

# **Language Policy: Educational and Political Aspects in Pre-2003 and Post-2003 Iraq - A Comparative Descriptive Study of Kurdish**

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## Language Policy: Educational and Political Aspects in Pre-2003 and Post-2003 Iraq - A Comparative Descriptive Study of Kurdish

سياسة اللغة في مظاهرها التعليمية والسياسية في عراق ما قبل وبعد عام ٢٠٠٣ : دراسة وصفية مقارنة للغة الكردية

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### Abstract

The present study is a descriptive comparative analysis of the Kurdish language status in terms of language and identity, language policy and language planning before and after 2003, the year of US-led invasion of Iraq. Kurdish is the native language of Kurds, the second largest nationality in Iraq, where identity can cost life. The researchers observed media, analyzed official correspondences and constitutional articles, and conducted interviews to describe the state of Kurdish

language in the periods of pre-war (before 2003) and post-war (after 2003) Iraq. The study examined the political and educational rights of the Kurdish language. It was concluded that the Kurdish language, though spoken by a minority, enjoys reasonably satisfactory rights in post-war Iraq, as compared to the pre-war status relative to language policies of minorities around the world.

**Keywords:** Kurdish, language policy, curriculum, language rights, prewar, postwar, Iraq

## خلاصة

تتناول الدراسة اللغة الكردية في مضممار اللغة والهوية وسياسة اللغة في بلد قد تكلف به الهوية حياة الانسان. حيث تعتبر اللغة الكردية اللغة الام للاكراد الذين يمثلون ثاني اكبر قومية في العراق. قام الباحثون بعقد مقارنة مستندة الى الدلائل العلمية بين وضع اللغة الكردية قبل وبعد حرب ٢٠٠٣، ملقيا الضوء على حقوقها السياسية والتدريسية في المدارس الكردية. تتناول المعطيات من منظور خارجي متمثلا بالدراسات

السابقة ومنظور داخلي متمثلا بمقابلات مع اساتذة عراقيين اكراد وعرب. توصل الباحثون الى ان اللغة الكردية مع كونها اقلية، تتمتع بحقوق نسبية افضل مما كانت عليه قبل عام ٢٠٠٣ بالنظر الى سياسات اللغة الخاصة بالاقليات في اجزاء اخرى من العالم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اللغة الكردية، سياسة اللغة، مناهج التعليم، حقوق اللغة، قبل الحرب، بعد الحرب، العراق.

## 1. Introduction

Varieties of language in general can be recognized in terms of their communicational function, identity indexing as well as world construction (Edmonds, 2013 & Aziz, 2011). However, it is needless to say that languages are not of equal status, even within the same national or ethnical community in a country, as in the case of Kurdish in Iraq. These status differences could be attributed to the historical or socio-political factors. Thus, the current paper investigates the status of Kurdish in Iraq before and after the 2003.

Not only could language policy shape the future of people's identity, it may change their economical, political, and social reality (Armenuti, 2014). It strengthens the majority's language and intimidates minorities whose languages are being led to a gradual death. Thus,

the future of a language gives serious worries to communities who have high sense of patriotism and love to their language.

In general, minorities with the above concerns about their languages are more likely to be destined to death. Nevertheless, political and financial factors play roles in deviating from the norms. In some countries, language of the minority is decreed to be an *official language* and sometimes the *national language* as in the case of Pakistan where Urdu is the national language and an official language besides English, although spoken as a first language by only 7.5% (Rahman, 1996). In Israel both Hebrew and Arabic are considered official (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999), and in Canada for instance, both English and French are considered official (Norris, 2007). In some multilingual countries, one language is the *official language* and another

is the *national language* of the country. In Algeria, for example, Arabic is the official language and Berber (the indigenous language of the country) is the national language (Marley, 2004).

The Kurds are an ethnic group that is considered one of the largest ethnic groups in the world with no state of their own. They originated in the Middle East. Their geo-cultural region is referred to as "Land of the Kurds". In Iraq, Kurdistan is an autonomous region located in northern Iraq, covering 40,643 square kilometers, populated with approximately four million people (Bartu, 2010).

According to Rashwan and Salif (2019), political theorists have put forward several arguments about "the language of politics," but rarely addressed "the politics of language." Therefore, the present paper attempts to analyze both terms in regards with the Kurdish language in Iraq and compare its status between two periods in light with the vast change in the political landscape of Iraq before and after 2003.

