Linguistic Landscape in Sulaymaniah, Iraq

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المشهد اللغوي في مدينة السليمانية ، العراق

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore language selection in shop signs in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq from a sociolinguistic perspective. It was guided by two main questions regarding language choice and attitudes toward the languages used. The research focused on shop signs in three distinct areas of Sulaymaniah: Zargatt, Qwlran, and Bustan. A convenience sample of 100 participants was selected. The researchers employed a sociolinguistic questionnaire, which included three sections, alongside a survey of approximately 150 shop signs in the chosen areas. The findings revealed two primary categories of shop signs: monolingual and bilingual. Additionally, the results showed a growing trend in the use of Kurdish and foreign names, particularly in Kurdish, Arabic and Persian. Shop owners generally expressed positive attitudes towards incorporating foreign names alongside with Kurdish and Arabic for their businesses.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, language choice, Iraq

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف اختيار اللغة في لافتات المحلات التجارية في السليمانية بالعراق من منظور اجتماعي لغوي. وقد استرشدت بسؤالين رئيسيين يتعلقان باختيار اللغة والمواقف تجاه اللغات المستخدمة. ركز البحث على لافتات المحلات التجارية في ثلاث مناطق متميزة من السليمانية: زرغات، وقولران، والبستان. تم اختيار عينة ملائمة من ١٠٠ مشارك. استخدم الباحثون استبيانًا اجتماعيًا لغويًا، والذي تضمن ثلاثة أقسام، إلى جانب مسح لحوالي ١٥٠ لافتة متجر في المناطق المختارة. كشفت النتائج عن فئتين رئيسيتين من لافتات المحلات التجارية: أحادية اللغة وثنائية اللغة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت النتائج اتجاهًا متزايدًا في استخدام الأسماء الكردية والأجنبية، وخاصة باللغة الكردية والعربية والفارسية. أعرب أصحاب المحلات التجارية عمومًا عن مواقف إيجابية تجاه دمج الأسماء الأجنبية إلى جانب اللغة العربية والكردية في أعمالهم التجارية.

1.Introduction

In our globalized world, language contact is vital, with societies frequently engaging in multilingualism, language shift, and language death. The rapid extinction of languages and the dominance of a few globally have led to a focus on linguistic diversity and inequality. This research aims to examine the linguistic landscape of Sulaymaniyah, the only city in Iraqi Kurdistan that has received limited attention. It will explore how sociohistorical and macro-social factors influence micro-language phenomena through various inscriptions, including monuments and street names. The study will analyze these inscriptions from visual, theoretical, sociological, and semiotic perspectives, addressing how they reflect political ideologies and the city's evolution over time.

The exploration of linguistic landscapes (LL) offers a fascinating lens through which to examine the interplay of language, culture, and identity within urban settings. This literature review synthesizes key insights from several studies that highlight the dynamics of linguistic landscapes, particularly in relation to the urban environment and its implications for community identity and communication.

(Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018) provide an insightful analysis of the linguistic landscape in Sidoarjo City, revealing a rich tapestry of languages that coexist in the public space. Their findings indicate that Indonesian

is the most prominent language on signage, with English appearing more frequently than Arabic. The study categorizes the functions of these signs into six distinct roles, including the provision of information, the conservation of local languages, and the expression of identity. This multifaceted approach underscores the significance of LL as a medium for both communication and cultural representation.

Building upon the concepts introduced by (Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018), (Oktaviani, 2019) expands the discussion of LL by examining shop names in Gresik Kota Baru. This research situates linguistic landscapes within the broader context of urban multilingualism, emphasizing how public signage serves as a symbolic construction of public space. By comparing various urban environments, the study highlights the role of LL in shaping community identity and the ways in which language reflects the cultural diversity of a region.

Further advancing the discourse, (World English Journal et al., 2021) explore the pedagogical potential of LL in the context of a translation classroom in Oman. Their study posits that LL can serve as a valuable educational resource, encouraging learners to engage with and enhance the quality of their local linguistic landscapes. This approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of language use but also empowers participants to take an active role in their community's linguistic representation.

