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Kurdish Language in Iraqi Kurdistan under Constant Threat of Marginalization and Declination

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Abstract

The study on which this article is based demonstrates the critical situation of Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan Region and warns the officials and the Kurdish academics of the threat of English which is one of the main factors of Kurdish language decline and marginalization in Iraqi Kurdistan where the process of resisting language shift is not as required. One of the major questions this study tries to answer could revolve around the role of English in putting aside the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan where private schools use English as the first language for their Kurdish students. Likewise, this paper tries to focus on other factors that result into the marginalization of Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan and it aims at searching for the symptoms of language marginalization and declination? What should be done to resist the decline produced in language is one of the essential objectives beyond writing this research. Meanwhile, it tries to know the role of language policy (if there is any) towards Kurdish language? Since Kurdish language is under constant threat of marginalization and declination, any attempt to protect and revitalize it would contribute to revive the Kurdish language for future generation. Depending on a descriptive method, this study arrives at the fact that what has been done till now in terms of the threat of English and its domination which gradually marginalizes Kurdish language is not as required and it explores the ways to be taken to resist such a language threat.

1. Introduction:

Although speakers of a language are usually unaware of the changes when they are occurring, languages constantly go through changes which, on one hand, could be the outcome of not-so-significant carelessness, laziness or even ignorance. On the other hand, it may be due to the lack of our competence or proper maintenance from our side. Are we only part of the process in which we just simply accept the change as it is? Is the language that changes on decline? And what is the Kurdish language situation in Iraqi Kurdistan? These are some of the questions this study is going to focus on.

Within the process of time producing a decline in language leads to language change which in the viewpoints of scholars like Fitch (2010: 34) is a fact, and since the initiation of writing there is a rich database which documented language change. Trask (1994: 1) states that “every language that people use changes constantly. English, for example, has been changing throughout its history and it is still changing today”. This shows that language change in Iraqi Kurdistan Region is inevitable since Kurdish language, which has many linguistic problems due to the lack of a united and standard language, is one of the languages that confronts the changes that may come from the threat of the English language which has definitely led to its declination in the long run. Language change could be a natural process for any language of the world since it doesn't mean the death of the language which is only true when none of its speakers are found alive. The language will be in trouble when it is exposed to linguicide which is expected when it doesn't undertake the codification step and when it is not elaborated functionally. The problem is with the Iraqi Kurdistan Governmental Authority in terms of their attitude and efforts which play an effective role in confronting such threats one of

which is putting aside the medium of instruction in the educational centers. In general, there are many different pathways to language changes some of which can stem from language learning or through language contact, social differentiation, and natural processes in usage. This paper mainly aims at pointing out the threat of English which is a global phenomenon and one of the basic factors that affects the competence of the new generation in using their Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan. Hereby, to restrict the dominance of English language, urgent procedures and serious steps are required to turn and translate the actual language practices and management found in Iraqi Kurdistan Region into a unified Kurdish language which is approximately not possible for the time being. This would be done through recognizing and activating the implicit language management which in turn activates Kurdish language and stands against the process of its being marginalized in Iraqi Kurdistan.

It is important to problematize that there are to be steps towards the process of Kurdish language codification and its being functionally elaborated through making use of the whole Kurdish dialects within the process of time so as to create a common language for the whole Kurdish people at the end to stand against the threat of the English language and the shift it may cause to the Kurdish language. It is hypothesized that the individual efforts and the community practices and management in terms of language resistance are not enough if there isn't an actual language practice and management in Iraqi Kurdistan region. It is estimated that if nothing is done, half of the Kurdish language spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. The present study is a descriptive analytic study which draws on the discourse historical approach to analyze some periodical articles, news items, commentaries, interviews, and official documents, produced predominantly in the Central Kirmanji (Sorani) concerning these debates. Thus, this study is a qualitative one.

The study is restricted to language marginalization and declination which precede the process of change which has recently become a phenomenon and it is restricted to highlighting the activities and practices occur in governmental and non-governmental domains in Iraqi Kurdistan. This study is of great importance for Kurdish academics, researchers and students so as to figure out what is needed to regularize the exercises and practices of language besides paving the way for what is required to be known about the current situation of Kurdish language in detail. It is principal to revisit the importance of language in discourses of Kurdish identity as well. However, the critical question which is raised here is that; does English with all powerful medium contributing to its dominance threaten life of Kurdish language? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at language marginalizing and its contributing factors or causes.

2. The Causes of Marginalizing Kurdish Language in Iraqi Kurdistan

At the beginning of 2020 Great Big Company which is a media company producing micro-documentaries located in New York with offices in London published and broadcasted a video in which there is a reference to a topic which is entitled 'Saving Languages from Extinction'. That is, one of these languages is Sorani Kurdish which is in addition to Tunica, Osing, and Dutch sign language among about 500 languages considered critically endangered. It is stated that with only a handful of speakers, and no active movement to revive the language, they could be lost to time. Thankfully, Daniel Bögre Udell is listening. The co-founder and director of Wikitongues is working with volunteers from all around the world to create an open video archive of people speaking and signing rarely used languages so they can be preserved and passed on to future generations. If we were fluent, we'd thank Daniel in every language we could.

