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Recruitment of Persian Language The Role in Exporting Iranian Culture and Revolution

Ahmad Mousa (Ph.D.)

Professor of Persian Literature, Morocco.

The Iranian 1979 revolution was the first sectarian political uprising in modern times. Its aims were to preserve Iran's new identity, export its culture, and sponsor a new revolutionary version of Islam - especially amongst Shiite communities, and those in poor countries that lacked a strong political authority. The Iranian clerics set the basic principles of Iran's internal and external policy through their speeches that focused on revolutionary concepts, national identity, and national interests. The clerics also set the standard for the "Self" and the "Other". Also, Iran's clerics challenged international protocols, threatened the prevailing international system of mutual relations between countries and mobilized the so called "Axis of Resistance" to challenge the dominant international powers.

The new political system in Iran was not content with revolutionizing the private and public spheres in Iran only, but strove to export this revolution outside its borders to other territories of the world.

Accordingly, the idea of exporting the revolution and its culture became a strategic goal, message, and task of Iran's new regime once it had covered the revolution with an aura of Shiite and Islamic values. However, this revolution would have failed to export its ideas to the outside world without relying on a language to carry and convey its ideas and principles.

This research studies and analyzes the relationship between the Persian language as a factor of Iranian culture/identity, along with the idea of exporting the revolution and its culture, as one of the central goals of the Iranian Republic as stated in the Iranian constitution.

The 1979 revolution was a turning point in Iran's foreign policy as it now focused on regional dimensions coated with its ideological impulses. The revolution relied on the Shiite ideology, which paved the way for Iran to actively engage in regional Arab and Islamic issues. Indeed, this policy directed Iran's attention towards the Middle East and provoked tension and confrontation with its Arab rivals.

1. Culture, Identity, and Revolution in the Iranian Perspective

Some arab and western researchers identify "Culture" as several materialistic and non-materialistic gains one achieves throughout his life.⁽¹⁾ Tyler defined culture based on the "Gain" dimension. He said, "Culture is a complicated cluster of knowledge, beliefs, arts, industries, ethics, laws, traditions, customs, behaviors, and regulations a person acquires from his society with duties and obligations towards that society." Professor Victor Kik said that culture is a civilization's reflection of its knowledge and people's practices and has certain characteristics and individualities that distinguish it from other civilizations. Indeed, culture is the power that drives a civilization towards development.⁽²⁾

Before handling the definition of culture that was adopted by Iran's Supreme Leadership, we will discuss some concepts by Iranian specialists in this concern. Baqir Sarokhani believes that, "Culture has a comprehensive concept that includes all models learned and delivered in the society and transmitted by values. It distinguishes man from other creatures in all social aspects and categories like language, arts, crafts, rights, science, religion, ethics, customs, traditions, and materialistic issues."⁽³⁾

Also, Javad Mansouri believes that culture is a complicated cluster of information, beliefs, arts, ethics, laws, customs, traditions, and desires one acquires when He engages in society.⁽⁴⁾ Nouri Qaisari defined culture as a set of literatures, traditions, customs, and ways of living that makes goals, meaning, and direction for people's lives.⁽⁵⁾ Dr. Dawri Ardkani said that culture is one of three elements that shape national identity.⁽⁶⁾

A. Khomeini's definition of Culture

For Khomeini, culture was a set of ideas and behaviors, manifested in individuals and society. To him, it is the source of identity, an institution for generating morals and a center for thought dissemination. In this regard, Khomeini says, "They (the West) want us to be followers of them. What they bring us creates dependency; they do not want us to have cultural and thought independence."⁽⁷⁾

To Khomeini, culture has determinants that can be summarized as follows, "Materialistic progress is not culture" and "Industry is not culture". To ensure these ideas he added, "We do not need the West in terms of culture and social science. We are not equivalent to the West in industry; we should not lose ourselves and recognize their development and express our need for them..."⁽⁸⁾

B. Ali Khamenei's definition of Culture

Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader identifies culture in three areas;

1. The state's major policies; this means that culture has a key role in the economic, political, administrative and production processes. He believes that culture is the soul of the state's body and the compass that directs its major policies.

