

Attitudes of University Students toward English Language Education Policy in Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract : Despite widespread coverage of language policy in the literature, there has been scant research probing into English language education policy at tertiary levels in general and in the case of higher education context of Iraqi Kurdistan in particular. The present qualitative study investigated the results of a questionnaire on attitudes toward English language education policy in terms of attitudes toward the English language in general, the current English education policy, and the purposes for learning English among Kurdish EFL university students. Moreover, this study aimed to investigate this topic in light of the participants' gender and major. To this end, an adapted version of Yang's (2012) questionnaire was administered to university EFL students majoring in soft and hard sciences (N=300, male 34%, female 67%, four and two disciplines, respectively) at two-state and private universities in Iraqi Kurdistan. The findings revealed positive attitudes toward English as an international language in both soft and hard sciences. While strongly subscribing to the idea that all Iraqi Kurdish students should learn the English language and the courses to be offered in English as well as Kurdish, the majority of the participants expressed their readiness and enthusiasm to excel in English and considered such competency a significant academic accomplishment. However, a good number felt dissatisfied with the status quo of English education at their institutions. This paper provides some implications and recommendations for English education policies makers, administrators, and English language instructors at tertiary levels.

Keywords : attitudes, language policy, English language education, Iraqi Kurdistan

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