(<https://www.greatbigstory.com/stories/preserving-endangered-languages>)

In the second part of 2020 precisely in 13/09/2020 Wishe.net confirmed what Great Big Company assumed. They made an interview with Nariman Khoshnaw, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and an Assistant Professor in Kurdish Language and Linguistics, and asked him questions related to Kurdish language which is about to get declined and extinct. Today in the world, there is a tendency towards turning languages into English. That is, this is a direction which works on weakening and marginalizing the mother tongue. This is a big catastrophe and a big barrier in front of the mother tongue in the world in general and Kurdish language in particular. Unfortunately, there are many factors that stand beyond such ignorance. The concluded points of the interview with Khoshnaw points out the following factors that stand beyond marginalizing Kurdish Language in Iraqi Kurdistan:

1) Private sector besides the councils and companies are working only on foreign language especially English. In other words, you can't get a job opportunity if you know your native language alone. This shows that native language is gradually getting marginalized.

2) Partially, the working language of the courts is still Arabic. It is in a way that the decisions of the courts are made in Arabic not Kurdish.

3) Most of the decisions of Kurdistan parliament were made and issued in Arabic then translated into Kurdish. Nevertheless, luckily there is a tendency towards using Kurdish language for issuing orders and rules in this course.

4) The relevant authorities (all concerned) are paying more attention to English and other foreign languages at the expense of Kurdish language for education.

5) The lack of a unified standard Kurdish language all over Kurdistan is a big trouble because both Central and North Kirmanji are working as standard language in this small region. This made people have a negative impression about Kurdish language and ignore it.

In fact, the aforementioned factors are not the only causes to pave the way for the English language to play a role in marginalizing Kurdish language since there are other causes that play influential role in this respect too. What follows are some of the causes the Kurdish authority and academics are to work on:

2.1 The Threat of Social Media

One of the sources of the threat of marginalization is stemmed from social media and smart phones which contaminated all including the rural areas of Iraqi Kurdistan region and affected the new generation severely. Because Kurdish language is not promoted to protect itself from threats and dangers, finding English as the main language of these electronic assets made many of the children be familiar with English rather than their mother tongue language. Hereby, even the villages and rural areas which were the source of purified Kurdish language are complaining from the appearance of a new generation that can't speak Kurdish as required.

It is through the socioeconomic power which is implanted in English language that it has such a high social status which enabled it motivate people to adopt it as the international language in global context. Globalization, academic and employment trend, new information technology are three critical issues that Warschauer (2000) finds them participating in the process of English spread. It is

through the revolution of ‘Information Technology’ and its connection with the life of people on a daily basis from local to international scale that English language got promoted and it is the influential role of such technology which made English language get exported to countries worldwide. Accordingly, the ultimate dominance of English in the world comes after the launch of World Wide Web as the global medium of attaining and exchanging information.

Social media plays a positive and a negative role because some of them don’t differentiate between speech and language; between dialect and language. Though using the same language on social media that they use at home or the same way they talk to each other when they are in their region may replace the Kurdish original words, it is in favor of elaborating Kurdish language functionally. On one hand, there is a tendency right now which tends to use more foreign words at the expense of Kurdish words and this is what makes the new generation be unfamiliar with the Kurdish original words. On the other hand, many words that belong to agriculture and its relevant are going to get extinct because none of the words in this field are used by the new generation who doesn’t read anything about which word is to be used for what purposes. Though sometimes social media plays a positive role in introducing and using original Kurdish words but unfortunately it rarely plays such a role, there are other governmental establishments like the Ministry of Culture and academic institutions such as Kurdish Academy which bear responsibility and participate effectively in this respect.

2.2 Private Schools and Serious Steps towards Marginalizing Kurdish Language:

With the booming economy after 2005, dozens of international schools were established in Kurdistan Region, providing high-quality education and world-class environment for students, but in return for a

substantial tuition fee. The curriculum and the education system at these private schools are different from those at the public schools of Kurdistan. That is, the main teaching language is English, an issue that this study criticizes and calls for preparing a project by the education specialists for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to modify and improve the education system at the private schools because the current system is neglecting the mother tongue. According to a report from Zhiyan Media, Kurdish language is in trouble and the Kurds themselves are the trouble makers. Many of the private schools/non-governmental schools where English is the language of teaching will originate a generation that is unfamiliar with his culture and his native language as he speaks most of the time in English and imitates the western people in his behavior. (<http://www.zhyan.co>)

The risk of producing a decline in Kurdish language is real this time. The greatest threat comes from those kindergartens and private schools that depend on English as their languages. Unfortunately, their numbers are getting increased every day. According to an official document (No. 13067 in 27/6/2021) from the Directorate of Education of Erbil which is listed as an appendix at the end of the research more than 200 non-governmental centers in Iraqi Kurdistan as follows are found:

- 72 kindergartens
- 56 basic schools
- 30 preparatory schools
- 12 educational communities
- 22 international schools
- 28 institutions

The focus and attention of these centers is on directing children to learn English at the expense of Kurdish. Most of the wealthy families and those who can afford sending their children to such schools don't

hesitate to send them there because they think that the future is for those who can speak English and they can make use of the vacant positions found not only in Iraqi Kurdistan but in the developed countries. Kurdish language can't be depended on for earning one's living these days. Hereby, there are currently efforts to close down Kurdish department in more than one university.