2. Forming societal awareness and general behavior, Khamenei believes that societal movements align with its culture. Here, he spots the shortcomings in culture, as he knows, in Iran and summarizes them in certain issues. Khamenei says the Iranian society is in need for discipline, self-confidence, and national pride. This means Iranians should be proud of their Iranian identity and origin like the Iranian contemporary poet, Sihrab Sabhari⁽⁹⁾ when he expressed his pride and loyalty to Iran in one of his popular pieces "Ahl Kasham Rozkam Bed Nest,"⁽¹⁰⁾ which, as Khamenei says, "What Iranians need". However, Khamenei believes this identity does not contradict Nationalism. Along with law, national enthusiasm, religion, ideology, marriage, family, administration, clothing, and food consumption, the Iranian Supreme Leader considers the pride in belonging to Iran as a 'positive nationalism' that the Iranian people need.

3. General policies of education, scientific research, and health; Khamenei believes the state's institutions are responsible for making and decentralizing the policies in these crucial sectors.⁽¹¹⁾

The identity issue has been a point of interest throughout the period of creating new social theories- either by early theorists or contemporary thinkers- and many social theories have been proposed on identity throughout the eightieth and ninetieth centuries up to the modern era.

C. Identity and its Types in Iran

Identity is a set of features that distinguish an individual or group from others. Usually, it is divided into two related and inseparable parts; the Individual and Collective. Experts limit the components of individual identity to the family,

social class, friends, and the knowledge that one acquires throughout his life. While collective identity is the corner stone for national identity and it emerges from the individual's status in the society and his belonging to it. Collective identity is formed under the influence of authority and the official cultural system, which means that it is a compound identity and takes a multi-dimensional shape in Iranian society.

Dr. Ja'far Rabani believes that a state's national identity is a set of accepted beliefs, customs, traditions, and views of that society over a long period and many centuries, which means that the national identity of any nation is rooted in the history and culture of that society.⁽¹²⁾

Sanee' Ijlal believes that the national identity is a combination of social, historical, geographic, political, cultural, and linguistic dimensions⁽¹³⁾ - some researchers have added religion to these dimensions.⁽¹⁴⁾

In the beginning, we will consider the Iranian national identity over the past two centuries; starting from the Qajari dynasty- during the time of the constitutional revolution- under the influence of European Nationalism. However, this identity peaked during the Iranian 1979 revolution that, later, took an Islamic shape.

Many explanations have been compounded to Iranian identity throughout history in acquiescence with the prevailing economic and political conditions in Iran and abroad. Stemming from this assumption, this identity was once considered "racist nationalism", a political tool in the hands of rulers, to return Iran to its ancient past that antagonized Arabs and Muslims, and later, it was tainted with a Shiite and sectarian flavor. The existence of sectarianism was notable in Iran's foreign policy even before the outbreak of the Iranian revolution. Some observers believe that the Pahlavi regime, despite its denial, used ideological instruments in its policymaking process, in particular Shiism as a means of expanding its influence in the region.⁽¹⁵⁾ However, post 1979 with the emergence of the new regime, the Shiite nature clearly distinguished Iran's official identity and it was rooted formally in the Iranian constitution. The only one in the world that stipulates the state's sect after mentioning its religion. Moreover, the sect in the Iranian constitution is more sacred than religion itself. According to the Iranian constitution, the "Ja'fari sect" has more than what Islam has.⁽¹⁶⁾ After the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, resulting in the empowerment of the Shiite in Iraqi politics, Iran included Shiism, more significantly, in its foreign policy, which paved the way for it to interfere in some Arab countries that lost control of their own affairs. Moreover, without the inauguration of the Saudi led Decisive Storm Operation, this Arab country would have been a soft target for Iran.

The Shiite factor in Iranian national identity has heightened Iran's regional presence, in promoting the Shiite sect and rooting it in weak Arab countries, and in serving the higher interests of Iran. This was recently stated by Ali Khamenei and quoted by Qassem Suleimani when he ignored all values and principles introduced by the Iranian revolution.

The Iranian collective identity can be summarized in the following points:

1. National identity: encompasses the dimensions of national society, culture, and politics.
2. Tribal identity: comprises the scopes of tribal society, culture, and politics.
3. Sectarian identity: represented by four dimensions- cultural, social, religious, and human behavior with others.
4. New identity: believes in the basic modern values and inclines towards the western model and international identity.