Together, these studies illuminate the intricate relationships between language, identity, and public space, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the linguistic landscape in diverse urban settings. The findings underscore the importance of LL as both a reflection of cultural dynamics and a tool for community engagement, setting the stage for further exploration into the linguistic landscape of Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher, being Iraqi, observed a significant prevalence of languages other than Kurdish on shop signs. Zughoul (2007) noted that the presence of English signage in the streets was remarkable. Consequently, the researchers aimed to explore the prevalence of foreign shop signs in Sulaymaniyah and the perceptions surrounding them.

Study Objectives

This study aimed to examine the languages utilized on shop signs in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, as well as to assess the attitudes of shop owners regarding the use of foreign names for their businesses.

Research   Questions

Two key questions guided the research:

1-What languages appear on shop signs in various areas of Sulaymaniyah?

2-How do shop owners feel about using foreign names for their shops?

Significance of the Study

The sociolinguistic study of shop signs is conducted globally, but it is seldom explored in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq. This research aims to address this gap in the existing literature. Furthermore, the sample chosen, consisting of shop signs from three distinct areas in Sulaymaniyah, has not been extensively examined, thus filling another gap. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods enhances the study's significance.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study are confined to the specific time and locations (Zargatt, Qwlran, and Bustan neighborhood) and the particular sample examined. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all shop signs in Sulaymaniyah; they are restricted to the sample and methods applied in this research.

Overall, these articles highlight the importance of linguistic landscapes as complex areas for exploration, reflecting larger themes of language policy, cultural rights, and social identity. The dynamic nature of linguistic landscapes, as discussed by the authors, encourages a thorough investigation into how language practices in Sulaymaniah are influenced by and contribute to the region's cultural and political context.

2. Literature review

Sulaymaniyah city, in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, is a place of much higher education. All universities teach various languages. Following the opportunities provided by the presence of these educational centers, the city witnesses linguistic diversity. The signs that are used as representatives of the linguistic landscape are names on signs of streets, links, labels, and inscriptions on most commercial and private buildings and information signs. In sum, "all linguistic signs that convey information with public communicative intent" fall under the

language landscape of the area. This term "Linguistic Landscape" was used for the first time by the linguist Eliezer Ben-Rafael in the study on the multilingualism of the occupied Palestine in 2003. (Shirin, 2016), (Nadje, 2015)

The article titled "Linguistic Landscape in Sidoarjo City" by Zakiyatul Fakhiroh and Zuliati Rohmah (Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018) provides a comprehensive examination of the linguistic landscape (LL) in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, which can serve as a comparative framework for understanding the LL in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. The study identifies the predominance of Indonesian as the most visible language on public signs, indicating the language's central role in everyday communication within the city. Notably, it highlights the surprising prevalence of English over Arabic, which may reflect broader global trends in language use and the influence of English as a lingua franca in various contexts.

The authors delineate six distinct functions of signs observed in the Sidoarjo LL, which can be insightful when considering similar functions in the context of Sulaymaniyah. These functions include providing information and regulation, symbolizing cultural or social meanings, conserving local languages, and showcasing identities. The emphasis on the conservation of local languages suggests a critical role for LL in maintaining linguistic diversity, which could be mirrored in Sulaymaniyah's LL, where various languages coexist due to the region's rich cultural tapestry.

Moreover, the article's findings on the symbolic and identity-related functions of signs could be pertinent to understanding how linguistic landscapes in Sulaymaniyah reflect the identities of its diverse communities. As such, the dynamics observed in Sidoarjo's LL, particularly the interplay between local and global languages, may resonate with the linguistic practices in Sulaymaniyah, where Kurdish, Arabic, and various minority languages interact.

The article "Linguistic Landscape: a case study of Shop Names in Gresik Kota Baru (GKB), Gresik" by Eka Oktaviani (Oktaviani, 2019) provides an insightful examination of the linguistic landscape, with a particular focus on the significance of shop names within urban settings. Although the study is centered on Gresik, the parallels drawn to the linguistic landscape of Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, offer valuable insights into the broader implications of language use in public spaces.

Oktaviani's analysis highlights how shop names serve as a reflection of cultural identity and social dynamics within a community. The article emphasizes that linguistic choices in commercial signage are not merely functional but are deeply intertwined with local identity, economic factors, and globalization. This perspective is particularly relevant to understanding the linguistic landscape of Sulaymaniyah, where shop names may similarly reflect a confluence of Kurdish, Arabic, and English influences, illustrating the city's multicultural fabric.