Notably, using a second language as a medium of instruction at school should not be at the expense of the Kurdish language because it doesn't only passively affect the language and culture, but it will also adversely have an effective impact on the future generations' sense of identity. What is sad here is [that] what Saddam Hussein did to the Kurds; we are doing it to ourselves under the pretext of experiencing a democratic life here in Iraqi Kurdistan. There are many international schools using only English as a medium of instruction, and they treat Kurdish language like a foreign language as they teach Kurdish lesson only 2-3 hours [a week]. As a result, these kids won't be able to read and write [their mother tongue]. But there is an alternative which is the dual-language approach teaching. That is, adopting content based instruction through which the teachers will be teaching the content of math, science, and social science in two languages.

Another fact that we need to understand [is the issue of] Inferiority Complex which simply means that you believe everything not Kurdish is better. Likewise, having all these international schools that have been established in the recent years in Kurdistan and their assumption that they serve through teaching in English only is at the cost of the mother tongue and affects the future generations who don't see the essence of who they are, i.e., what their identity and their cultural identity are. The lack of mother tongue education has something to do with this lack of cultural identity because the parents at home are not encouraging them, and at school it is only English.

When a minority — in this example the Kurds — is being suppressed by the majority over centuries, they [gradually] develop Inferiority Complex.

Though there is too much Western influence in many cultures, educators and intellectuals need to preserve and protect and cultivate [their] culture. The only way is to do that through the language. To be multilingual doesn't mean to learn another language at the expense of your mother tongue because if you lose your mother tongue, you're not going to learn the second language correctly. It's disappointed to have students and even staff members in private schools who cannot write properly in Kurdish. It is to be stated also that in a near future a new generation will appear for whom Kurdish will be a low variety as they give priority to English as a high variety and this could be a step towards turning the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan into a diglossia situation. Diglossia is known to be:

“a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.” Ferguson (1959) cited in Hudson (1996: 49)

As a matter of fact, these factors can be regarded as barriers before or in front of the process of promoting Kurdish language to be a standard and official language which will be an informal language for the Kurdish community by then. English will not only replace Arabic as second and official language; it will put aside Kurdish as well. As a result, the decision makers may select English as an official language for solving the problems including the political problems that stand beyond the selection processes of Kurdish language.

One of the ways to deal with this phenomenon is to talk to the parliament, and the higher institutions that are the ones that need to address this issue. The parliament should change the law to make bilingual education mandatory in Kurdistan. Teaching is to be in both languages and to do so there are to be teachers capable of speaking and teaching in both languages. Albeit finding such quality of teachers is not easy, it is possible to hire a Kurdish and an English teacher for team teaching which is definitely costly. Hereby, the universities here should train trainers [for the future].

2.3 The Growth of Using English Words under the Pretext of Borrowing Words:

Among all the languages of the world “English” is the only language which is spoken by more people as a second language than a first language and as observed by Crystal (2003) nonnative speakers of English outnumber its native speakers by a ratio of 3 to 1. The growth for the need of English language in Kurdistan region can be traced to different points such as: the nature of the Kurdish society (people speaking different languages such as; Kurdish, Turkman, Assyrian and Armenian). Besides the nature of the society, Kurdistan region is going through a very fast progress of economic status since Kurdistan region is depending on importing more than exporting. Since it is considered as the most secured part of Iraq, different NGOs and companies are located in Kurdistan region. Just like many other progressing countries, after 2003, access to internet and social media became faster and more demandable. Thus, in order for the Kurdish people to couch up with the mentioned ideas as fast and easy way as possible and to avoid language barrier, they start to borrow words from English language. According to Hoffer (2002:1) Borrowing is “the process of importing linguistic items from one linguistic system into another, a process that occurs any time two cultures are in contact over a period of time”.

Though a given language may witness much change without any external interference, many changes take place through the contact with other languages. That is, whenever speakers of a language encountered other languages, they would 'borrow' (that is, copy) words from them to their language. Thus, throughout its history English depended on borrowing many thousands of words from other languages, and the rate of appearance of new words is now perhaps greater than at any previous period because English is still borrowing new words today. Hereby, the appearance of new words is one of the types of change in language. Nevertheless, there is another vision which confirms that borrowing words is one of the ways that stand beyond increasing the vocabulary of the language. Those who have such opinion find the impact of language of education (medium of instruction) greater and more effective on the speaker who finds himself enforced to think in the language that dominates the education and this is how his system or structure of his native language gets destroyed and distorted. Likewise, the process of pidginization, which is in Hudson's viewpoint (1996: 67) a process of variety creation, is expected to play the same role. anyhow, collecting thousands of new words which have emerged since their last editions is one of the chief tasks and challenges the lexicographers (dictionary writers) encountered while they prepare their new editions. Hereby, volume of new words is brought out by some publishers every year. (Trask, 1994: 3)

With the diverse of language, the only language that is intelligible to many is English since English is a globalized language. Based on this fact, using and interfering English words into the speech is making communication easier and faster for the Kurdish language speakers. To sum up, it is very obvious that the situation the Kurdistan region is going through enforces Kurdish language to borrow from other languages in general and English language in particular. Because of the globalization of English language, the demands for using

English terms are increasing. Besides, Kurdish people prefer depending on English words so as to be used instead of the terms and vocabularies that do not exist in Kurdish language. In addition, it is clear that borrowing is easier than inventing a new term. In order to communicate easier, Kurdish people know how to use borrowed words while speaking in Kurdish language and this is a process known as Kurdandin because Kurdish system and structure will affect the borrowing words which will be modified according to the nature of Kurdish language.