In the Iranian perception, “Culture” is responsible for giving identity to society in case the individual, group, or family fail to recognize this identity. Also, to implant it for future generations, and to export it to others, leading this society to perish and submit to foreign cultures. Indeed, the transition of cultures results in the transition of national identity and its elements. To Iranians, the Persian language is the most important means to transmit the Iranian identity and culture.

D. Culture and Identity- their relationship to the Idea of Exporting the Revolution

The Iranian fundamentalists define the concept of exporting the revolution, as a means of explaining the ideas of the revolution and exporting them to others through increasing awareness and participating in the liberation of oppressed people from repression and tyranny. According to Iranians, exporting the revolution means to promote the revolutionary speech that relies on awareness (the liberation of others), which inspires all people to liberate themselves and to overcome tyranny and oppression. In political terminology, exporting the revolution means to carry out programs and policies by founders of a revolution to influence other societies.⁽¹⁷⁾ For Iran, it aims to transmit the values and principles of its revolution to other societies- especially Muslim communities by connecting the different sectors of Iran’s revolutionary society with several categories of people in the target countries.

This concept of exporting the revolution relies on substantial ideology; the Iranian revolution is more than a historical event or political and social phenomenon, but a political and cultural narrative. This means the Iranian revolution was a set of coherent rules, a meaningful and distinct system that legislated for special political, social, and behavioral systems.⁽¹⁸⁾ To the Iranian regime, the revolution is not a historical event that ended in 1979, but a group of values, perceptions, concepts, sayings, and meanings in the political and social spheres that generates new behaviors and political views, that are reproducing others.⁽¹⁹⁾

The idea of exporting the Iranian culture and revolution relies on the belief that religion conforms with politics, internally and externally and that identity aligns with the national language (Persian). In the beginning of the revolution, because of a mix between religious, revolutionary, and national speeches, there

was controversy around the idea of exporting the revolution. Many contradictory views concerning this issue arose. Taoism allowed some kind of propagation of the revolution, stemming from a religious necessity, whereas the revolutionary Iranian actors believed that exporting the Iranian revolution and culture was not a religious but a strategic necessity. Also, there was a call for the necessity of clinging to the Iranian identity and nationality. All these currents met and unified on the belief that Persian is a major component of the Iranian identity that should be preserved, strengthened, and promoted fully.

2. Culture of the Revolution and its Impact on the Persian Language

Every language has a close relationship with the state's culture and the nation it represents. Any change in the culture of this nation is followed by a significant change in its language like the Arab Islamic culture that replaced the Iranian Zoroastrianism culture during the time of the 'Islamic' conquest of Iran.⁽²⁰⁾ In modern days, Iran replaced the Iranian culture that was notably influenced by the Western civilization at the time of the Pahlavi monarchy with the revolutionary Shiite culture following the victory of the 1979 revolution. These developments were reflected in the Persian language that witnessed a significant change in terms of its concepts and glossary as will be discussed later in the Persian language section of this study.

A. The impact of the culture of the revolution on the Persian Language

By the end of the nineteenth century, cultural diffusion and language teaching were two of the most controversial issues. Even though cultural teaching prevailed, independently, in the sixties of the last century, the relationship between cultural teaching and language teaching did not taken place until the nineties of the last century. As a result, the focus during this period became on intercultural learning.

In the nineties of the last century, the focus on "Culture" in teaching Persian for its non-native speakers attracted attention. Dr. Qahraman Suleimani, Chief Editor of the Quarterly "Nameh Parsi" referred to this issue saying, "to have a role for any culture in the international sphere, this culture needs to introduce itself through means of contact and there is no better way than national language..."⁽²¹⁾

The cultural issue is materialized in language teaching in three dimensions as referred to by Risager⁽²²⁾, "After content, context, and poetry in Persian, the focus was more on the religious cultural content (most of the prevalent books in teaching the Persian language focused on the cultural and sectarian issues) and then on the poetic dimension with regard to the wealthy Persian literature.

One of the most important books written in Iran on culture and Persian language teaching was "Studying the Role of Persian Teaching in Clarifying the Iranian Islamic Culture" by Hameed Mohammad Khani (1999). The writer considered the Iranian culture as a message that can be conveyed through the Persian language. In this case, language takes the role of a mediator. Khani determines four elements in conveying

the message- the sender, the recipient, the means of conveying, and the purpose of the message. These elements are elaborated on in the rest of this paper.