### 1.1 Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How did the Kurdish language policy change

concerning the political and educational aspects between pre-2003 and post-2003 Iraq?

2. What are the major factors contributing to these changes in Kurdish language policy across the two periods?

3. How did these changes influence the Iraqi reality in terms of politics and education?

### 1.2 Research objectives

The study aims to:

1. Compare and analyze the changes in the Kurdish language policy concerning political and educational aspects between pre-2003 and post-2003 Iraq.
2. Identify the major factors contributing to these changes in the Kurdish language policy across the two periods.
3. Analyze the impact of these changes on Iraq's political and educational realities.

### 1.3 Problem of the study

Despite the vast shifts in the political landscape of Iraq before and after

the war of 2003, there is scarce systematic work comparing the political changes of these two stages in terms of educational and political dimensions of Kurdish language policy. Even when there are studies on the Kurdish language policy, they often examine either the political aspect or the educational feature in isolation. Moreover, few studies provide a descriptive and comparative account across the two historical epochs. This gap renders the status of Kurdish language rights and educational language planning unclear in response to governance changes in ideology and tendency. Therefore, the current study is a comparative investigation to understand the continuity and transformation of Kurdish language policy in pre-2003 and post-2003 Iraq.

The political struggle in Iraq over the past decades had negatively overshadowed the Iraqi linguistic reality. Even with the coexistence of multiple nationalities with many languages, no clear language policy had been seen before 2003. Yet, the Kurdish language in Iraq received limited scholarly attention.

The situation in Iraq has changed after the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. Hence, the current study tries to draw lines of comparison to situate

the Kurdish language policy in both eras.

## 2. Literature review

The status of the Kurdish language in Iraq before 2003 was significantly influenced political marginalization of centralized state control. On the other hand, after 2003, new opportunities—but also challenges—appeared due to the constitutional reforms and decentralization to implement Kurdish in education and government.

However, systematic investigation has not adequately compared the *educational* and *political* aspects of Kurdish language policy across these two eras. The lack of a comprehensive descriptive comparison limits our understanding of how political structures, ideological shifts, and administrative reforms affected the status, function, and institutional support of Kurdish. The research problem, therefore, lies in the absence of an integrated comparative analysis that documents how Kurdish language policy changed (or remained constant) in both periods.

Tollefson (2006) establishes that research on language policy is inevitably political and this requires a deep understanding of the political reality around language policy

decisions (p:49). This in turn necessitates explicit and scrutinized analysis of this significant linguistic issue. Admittedly, the associations between language policy and management and the ethnical, historical and diasporic processes as state formation, political conflict and migration. For that reason, research on language policy especially in a multiethnic and multilingual country needs genuine impartiality.

Sheyholislami (2017) investigated the status of two varieties of Kurdish; Badini and Hawrami, being two striving varieties for educational rights in Iraq. He shed light on the political background in Iraq after invading Kuwait and how tensional the situation was then, the fact that complicated the Kurdish language policy. Over ten years of data collection, the researcher tried to answer why these two varieties have different statuses. The researcher points that only Badini succeeded in achieving recognition both in the political and educational perspectives.

On a diasporic account, the same researcher (2016) conducted a study on the Kurdish language in the United States, exploring the roles played by the language in question in their diasporic community in the United States. He adopted a mixed method of surveying literature,

interviews with community members and media reviews in the Kurdish community in South Carolina. The results indicate that the Kurds of both first and second generation consider their Kurdish language as a representation of their cultural identity. Moreover, it is their dynamic survival and solidarity within their local community, and with other Kurds America-wide.

In a more relevant study to the current paper, Yaseen and Shakir (2016) situated the current language policy of the Kurds in Iraq. They concluded that the education system for minorities in Iraq, including Kurdish, has less access to the minorities' mother tongues. The researchers recommended that the government offer better access to minorities' language in the educational curricula. They also suggested that 'language' be added as one prominent basis for discrimination in (Article 4) of the constitution.

Abbas and Saeed (2020) investigated *language management* in Kurdistan of Iraq, focusing on the academic situation. They tried to propose sound and balanced resolution for all levels, especially the academic area. Hence, they suggested methods to take the multilingual situation of Kurdistan in Iraq to an English plus

situation in analogy with Singapore, which the researchers visited.