Accordingly, one may wonder whether there isn't a necessity for a Kurdish-Kurdish dictionary for now because there are many loan/borrowed words the meaning of which in Kurdish is not known? The best type of dictionary in terms of appearance is the national one. This dictionary displays only the words and terms of one language. That is, the words are written in standard language and in front of them their meanings are given in dialects and subdialects. Thus, this dictionary is interested in dialects and subdialects of a language. Sometimes, it is in this dictionary that the words are analyzed. For instance, there are Kurdish-Kurdish; Arabic-Arabic; English-English dictionaries. An example of such a dictionary is the one of (Zabihi 'A' and 'B') dictionaries by Abdul-Rahman Zabihi, and (Shanadar) dictionary written by Shafiq Qazzaz. Thus, it seems that efforts are made by Kurdish linguists and intellectuals to have their own dictionaries which didn't include all dialects. They were written in one or two dialects. Nevertheless, Kurds are in need of dictionaries like Oxford, Munjid and Mawrid in which all its original words could be kept so that we can have our own term and word for any Arabic or English or any other language words whenever needed. In fact, it is an evitable necessity to have our own dictionary. (<http://www.wishe.net>)

In a word, Kurdish language is still complaining of foreign words while it doesn't get rid of the Arabization besides the efforts of

Turkish and Persian authorities to distort it. Though being educated in Arabic or other languages and having the same way of thinking play a role in the ways those Kurdish individuals use the foreign words, till now some of the students that graduate from Kurdish department are not qualified in using Kurdish language as required. Likewise, the new generation of Kurdish migration abroad can't command their native language and they are about to forget it ultimately except for those who preserve their communication in Kurdish at home. It is noteworthy that national consciousness plays a vital role in terms of having national language got affected. That is, there are people who don't believe in nationalism as they are cosmopolites or they might be holding religious beliefs or ideas or they might believe in liberalism and demanding individual rights. Sometimes, they try to confront such a threat and open kindergartens where they use Kurdish language. In the occupied parts of Kurdistan, Kurdish language is still in the position of defense and fight for the sake of existing.

2.4 Weak Performance of Kurdish Individuals:

The first step of protecting the native language could start from those Kurds who are acting against the interest of their native language. Some of them are taking sensitive positions and bear responsibilities but their problem is that they don't know how to preserve our value and national interests. That is, they participate in making decisions such as paying attention to English at the expense of Kurdish and sometimes they behave in a way that results in the violation of legislative rules and articles related to the Article (5) of the first part of the proposed Constitution for the Iraqi Kurdistan Region at 1992. That is, Article (5) refers to Kurdish language as an official language of Iraqi Kurdistan. In addition, Arabic is decided to be an official language in issues related to communications with the Federal Government. Likewise, there is a reference to giving instructions at all levels of education in general in Kurdish. Further,

the same article mentions also that Arabic and one foreign language will be taught towards the end of the elementary level and in the higher level. The Article doesn't forget the right of the minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan and indicates that they have the right to use their own language until they reach higher education. (Talabany, 2013: 65)

Accordingly, when we hear from time to time that one of the Kurdish departments in one of the Kurdistan Universities are proposed to be shut down or suspended, we have to take it seriously and have a necessary reaction because it is a catastrophe and it has a direct relation with the national security. Likewise, the optional choice of Kurdish lesson marks for the 12th year students is another step towards marginalizing Kurdish language. It is the duty of the Kurdistan parliament to work on more rules that are in the interest of Kurdish language preservation and to issue rules that call for the punishment of those who try to weaken and produce a decline in the Kurdish language.

It is worth repeating that besides the government and the private schools, many of the centers and media channels are having a negative impact on Kurdish language since they are forming words as they like without consulting Kurdish intellectuals. Some of their programs are named in English and even the names of these programs are spelled and written in English. Further, some of the program introducers greet and farewell their audiences in English. The educated people use complicated English words. Clergy men use Arabic words due to religious purposes. Consequently, Kurdish becomes the language of lower generation whereas English becomes the language of upper/high class or generation. Uneducated people and those who don't have any idea about their language are beyond writing tablets in other languages rather than Kurdish. Actually, this disordered situation leads to increasing threats on culture and Kurdish tradition as the intellectuals and sociolinguists stated that if a person forgets his language, he will find himself under two threats: on one hand, his loyalty and love

towards his nation gets decreased. On the other hand, his relations with his family will get worse and deteriorated. As a result, he will lack the sense of nationality and he hopes to live just like other people in other countries and speak their languages. That is, if a child doesn't know his mother tongue, he will turn into a stranger in his country and will suffer from psychological disorder and will be isolated from his community.

