Methodology

The present study aims to explore the attempts toward Kurdish alphabetic change inside Kurdish regions and outside. In order to get the appropriate answer for the below research questions, Iraqi constitution, Iraqi Kurdistan regional and governmental bylaws and official conferences will be into consideration. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the attempts towards Kurdish language alphabetic changes?
2. What is the role of political factors in the attempts change the Kurdish language alphabet?
3. What are the recent sociopolitical developments in the attempt to change Kurdish language alphabetic system?

4. Findings and Discussions

The data analysis of present study contains of document, bylaws, official statement analysis and Kurds and the Status of Kurdish Language.

4.1 The Analysis of official and non-official documents in first Kurdish renaissance

The Kurdish language is a member of the Indo-Iranian language group which is a branch of the Indo-European family. The most closely related languages to Kurdish are Balochi, Gileki, and Talysh all of which belong to the north-western branch of Iranian languages. The Persian language which belongs to the south-western branch, especially the Lori and Bakhtiari dialects, is related to Kurdish (Poladian 2004; Kurd_lal Working Groups 2003; Ali 1992). Globally, the Kurds are estimated to

number anywhere from a low of 30 million, to possibly as high as 45 million, by the Kurdish Institute of Paris, 2017 estimate. The Kurdish population is estimated at 15–20 million in Turkey, 10–12 million in Iran, 8–8.5 million in Iraq, 3–3.6 million in Syria, 1.2–1.5 million in the European diaspora, and 400000–500000 in the former USSR — for a total of 36.4 million to 45.6 million globally, with the majority living in the region they regard as Greater Kurdistan. However, there are significant Kurdish diaspora communities in the cities of western Turkey, in particular in Istanbul. A recent Kurdish diaspora has also developed in Western countries, primarily in Germany. The Kurds are the majority population in the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, and form a significant minority group in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Iran, and Syria.

In this part we mostly focus on Kurdish language in the different Iraq's rules ages. The British in the World War II slowly took Iraq under their authority. In the "Peace conference" in Paris in 1919 Iraq became colonized by Britain, and the concord was performed in 1920. The British ruled Iraq through imperial system and they elected King Faysal to rule the country. The Mosul (Mûsil in Kurdish) region became a contested territory between Iraq and Turkey, but The United Nations gave it to Iraq in 1925. The Britons instead of Musil asked Iraq to extend their duration in Iraq to 25 years to protect Kurds in Iraq which was for four years in a contract that was signed in 1923. The imperial regime was formally asserted in 1932. In 1933, King Faysal I died, and his son Ghazi took his position. Ghazi had problem with religious groups and ethnic minorities. Ghazi died in a car accident and the title was given to his cousin Amir Abdullah. Nuri Saeed who was King Faysal's friend acted as a representative of the authority in the Iraq imperialism era and was one of the United Arab Emirate's founders in 1945. In the same year the country became a member in The United Nations.

All documents of the Iraqi government were written in Arabic and in the all-government sectors Arabic language was the official language. But in the literary and educational domains, efforts were taken to use Kurdish language. Shakir Fattah in 1940 published the "Khormal Newspaper" in Kurdish language. In addition, he relived and renewed a great number of different expressions of Sharazoor region.

The number of forces who were against the regime rapidly increased because of the dissatisfaction against the regime and discontent with regime's confederate in the Baghdad treaty in 1955. Furthermore, the Nuri's regime corrupted

and people who were against his ruling system suffered. In 1958 a coup was setting up against Faysel the second Nuri Saeed's imperialism with the name of the revolution of September 14. In this coup king Faysel II and Amir Abdullah were killed and Nuri Saeed was killed on the way to escape. In 1958 the Iraqi imperialism was fallen, the Iraqi government established and Abdul Karim Qasim came to power. Qasim declared freedom of conscience and repealed the Baghdad 1959 treaty.

