

Article

LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE STATUS OF THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

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Abstract: The Persian language is pivotal in connecting the Iranian nation's past, present, and future, highlighting its historical and political importance. However, it faces significant challenges that threaten national identity and the continuity of Iranian traditions. Preserving and promoting Persian has been emphasized in key documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the Constitution, Vision 2025, and various development plans. Despite introducing policies to address these issues, implementation has been flawed, yielding unsatisfactory results. This article aims to identify factors behind the failure of these language policies, focusing on the Fifth Development Plan. It explores how the plan's approach and implementation led to suboptimal outcomes. Using thematic analysis and archival data, the study finds that the challenges facing Persian must be conceived as a wicked problem. Additionally, a directive approach to policy implementation has obstructed the success of national language policies.

Keywords: Persian Language, National Language, Wicked Issues, Public Policy, Iranian Identity

1. INTRODUCTION

The Persian language occupies a pivotal role in Iran's cultural heritage and national identity. Throughout Iran's history, Persian has served as both the language of bureaucracy and the conduit for expressing Iranian worldviews, ethos, and intellectual discourse. The literary works of esteemed poets and philosophers such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Ibn Muqaffa, Saadi, Suhrawardi, and others have been instrumental in forging a shared cultural and national identity among Iranians, contributing significantly to Iran's national cohesion. Ahmad Ashraf posits that factors such as territory,

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governance, citizenship, language, shared traditions, religion, and economic factors do not singularly define national identity. Rather, he asserts that in each historical epoch, one of these elements has assumed a more prominent role (2016, 21). Accordingly, we ascribe a significant and salient role to the Persian language in unifying the historical narrative of Greater Iran. The medieval Islamic period was not devoid of Persian's presence in Iran's political sphere. With the advent of the Safavid state, Persian, coupled with Shiite Islam, emerged as the two foundational pillars of Iran's political discourse, juxtaposed against the Turkish language and Sunni Islam of the Ottoman Empire, a dynamic that persists to the present day.

It is unsurprising that a language that has encapsulated the full spectrum of Iran's cultural and social conditions across various epochs remains today the language of bureaucracy and government, and represents Iran's national identity in the age of nation-states. It is at this juncture that the nexus between politics and the Persian language manifests itself, as the notion of statecraft in Iran for its preservation and perpetuation inevitably necessitates the maintenance and propagation of one of its most crucial markers of national identity. However, Persian currently faces numerous challenges. Should these issues remain unaddressed, there is a concern that, as Kazzazi notes, "this magnificent and unparalleled language may fade into silence and oblivion; at which point one of the greatest and most regrettable cultural catastrophes in the world will occur" (in Daneshyar 2007, Preface).

The silence of the Persian language is the same danger witnessed in the political fragmentation of territories that not long ago were part of Iran. In those regions, Persian was suppressed by newly independent states that encouraged ethnonationalism, resulting in a large portion of the people in the Iranian cultural sphere today being unable to read, write, or speak their thousand-year-old standard language, Dari Persian.

Numerous foreign words, primarily from English, French, and other languages, have besieged Persian. The reckless use of these words raises concerns that they will become comfortably entrenched, and their extensive use will distort Iranians' vocabulary, turning Persian into a dependent language. The general populace may use these words and phrases colloquially and out of ignorance, unaware of the consequences. However, the insistence of some individuals, who consider themselves intellectuals, on the improper and irrelevant use of foreign words to demonstrate modernity and scientific credibility causes the public to believe that Persian is incapable of facilitating communication, conveying scientific and specialized concepts, and adapting to the modern world, compelling us to use foreign words in our language. The inappropriate use of loanwords is not merely the substitution of one word for another; these seemingly simple replacements lead to the oblivion of Persian words, causing us to lose a word with all its capacities, which will eventually lead to the neglect of the Persian language. Since language is a mirror of a cultural values and beliefs, the weakening and retreat of the Persian language will result in the erosion of Iranian culture and its marginalization (Mohammadnejad 2015, 91).