The aforementioned causes indicate that the Kurdish language is really in a critical situation and it requires an urgent interference which could be an effort through which the marginalization and shift of Kurdish language could be reversed. Nevertheless, there is to be a language policy and planning to deal with such issue properly. That is, language policy documents indicate the time and the reasons due to which small entities like neighborhoods and communities and large entities such as cities, nations or global regions afford special prestige to language(s) raising and/or keeping the status of specific languages and lowering the status of others (Shohamy, 2006: xvii). For sure, there is a space within the scope of language planning and policy for a process which works on the prestige of language and the ways Kurdish language could scientifically accord prestige. That is, Kurdish language just like other languages is accorded prestige based upon factors such as rich literary heritage, the degree of esteem and social value attached by members of a speech community to the language, its dialects or features of its language variety. Jukil (2003: 26, 32) indicates that standard language depends on how much prestige one thinks it has, and for most people this is a clear-cut matter, which depends on whether it is used in formal writing or not. For him the important characters which assisted English to regain its old prestige were the progress in the condition of the majority of the people and the rise of a substantial middle class. As a matter of fact, the importance of the language is considerably identified by the significance of the people who speak it. Another point concerning

prestige of language is sometimes related to an attitude from a politician or an influential figure and it could be restricted to a variety. For instance, the recognition of the Kirmanji dialect being emphasized by Mulla Mustafa's influence and prestige Jwaideh (2006: 288) thinks is possibly an indication of the Badinani Kurds' desire to break away from the tutelage of Slaimani and is an indicative of the shift of Kurdish leadership in Iraq from the Slaimani region to the Mosul region, which had for many years been the acknowledged Kurdish center in Iraq. Nevertheless, there are others like Tofiq (2007: 5) who confirm that General Barzani refused the request of those who asked him to depend on Northern Kirmanji instead of Central Kirmanji.

3. Reversing Language Shift

As far as those who are interested in preserving linguistic diversity is concerned, the world's statistics on minority and indigenous languages are found to be upsetting. Yet, many people have dedicated their entire careers and lives to maintain and develop the indigenous and minority language, development, and to what Fishman (1991) calls reversing "language shift". The focus is on the role the education plays in terms of indigenous and minority language maintenance since there are movements to preserve such languages. Reversing language shift constitutes the corner of the total field of status planning that is devoted to improving the socio linguistics circumstances of languages that suffer from a negative balance of users and uses.

The study of reversing language shifts depicts the attempts to re-dress the perspectival balance and to direct attention to the fact that not only are millions of speakers of small languages on all continents convinced of the creative and continuative contributions of their language to their personal and collective lives but that millions are also engaged in individual and collective efforts to assist their

threatened mother tongue use to reverse the language shift processes that threaten or that have engulfed them.

Translation plays a crucial role in enhancing the prestige of Kurdish language and it can act as part of the process of reversing language shift. Likewise, it is crucial for the Kurdish language to find people working on making use of the variation of Kurdish dialects through replacing the newly borrowed words by old and ancient word and expressions that are found in such dialects and varieties.

Though Kurds own a rich language and a huge dictionary, few of them tried to take care of the Kurdish language. Likewise, there is no independent authority to serve and cultivate Kurdish native language. Hereby, Kurdish language is found in a critical situation. Nevertheless, it was due to the great efforts of many writers and poets for decades that our language was safe and far from the threats of Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages despite of finding the Kurdish dictionary contaminated with the words and vocabularies of the aforementioned languages during 18th and 19th centuries when Kurdish intellectual élite have always relied on the language of the conqueror for centuries in their efforts to express themselves through writing in Arabic, Persian or Turkish. (Allison, 1996: 21)

Making use of terms from Latin, and other languages, the experts of English language enhanced their language. Kurdish language scholars were required to take the same steps to be able to come out with one standard language and put an end to the phenomenon of finding Kurds using four formula accents of Kurdish language.

Accordingly, an effort is to be made to keep a language alive and the Government of Kurdistan Region can play an influential role in this respect. To get education in English and know nothing about Kurdish language and culture is to be corrected. Using dual language approach is one of the solutions which could tell the difference in those little kids [after applying this approach]. The cultural identity is to be promoted so as to make students be proud of what they are,

because the more they know the language, the history, [and] the culture, the better they are going to feel about themselves. Meanwhile, the government, Prime Minister, and Ministry of Education are to bear responsibility to build an academic institute of the language in the highest level and pay enough attention to the dictionary of United Kurdish language. The first step to do could be the process of making Kurdish the main lessons at school in different stages and depending on it as a medium of instruction. As a result, our language won't be under the effect of other languages. (Qadir, 2019)

4. English Language and Kurdish Language Policy:

English is known to be the language of communication all over the world and it is defined to be a learning medium tool which has the power to enable people gain access to knowledge worldwide so that people can create and preserve eloquent relationships with each other, expand their cultural understanding and increase their knowledge besides world-news. Further, it has recently been the language of international business, trade and professional communication. The general goals of English language curriculum in schools are to supply every learner with further chances for being familiar with the knowledge of the cultures of other people in addition to providing them with opportunities related to personal and intellectual growth and to let them be prepared for the shifting socio-economic requests resulting from the development of the information technology, in the first place. (Slobodanka, 2015: 289-319)