Saeed and Jukil (2018) surveyed the language management and practice in terms of the steps followed and methods adopted by governmental and non-governmental centers as well as individuals, in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. They highlighted that the media and academic institutions could assume a considerable role in improving the language management reality in the Iraqi Kurdistan. They recommended that several committees should be established; one is dominant established in the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament consisting of language and law experts to deal with linguistic and legal issues. Another committee of similar experts to study laws and resolutions in the Council of Ministers.

Very few studies compare language policy of Kurdish between pre-war Iraq and post-war Iraq. Hence, the current study is an attempt to shed light on the reality of this controversial issue as an insider in the light of many other studies. Some of the notions are merely facts that the researcher himself witnessed but still enhanced by previous studies. Some of the data and impressions about these data come from the media and gazettes and other sources as observing

parliament meetings on TV and observing the credit given to the Kurdish language and Kurdistan (the formal and national name of the Kurdish region north of Iraq).

### **3. Methodology**

The researchers of the current study adopted the qualitative design as a main method relying on analysis of official documents, constitution excerpts and media from both prewar and postwar periods (see appendix).

Moreover, in light of Spolsky's (2004) views, the current descriptive study makes use of interviewing Kurdish and Arabic teachers and professors, students and officials, observing Kurdish media as well as reviewing the relevant literature review. The Iraqi constitution pertinent to the language policy and language status was also examined and the relevant points were analyzed.

### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Kurdish in Pre-War Iraq**

##### ***4.1.1 Official Situation of Kurdish***

One major factor that affects *officiality* of a language is its religious association. One of the basic reasons why the Kurdish was denied this privilege in Iraq is its

coinciding with the Arabic language, which is the language of the Quran. It is a fact that a huge portion of the society structure in Iraq is centered around religion and Islamic traditions (Wimmer, 2003). The Holy Quran descended in standard Arabic and is only allowed to be recited in Arabic (Spolsky & Spolsky, 2003).

Iraq is multilingual and multiethnic country with Arabic being the dominant and national language, and Kurdish, Turkish, Syriac and others being minority languages. In the past, Iraq was one of very few countries that recognized the Kurdish language as a *local language* under the 1931 (Local Languages Law). Moreover, Kurdish was then considered an *official language* but only in the Kurdish region. Around the 1991 Gulf war, Kurdish was used in print, in media, and press but only within limits set by the government. Despite this limited official recognition, the government of the Baath Party practiced Arabization and de-ethnicization policies on the Kurds (Hassanpour et al, 1996).

#### 4.1.2 Nationalization and national language

As stated by Sheyholislami (2019), nationalization is related to the

concept of nation and the categorized languages to be viewed as more or less national and the degree of their representation of nationality or identity of any country or community. However, the coexistence of other official languages as other official languages can be an incentive of conflict. The Kurdish language associated to the Kurdish people who have been always in political and ethnical struggle (Haig, 2007) puts them in a critical situation where they have been always denied that right of nationality. The political influence has been monitored to be a clear influence on the status of the Kurdish language and how this language has been oppressed due to political reasons. The Iraqi Kurdish people are scattered in other countries neighboring Iraq like Syria, Iran and Turkey. This strategic parameter resided by the Kurdish population has posed threats to these three governments. The fears are the Kurdish community especially with their strong political parties would make a strong nation with strategic location. The Kurdish parties and people are claiming the right to include the city of Kirkuk, a city rich with oil and natural resources of power (Zanger, 2002). This has added to the fears not only for the Iraqi government, but for the neighboring countries as well.

During the formation of the first Iraqi government in 1921 through 2003, the Kurdish language situation in Iraq went through three major phases. The first Iraqi constitution, the Basic Law 1921, represents the first phase of this situation. In that law, the Kurdish language and its speakers were not recognized as one of the national languages. Moreover, the Kurds then were not considered among the Iraqi population components (Khadar, 2007). The first turning point in the history of the Kurdish language in Iraq was in 1931 when it was merely recognized a local language for a certain area, according to the Law of Local Languages. Conversely, the 1958 interim constitution, Article 3 evaded mentioning Kurdish as one of the local languages. It confirmed that "Iraq is part of the Arab nation" (Kirmanj, 2013). In 1964, the constitution amended was a disappointing for the Kurds in Iraq, as it did not recognize their language officially. Nevertheless, Article 19 recognized the Kurds' national rights as part of the Iraqi people within the brotherly and national unity.