The methodology employed in the study involves a qualitative analysis of shop names, exploring both linguistic features and the sociolinguistic context. This approach is commendable, as it allows for a nuanced understanding of how language operates in public domains. Oktaviani's findings suggest that shop names can act as markers of social stratification, with different languages or scripts signaling varying levels of prestige or accessibility within the marketplace.

Furthermore, the article critically assesses the impact of globalization on local linguistic practices. In the context of Sulaymaniyah, this aspect is particularly salient, as the city has experienced significant economic development and cultural exchange in recent years. The presence of English in shop names, for instance, may indicate a shift towards a more globalized economy, while also raising questions about the preservation of local languages and identities.

The article "Utilizing Learners' Linguistic Landscape as a Pedagogical Resource in the Translation Classroom: A case study in the Sultanate of Oman" by Ali Algryani and Syerina Syahrin (World English Journal et al., 2021) provides a thought-provoking exploration of the concept of linguistic landscapes (LL) and their potential as educational resources within translation studies. The authors articulate a compelling argument for the integration of local linguistic landscapes into pedagogical practices, emphasizing the role of learners as active participants in both their educational journeys and their communities.

One of the key insights from the article is the recognition of the linguistic landscape as not merely a backdrop for language learning but as an interactive space that reflects the sociolinguistic realities of a community. Algryani and Syahrin argue that learners, particularly those training to be language specialists and translators, can benefit from engaging with their local LL. This engagement not only enhances their understanding of

language in context but also prepares them to contribute meaningfully to the linguistic needs of their communities, both in private and governmental sectors.

The authors effectively illustrate how the quality of the LL in a given area can serve as a reflection of the community's linguistic diversity and cultural identity. By encouraging learners to critically assess and improve their local LL, the study highlights the potential for fostering a sense of agency among students. This approach aligns with contemporary educational paradigms that advocate for experiential learning and community involvement, positioning learners as stakeholders in the linguistic development of their environments.

Furthermore, the article prompts a critical evaluation of the existing linguistic landscapes in various contexts, including Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. While the study is situated in Oman, the implications of its findings can be extrapolated to other regions with rich linguistic tapestries. In Sulaymaniyah, where multiple languages and dialects coexist, there exists an opportunity to harness the local LL as a pedagogical tool. This could not only enhance language learning but also promote cultural appreciation and awareness among learners.

Additionally, Thonus (1991) investigated the trend of English usage in shop names across Brazil. Her research focused on the impact of English in five state capitals and identified two primary categories of borrowings. The first category involved a more refined application of English, characterized by careful word choices and puns. The second category encompassed shop names that were selected without regard to their context, indicating that the reasoning behind these names was often random. A key finding of her study was that English naming was aimed at appealing to the average Brazilian consumer, based on the belief that English shop and brand names could enhance product sales.

Similarly, Saleh and Al-Yassin (1994) examined the prevalence of foreign shop signs in Jordan from a socio-cultural viewpoint. They investigated why Jordanian business owners opted for foreign signage and the potential negative impacts of English on the national language and the attitudes of future generations towards both Arabic and English. Their findings indicated that merchants favored English not out of disloyalty to Arabic or due to a lack of competence in it, but primarily for its effectiveness in boosting their businesses. From the perspective of these traders, using English in shop signage adds prestige to their products and conveys qualities such as quality, modernity, durability, service, and management, reflecting a socio-economic trend that values foreign influences. Furthermore, the authors expressed concerns shared by other Arabists regarding the susceptibility of Jordanian youth to hybrid styles seen in shop signs, which could ultimately contribute to the erosion of the national language in this context.

Methodology

The current study focused on the commercial shop signs located in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. These shops offer a range of services and products, and their names are presented in various languages. Because it was challenging to collect and analyze all shop signs in Sulaymaniyah, the researchers intentionally selected a sample of 150 signs, with 115 from each of the three neighborhoods: Zargatt, Qwlran, and Bustan, which cater to lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic classes, respectively. Additionally, they conveniently chose 30 shop owners from each area to explore their perspectives and values regarding the use of Kurdish versus foreign names for their signs. These owners completed a questionnaire designed for this study, which included various demographic questions such as gender, age, education level, marital status, the type of school attended, and place of work. Table 1 presents the demographic details of the selected sample

Instruments of the study

To address the research questions regarding language selection in shop signage and attitudes towards that selection, the researchers performed a survey of shop signs in three prominent shopping districts in Sulaymaniyah, in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. They gathered a total of 150 examples of these signs. Additionally, a primary sociolinguistic questionnaire was utilized to achieve the study's objectives. A pilot version of the questionnaire was employed to gather initial data for the development of the main sociolinguistic questionnaire.