Within this juncture of historical developments, it is important to focus on the linguistic landscape vis-à-vis socio-political changes in the Kurdish language. Now, there are two major players in social issues: those countries which are officially recognized in the international level, and those nations which are defined as the citizen of those countries. Kurds as a great nation and an active player have played a great role in the social political changes in The Middle East. Tremendous social, political, economic, and historical changes occurred in those areas in 90s. These changes have a huge impact on cultural and linguistic domains. These changes influenced the position of both Kurdish and Arabic languages and in the level of their language structure. In addition, these changes followed informal and indirect way and have long-lasting effects on maintenance and reliving Kurdish language. The development of national language could strengthen the chance of achieving the Kurdistan's independent. Also, it could change the Kurdish people from a natural people to a cultural people or a nation who has its own government and its especial language that be asserted in the regional and international levels.

The economic, politic, scientific, and military power of the speakers' languages has a great role in protecting and strengthening or destroying and weakening of the languages. In this point of view, the dominance of Arabs, Turks, and Persians in the previous centuries besides establishing the new governments, the languages reflected superiority and power the related countries might experience. Kurds as nation and Kurdish as their language could not have any privilege.

That official and/or the national language had and has an ideology that its major goal is to give price and importance to the superpower's nation and language and stand against other minor nations that demand for citizenship as Kurd nation. The unequal competition among mother tongues, or the school, government, media, street, job, languages and require to improve the level of proficiency strengthen, maintain them and protect from them from decay.

Before 90s of the previous centuries the

dominant ideology was in Iraq was preserving and strengthening the unitary structure on the basis of nation state: one state one national ethnic identity. Due to internal, regional and external pressure obliged the United Nations Organization and superpowers to accept to establish a new political power in Iraq. Therefore, based on the natural, linguistic and ethno-cultural boundaries, a new political configuration was established. Kurdish language in Iraq has become an official language and Arabic language has become a weak language according to its national position. Also, because of the influences of other languages on the Arabic language Iraq goes to a multi-language country. However, Kurdish language since 1970 is used in school in the teaching process but it had not any role as one of the official languages in Iraq. Besides this, because of the other minor languages and nations like Turkmens and Syrians the Iraq's multi-language became a reality.

Language has a great role in the nation building process and Kurds in Kurdistan are decisive in making their language a symbol of their ethnic identity in their homeland in the Middle East. Language is helpful in achieving the other rights of Kurdish nation and representing the resident management of Kurds in each political exchanging in future. Since, today to understand this world that we live in we have to figure out those especial ethnic realities that are numbed quietly in the core of each of these government instead play in government's games and play as their hidden or declared doll. In order to investigate those opportunities that are possible to nations we have to work on their roles that they play nowadays, that language plays as the most important of those ethnics' visions. The representation and activeness of languages means the representation and activeness of the nations that are consider as the foundations of governments. The establishment of independent Kurdistan government could be possible by believing in its abilities' sources like natural, ethnical, lingual, cultural, and political ones.

Also, Kurds need to behave wisely in its local issues and have plans to relive national aspects. Moreover, the weakness of against countries ruling and position as Iran has a good impact on achieving Kurd's independent dream. The interference of Iran's rulers in other countries and their internal and external discords can help the independence of Kurdistan's north and west parts as well and wide Kurdistan's geographical area. About that geographical, political, ethnical, lingual, and cultural atmosphere that has created in south Kurdistan the first step is that Kurdish nation has

to identify itself in its own perspective irrespective of other perspectives and be conscious as an official national formation and from none existence comes to existence. It is important for the KRG and the Ministry of Education to abide by as it happened before due the lack of systematicity in language acquisition planning. Moreover, authorities need to look at the Kurdish language as the national identity and as the one of the major foundational elements of establishing the Kurdistan Independent Government. Furthermore, they have to work to developing national language in a planned way.

4.2 Article analysis of Iraqi constitution on Kurdish language

The assertion of Kurdish language in Iraq was happened in 1958 that is mentioned in the 3rd article of Iraq constitution as: "Arabs and Kurds are partner in state" and it was the beginning of identifying Kurdish language in Iraq. It has caused that to establish Kurdish Language and Art department in Baghdad University. Also, in the radio stations Kurds could take a part in their language and they let Kurdish children in the north of the Iraq to study in Kurdish in the schools. In addition, in the Kurdish areas Kurdish language became the official language and it became the language of writing and studying. According to Amin (2017), Kurdish language is used as an official language in Iraq and it is one of the world's live language. Moreover, it got the code 143 among the 342 world's live language from the world Organization of Servicing Examining of Education.