Accordingly, there are efforts for learning a new language and the focus is most probably on English. Unfortunately, Iraqi Kurdistan has recently witnessed the phenomenon of providing what is needed for learning a foreign language, for instance, many kindergartens, schools, institutions, universities, and centers are established/opened for foreign language and the most developed tools and instruments besides the most appropriate buildings and private locations are

provided for such schools and universities so as to pave the way for learning a foreign language. On the contrary, nothing of the aforementioned arrangements are done for teaching mother tongue. You feel that these two education systems belong to two different countries. Accordingly, there is no plan and policy for developing Kurdish language. Instead, Kurdish language is getting declined and marginalized which is a serious risk that threatens the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The authorities didn't think of supporting the native language. Have a look at the Arab governments and see what do they do for improving their native language. They have dedicated a specific budget for printing books in Arabic, for opening schools, institutions, and universities in Arabic language. They have the law of preserving Arabic language. The state dedicates an annual budget for developing the language. (Spolsky, 2004: 134-135)

Notably, it was the wish of all Iraqi regimes to belittle and devaluate the Kurdish language for the Kurds but they failed. Unfortunately, what they couldn't do, we did. It is a catastrophe to let Kurdish language get declined. For some linguists, language death occurs when a language loses its last native speaker and language death can affect any language form including dialects. Crystal (2000: 1) thinks that language death comes from finding no one to speak it, i.e. "a language dies when nobody speaks it any more" and this idea is close to Campbell's (1994) view point who states that "the loss of a language is due to gradual shift to the dominant language in language contact situations". Meanwhile, Crystal connected between English language and language death and said: "Once English language will die when it is facing a threat". Ammanuel (2018) who wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on Aramaic minority language supports Crystal and comes to conclude that whenever a language faced a threat, it is on its way to get extinct. If this is the opinion of Crystal about English, what would we say about Kurdish?

Accordingly, it is the fragile attitude of the related ministries and educational administrations in terms of dealing with Kurdish language that led the educational centers especially universities and institutions dare to marginalize Kurdish language. Thus, though Kurdish language is the mother tongue, it is treated as the third language in such educational units.

There is a tendency in both Ministries of Education and Higher Studies which shows that Kurdish language doesn't have the ability to overcome the scientific topics. That is, they think that Kurdish can't manage scientific issues and this has a direction because if the topics of Medical Colleges were in Kurdish, the doctors would understand the scientific topics and the community would make use of them more. The students in such colleges get confused and don't know what to do. They don't know whether they have to learn English language or manage the science. This made them partially learn the topics and can't do their best in treating their patients. Likewise, the same thing is true for the engineering, oil and other scientific colleges.

There are 30,000 kids [studying at international schools], and they are treating the Kurdish language as a foreign language. There is an alternative, there is a way [to address that], and this is an issue that the parliament and the universities need to agree with. The quality of education in some of the private universities here is not as required too. [Parliament and government] are to support training the future teachers. What is seen in the international schools is not acceptable because these kids who come from well-to-do families pay \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year, and their mother tongue is slowly disappearing. The educators are not allowed to sit quiet and not speak up.

Notably, language change has something to do with other issues one of which is language planning (Rubin, 1977) which is a deliberate language change. According to Corson (1999), a school language policy is to play its role in the identification of language problems, setting out what the school aims at in terms of areas of interest, and

including provisions required to monitor and revise the policy. It is a changeable dynamic action statement that belongs to the school and community. However, some contexts witness explicit written language policies whereas others experience implicit practices that language planning and policy researchers detect and record via ethnographic and discourse-analytic methods. In other contexts, there are explicit written policies the existence and meaning of which are not recognized by the practitioners working in classrooms. Likewise, the ways that language policies are appropriated locally are affected by complicated relationships between school and community beliefs about language teaching, learning, and use. Language planning and policy researchers and consultants are commonly able to find gaps, confusion, contradictions, and controversies whenever they are in need of local negotiation. (*Rebecca Freeman Field*, Public Engagement and the Language Planning and Policy Scholar) cited in (Hult & Johnson, 2015)

Having two major dialects in Kurdistan Region — Sorani and Behdini is another issue which is to be handled properly. Albanians had the same problem. The Albanians in Kosovo spoke Albanian, but if they wanted to speak to the Albanians in the south, they would not be able to understand each other... But Albanians unified the language, and it took 20 years. Now, whether you are from Kosovo, or [anywhere else], the writing, the speaking, and everything is the same. The intellectuals and linguists need to get together and come up with how to unify the Kurdish language. They need to agree on [that], because you don't want one side to carry more weight than the other. Each individual [here in Kurdistan Regional Government] needs to do something, and [the Kurds in diaspora] need to do something to ensure that there is a link.

Conclusion:

Words are the tools of language. Some of the words are old and expected to die whereas others are new and have been recently born or existed. This indicates that language stability is approximately impossible. There is something called the war of languages which shows that languages are in struggles with each other and most probably the domination is to the language which is distinguished by having the factors and the causes that give it the right to be a dominant language. English is one of the dominant languages which stands beyond the emergence of a new international phenomenon which is called English threat. All of the languages of the world are taking such a threat into their consideration and working on avoiding it. Based on the saying that a journey of a thousand miles begins with just a single step, the process of having a language getting marginalized and declined starts with a single step like giving priority to English at the expense of Kurdish.