The sociolinguistic questionnaire

After the researchers collected feedback from the pilot questionnaire, they began designing the sociolinguistic questionnaire. This questionnaire was validated and tested prior to being distributed to a sample of shop owners in Sulaymainyah. Occasionally, the researchers employed the 'social network' model proposed by Milroy and Milroy (1978) to connect with participants through mutual acquaintances. Three friends of the researcher, who had access to the community, assisted in distributing and gathering the completed questionnaires. They shared the questionnaire with their friends, neighbors, and coworkers, all of whom owned shops. The questionnaire

was available in Kurdish, Arabic and English, allowing respondents to choose their preferred language; most selected the Kurdish version.

The questionnaire comprised three sections focused on the respondents' demographic and social information, shop naming history, and attitudes towards foreign and Kurdish names. It also included a cover letter outlining the questionnaire's purpose and instructions for completion. The first section collected various demographic data, including gender, age, education, marital status, school type, and workplace, while emphasizing shop naming background.

The second section featured nine items, seven of which were open-ended, while two required respondents to select a single appropriate response. The final section explored respondents' personal views on choosing foreign versus Kurdish business names. Participants were instructed to select one response that best represented their opinion on the languages in question. This section was divided into two parts: the first included six statements regarding attitudes towards foreign names, such as the perception that English names are more appealing to customers and signify higher product quality. The second part contained five statements about Kurdish names, emphasizing sentiments like "reflecting my pride in being Kurd" and "being more expressive than foreign names," using a five-point Likert scale. Each statement was accompanied by five response options for participants to choose from.

Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

The researcher distributed a total of one hundred questionnaires, but only ninety were returned. The survey focused on 150 shop signs, selected for their convenience and representing a wide range of services and businesses, including restaurants, offices, money exchange services, medical centers, hotels, companies, grocery stores, clothing shops, travel agencies, jewelers, florists, photographers, and more. The researchers collected, analyzed, and categorized these signs into monolingual signs (including 'Arabic'and 'Kurdish', 'transliteration', or 'foreign') and bilingual signs (including 'foreign and Kurdish translation', 'foreign and Kurdish transliteration', or 'mixed' signs that incorporate Kurdish, Arabic and foreign languages).

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a panel of six sociolinguistics experts was invited to review its form and content. They provided several recommendations to improve clarity and informativeness, such as replacing the term 'district' with 'area' and suggesting the removal or addition of certain items. For assessing the reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers selected a subset from the population to complete the questionnaire, and then repeated the same process two weeks later as a pilot study.

Findings of the Study

The initial inquiry focuses on the languages present in shop signs within the chosen regions. The data presented in Table 2 indicates that a total of 680 signs were gathered across three areas: 50 in Zargatt, 50 in Qwlran, and 50 in Bustan. The findings categorize shop signs into two primary types based on language use: monolingual and bilingual, with each type further divided into subcategories detailed in the tables below.

According to Table 2, monolingual shop signs consist of Kurdish, Arabic, foreign, transliteration, and foreign transliteration. For example, in Zargatt, Kurdish signs include Markaz Cihan, Sherzad Lilmalabis, and Ferhad. In Qwlran, examples include Mata'am Izwitna, Suzwar Kurdi Jelin, and Siban. Jabal kurek features signs like Ranib, Gorin, and Mervab.