The second phase of Kurdish language status was sanctioned by the (1970) amended interim constitution, which allowed the Kurds to have the right of self-ruling, mainly in the areas with the Kurdish majority. However, the

Arabization campaign waged by the regime then deprived many Kurdish regions of the right to use their language (Abdullah & Naif, 2022; Khadar, 2007).

The third phase started in (1991) when the US and its allies forced the Iraqi army to withdraw from Kuwait. They promoted Iraqi Kurds to emerge from the central Iraqi Government and establish their Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). This phase is considered another significant turning point that depends on the political support of the US to the Kurdish issue. Thus, the Kurdish language has been the working language of KRG, schools, media, and administration so that Kurds no longer felt forced to learn Arabic and made no effort to master it (O'Leary et al., 2006).

#### *4.1.3 Educational Situation of Kurdish*

Education has been a matter of constant struggle between the Kurds and the Iraqi government since the dawn of its establishment. Before 2003, the children of minorities had to use Arabic as their medium of instruction in schools while spoke their native language at home (Yawer, 2010). The Saddamist regime for instance had attempted to Arabize the governorates of

Northern Iraq by force (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

The Kurds have been demanding education in native language on all levels of education, primary, undergraduate, and post-graduate. The League of Nations accordingly recognized the Kurds right to native language education, and recommended the British mandatory power to allow the use of Kurdish as an official language in education. Then, Britain gave "assurance" to fulfill the aforementioned recommendation, yet education in Kurdish was limited to a handful of elementary schools. The Kurds demanded that more schools and higher levels of education be included. Britain turned down the demand of even bilingual (Arabic and Kurdish) education in higher or secondary education. This status of policy was pursued by the monarchy and the successive republican states that took power after 1958. The autonomist armed resistance in 1961-75 managed to force the government to allow restricted secondary education in Kurdish and bachelor level of Kurdish language and literature program. Finally, around the beginning of 1990s, most secondary school textbooks were translated into Kurdish. However, Kurdistan part that was outside the "autonomous region" received no

education in Kurdish (O'Leary, 2006; Yaseen & Shakir, 2016).

The part under the Regional Government of Kurdistan in that period implemented the Kurdicization policy of the educational system. However, the system lacked financial resources, teachers, programs, textbooks and teaching materials. Additionally, the region had been afflicted by continuing internal and external wars and a blurry future.

## 4.2 Kurdish in Post-War Iraq

### 4.2.1 Officiality

Among all the languages mentioned in the modern Iraqi constitution, the Kurdish language was the first to be considered a *formal language* in political terms in the post-war Iraq since the Kurds represent about 20% of the total Iraqi population (Katzman, 2009). However, the Kurdish language is thought, at least by its speakers, to be given incomplete merit on an equal footing of Arabic, the higher in the language hierarchy of Iraq.

The Iraq Federal Constitution of 2005 in Part 1, Article 4, Paragraph 2 declares the following:

"The scope of the term "official language" and the means of applying the

provisions of this article shall be defined by a law and shall include:

A. Publication of the Official Gazette, in the two languages;

B. Speech, conversation, and expression in official domains, such as the Council of Representatives, the Council of Ministers, courts, and official conferences, in either of the two languages;

C. Recognition and publication of official documents and correspondence in the two languages;

D. Opening schools that teach the two languages, in accordance with the educational guidelines;

E. Use of both languages in any matter enjoined by the principle of equality such as bank notes, passports, and stamps.”

Hence, the constitution declares that there are two main languages: Arabic and Kurdish as well as other minority languages such as Aramaic, Turkmen and Syriac.

The two official languages are used in official documents and media. These languages can be used, one or both, in the government conferences and parliament meetings. Names of vital government buildings are now written in Kurdish besides Arabic (see fig 1). They are used in official documents and passports. In Saddam’s time (pre-war Iraq), the Kurdish language has never been used in any official documents, journals, or media (Zanger, 2002). These two languages are now used in Kurdistan, the north region of Iraq where the Kurds reside (Brown & Brown, 2005).

#### *4.2.2 Educational rights in the new constitution*

Meho (2004) establishes that under Hussein’s regime the Kurdish language was banned in Kirkuk, in educational and institutional facilities as part of the Iraqi state’s effort to change the demography of the oil-rich province in favor of Arabs. However, according to an interviewee working in the education system, the Kurdish education was restarted in Kirkuk after Saddam was ousted in the 2003 US-led invasion.