Although the issue of preserving and promoting the Persian language has been at least a theoretical concern for policymakers and planners in recent decades, and some of the most important upstream documents have formulated policies to address the challenges facing the Persian language, an examination of its current state and the obstacles it faces reveals the failure of implementation and the inability of these policies to achieve their objectives. With the aim of better understanding and explaining the reasons behind the failure of national language policy in Iran, this article endeavors to first shed new light on the challenges confronting the Persian language in the face of the readers' perspective by relying on the wicked problems approach. It then seeks to answer the question of how the approach and implementation of policies related to the Persian language in overarching documents have affected the lack of satisfactory results and the failure of these policies.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method of this research is qualitative and involves thematic analysis. The data were collected and studied through thirteen upstream documents published by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to identify policies and guidelines related to the Persian language domain. After reviewing these documents, the Fifth National Development Plan was selected as the research sample, and the collected data were analyzed and evaluated using thematic analysis based on the specific theoretical framework of this research.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Some issues in the realm of public policy have been termed "wicked problems." Contrary to the appearance of this term, in the relevant literature, the word "wicked" does not carry a negative or unethical connotation; rather, it refers to issues that fiercely resist conventional solutions, and their successful management necessitates a reevaluation of old methods (Karimi Maleh 2018, 1). The term was first used in anthropological and management research in the 1960s by Horst Rittel (Buchanan 1992, 5). Subsequently, in 1973, H. W. Rittel and M. M. Webber, by precisely defining this term, argued that there are some issues that traditional methods and approaches cannot successfully resolve. Rittel and Webber coined the term "wicked" for these issues and contrasted them with "tame" problems. In their view, while science emerged and developed to solve tame problems, the problems of social sciences cannot be resolved using the methods of natural sciences. The characteristic of these kinds of issues, which encompass many public policy issues, is that unlike tame and solvable problems faced by natural scientists and engineers, they are not "definitively solvable" (Rittel and Webber 1973, 155).

3.1. PUBLIC POLICY APPROACHES

Among the predominant approaches to addressing wicked problems are the directive (top-down), competitive, and participatory models. Each of these approaches offers distinct advantages and disadvantages, necessitating a comprehensive understanding to effectively implement them in various contexts

Table 1: Approaches to Addressing Wicked Problems

Approaches	Features and Description	Strengths and Weaknesses
1 Directive	This approach delegates problem-solving task to certain groups or individuals while others await their decisions. It is believed to be useful and effective in emergency situations.	The main strength of this approach is optimal time efficiency and swift decision implementation. However, the significant drawback is the potential disregard for key considerations as specialists and officials work within a limited framework, missing out on the advantages of broader interaction and learning.
2 Competitive	Stakeholders pursue a win-lose outcome in this strategy.	The primary strength of this approach is the generation of new ideas, initiatives, and innovations, providing a foundation for better and more efficient choices. The major weakness is the increased likelihood of conflicts among powerful stakeholders.
3 Participatory	The most efficient strategy for addressing wicked problems, it promotes collaborative problem-solving with win-win outcomes.	The advantage of this strategy includes commitment to policy follow-through, more comprehensive and effective solutions, and less resource use from each stakeholder. The key drawback is the increasing costs of interaction due to a lack of cooperation skills.

4. FINDINGS

The following tables enumerate clauses from the upstream documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran that pertain to the Persian language, followed by a thematic analysis.

Table 2: Policies Related to the Persian Language in Iran's Higher Documents

Document	Text
1 Constitution of I.R. Iran	The official and common language and script of the people of Iran is Persian.

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|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 2 | Vision Document 2025 | Strengthening national unity and identity based on Islam, the revolution, and the Islamic Republic system, with sufficient awareness about the history of Iran, culture, civilization, and Iranian-Islamic art, and serious attention to the Persian language. Article 3, Clause 6: Strengthening the Islamic and Iranian identity of Iranians abroad, assisting in the promotion of the Persian language among them. |
| 3 | First Development Plan Law | Article 3-13: Establishment of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature to strengthen the Islamic and Iranian identity of Iranians abroad and promote the Persian language among them. |
| 4 | Second Development Plan Law | Clause 57: a) Reviving and developing Islamic studies and Persian language and literature chairs. b) Expanding Persian language and literature education programs and cultural programs for Iranian families abroad. e) Expanding Persian language and literature educational programs and cultural programs for Iranian families and other audiences. |
| 5 | Third Development Plan Law | No policy related to the Persian language is observed in this law. |
| 6 | Fourth Development Plan Law | Article 109: The government is required to preserve and introduce Iranian historical identity and use elements and components of Iranian identity, especially the Persian language, by supporting scientific and interdisciplinary research on Iranology and its long history, and drafting necessary reports and books at various public, educational, and research levels. |
| 7 | Fifth Development Plan Law | Chapter 1, Article 3: To deepen Islamic values, religious beliefs, and ... expand Persian script and language, the government is obligated to support the non-governmental sector, both real and legal, in the following: e) Removing Latin names from public place signs, companies, and non-export product packaging. Clause 1: The government is required to draft all necessary standards for Persian script and language and the solar Hijri calendar by the end of the first year. Article 5: To introduce and present Islamic-Iranian culture and civilization and expand Persian script and language and literature, especially for Iranians abroad, with an emphasis on convergence of Islamic sects. |
| 8 | Sixth Development Plan Law | 2- Supporting the expansion of resources and information in Persian script and language and drafting and approving national and international standards for displaying Persian script in computer environments. 3- Training and encouraging skilled and experienced |