According to 4th article of Iraq constitution, the status of the languages in the country is defined and explained like this:

"Arabic and Kurdish languages are two official languages in Iraq, the right of all Iraqis is reserved in teaching their children in their native language as Turkmen and Syrian in the government's official offices based on educational rules or in any other language in the privates teaching sectors." (Iraqi Constitution, 2005, Article four)

4.3 Attempts to change Kurdish language Alphabet

This Kurdish alphabet is used in south and east of Kurdistan for writing Kurdish, and the all of Kurdish thought, belief, and culture has been written in this for some centuries was not like that before. This alphabet has undergone changes many times. If in the seventh century Arabic alphabet came to Kurdistan so it means at that time writing in Kurdish language was not possible and everything was written in Arabic and Persian

as dominant languages in the region. Kurds those days were not independent; hence, Kurds did not have their own alphabet. Therefore, Kurds tried to make use of Arabic and Persian alphabet and match and adapt them with Kurdish language and it is about six to seven centuries that Kurds have their own alphabet and could write in Kurdish. Alphabet and language are two different things. Alphabet is those symbols that are used to represent those phonemes and sounds that are exist in a language and uttered by the speaker of that language. Thus, calls those symbols alphabet which man by himself makes them and use them (Shakeli, 2013).

The language refers to a group of people or specific nations who speak in that language and use it in their daily life to communicate but alphabet do not refer to a specific group of people. Each alphabet could adapt itself with any other language and represents that language's phonemes and sounds. Also, whenever it will be necessary man can create new symbols for new phonemes and add them into the alphabetic of that language. Therefore, this alphabet that Kurds have and use give them a powerful political and economic position.

The fact that Kurdish fails to develop, it does not improve as much as it needs to, also the fact that it is not widespread among the Kurds in the world can be explained referring to some imperatives. In fact, first of all, Kurds are colonized as a nation with four distinct parts in various socio-political entities. Second of all, it lacks an overall educational and acquisition policies. Third of all, they fail to have Kurdish Media which could be shared by most them at least. Finally, it is practically too hard to create a unique alphabet that could be based on the modified Latin. These reasons did not make Kurdish language progress enough according to its time and age. Kurdish language did not face any serious problems and certain changes towards its betterment can be noticed. Thus, it is used for writing subjects in any area and field (Shakeli, 2013).

Those who argue for the shift from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin-based alphabet criticize Arabic alphabet and talk about its deficiencies in order to remove it and make the Latin alphabetic the official Kurdish alphabetic. These criticizes are just excuses. Those people say: it is a good way to serve Kurdish language because it is a good way to introduce Kurdish language to the world. In addition, through using Latin alphabetic foreign people try to understand and learn Kurdish (Shakeli, 2013). As, if a foreigner wants to learn a language s/he can learn it easily no matter which

alphabet it uses. As a matter of fact, Thousand's foreigners, especially Europeans and Americans can speak in Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Amharic, Chinese, Russian, Somali, Korean, Jordanian, Assyrian, Armenian, Sanskrit, and tens other languages which are not written in Latin font.

Learning Kurdish language by foreigners is connected to the importance of Kurd as a nation and its role in political, economic, and educational issues and changes in the world. So, Kurds do not have any influential economic, political, and educational position in the world. Moreover, Kurds have not introduced any innovations in the domain of education. Also, Kurdish is not the language of an independent country that could attract many tourists. That is why, foreigners are not passionate about learning Kurdish language and they do not. Thus, proficiency of a language has nothing to do with the alphabet it uses. If we look at our neighboring countries, we see Arabs and Persians write in the same alphabetic as Kurds. But their position is significantly higher than that of the Kurds.

A brief recourse into the history of discussions concerning alphabetical shift shows that those who have made an effort to shift are foreigners rather than Kurds themselves. Thus, it is obvious that mostly foreigners want to change Kurdish alphabetic. Besides them, there are some efforts have been done by Kurds in the Kurdistan as well.