As for foreign names, Zargatt has shops like Oxygen, El Classico, and Overman Cafe, while Qwlran includes Hair Care Center, Two Rings, and Family Needs. Bustan features Lavoro, Le Possible, and Umbrella. Arabic transliterated signs in Zargatt include Holiday Shoes, Lavender Link, and Soft Wear. In Qwlran, there are few examples such as Lamita and Wow, while Bustan has Orange, Nice, and Royal. Foreign transliterated signs are notably scarce, with Zargatt showing names like Berwar, Nazik, and Nusha. Qwlran has Peri, Revend , and Saraya, whereas Bustan includes Lamasa, Sahri, and Jaz

The analysis in Table 1 reveals that Zargatt has the highest proportion of Kurdish and Arabic signs at 45%, followed by Qwlran at 27%, and Bustan at 19%. In terms of foreign signs (primarily Kurdish), Zargatt leads with 55%, Qwlran has 37%, and Bustan has 16%. For Kurdish transliteration, 10% of signs in Zargatt are transliterated, compared to 6% in Qwlran and only 3% in Bustan. Foreign transliteration shows the lowest percentages across the areas, with 3% in Zargatt, 3% in Qwlran, and 2% in Bustan.

Table 1: Occurrences and proportions of monolingual shop signs across the three regions.

Sign	Kurdish		Arabic		rdish transliteration		abic transliteration		Total	
Area	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Zargatt	112	44	40	15	25	10	6	3	185	74

Qwlran	40	18	118	54	6	2	3	2	170	79
Bustan	58	26	77	36	12	5	6	3	155	73
Total									510	

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that bilingual shop signs can be categorized into several subtypes, including 'foreign with translation', 'foreign with Kurdish & Arabic transliteration', and 'mixed signs' (combining Kurdish, Arabic and foreign elements). Additionally, the data reveals that Zargatt has the highest proportion of 18% for the use of foreign signs alongside their translations, compared to 11% in Qwlran and 10% in Bustan.

Table 2: Counts and proportions of bilingual shop signs across the three regions.

Sign	abic and Foreign translation		n, Arabic and for transliteration		d (Kurdish, Arabic a foreign)		Total	
Area	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Zargatt	44	18	7	3	12	5	65	26
Qwlran	21	10	20	10	11	1	45	21
Bustan	25	11	34	15	2	1	60	27
Total							170	

In terms of foreign signs with their Kurdish and Arabic transliterations, Qwlran has a usage rate of 15%, while Zargatt has 10%. In contrast, Bustan shows only 3%. Additionally, only 5% of mixed signs, which combine Kurdish, Arabic and foreign elements, are found in Zargatt, compared to just 1% in Bustan and Qwlran. The data presented in Table 4 indicates that 58% of respondents use Kurdish for their shop names, 40% use Arabic, and 2% use Persian. This implies that 60% of the respondents opt for foreign names for their businesses, likely reflecting their bilingual or multilingual backgrounds.

Table 3: The language used in business names

Question	Kurdish		Arabic		English		Other		Total	
rminology employed in namin	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
usinesses of the respondents.	33	40	56	52	4	2	1	1	91	100

Table 4 reveals that when respondents were inquired about the kurdish meanings of their business names, 52% confirmed that their names do have Kurdish meanings. Conversely, 43% stated that their names do not have an Arabic equivalent, while 5% expressed uncertainty. This indicates a variety of reasons influencing the selection of business names.

Table 4: The meaning of business names

Question	Meaningful		Meaningless		DK		Total	
eaning of the respondents' bus name is	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
	30	52	25	43	4	5	56	100

*DK: Don't Know

Table 5: Influence of Location on Name Selection

Question	Yes		No		Total	
region where the respond is situated plays a part in of their business name.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	50	58	37	42	91	100

Table 5 indicates that 58% of respondents believe that the location of their business significantly influences their name choice. In contrast, 42% stated that their business's location does not affect their naming decision.

Table 6: Attitudes towards non-Kurdish shop names

No.	Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Total %
	shop names:						
1	e appealing to customers.	31	22	7	37	3	100
2	sidered more prestigious than Ku	30	25	7	23	15	100
3	e widely accepted by people.	25	25	15	27	8	100
4	the quality of the products.	27	30	8	28	7	100
5	ent socio-economic class of custom	28	37	20	8	7	100
6	Kurdish	27	13	15	33	12	100

Key: SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, U: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

The findings presented in Table 6 reveal that respondents generally have a favorable view of Kurdish shop signs. Notably, 70% believe that kurdish names symbolize pride in their kurdish identity, while 20% were neutral and 10% disagreed. When asked if Kurdish names convey more meaning than foreign names, 55% answered affirmatively, although 17% disagreed and 28% remained neutral. In terms of the indigenous nature of Kurdish names, 73% of participants felt that Kurdish names are more original than those from foreign cultures, with 20% undecided and only 7% disagreeing. Additionally, regarding the perception of foreign names as a sign of modernity, 72% of respondents viewed kurdish names as more traditional than foreign ones, while 8% disagreed and 20% were undecided.