Another two writers, Nejad Ma'soum and Nadir Haqani went further than that when they considered "Culture" as the fifth skill that language teaching relies on after the four known ones.⁽²³⁾

To determine the relationship between language and culture, there are three views; the first view says that language is part of culture that highlights the relationship between individuals and common culture. According to this view, the elements of culture such as the family, economy, and others are crucial in this and that no culture can survive without them. And that language is more than a component of culture. The second view believes that language and culture are two independent issues, but with natural overlapping relationships that exist between the two and even with alternative elements. The third view ensures the existence of a connection between language and the elements of culture.

Language as a mean of expressing ideas is a crucial part of the written and oral heritage of any nation. Literature is also an important part of culture and national identity. A significant part of any nation's identity can be transmitted by language because it is, one of the important factors in making culture and thought. Some believe that language is a means of thinking, making views, constructing social identity, forming small/major relations in society, and connecting it to the present and the future.⁽²⁴⁾

B. Persian language hegemony and targeting neighboring languages and cultures

Iran inhabits various nationalities, ethnic groups, and cultures that shape the Iranian nation. Each ethnicity has its culture, language, or dialect. The notable closeness between these dialects did not deny the existence of disagreement and difference between them. The loss of any language or dialect automatically results in the tribe perishing that communicates in that language, which is a significant part of the tribes life, and representation of its social capital.

Given the swift changes in Iran since the monarchy period until today, in the social, economic, and political fields, languages and dialects could not escape the consequences of these changes and their impact. Especially the Persian language that submitted to these developments, but at the same time preserved its identity as a national, official, scientific, and religious language for Iranians. These developments resulted from the linguistic policy that was adopted since the time of the monarchy in Iran, particularly, during the Iranian republic when the policy appeared in a more methodological way. This linguistic policy was grounded on enabling the Persian language (the Tehran accent) from dominating over other domestic languages and Iranian dialects. Like the Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish, Azeri, and Baluch languages and the Lure, Bakhtiari, Kilkiyah, Mazindraniah, Tabariah, Talshiah, Jirjaniah dialects.

This tendency was supported by the cultural, historical, and literary background of the Persian language without excluding the strong Persian national dimension that frames this language and distinguishes it from the languages of other Iranian ethnicities. This paved the way for the hegemony of Persian as an official language, particularly in the scientific and media spheres. This resulted in the weakening of other Iranian languages, their cultures diminishing and the number of their speakers decreasing. The net result being the extinction of minority languages.

There are many factors that threaten the domestic languages and dialects in Iran. In fact, these languages are the major languages of the Iranian ethnic groups. They had a significant part in the culture and identity of these peoples and reflected their customs, traditions, literatures, values, and beliefs. They were the medium of transmitting these values and beliefs from one generation to another. These languages had a link with the Persian language, that included a significant heritage of authentic vocabulary that helped in the study of the history and etymology of Persian. Hence, any attempt to weaken these languages and dialects, would inevitably weaken Iran's national language and the linkage between the Iranian people.

Some social researchers have conducted field studies on the domestic languages and dialects in Iran over the past two decades and referred to carelessness and negligence toward these languages which was a result of a systematic policy aimed at weakening these languages at the expense of the Persian official language. This policy is evident through limiting the role of these languages in the educational processes, tightening controls on them, prohibiting teaching in these languages, and denying all official channels to them.⁽²⁵⁾ Moreover, this policy is tougher on certain languages than on others due to the sensitivity towards the historical, cultural, and political dimensions of certain languages, such as the Arabic and Kurdish languages. Indeed, this policy appears clearly in the following tendencies and procedures:

1. Promoting Persian language and its use in the Non-Persian territories.
2. Using Persian as the only official language in public and private departments and institutions. The institutionalization of Persian in the media, and all aspects of Iranian life, while cracking down on all other languages and dialects to limit their prevalence.
3. Prohibiting the use of domestic languages and dialects as educational languages- especially in schools, institutes, universities, colleges and limiting their use within the family. This contradicts the international pacts and resolutions which Iran is a signatory of, even the Iranian constitution itself that stipulates the right of a citizen to use his domestic language as a native language in his environment and to learn in it.⁽²⁶⁾
4. Discouraging any scientific studies or researches on the Iranian dialects to prevent them from being strengthened and to limit their use in the official literature.