4.3.1 The External attempts

In 1905 Morgan proposed to change Kurdish alphabetic to Latin. Later in in 1913 some efforts had been done by Major Sown to create a modified version based on the Latin alphabet for Kurdish language. Furthermore, in 1930 Isaac Moroglof and Arabi Shamoe created a Kurdish alphabet and it was in use by Kurds of Soviet Union till 1938. For example, the Reya Tazeh, a Kurdish newspaper which was published between 1930 and 1938, used the Latin alphabet. Then, it resumed its publication in 1955 and since then it has been using the Cyrillic alphabet. In addition, in 1931 Edmonds attempted to shift the alphabet, in the same vein, Pere Rondo, a French officer in Syria tried proposed the shift before Jaladet Badir Khan's attempt to shift to the Latin alphabet. Similar attempt was taken in 1933 by Minorisky and Arabi Shamoe. In fact, all of them were non-Kurdish.

4.3.2 The Internal attempts

In 1931 after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk changed the Turkish alphabetic to Latin, the Khoyiboun group in Damascus decided to use Latin alphabet

instead, Arabic alphabet to write in Kurdish. Jaladet Badir Khan published his Latin alphabet in 1932. Also, he published "Hawar" journal and from number 24, it appeared in the Latin alphabet.

Abdullah Jawdet in "Rozhi Kurd" journal proposed to change Kurdish alphabetic to Latin. On the other hand, Abdul Razaq Badir Khan suggested using the Cyrillic Russian alphabet. In 1925 Muhammad Amin Zeky Beg and Mirza Muhammad Bashiqe" prepared a book for primary school in Latin. In 1933 Tofiq Wehby published a book with the title of "Khwendawary Baw" which used English alphabet rather than Kurdish. In 1956 Jamal Nebez published a book in Kurdish with a modified Latin alphabet and he added phonemes "ل" and "ر" and "ئ" to Badir Khan's Latin alphabetic. These changes were believed to make Badir Khan's alphabet richer and more appropriate for the Kurdish language. However, those who use Latin for Kurdish writing did not support the changes proposed by Jamal Nebez. In 1972 Giewy Mukriani designed a Latin-based Kurdish alphabet. In addition, Sadiq Baha'addin Amedy was one of those voices who called for change Kurdish alphabetic to Latin. Moreover, Aziz Akreyie" supported this view. In fact, he has published some works where he discussed issues concerning alphabetical reforms. If we focus on those foreigners who called for changing Kurdish alphabetic to Latin, they could be divided into two groups. One of them could be characterized as those who belong to church and Christian religion and they called for Christianity, and the other group comprised French and British colonizers.

Shakeli (2013) states that, the main aim of foreign behind changing Kurdish alphabetic was the idea to decrease the value of Kurdish culture in those areas where Kurds lived and make it passive and unknown step by step. In fact, they were quite reluctant to change the socio-political status quo as they wanted Kurds to leave the countries where they lived as indigenous ethnic groups. Moreover, they aimed to make Kurds as a source of disturbances for Kurds themselves and for those who they were in contact with. Besides that, they wanted to Christianize Kurds in this way and apart them from Islam and Islamic traditions and beliefs. Also, they wanted to derail Kurds from Persian and Arab culture and traditions. On the other hand, Kurds themselves preferred to change their alphabet. After the appearance of Jaladet Badir Khan's alphabet, some reasons were presented to justify the change of the Kurdish alphabet. The main reason was thought to be the idea that the present Kurdish alphabet was deficient and it could not reflect all features of the Kurdish

language. On the other hand, the alphabet was associated with the Western values and culture as if Latin or shift to Latin would be a panacea for all problems. This view seems to have no grounds since many languages with their own alphabets which are different from Latin, can successfully survive and meet the requirements of their users. These languages (and their alphabets) can be exemplified as Arabic, Bengali, Georgian, Armenian and other languages. However, these languages did not attempt to change their alphabets as they may not reap anything but loss and detriment. (Jambaz, 2009)

4.4 Language Policy proposed by Kurdish autonomous authorities

Language laws aim at establishing norms of language management, including status of languages, corpus standards, issues concerning using languages in education and prestige planning of any language. Their scope also includes inspecting how language laws are implemented. In other words, 'policing' is an important element of language management. In some countries, academies, committees or other state organs are established to deal with language management issues. In short, any new democracy needs to take specific practical steps in language management no matter what language policy the country pursues, overt or covert.