		Persian language teachers at various educational levels, especially elementary.
9	Comprehensive Scientific Map of the Country	Chapter 2: Article 2, Clause 6: Enhancing the status of Persian language among international scientific languages. Clause 1: Persian as a language of science. Strategic Plan 9: Increasing foreign student admissions to promote the Persian language and ... Strengthening the equivalence flow for foreign scientific terms in all fields and emphasizing writing specialized scientific articles in clear Persian. Supporting the establishment of Persian language departments in various universities worldwide. Enhancing the use of Persian in specialized scientific fields ... and striving to make Persian a scientific language.
10	Cultural Engineering Map of the Country	Article 17: The target community of the cultural engineering map of the country: Persian-speaking communities. Chapter 4: Major Cultural Goals Article 3: Deepening national self-confidence and ... promoting and expanding Persian language and literature. Enhancing the status and expanding Persian language and literature, considering local and ethnic languages. Article 22: Drafting and implementing the document for expanding Persian script, language, and literature abroad within the framework of the cultural engineering map.
11	Document on the Islamization of Universities	Chapter 6, Article 5: Strengthening and expanding the use of Persian in university scientific texts and making Persian a reference language of science. Article 6: Supporting the drafting of global competitive reference books and texts in Persian to achieve scientific authority. Article 7: Creating mechanisms for producing and drafting scientific reference texts in various fields in Persian.
12	Fundamental Transformation Document of Education	Chapter 2, Article 21: Strengthening the inclination towards Persian language and literature as a common language.
13	Comprehensive Document on International Scientific Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran	Article 3: National Actions Clause 7: Developing and using methods and tools to promote the Persian language to enhance its status among international scientific languages.

Table 3: Extracting Codes from the Fifth Development Plan Law

Document	Code
Fifth Development Plan Law of Iran	1- The necessity of government support for preserving and promoting the Persian language. 2- The necessity of producing scientific and educational programs. 3- The necessity of implementing cultural and social activities. 4- Enhancing theoretical and practical interactions to promote components of national identity. 5- Facilitating and enhancing public and institutional participation in cultural activities. 6- The necessity of interacting with relevant institutions and organizations to preserve and protect the Persian language. 7- Efforts to expand the Persian language domestically and internationally. 8- Developing media, cultural, and artistic digital products and multimedia software. 9- Actions to remove Latin names. 10- Drafting necessary standards for Persian script and language. 11- Developing connections and cooperation with Iranology centers. 12- Preserving spiritual, cultural, and scientific notables. ¹

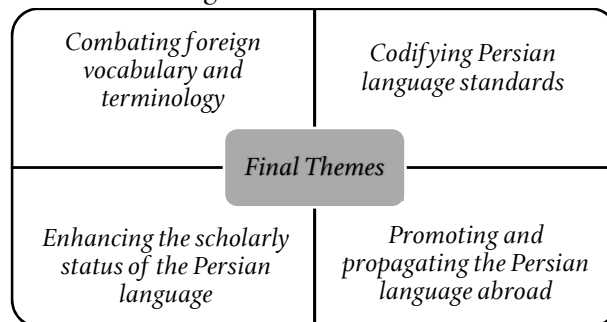
Table 4: Extracting Themes from Codes

Code	Theme
1- The necessity of government support for preserving and promoting the Persian language.	The necessity of government support for the Persian language as a national value.
2- The necessity of producing scientific and educational programs.	The necessity and priority of soft media activities to promote the Persian language.
3- The necessity of implementing cultural and social activities.	The necessity of producing scientific and educational programs.
4- Enhancing theoretical and practical interactions to promote components of national identity.	Interaction of related institutions as an example of efforts to develop Persian language, government, and society.
5- Facilitating and enhancing public and institutional participation in cultural activities.	Standardization as a prelude to eliminating harms and supporting the development and promotion of the Persian language.
6- The necessity of interacting with relevant institutions and organizations to preserve and protect the Persian language.	The necessity of interaction with relevant institutions to preserve and protect the Persian language.