In post-war Iraq, the minorities have the right to educate their children in their mother tongue in government institutions under guidelines (Brown & Brown, 2005). The 2005 Federal

Iraq Constitution in Article 4, Paragraph 1 stipulates the following:

“The Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Assyrian, and Armenian shall be guaranteed in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions.”

Moreover, the Kurdistan Regional Constitution guarantees minorities in the region with mother tongue education in Article 14, Paragraph 1 and 2:

“*First:* Kurdish and Arabic are the two official languages in the Region, and this Constitution guarantees the rights of citizens of the Region in to teach their children in their mother tongue, such as: Turkoman, Syriac, and Armenian; in the governmental education institutions according to the educational procedures.”

*Second:* In addition to the Kurdish and Arabic languages, the Turkoman and Syriac languages are official in those administrative units where people form the majority in speaking in the Turkoman and Syriac languages. This shall be organized by law.”

Thus, the Iraqi people are given the right to educate their children in their native language in public schools within guiding principles. Moreover, Kurdish is now taught in the public and private schools of Arabic populated governorates (Appendix 1, Figure 2). Furthermore, special attention is given to the Kurdish language lesson such as its placement in early hours when students have more attention and comprehensibility (Appendix 1, Figure 3).

#### 4.2.3 Policy- Subjected Language

In Iraq, the post-war constitution declares the Islamic religion as the national religion of the nation, and accordingly, the Arabic language as the national language. Nevertheless, the Kurdish language is recognized as a second formal language alongside with Syriac, Aramaic and Turkmen on the foundation of ethnicity.

Modern history indicates that it was only on March, 11<sup>th</sup>, 1970 when the Kurds have gained their rights of recognition in Iraq. Yet, Shohamy (2012) argues that the right given to the Kurdish people was not through the 1970's draft, but through the new constitution of post-war Iraq instead.

That recognition was not an easy road for them. It came after a long history of struggle and uprising against tyrants and dictators. Consequently, they were given their constitutional right in self-governing or "partial autonomy" including legal use of language in the public institutions (Haig, 2007).

According to Brown & Brown (2005), the new Iraqi constitution grants the Kurds the right to educate their children in their native language. The use of the Kurdish language is also considered legal for the media and official government meetings.

The most substantial phase of the Kurdish language status started after the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The subsequent political fluctuations following Saddam regime opened the door to draft the new Iraqi constitution in 2005. The new constitution considered Iraqi Kurdistan as a federation recognized by the Iraqi central government and the United Nations. It also granted

the Kurdish language the status of being official in all of Iraq and the status of the only official language in Iraqi Kurdistan. The new Iraqi Constitution (2005), amended included Article 4, which is related to the Official Languages, as follows;

"The Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turcoman, Syriac, or Armenian, in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines or any other language in private educational institutions, shall be guaranteed. The scope of the term 'official language' and the means of applying the provisions of this Article shall be defined by law and shall include:

- (1) Publication of the official gazette, in the two languages;
- (2) Speech and expression in official settings, such as the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, courts, and official conferences, in either of the two languages;
- (3) Recognition and publication of official documents and correspondence in the two languages;

(4) Opening schools that teach in the two languages, in accordance with educational guidelines;

(5) Use of both languages in any other settings enjoined by the principle of equality (such as banknotes, passports, and stamps); Use of both languages in the federal institutions and agencies in the Kurdistan region.”

In light of Article (4), the new constitution grants the rights of all minorities inspired from the international law of human rights. Nevertheless, the Kurdish language received further recognition and attention by considering it as an official language besides Arabic.

Hence, In Iraq, all official correspondences among ministries, institutions, and publications, are conducted in Arabic and Kurdish. Moreover, the Iraqi passport information is written in three languages; Arabic, Kurdish, as well as English.

Much more significance in recognizing the real importance and size of the Kurdish component in the Iraqi society is given as the Kurdish language is now not only a part of names on buildings; but also an entry for governmental slogans and signs (Figure 1), official documents, and identification papers.



*Figure (1): A general view of the Iraqi parliament in Baghdad, Iraq, January 9, 2022. (Reuters)*

To show the Kurdish language status in practice, Sheyholislami (2019) explains that although the Kurdish language has been considered an

official language, the website of the Iraqi president is using the Arabic language even when he is Kurdish.