5. Absence of clear programs and planning- which reflects the absence of political determination- to strengthen and promote domestic languages and dialects.

C. Revolutionizing the Persian language, its transition and its implications after the revolution

There is no doubt that language reflects developments in the institutions, infrastructure, and social values of any society. Language is connected to its environment and undergoes changes according to developments in its society. This means that the changes in any language align with the political, economic, and social developments.

The 1979 Iranian revolution triggered various changes in all social spheres and reflected the changes that occurred the inside the Persian language. In this regard, we will handle the Iranian vocabulary and linguistic dictionary, including the changes brought about by the Iranian revolution.

This transformation can be visualized via removing an important Persian dictionary related to the monarchy period, changing the meanings of some words without deleting them, and creating new expressions that were not available in the former Persian language (the Shahanshahi).

In fact, the Iranian revolution incurred substantial changes in three facets: values, society, and institutions as follows:

1. Values transformation: the most important facet transformed by the Iranian revolution as stated by theorists and leaders of the revolution is summarized by the statement of Shaheed Bahshati, "It is a revolution of values". Before the revolution, the Iranian society had values and culture, but they were changed after this revolution. The changes in the Persian language resulted in new implications and connotations for words and new meanings being specified. For example, the word 'Roshen Fikr' (the enlightened) had a positive implication during the monarchy era. It described the educated and enlightened person with new sciences. However, after the revolution, because of criticism of western culture and values, this word was degraded, with a new meaning, alluding to the person with a stolen identity and infatuated with western civilization.

Another example is of those with eastern and western ideological backgrounds and having experience with their thought schools. They enjoyed a privileged status during the Shah era and their expressions were known for their positive connotations, but later, began to carry negative connotations like Capitalism, Socialism, Communism, Leninism, Marxism, and Materialism.

Since the transformation of values resulting from the revolution, many new sectarian words emerged, which were used in daily language, and included in the standard language in Iran. The Media language incorporated these new words such as Imamate, Velayat-e Faqih, Jihad, Nahdat, Shahadat, Ithar, Nahi beh Ma'rouf and Nahi ez Munkar, Hukoumat Islami, Shar' Islam, Qanoun Ilahi, and others.

2. Structural transformation: this denotes the transformation of the social structure, which resulted in a significant change in the Persian language. For example, the implication and value of certain terms increased like Sazandaki (structure), Tawleed (production), Rosta (village), Mahroumiat Zada'I (fighting negligence) and others, because of a focus on the rural environment, farming sector, livestock, and domestic production during the Iranian revolution. Unlike the Shah rule when the focus was on the modern world, capitalist market economics and when the Iranian economy was dependent on foreign countries. Also, new social and economic institutions emerged, along with new terms and concepts that were created for these institutions like Jihad Sazandaki (structural Jihad), Kamitah ya Imdad (relief committee), Khadamat Kashawarzi wa Ta'awuni Ha (services of farming and cooperation), Benyad Shaheed (martyr institution), Benyad Mustad'afan wa Janbazan (poor and estranged institution), Benyad Maskan (housing institution), and others.

3. Institutional transformation: this denotes a transformation in political institutions. This includes various forms of transformation like the emergence of a new legislative council with extensive powers. The refreshing of Persian terms in Iran is evidence of the basic changes in political institutions. The following are examples of the new terms and expressions in this concern: Saltanat, Nizan Shahanshah, Shah, Ala Hadrat (his majesty), Waliahd, Hamayouni (Sultan), Shah Banu (Queen, Sultana), Wazarat Tashreefat (Ministry of Ceremonies), Wazarat Derbar (Ministry of Palatine), Majlis Sana (Senate), Majlis Shurai Meli (the National Shura Council), Anjamnhai Ayalti Wawilayati (domestic associations), Bank Shahanshahi (Royal Bank), Benyad Farah (Farah Institution), and many others.