¹ Aside from Article 15 of the Constitution, which explicitly designates Persian as the common language of Iranians, the aforementioned laws have only peripherally addressed the Persian language. For a comprehensive analysis regarding the status of Iranian national identity and the Persian language as one of the pillars of this identity in the cultural policies and documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, refer to Attarzadeh and Seyfodini, 2022.

7- Efforts to expand the Persian language domestically and internationally.	Removing Latin names, a symbol of protecting the Persian language domestically and expanding it abroad.
8- Developing media, cultural, and artistic digital products and multimedia software.	Combating media attacks of foreign words and terms.
9- Actions to remove Latin names.	The necessity of addressing instances of foreign words and terms.
10- Drafting necessary standards for Persian script and language.	The necessity of non-governmental organizations' involvement in protecting the Persian language and promotional activities.
11- Developing connections and cooperation with Iranology centers.	The necessity of non-governmental organizations' involvement in protecting the Persian language and promotional activities.
12- Preserving spiritual, cultural, and scientific notables.	The necessity of non-governmental organizations' involvement in protecting the Persian language and promotional activities.

Figure 2: Final Themes



5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1. THE WICKED PROBLEMS FACING THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE

Efforts to combat the infiltration of foreign vocabulary and terminology by promoting Persian equivalents have been a cornerstone of language policy initiatives in Iran. The primary legislative framework for this effort is the “Law on the Prohibition of Using Foreign Names, Titles, and Terminology,” ratified by the Islamic Consultative Assembly on September 14, 1996. This law asserts:

“To preserve the strength and authenticity of the Persian language, as a fundamental pillar of Iranian national identity and the second language of the Islamic world and Islamic scholarship and culture, all legislative, executive, and judicial bodies of the country, as well as governmental organizations, companies, and institutions, and all entities governed by general laws and regulations, must refrain from using foreign words and vocabulary in reports, correspondence, speeches, and official interviews.

The use of such words is also prohibited on all domestic products, whether governmental or non-governmental, marketed within the country.” (Law on the Prohibition of Using Foreign Names, Titles, and Terminology, approved September 14, 1996)

The complex and multifaceted nature of this issue necessitates coordination and collaboration among various organizations and institutions. Consequently, relying solely on the efforts of a single entity, such as the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, is insufficient to effectively address this challenge. This characteristic of wicked problems underscores the need for cooperation among governmental, private, and other key stakeholders. Their collective efforts should align towards a common goal to maximize the capabilities and resources of the organizations and institutions responsible for implementing this law. The report on the implementation of the Fifth Development Plan Law highlights the lack of coordination and cooperation among some relevant organizations, substantiating this claim (Jafari et. al. 2017).

Table 5: Factors Leading to the Failure of the Law to Remove Latin Names

Law Text	Factors Leading to Failure
Action to remove Latin names from the signage of public places, companies, and packaging of non-export goods	1. Lack of timely action by the Public Places Police of NAJA in dealing with offending commercial units and manufacturing companies. 2. Registration of foreign names for companies and domestically produced products by the Registration Organization. 3. Neglect by organizations, ministries, and unions that issue permits for the activities of natural and legal persons in the country, leading to the issuance of permits for units whose products bear foreign names. 4. Failure of municipalities to enforce the law when controlling the signage of commercial units.

This lack of coordination among institutions can be attributed to a “lack of procedural legitimacy,” which necessitates the involvement of all branches of the state bureaucracy in policy implementation, incorporating their perspectives and inclinations. Without this comprehensive involvement, policy implementers are less likely to perceive the policies as their own, leading to reluctance in implementation and a lack of accountability for non-compliance (Ashtarian 2017).