There are several factors that have contributed to the Kurdish language transformation and development from prewar to postwar Iraq. First, in terms of the social aspect, the Kurds' awareness of the importance of language to conserve identity, and their self-determination have collaborated in preserving their dream to have their own country (Elis, 2004). Besides, the powerful social integration among the Kurds themselves, the social and political stability, and the well-designed image of Kurds as civilized and open-minded society among the coalition forces have helped Kurds establish a supported front to demand all their rights, particularly language rights.

This line of thought was addressed by Kurdish professors; for example, in the interview, KP1 (Kurdish professor 1) stated that "Before that period, i.e., 2003, the Iraqi authorities worked to make Arabic the only language in Iraq and the Americans believed that this change may change the world's perspective about the invasion claiming that democracy came to Iraq after 2003." Similarly, in their interviews, Arabic professors expressed the vital role of the Kurdish social factor in having their rights. They indicated that their good social reputation in many places they lived contributed significantly to make well-relation

with different nations. Expressing this idea, AP2 (Arabic professor 2) mentioned, "Kurds worldwide won a good social reputation as they are peaceful, well-rapport, and open-minded."

Second, concerning the economic factor, unlike the other parts of Iraq, Kurdistan Region witnessed a noticeable growth rate in the economy after 2003. The support of Kurds' representatives to the Anglo-American invasion of 2003 provided the region with authentic protection since 1991 and prompted foreign investors to invest in the main two cities of the region, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah. Besides, being an oil-rich source gives the Kurdistan region the privilege to attract most of the coalition forces to support their aim to preserve their existence, including the language and identity, which represent the most outstanding parts. Furthermore, some luxurious hotels, shopping malls, and tourist resorts have been erected due to the new changes and scattered along with the region territory. In this respect, KP3 stated that "The absolute protection for the Kurdistan region provided by the coalition forces after 1991 made it a peaceful place, which encouraged many investors to establish many projects in Kurdistan. Also, the support of the Kurdistan people to the Anglo- American invasion of

2003 sustained the investment and strengthened the economic situation in general.”

Third, in regard with the political factor, the Kurds-US relations and alliance was one of the major factors behind the language policy transformation. The speech of the Kurdish government's top representative in the USA says, “In the Middle East, we're seen as being allied with the United States, that makes us unpopular in the Arab world, but we're proud of it. We hope that alliance that friendship will be reciprocated.” (Kelley, USA Today, 28th June 2007). Furthermore, international law alone is not enough to promote minorities' languages unless there is external support like the USA. “Without US support, Kurdish rights would be severely jeopardized, as we see from recent history and by the place of Kurdistan within the region” (Chomsky in Kurdistan Newspaper, February 17, 2008). In the same vein, KP2 and AP1 argued that the US support for the Kurdish language promoted their allegation of bringing democracy to the region.

## CONCLUSION

The political views and interests play a major role in shaping the pathway of language in Iraq. Therefore, the Kurdish language had witnessed

political, ethnical and consequently linguistic oppression and discrimination for many years in pre-war Iraq, i.e. before the US led invasion on Iraq in 2003. The Kurdish community has lived the terror of war and genocide both physically (see Kelly, 2008) and linguistically. As a reaction, there was a phobia, so to speak, developed inside of them against any political or identity (including language) marginalization. In such circumstances, it is hard to satisfy their ambitions at least concerning their language. With all the huge forward steps that have been made in the post-war Iraq regarding the Kurdish language, it is still not given its real size and significance. The new constitution has given less credit to the Kurdish language than Arabic, and least to the other minorities. The Iraqi ministry of higher education and scientific research, for example, use the Arabic language in all its affiliations and institutions. Another factor that restricted the Kurdish language is the religious status that deems Arabic highly since it is the language of the Quran. Unlike the Arabic community, the Kurdish people usually (but not always) emphasize their nationality rather than religion even when they are generally Muslims, as a reaction to elevate their language status.