Some expressions witnessed little change in their structure, but preserved their connotations as before like Majlis Shourai Islami instead of Majlis Shurai Meli, Wazarat Difa' instead of Wazarat Jank (Ministry of War), Shurahai Islami (Islamic Councils) instead of Anjamnhai Ayalti Wawilayati, Nahdat Sawad Amouzi (Renaissance to Eliminate Illiteracy) instead of Kamitah ya Meli Bikarr Ba Bi Sawadi (the National Committee for Fighting Illiteracy). Also, some new terms and expressions were created in the Farsi language to refer to the new governmental institutions and departments established by the new regime like Inghilab Islami (Islamic revolution), Vilayat Faqih (Supreme Leadership), Jumhouri Islami (Islamic Republic), Maqam Rahbari (Leadership Status), Khadmat Kazar Shura (Servant), Shourai Inghilab (Council of the Revolution), Shurai Nkhaban (Guardian Council), Majlis Khabarkhan (Assembly of Experts), Mujama' Tashkhees Maslahat Nizam (Expediency Council), Namayandki Wali Faqih (Representation of the Supreme Leader), Sazman Tableeghat Islami (Institution of Promoting Islam), Kameetah Ya Inqilab Islami (Committee of the Islamic Revolution), Sabah Basdaran Inqilab Islami (RG Army), Basij (Mobilization Forces), Dadkao Inqilab Islami (Court of the Islamic Revolution), and Imam.

D. Language, Exporting Culture and Revolution in Iran: Mechanisms and Procedures.

The Persian language has a special place for Iranians as a point of pride and superiority. It played a central role in exporting the Iranian culture and revolution. This can be referred to by the following:

1. Persian Language as a tool to promote the Iranian culture.

One of the most prominent Persian language professors in Iran, Dr Barweez Natil Khnilri⁽²⁷⁾ said about it, "I am proud of the Persian language because it represents me and my nation's language; the language that satisfied enemies before friends; the language in which Sa'di chanted his love poetry... my country is not what you think; my country is not surrounded by these four borders only; where the Iranian culture exists, my home exists because there my soul and my taste find their knowledge. I do not say that culture is the language, but language is part of culture; a big part of it..."⁽²⁸⁾

The Persian language in the view of Haq Shnas, a Professor of Persian linguistics, does not represent national reality or a geographic place, but a cultural and historical reality. This means that all Iranian ethnicities utilize this language inside the framework of one culture, one historical background, and one joint destiny, which ultimately, builds one nation. He adds that this cultural and historical origin of the Persian language liberated it, all the time, from any geographic restraints and limitations.⁽²⁹⁾

These characteristics make the Persian language the voice of the revolution, "This language is the expressing tongue of the revolution. It perfectly documented the glories of the revolution and its setbacks and defended its ideas and thoughts; it is the language that will convey the heritage of the glories of the revolution to generations to come."⁽³⁰⁾

The Iranian Scholar, Murtaza Motaheri⁽³¹⁾ in his book, made a popular statement in Persian that expressed his love for this language when he said, "In some cultures language has a greater role than religion or society in preserving these cultures and their continuity, which applies to the Persian language."⁽³²⁾ In another place in his book, Motaheri refers to the relationship of the Persian language with the Islamic culture saying, "Had Persian been lost, we would not have had the treasures that contain the Islamic and Quranic concepts and that connect the Persian language to Islam in a strong and everlasting bond like the books, Mathnawi Ma'nawi, Kilstan, Dewan Hafiz, Nizami Kanjawi, and other hundreds of masterpieces."⁽³³⁾

To describe the role of the Persian language in exporting the Iranian culture, we must explain the relationship between them. The Iranian culture, as mentioned before, is a message that must be transformed by the Persian language that takes the role of a mediator and conveyor of this culture.

This message today in Iran is the Iranian culture with its Shiite background rooted

in ancient Zoroastrianism, as stated by Motaheri when he said, “Iranians introduced the remaining of the Iranian ancient culture after they adjusted and refined it to Islam.”⁽³⁴⁾ Indeed, the culture of any nation reflects its ideas, beliefs, ethics, arts, values, customs, and its social transformation over a long period of time.