Accordingly, this study comes to conclude that Kurdish language is not exceptional and it is expected to be dominated by other languages in general and English in particular if the academics and chiefs in charge don't take certain issues into their consideration. That is, language change is the outcome of previous actions that affect a language. The academics and linguists are to be aware of the threat of such a slow and fatal change which is not only working on changing the language of a nation; it changes its identity and leads to the birth of an ignorant generation which doesn't know anything about its language and identity. Language marginalization and producing a change in language precedes language changes which in turn precedes language death which can affect any language form including dialects. Accepting and using English instead of Kurdish words paves the way for marginalizing the later since it makes prestige be less by its speakers. This study arrives at the fact that education plays an effective role in terms of indigenous and minority language maintenance since there are movements to preserve languages through

the education sector. Kurdish children are under the threat of English language in the private schools and electronic games. Most of the decisions and rules of the officials are in the interest of English and marginalize Kurdish language. For example, giving priority to other topics except for Kurdish lesson for students of grade 12. Another example is the attention given to English in the universities and institutions in addition to the international tests like TOEFEL, IELTS, and PTE which are a requirement for attending higher studies. This shows that there is something wrong with the way the individual efforts and the community practices and management are dealt with in terms of language resistance. This study believes that the decline of Kurdish language stems in part from large factors and causes one of which is the great and rapid change this region goes through particularly in terms of giving priority to English at the expense of Kurdish mainly in the educational context. In a word, blaming the politicians and the academics is hoped to lead to proposals working as guidelines to changes and to understanding of the problem. The conclusion is available that if it had not been for these bad and misguided causes, the linguistic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan would be safer and better.

Recommendations:

There are different sources through which Kurdish language could be under the real threat of getting marginalized and declined. The relevant government establishments and academic institution are recommended to investigate the causes that stand beyond the existence of such threats. The Ministry of Education is recommended to work on making Kurdish the medium of instruction in non-governmental schools as well. The officials are required to establish a center for translation which could translate scientific topics related to math, physics, chemistry, and all types of engineering into Kurdish so as to allow Kurdish individuals make use of them. Kurdish language scholars are recommended to take the same steps the English experts

have taken to be able to come out with one standard language and put an end to the phenomenon of finding Kurds using four formula accents of Kurdish language. The Iraqi Kurdistan Government is recommended to have an explicit language policy so as not to be accused of ignoring the prestige of the Kurdish language in general.

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Appendix 2:

پۆنجەمی نامەێی بۆ ژمارەێ باخجەێ مەدانی قوتابخانەکان: بەرزۆو بەرێهێ گەنێ بەرزۆو بەرێهێ پارێزگای هەولێر
 بە پێی بەرزۆو و تۆکان خۆێنێ ساڵ خۆێنێ ٢٠١٠/٢٠١١

کۆ	خۆێنێ ئیسلام	پێشێ	فێرگۆێن خێرا	دوێوێ	لامەێ	بەرێ	باخجەێ مەدانی	بەرزۆو و تۆکان
417	2	9	8	13	72	263	50	بەرزۆو و تۆکان
201		1		25	17	145	13	ژۆوێ هەولێر
162				20	13	112	17	دۆزۆوێ هەولێر
272	1		2	18	32	199	20	هەولێر
276	1			18	25	217	15	دەشێ هەولێر
264	1			43	15	189	16	شەقڵۆو
77				10	5	53	9	سۆزێ
102				11	9	75	7	دۆزۆو
174				23	6	136	9	چۆمان
71			2	5	8	52	4	مەرگۆسۆر
218	1	1	2	11	19	168	16	هەخۆو
2234	6	11	14	197	221	1609	176	کۆ

ناخکۆس				
کۆ	بەرزۆو و تۆکان	لامەێ	بەرێ	باخجەێ مەدانی
220	28	30	56	72

بۆ بەرزۆو و تۆکان خۆێنێ ساڵ
 بەرزۆو و تۆکان خۆێنێ ساڵ
 ٢٠١٠/٢٠١١

Appendix 4:

ژماردی قوتابنایی سەرچم قوتابنایانی خۆبندن له ستوری ب.گ.ب.هه وایر

خۆبندان نێمکانی	پێشانی		خۆبندان خۆرا		بۆلارێدی		ئامادانی		بهرمی		باشی		پهروهنگان							
	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن	کەن								
279	6	273	1963	613	1350	1716	355	1361	7301	2689	4612	30222	19593	16629	146138	72550	73588	3402	1793	1609
0						0		5765	3966	2799	3316	3943	3316	55474	26334	29140	1422	720	702	
0						0		4086	1323	2763	4500	2366	2134	33397	15924	17573	1174	581	593	
40	4	36	0			240	139	101	5663	3374	12881	7334	5547	73288	35078	38210	1083	562	521	
27	0	27	0			0		3476	1334	2142	6826	3502	3324	32711	15249	17462	1004	512	512	
67	0	67	0			0		12117	6182	5935	5225	2459	2766	35020	15895	19125	570	273	297	
0						0		1179	707	472	970	427	543	4756	2106	2650	242	118	124	
0						0		699	295	404	1482	746	736	5301	2458	2843	77	46	31	
0						0		4261	1818	2443	934	411	523	9402	4471	4931	122	65	57	
0						0		439	83	356	1148	563	585	6111	2984	3127	262	140	122	
35	0	35	102	40	62	61	11	50	1508	845	663	6101	3010	24126	11625	12501	1222	648	574	
448	10	438	2254	718	1536	2097	540	1557	46494	20531	25963	83548	44354	39194	425724	204574	221150	106100	5458	5142