Language policy, especially prestige planning is very important for new democracies. In this regard, language awareness and the role of language as a symbol of ethnic or national identity are crucial. Moreover, people need to have language rights. In fact, language is not just a tool that enables communication and social relationship. It's a matter of ethnic and cultural identity and when language dies, it is more than language shift. It implies the loss of culture and ethnic cognition. Thus, new democracies need to take laws to protect their language and take laws in that direction. Language is the national security and without patriotism it cannot represent itself. All around the world there are 470 language laws 345 of which are not presented in the regions of the countries. That is why, UNESCO considers the language as the humanity's heritage and gives importance and price to this issue. For example, the Cherkess (or Circassian) language was under the threat of extinction in Jordan through some plans worked to revive that language in order to protect it from extinction. Furthermore, in the northeast of India in the Oronashal region the Koru language was found that its speakers were only 800 people. Hence, a project was made by

UNESCO to protect this language. They compiled a dictionary for this language inside the immortal language's project and collect all of the phonetics and textual documents and archives of the language and put them in the internet. In order to catch attention to the language and make use of it continuously and protect it from extinction. Since, language is an animate thing and if does not make plan for it, does not setting it based on language rules, does not edit it annually, does not add new words to it so it goes to fading and extinction instead reliving. Since, once every two weeks a language goes to extinction all around the world and yearly 52 languages fade because of the globalization of the internet, satellite, and the other stuffs. Therefore, it assumptions that from the all of these 600 languages just 200 to 500 languages could stay and resist against the fast changes of all life's aspects. Thus, the more language uses in the studying, writing, and audial, visual and literal channels the more it relives. But each individual of that nation must think that studying and writing in his/her language is his/her self-duty. Not only that, s/he has to teach his/her children; it is important to study their language and learn it.

In the Kurdistan region the rules and statements are issued in both Arabic and Kurdish languages. In addition, there are 5740 schools in the Kurdistan region that they teach in Kurdish language. Also, there are hundreds print products of governmental and private presses have been printed in Kurdish language. Moreover, in the jurisdiction Kurdish language is used. Furthermore, there are many literal, audial, and visual channels that one cannot reach to read, listen or watch all of them. As language as a sensitive issue for voters, politicians try to use it to achieve their political aims during their election campaign. However, it is rare that they consider language matters seriously. It is hard to believe that political parties in Kurdistan have issues relating to language policies or language management in their agenda. It is hard to believe political parties care about the visibility of the Kurdish language in the billboards in the public places. If they cared for their language and its prestige, they would issue language laws concerning language use in the public space since prestige planning is one of the central provisions of language planning.

The leadership of Kurdistan front set up a committee for project rules of Iraqi Kurdistan's parliament election. In the first point of their final report that has directed it to the political leadership of Kurdistan front in 1991-1992, they have written about language: "we thought it is

better from the beginning the rule set in Arabic then it will be accepted by the political leadership of Kurdistan front and be decided on it. Then, by specialists in law and linguist professors it will be translated to Kurdish language. Also, translating the rules to English, French and German languages is a holy work."

Now, from here, after 19 years, it would be important to learn why the previous political leadership of Iraqi Kurdistan front did not issue an intransitive, perpetual and inveterate rule. In fact, it is high time that the country had specific language laws and by-laws which could be adopted after meaningful public debates. Such laws and by-laws need to cover all levels starting with the institutional level finishing with governmental one.

The Kurdistan parliament election is carried out referring to the law number 1/1992. In addition, the liberalism movement president election is done based on article 2/1992. Then, many times the rule number 1/1992 has been laid but language issues were not mentioned. Also, in both Kurdistan parliaments' election campaigns from 1992 to 2009, language related issues were not on the agenda or such issues were not seriously considered, therefore, if we analyze the all translated Kurdish texts of parliament's rules and decisions from 1992 to 2009, we see a huge difference between the translated forms. So, now, who and which party is responsible of those rules and decisions that are issued in Kurdistan Parliament from 1992 to 2010 which are more than 600 and there are a few references to language.