Discussion
The findings presented in Table 1 regarding language selection indicate that shop signs in the studied areas are predominantly monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Various languages are represented, including the local language, Kurdish (e.g., kurdi Jelil, Siban, Berwar), as well as Arabic (e.g., Al-Thiqa, Sayid Ahmed), English (e.g., Moonlight, Dream Coffee), Persian (e.g., Khanim Berai Lbas, bazar, mez kahwa khuri), and Turkish (e.g., Soz kahve, Guzel kuwafur). These observations align with McGroger (2003), who noted the presence of unilingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs, and Zughoul (2007), who argued that although the Kurdish community is primarily monolingual and unicultural, the use of foreign signage in public spaces is significant. The data also reveal that English is the most frequently utilized foreign language, with only six non-English shop signs identified in the survey. This trend is consistent with the conclusions of McArthur (2000) and Shlick (2003), who recognized English as the predominant language in store signage.

Table 5 outlines respondents' views on Kurdish, Arabic and foreign names, showing that shop owners generally hold positive attitudes towards them, perceiving them as more appealing and prestigious compared to Kurdish names. They believe such names enhance the perceived quality of the goods and services offered. This perception may stem from the high regard for foreign products and the influence of foreign films. Additionally, respondents feel that foreign names attract customers, as they are associated with a higher socio-economic status. This may reflect the notion that affluent shoppers tend to favor well-known shops featuring foreign names. The positive perception of foreign names is further emphasized by most respondents disagreeing with the idea that their use does not dilute the Kurdish language, suggesting a belief that bilingualism or multilingualism is beneficial. These findings are supported by Thonus (1991), Ross (1997), Griffin (2004), Gao (2005), and Khosravizadeh & Sanjareh (2011). Thonus (1991) noted that English names appeal to consumers, while Ross (1997) remarked that English is viewed as stylish and prestigious, giving businesses an international flair. Griffin (2004) affirmed that attitudes toward English are favorable, associating it with attractiveness and modernity. Gao (2005) suggested that English code-switching in advertisements reflects a contemporary identity, and Khosravizadeh & Sanjareh (2011) observed a growing trend in the use of English in advertising and shop signs in non-English speaking countries.

Table 6 presents respondents' attitudes towards Kurdish names, revealing a strong sense of pride in their native language. They view Kurdish as integral to their identity, culture, and traditions, considering it more authentic, expressive, and understandable than Arabic and foreign names. This appreciation may be influenced by the cultural significance of Kurdish , as it is the second official language of Iraq and the language of culture, reflecting values such as generosity, nobility, and courage. These findings contrast with

McGroger (2003), who suggested that foreign languages enhance native shop names, but support Saleh and Al-Yassin (1994), who argued that traders adopt English names not out of disloyalty to Arabic culture, but primarily for their effectiveness in business promotion.

Conclusions

The analysis of the survey results regarding shop signs and the sociolinguistic questionnaire reveals that a range of languages is utilized in shop signage across Sulaymaniyah, with positive attitudes towards the use of languages beyond Kurdish. This observation underscores the bilingual and multilingual characteristics of shop signs in the nation. Primarily, the languages featured are Kurdish, Arabic and English. Additionally, the selection of language is influenced by various factors, including attitudes, linguistic aspects, commercial considerations, and more. The research questions can be addressed based on the study's findings as follows:

1-There is a variety of languages present in shop signs in Sulaymaniyah, including:

- Kurdish, the native and second official language, serves as the primary means of communication among all Kurdish people in the Kurdistan of Iraq, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds.
- Arabic, the first official language , which is used in many governmental sectors and documents.
- English, regarded as a foreign language in Iraq and taught at all educational levels, is predominant in many foreign shop signs.
- Other globally recognized languages like Persian, Armenian, and Turkish are also represented.

2. Shop owners generally have a favorable attitude towards using foreign names for their businesses. They find that employing foreign languages makes their shops more appealing, prestigious, and acceptable to the public, while also suggesting high-quality products or services, thus attracting customers who associate such names with a higher socioeconomic status.

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