Mohammad Hameed Khani explains the roots of the Iranian culture being exported by saying, “We did not receive this culture and these values easily. We owe the prophet of Islam, Ali, and the Infallible imams who struggled throughout their lives for this Iranian Islamic culture. Today, the Iranian culture and Islamic Iran owe the Imam (about Khomeini) who raised, through his unparalleled struggle, Iran’s Islam and the Islamic republic in the world. He is truly the reviver of Mohammad’s religion. We also owe the Supreme Leader...”⁽³⁵⁾

Iran has various cultural capabilities. Each one can motivate foreigners to learn the Persian language. For example, the history of ancient Iranian civilization is a point of attraction for non-native speakers of Persian to learn this language. The official institutions in Iran are aware of this issue and have directed the centers of Persian language teaching for foreigners to introduce beneficial programs for those students by including exploratory tourist visits to historical places in Iran in their educational programs. Nevertheless, these visits focus on ideological places like scholastic Hawzas, Shiite Imams’ shrines and of their grandchildren, sectarian personalities, charities, and others they consider historical places of interest for foreigners. Through these visits, Iran tries to attract the educated foreign people to the Shiite religious culture and to the Shiite sect. For example, by studying the series, “A Trip with Persian Language,”⁽³⁶⁾ which is a series of Persian language lessons directed for Arabs; written, televised, and introduced on Arabic TV channels, students are introduced to Iranian culture. These series include Shiite religious culture like visiting the shrines and tombs of Imams, holding condolence councils, and funerals on popular sectarian occasions (class no 24). The lessons also include Iranian historical events like the reference to the Iraqi-Iranian war that carry’s sectarian inferences (class of the unknown martyr, no 32). The motives behind writing these lessons are visible when the writer focuses on the revolutionary dimension saying, “In addition to the aforementioned reasons, the important cultural and progressive role of Iranians on the regional and international arena- especially after the victory of the great Islamic revolution- notably attracts the attention of the world- especially the Muslim world- to Iran as a model of independence, freedom, development, and because of its stand against the tyrant powers...”

The same theme can be found in other books to teach Persian language to foreigners. This means the inclusion of the Shiite and revolutionary beliefs in the teaching lessons that are supposed to be educational. Some of these books are “Persian Language” for Ahmad Saffar Muqadam that includes some lessons concerning Shiite sectarian symbols (the tenth lesson: Righteous Imam Tomb).

Another book is “Teaching Persian Language from the Elementary Phase to the Advanced Phase” for Mahdi Derghamian that includes intensive sectarian lessons like Sectarian Memories, Solace in Iran, Muharram, and condolence councils...”⁽³⁷⁾

The literature is also one of the Iranian cultural elements that attracts foreigners and evokes their feelings and literary appreciation. In fact, Iranians introduced Persian language teaching books to foreigners with a variety of literary contents that include poetry and prose. With the inclusion of Shiite poets and poetry that praises the revolution, its founders, its principles, and expectations. Most educational books written in Iran, if not all, use this literary theme in teaching Persian language to foreigners. Also, other topics like arts, cinema, traditions, customs, folklore, feasts, and Iranian occasions take on an important part in Persian language teaching as enticing cultural insights for foreigners.⁽³⁸⁾

2. Persian language as a tool for exporting the Iranian revolution abroad.

Ali Khamenei explained the importance of the Persian language for the Iranian regime in a speech he delivered in the presence of members of the Higher Council of Persian Language at the Iranian Radio and Television Corporation in 1992 when he was quoted as saying, “I believe the regime personalities recognize the status of the Persian language. The reason is that Iran has a message to export to the world, which is our revolutionary Islam. We have a message to the world that can be conveyed by one and only tool, which is the Persian language. When I think of this message, I find that this language must be able to carry the terms and expressions of our own; the rich expressions and ideas of the regime. Indeed, we need a strong, persistent, and widely-spread Persian language that we have with the blessing and grace of God.”⁽³⁹⁾

As a practical process of this linguistic policy, the Persian language witnessed, in the age of the revolution, the penetration of revolutionary ideas into it, the use of new terms and expressions that expressed the spirit of the revolution and its message. The language was sponsored and supported by the state.