For example, in the rule number 10/2008 of Higher Education and Scientific Study there was no debate about language. In fact, it is necessary to talk about it with Kurdistan's university's and institute's presidents in the legal committee or in the legal participating and education and higher education committee. There have also been cases when the issues like were debated at the governmental or ministerial level. As a result, for the first time some amendments were made. To exemplify, we can refer to the article in section 12 which attaches importance to the role of Kurdish language "...work to make the Kurdish language the language of teaching and studying in the Higher Education stages of the human sciences, and encourage for translating and establishing the scientific, educational, and academic publishing centers for Kurdish language."

In a statement of Kurdistan parliament in the number 1628 in the 23/9/20110 in its attachment number 4 about an article of the same rule deals with Kurdish language in the same way. Since the

Arabic version is considered as the most reliable version because it is the original one and it the parliament has voted for it. So, the Kurdish version which is the translated version of the original one should be like the Arabic version. In order to consider it and based on that statement that has mentioned in the Arabic version based on the article number 44 of the mentioned rule, we considered it necessary to mention it and issued this statement. (Jambaz, 2009)

The second example: by the end of the last year 2010, the project rule of private universities of Kurdistan region of Iraq in the Ministry Association was sent to Kurdistan parliament but in 29/11/2010 was issued to postpone it. If we pay attention carefully to the 7th article of this project which is its text: "The studying language of universities is English with considering some proficiencies that ministry select them could study in the local languages." Postponing the project can be considered to be a positive act because this article opposed to the 4th article of 2005 Iraqi Constitution, which says: "In all around the Iraq there are two official languages which are Arabic and Kurdish languages." On the other hand, it would be interesting to learn if there is any Human Sciences college where the medium of instruction for all subjects is English exclusively. Thus, may also question the role of other languages. This one reminds the rule number 74/1931 which was issued before 80 years ago. (Jambaz, 2009). If we read the agenda of Kurdistan Region's cabinets from 1992 to 2009 in two administrations, and unity, we see they just in some few words were talked about language. That is why; they did not make any systematic plan or did not come up with a specific proposal which could show that they attach any importance to the issue. It should also be mentioned that The Ministry of Education from the primary school to the high school all study's programs are printed and they are available in Turkmen, Syrian, and Armenian languages besides Arabic and Kurdish languages.

There are 497 schools in Kurdistan Region where the language of instruction is Kurdish and in 17 schools the medium of instruction is Arabic (see Article 6).

If from 1992 to 2009 there was a plan by the Ministry to annually translate or write two books of the studying subjects of Human Sciences departments, now all of subjects are instructed in in Kurdish language. Since, all of those subjects are not more than 40 subjects. This means that studying in Kurdish language was possible and some teachers do not allow their students to ask questions or answer any questions in Kurdish and

not Arabic, this might be one of the reasons most of the students do not understand the questions throughout the years of college even after the graduation. However, in the Association of Justice Authority's rule number 14/2008 in the article number 5 it is included that the Kurdish language how should be used which this is its text: "The language of the courts should be Kurdish but after the swearing the court is allowed to listen to the clients' and witnesses' speeches through interpreting their speeches." But this was not done but instead court's works go quickly the Kurdish language was transferred to Arabic language then it was registered in registrations. Moreover, if the evidences were in Kurdish so an amount of money was given to a translator to translate it into Arabic language. But which visual, audio and printed Media had role in this issue? The great majority of the 633 journals published in Kurdistan Region are in the Kurdish language. Also, 80 radio stations and 100 local channels and 20 satellite channels and other websites are broadcasted and in Kurdish. The Media and Social Organization of Civilization does not serve as much as necessary and the way that it works must be subjected to reevaluation. Since language is a strategy and National Security and it is the crossing of the red line. There are many questions here that need serious consideration. There are serious problems with the materials for schools. The low quality of the translated materials is quite evident. The Media and the Social Organization of Civilization fails to find solutions to many language related questions that the society faces. To do this, the committee needs to work systematically by involving all stake holders.

4.5 KRG and the Kurdish language policy

In 2003 Kurdish Politicians became members of Iraqi Public Association. Three elections were having taken place since 2005. One of them was to Transitional National Association another, the second one was to Kurdistan National Association of Iraq, and finally, the third one was to Association of Governorates. The Laws of Iraq state during transitional period approved KRG autonomy to KRG, with "absolute liberty" as well as respect to permanency constitution. KRG has constitutional authority over number of governorates such Erbil, Sulaimani, Duhok, and some other places like Diala, Kirkuk and Ninawa. Nonetheless, KRG since 2005 till now has failed to prepare and implement its own language policy which could include all aspects like corpus planning, acquisition planning, status planning and prestige planning.