بۆلارێدی خۆبندان
 ٢٠١٧/١٠/١٥
 ٢٠١٧/١٠/١٥

پوخته

زمانی کوردی له کوردستانی عێراقدا له ژێر مهترسی بهردهوامی پهراویزخستن و پووکانهوه

ئهم تووژینهوهیه که ئهم بابتهیه له سههر بهنده ههلهستی به خستنه پوووی بارودوخی دژواری زمانی کوردی له ههریمی کوردستانی عێراقدا و بهرپرسه ئهکادیمییه کوردهکان ئاگادار دهکاتهوه له مهترسی زمانی ئینگلیزی که یهکیکه له هۆکاره سههرهکییهکانی پووکانهوه و پهراویزخستنی زمانی کوردی له کوردستانی عێراقدا له کاتیکیدا که کرداری بهرنگار بوونهوهی گۆرینی زمان وهک پیویست نییه. دهکری یهکیکه له پرسیارهکان که ئهم تووژینهوهیه ههولێ وهلامدانهوهی دها سهبارت به پۆلی زمانی ئینگلیزی بێ له بهلاوه نانی زمانی کوردیدا له ههریمی کوردستانی عێراقدا که تیایدا قوتابخانه تاییهتهکان (ناحکومییهکان) وهک زمانی یهکهم بهکاری دینن بۆ قوتابییه کوردهکانیان. بهههمان شیوه، ئهم تووژینهوهیه ههول دها جهخت بکاتهوه له سههر هۆکاری تر که دهبنه مایه ی پهراویزخستنی زمانی کوردی و ههول دها بهدوای نیشانهکانی پهراویزخستنی زمان و پووکانهوهیدا بگهڕێ. یهکیکه له مهبهسته سههرهکییهکان له نووسینی ئه تووژینهوهیه بریتییه له وهی ئاخۆ دهبی چ بکری تاکو بهرنگاری پووکانهوهی زمان ببینهوه؟ له ههمان کاتدا، ههولیک دها بۆ زانیی پۆلی سیاسهتی زمان (ئهگهر ههچ ههبی) بهرامبهر به زمانی کوردی؟ له بهرئهوهی زمانی کوردی که وتۆته ژێر ههپهشه ی پهراویزخستن و له ناوچوون، ههر ههولیک بۆ پارێزگاریکردن لێی و کاراکردنهوهی به شداریکردنه له ژياندهوهی زمانی کوردی تاکو نهوهی داهاتوو لێی بههرمه نده بن. به پشتبهبستن به ریبازی وهسفی ئهم تووژینهوهیه گهیشتۆته ئهوه دهره نجامه ی که ئهوهی تاکو ئیستا ئه نجام دراوه سهبارت به ههپهشه ی زمانی ئینگلیزی و ئهوه بالادهستییه ی زمانی ئینگلیزی که به هیواشی زمانی کوردی پهراویز دها وهک پیویست نییه و لهو رینگایانه دهکۆلێتهوه که پیویسته بگرینه بهر بۆ رووبهروو بوونهوهی ئهوه جووره ههپهشانه ی سههر زمان.

المخلص

اللغة الكوردية في إقليم كردستان العراق تحت تهديد التهميش و الانحراف المستمر

توضح الدراسة التي استند إليها هذا المقال الوضع الحرج للغة الكوردية في إقليم كردستان العراق وتحذر المسؤولين والأكاديميين الأكراد من تهديد اللغة الإنجليزية التي تعد أحد العوامل الرئيسية لتراجع اللغة والتهميش في كردستان العراق حيث عملية مقاومة التحول اللغوي ليست بالشكل المطلوب. يمكن أن يدور أحد الأسئلة الرئيسية التي تحاول هذه الدراسة الإجابة عنها حول دور اللغة الإنجليزية في تنحية اللغة الكوردية جانبا في كردستان العراق حيث تستخدم المدارس الخاصة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أولى لطلابها الأكراد. وعلى غرار ذلك، تحاول هذه الورقة التركيز على عوامل أخرى تؤدي إلى تهميش اللغة الكوردية في كردستان العراق وتهدف إلى البحث عن أعراض تهميش اللغة وانحرافها؟ ما يجب فعله لمقاومة تدهور اللغة هو أحد الأهداف الأساسية لكتابة هذا البحث. في غضون ذلك تحاول هذه الدراسة معرفة دور سياسة اللغة (إن وجدت) تجاه اللغة الكوردية؟ بما أن اللغة الكوردية مهددة باستمرار بالتهميش والانقراض، فإن أي محاولة لحمايتها وإعادة تنشيطها ستساهم في إحياء اللغة الكوردية للأجيال القادمة. معتمدة على المنهج الوصفي توصلت هذه الدراسة الى حقيقة ان ما تم القيام به حتى الآن فيما يتعلق بتهديد اللغة الإنجليزية و سيطرتها على اللغة الكوردية قد تتسبب بصورة تدريجية في تهميش اللغة الكوردية وتستكشف السبل التي يجب اتباعها لمقاومة مثل هذه التهديدات على اللغة .