Historically, the Persian language and the Iranian people have maintained a reciprocal relationship. As the national language and primary means of communication for Iranians, Persian has been a conduit for transmitting cultural heritage and fostering national solidarity. Just as the Persian language is crucial for the people, the citizens are vital for the survival and preservation of the Persian language. Therefore, removing Latin names from public places necessitates mutual cooperation between the government and the populace. Despite governmental policies and interventions aimed at influencing citizens’ language choices, the success of these policies hinges on public support and cooperation. Without broad public endorsement,

these policies are likely to fail, as citizens will not participate actively in their implementation.

Although the issue of using foreign vocabulary and terminology has been a long-standing concern among academic and literary elites, it has not yet become a widespread issue among the general public. Policymaking in this area has not effectively permeated all social strata, and public awareness of the issue remains largely confined to university professors, literary figures, and similar circles.

In this context, the government has encountered significant deficiencies in allocating financial and material resources towards public education and fostering a cultural appreciation for the necessity of preserving the Persian language. If policymakers had prioritized educating and persuading citizens about the importance of maintaining the Persian language, the public might have adopted these policies with greater enthusiasm and awareness, demonstrating a more nuanced approach to safeguarding the national language.

Another plausible explanation for this issue is that the public's use of foreign names and titles is influenced by a complex interplay of social, political, economic, and cultural factors. For instance, one scientific factor contributing to this phenomenon is the rapid production and dissemination of new technologies in the era of globalization. When a new technology is introduced into the country, its name, along with numerous specialized terms, becomes integrated into the language and is subsequently adopted by the populace. As Dariush Ashouri articulates, "Just as the social, economic, and cultural structures are undergoing transformation under the pressure of economic globalization and modern technology, languages are also undergoing molting, transformation, and destruction under the pressure of modern languages (such as English)" (Ashouri 2005).

The discourse and writings of experts in this field highlight the presence of competing and contradictory values regarding the nature of, and solutions to, linguistic issues in Iran. For example, while figures such as Kazzazi and Heidari Malayeri advocate for persianization, viewing it as a suitable approach to elevate the status of the Persian language, others propose a more moderate stance. Parviz Ejlali dismisses persianization as a fanciful ideal and instead advocates for a policy of peaceful coexistence between Persian and scientific languages (Ejlali 2013, 6).

Similarly, the standardization of the Persian language must be acknowledged as a crucial principle, since successful policymaking in this area will facilitate the achievement of other language policy goals. Although the standardization of Persian is addressed in the Fifth Development Plan Law, stating: "Article 5, Note 1. The government is obliged to formulate all necessary standards for the Persian script, Persian language, and the Solar Hijri calendar by the end of the first year." (Jafari et. Al., 2017),

However, no reference is made in official reports to the government's and relevant organizations' performance in implementing it. This omission may be due to the nature of this goal, as its implementation results are not closely related to people's daily lives,

affecting only a small segment of those engaged in learning Persian. Nonetheless, the evaluation of policy outcomes should not be disregarded simply because they lack a public aspect. An effective and efficient performance monitoring and evaluation system is essential to assess the effectiveness of policies and reinforce their success.

Policymakers' efforts to restore the Persian language's global stature have materialized through policies focused on its international dissemination, aimed at promoting Iranian-Islamic culture, especially among the Iranian diaspora. Realizing this policy can help preserve the connection of Iranians abroad with their national culture and identity, ultimately maintaining the solidarity and identity bonds of Iranians worldwide. Historical analysis reveals a gradual decrease in the domain of the Persian language, correlating with a diminished dominance of Iranian-Islamic identity. This policy is articulated in Article 5 of the Fifth Development Plan Law:

In order to expound the principles of pure Muhammadan Islam (peace be upon him) and ... introduce Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization and spread the Persian script, language, and literature, especially for Iranians abroad, ... the 'National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the International Level' shall be prepared by the end of the first year of the Plan by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relations) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant agencies, the Supreme Council of the Qom Seminary, and the Al-Mustafa International University, and shall be approved by the Council of Ministers.

However, despite several decades of preparing, formulating, and implementing such programs, these policies have not been notably successful in achieving their objectives. As previously mentioned, one characteristic of wicked problems is that expecting different results from the same old methods is futile. Reviewing and evaluating the government's performance in implementing policies related to the Persian language provides insight into the relationship between this characteristic of wicked problems and language policies. The following table outlines the actions taken to promote the Persian language abroad during the period covered by the Fifth Development Plan Law (2011-2016) (Vice Presidency for Strategic Planning and Supervision 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016).