Conclusion

The Draft -copy of article 14 of the Constitutions of the Kurdistan region in 2005 defined the status of the languages in the region. It stipulated Kurdish and Arabic as two official languages of Kurdistan region and this constitution ensured civil people's right in Kurdistan to teach their children in public institutions using their native language regarding educational principles. It also stipulates that, in accordance with Article 4 of Iraqi constitution, the formal language shall be used everywhere if it has legal circumstances to performing and use. According to Iraq constitution, Kurdish and Arabic official languages, and they must be functional in all institutions although there are frequent efforts to ignore Kurdish language in Iraq. In fact, KRG seems to give no serious reactions to such cases. For instance, at the end of 2017 Iraq government removed Kurdish letters in food rations form. In 2017 the deputy prime minster Aram Sheikh Muhamad who is Kurdish by nationality, in his formal message number (M.N/296) asked The Planning Office which belongs to Commerce Ministry of Iraq, to give explanation about removing Kurdish language on food ration form of civil people of Kurdistan region as it meant violation of Article 4 of Iraq constitution. The mentioned office replied to the deputy parliament president with two letters. In the first letter, they informed that they had no connections with the firms which deal with food ration form of the Kurdistan Region and Kurdish was removed from the forms without any purpose. In addition, they contacted with Nahrain press to solve the problem and asked them to take such issues seriously in coming years. Now, most of the official documents of KRG are written in the central (official) variety of Kurdish language, and the same dialect is used by political parties of Kurdistan region. Politically the Kurdish language in the Iraq government and Kurdistan region legally and institutionally in KRG Kurdish language specified its position although Kurdish political parties pay less attention to Kurdish language policy. Also, those who work for the ministries of Education and Highly Education of KRG devalue the role of the Kurdish language giving English priority as a global language. Moreover, Kurdish seems to have no economical value Kurdistan is not a state.

That might be the for removing Kurdish from the forms and having English along with Arabic. Meanwhile, Kurdish language is not offered to foreigners who visit Kurdistan region. In addition, both Kurdish and Latin alphabets are used in mass media and this has negative impact on Kurdish

language.

- The attested problems and drawbacks in the scrutinized documents mentioned above enable to come up with specific recommendations. It is imperative for the authorities to work out a language policy that could meet the community's need for language and implement it systematically at all levels and domains. The provisions of the Iraqi Constitution stipulating Arabic and Kurdish as official languages must be implemented systematically.
- The government needs to set up a permanent committee aiming to protect the ethnic language. It should involve linguists, lawyers, educators, in short, all stake holders. Their recommendations must be presented to the decision-making organs. The local parliament is also advised to have a special committee to deal with language related legal issues.
- The Kurdish Academy should have a special committee which will deal the state of the art in the field. It must work out recommendations referring language standardization, language change and language functioning. Among the scope of duties, they have to police language visibility in the public space, to supervise top-down and bottom-up language use.
- The Ministry of the High Education and Scientific Studies of Kurdistan should work on plans to translate, set and prepare all the study programs and subjects of the Human Sciences colleges immediately. Also, there is a need to expand Kurdish language courses. It is unfortunate that majority of researchers at MA/MS level and PhD level conduct their research in Arabic rather than in Kurdish in the universities of Kurdistan.
- The mass media and non-governmental organizations must protect the originality of language with a sense of patriotism.
- Language is a strategic factor of the national security so it must be a perpetual part of each and every Kurd's conscience at anywhere in the world. Whoever devaluate the language must be responded to directly and Prosecutor must raise lawsuit against them because it is related to the dignity of forty million Kurds. This language is no less than any other language but it is equal to them. Tolerance and living together refers to other nations as well. Turkmens and Syrian who live in Kurdistan must be given equal language rights and they must have rights to educate their children in their native language.

- Written and oral proficiency of Kurdish must be one the requirements for job applications and admission criteria. Candidates must be subjected to proficiency tests in Kurdish.
- KRG must provide a significant amount of money in the yearly budget to spend for elevating the prestige of the Kurdish language and for other language-related issues.

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