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## Appendix of photo documents

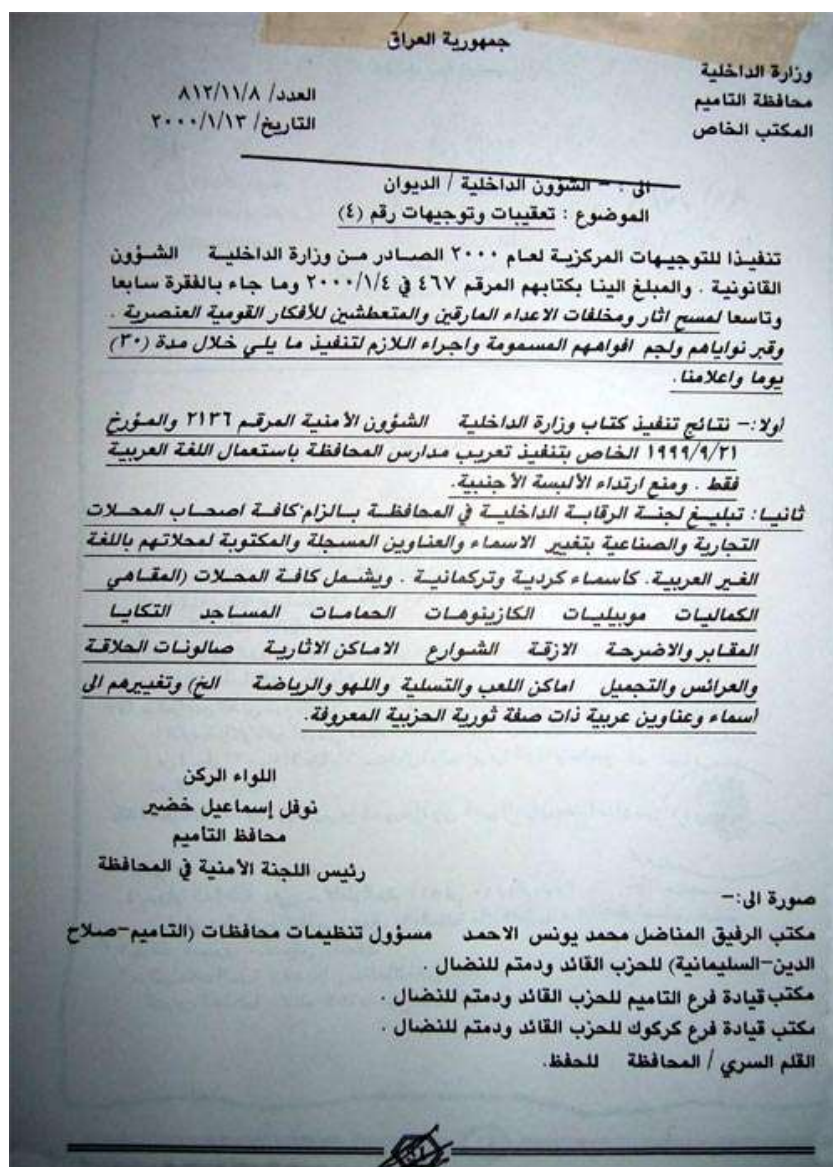


Figure (1): A document issued by the governor of “Ta’meem” (current Kirkuk) informing the implementing of instructions of the Internal Affair/Bureau: First, Arabizing the schools in the Governorate of “Ta’meem” (current Kirkuk) by using Arabic only. Second, obligating salespeople and industrial shops to change their shops names into Arabic only instead of Kurdish or Turkmen (Year: 2000). (Source: Muzaffar Mazori retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.net/> , March, 27/7/2018).



Figure (2): A document issued by the Ministry of Education instructing to teach the Kurdish language in secondary and high schools as well as vocational schools and fine arts, both in public and private schools. The memo also warns penalizing in case of non-compliance. (Year: 2020). (Source: Archive of Directorate of Education in Qadisiyah).



Figure (3): A document issued by the Ministry of Education instructing that based on the constitution of the years 1958 and 2005 of considering Kurdish the second official language in Iraq, it is decided that: One, the Kurdish lesson should not be placed at the end of schedule, which could affect the students comprehensibility. Two, (irrelevant). Three: teachers of Kurdish should not be assigned other tasks than teaching Kurdish. Four: Kurdish lectures should not be occupied by other classes as a process of underestimation of the Kurdish lesson. Five: Kurdish adjunct teachers are to participate in forming and grading exams on an equal footing of permanent teachers. Six: director of the Kurdish Studies Department should conduct field visits to schools to ensure compliance to instructions. Seven (insignificant). Eight, Kurdish teachers should fulfill their hours in other schools. (Year: 2018). (Source: Archive of Directorate of Education in Najaf).

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