Table 6. Actions Taken to Promote the Persian Language Abroad

Year	Actions Taken
2011	Formation of a committee for drafting the document, holding expert meetings with representatives of other relevant bodies, and drafting the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran in collaboration with relevant organizations. Formation of a task force for implementing executive packages, preparing relevant guidelines and regulations, and drafting some strategic documents and the strategic document.
2012	Formation of a committee for drafting the document, holding expert meetings with representatives of other relevant bodies, drafting the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran in collaboration

Year	Actions Taken
	with relevant organizations. The draft of the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the international level was prepared by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization in collaboration with active organizations and institutions, approved in the regulations committee of the Planning Deputy, and sent to the Cabinet for approval.
2013	The draft of the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran was prepared in collaboration with relevant organizations and presented to the Cabinet for consideration and approval. This draft was revised and refined in multiple sessions with the presence of relevant executive bodies after being referred to the Government's Cultural Commission.
2014	Following multiple expert meetings with representatives of relevant bodies, the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran was drafted by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization in collaboration with relevant organizations and sent to the Government's Cultural Commission for discussion and review. It was then sent to the Cabinet for final approval; however, due to certain issues, the document was revised in the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and resubmitted to the Cabinet.
2015	Following multiple expert meetings with representatives of relevant bodies, the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran was drafted by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and, due to certain issues, was revised in the organization and resubmitted to the Cabinet.
2016	Following multiple expert meetings with representatives of relevant bodies, the National Document for the Development of Cultural Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran was drafted by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and, due to certain issues, was revised in the organization and resubmitted to the Cabinet.

As observed, the actions taken to promote the Persian language abroad during the Fifth Development Plan period primarily involved holding meetings and drafting several documents, some of which did not reach completion by the end of the period and were postponed to subsequent years. The re-approval of minor documents within existing laws and regulations has stymied the implementation of existing programs, and the repetition of these meetings has hindered necessary actions. Consequently, the perpetuation of this routine and conventional cycle, which has become ingrained in executive bodies, leads only to the waste of resources and facilities. Ultimately, the lack of a unified perspective among experts, critics, and policymakers in this area exacerbates the wicked nature of national language policymaking in Iran. This disunity not only impedes the planning and formulation of logical, implementable long-term policies but also fosters confusion and a sense of hopelessness due to the absence of solutions to these problems. Such issues result in a never-ending process where, upon resolving some problems, new ones emerge, each necessitating a new solution.

5.2. THE PREVAILING APPROACH TO POLICIES RELATED TO THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE IN UPSTREAM DOCUMENTS

Despite the differences in the nature, missions, and administrative systems of various organizations, they all share a fundamental oversight: they do not recognize the challenges facing the Persian language as wicked problems, which has led to an inability to accurately identify the nature of these issues. Traditional methods and approaches, including financial support, legal and judicial measures, and the repeated formulation of documents and regulations, have proven inadequate in successfully resolving the problems facing the Persian language.

An examination of the government's performance in implementing the Fifth Development Plan reveals that the approach of the planners and executors of these policies reflects a somewhat top-down or prescriptive model. Consequently, the responsibility for solving the Persian language problem has been largely delegated to a few institutions, such as the Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, while others, including the general public, have been left to await the results of their actions. In this scenario, the public is perpetually waiting to accept the outcomes of bureaucratic decisions, and the decision-makers have deprived themselves of interaction with the audience, researchers, and specialists in this field who may operate outside the frameworks of the aforementioned organizations. As a result, the sensitivity, importance, and public participation in these policies have diminished.

This research aimed to provide an explanation for the reasons behind the failure of national language policy in Iran. The findings of this research demonstrate that the issue of the Persian language and the challenges it faces have not been ignored by policymakers in Iran. These issues have been addressed in several key upstream documents, including the Constitution, the Vision Document, the Development Plan laws, and the Comprehensive Scientific Document of the Country, among others, and various policies have been formulated to address them. Although the achievement of goals in the implementation of public policies is always relative, the current state of the Persian language, following the implementation of numerous policies to improve its status, suggests that despite the design and implementation of many policies in this area, the prescriptive approach—which is one of the traditional methods of implementing public policies and includes solutions such as financial support, legal measures, and the formulation of numerous laws—has been inadequate in resolving the prevailing problems of the Persian language. The ultimate conclusion of this research is that the issues and challenges facing the Persian language are inherently wicked. The failure of policy designers and implementers to recognize this point has led them to adopt language policies that are incompatible with the structure of these issues. This prescriptive approach has been the primary and serious obstacle to the proper implementation of these policies and the resolution of the problems facing the Persian language.

6. THE NECESSITY OF ADOPTING INCENTIVE POLICIES

Preserving and safeguarding the Persian language is a national issue that encompasses numerous cultural, economic, and social factors. By examining these factors, one can discern the reasons behind the declining inclination to use correct Persian vocabulary and terms. For instance, in the case of eliminating foreign words and terms from storefronts, it is inappropriate to blame the public for their ignorance or even for their conscious use of foreign names due to personal taste. With the advent of new communication tools and media, the influx of foreign words and terms is increasing, thereby influencing the cultural and linguistic preferences of the people. Thus, while recognizing that exerting pressure in this area is not only ineffective but may also have unintended consequences, cultural methods should be employed to inform and raise public awareness.

Considering punitive policies, such as imposing monetary fines or restricting business activities (except in certain essential cases), is misguided, and one cannot expect to receive an appropriate response from such measures. Instead, the public should be familiarized with the realities and the importance of choosing appropriate Iranian names and titles, and they should be made aware of the risks associated with identity changes should this trend continue. By recognizing their intellectual maturity and eligibility, the decision should ultimately be left to the people themselves. Through incentive and promotional activities, such as tax exemptions or financial assistance for replacing the signboards of businesses that previously did not use Iranian names, one can encourage the continuation of this practice and guide others towards the conscious, voluntary, and eager selection of Iranian names and titles for commercial signboards.

6.2. THE NECESSITY OF FORMULATING A STRATEGIC DOCUMENT FOR SUPPORTING THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE

Given that the fundamental goal of upstream documents and policy programs should be to create harmony and consensus rather than dispersion and separation, the diverse perspectives on language policies—resulting from extensive and scattered programs in several different upstream documents—prevent a consensus among planners and implementers. The existence of a coherent and structured program, accompanied by a strong implementation guarantee obliging all executive bodies in the country to observe and pursue it, can prevent the incompleteness of many programs resulting from changes in government and the governing discourse over the country's cultural institutions. Considering the importance and acceptance of the fact that the issue of the Persian language alone merits a dedicated document, a clear and precise definition of the most critical components and prerequisites for its preservation, safeguarding, and promotion should be formulated. Subsequently, based on this definition, the dimensions and components of language policymaking in Iran should be specified to result in a standardized and universally accepted framework. Such a consensus can serve as the basis for formulating a comprehensive document without time constraints,

based on realistic policies, scientific studies, and aligned with rapid domestic and global developments. This document should be implementable and entitled "The Strategic Document for the Preservation and Promotion of the Persian Language."

6.3. ATTENTION TO THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND UTILIZING ITS CAPACITIES

Civil society can play an effective role in identifying and highlighting issues to be placed on the government's agenda. Within the framework of implementing some of these policies, the government can assume a managerial, supervisory, and controlling role by outsourcing certain actions to associations and non-governmental organizations active in this field. In the policy evaluation stage, continuous public oversight of policy implementation can minimize government errors, reduce instances of law-breaking, non-compliance with program principles, and the implementation of repetitive and erroneous policies by authorities and officials. By involving citizens in national language policy, their sense of belonging and attachment to their national identity can be reinforced, while also receiving valuable feedback from them.

4. EDUCATION FOR PROMOTING A CITIZEN-CENTERED NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Persian language is the product of the "natural cultural and political order" of greater Iran's geography over centuries (Tabatabai 2019). According to experts and historical accounts, all inhabitants of Iran have equally contributed to its nurturing. By accepting the importance of the Persian language as a mediator for the connection of local identities at national and international levels, an effective step is taken towards consolidating national interests. The acceptance and consensus of all citizens is achieved when the national government, through education and the promotion of the importance and necessity of using the national language, creates the grounds for strengthening national identity in society. As the national language, Persian contributes to creating a shared national understanding among all citizens of Iran and fosters a collective will to live within a unified territory while preserving diversity.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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