Post Iranian revolution, the Persian language expanded because of the significant transformations in the cultural, political, and social spheres in Iran. Given the conviction that the Persian language is the carrier of the message of the revolution and its concepts, this language and its educational texts witnessed many notable changes and big efforts were made to promote it in other countries. This was facilitated by several procedures taken by Iran like the establishment of the Higher Council for Cultural Revolution and the Research and Planning Institution in the Ministry of Education that authorized educational textbooks. In cooperation with many experts, this institution re-wrote, and published textbooks for Iranians and foreigners in agreement with the new ideological and sectarian background underpinning the Iranian revolution. Stemming from this assumption, all educational materials and topics related to the Monarchy and the Shahanshahi era were omitted and re-written in consideration of the new Iranian ideas and spirit.⁽⁴⁰⁾

To achieve this goal, the ancient literary heritage was carefully studied to distinguish between the good that could be published and conveyed grounded in the standards and directions that were drawn by the founders of the Iranian revolution headed by Khomeini. He drew a roadmap concerning this issue in his speech when he said, "Honest writers and authors who spent years of oppression and isolation under a tyrant and terrorist government have to use freedom that cost pure blood of martyrs and must not ignore the divine values...". Ali Khamenei also said, "Persian language is a divine blessing... it is the language of the revolution, religion, revolutionary Islam, and the nations' love."⁽⁴¹⁾

After victory of the revolution all official institutions and departments headed by the Ministry of Education, looked at the Persian language as a rich heritage reflecting the Iranian rich culture and civilization and a tool to carry the ideas, principles, and values of the revolution. They believed that one of their priorities was to preserve, spread and promote this language.⁽⁴²⁾

These efforts were not confined to the Iranian interior only, but included outsiders as well. The departments responsible for developing, spreading, and promoting the Persian language, moved to accomplish this goal. This was achieved by writing new textbooks, cutting off all ties with the former political regime, and purifying textbooks from the Shahanshahi ideas, contents, and culture.

Iran also built schools and cultural centers abroad. The number of schools and centers increased from forty-seven in 1989 to more than 120 in more than 109 cities in the world. This is, along with the tens of cultural centers in world capitals that work autonomously from the Iranian cultural attaches in these capitals. Furthermore, Iran dispatches experts and specialists in the Persian language and Iranian culture to these centers, distributes books and teaching aids. Also, Iran holds courses for Persian language teaching in many cities of the world like Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, London, Paris, Stockholm, Aya Sofia, Irwin, and many other Arab and Muslim capitals. Moreover, Iran introduces basic lessons in the Persian language and revolutionary Iranian culture for thousands of foreigners living in Iran- especially Afghan and Iraqi refugees.

Some of the other influential procedures in achieving this goal was via establishing a special department in the Foreign Ministry for promoting the Persian language and the Iranian culture under the name, Markaz Kastarsh Zaban Persian (Center of promoting Persian language). This center succeeded in establishing representations in the Iranian embassies all over the world. In more than 130 representations, this center provides an educational, cultural, and sectarian program for students, researchers, and all concerned by introducing Persian language teaching courses, holding exhibitions, and other activities. In the same regard, the Iranian accredited cultural centers abroad introduce such services autonomously from the center. They also provide aids for universities and cultural centers that teach Persian language

and Iranian culture in the world by dispatching Iranian teachers, exchange students, and holding intensive courses for foreign Persian language teachers. Also, other institutions have been opened for the same purpose such as the Council of Promoting Persian Language in the Ministry of Culture and Religious Guidance, the Persian Language Association, and the International Center for Teaching Persian Language for Foreigners in the University of Tehran. This Center is active in teaching Persian language for diplomats, businessmen, tourists, and international students.

Iran implemented all these policies and procedures to promote the Persian language and Iranian culture and to export the Iranian revolution to other countries.

Conclusion

Since Persian is a basic component of the Iranian identity, Iran's national language, and the language of its revolution, it has always been one of the most important tools of the Iranian governments. The interest in consolidating this language internally, supporting its role in promoting the Iranian culture on the international level, and exporting the Iranian revolution and its principles to the outside have been a top priority for the Iranian decision makers, starting from the first government in the modern age up until the revolution and beyond. In fact, this policy succeeded on the international level. Persian has occupied the second rank of importance in the Muslim world after the Arabic language. In modern days, it has become more open to the West and has been highly influenced by it. The method of the Persian language has become closer to the tastes and perceptions of the public because of its engagement with the European languages, its renewal, and its disposal of the ancient heritage. Also, the Persian language has resulted in the opening of universities, schools, and institutes all over the world that positively reflect on Iran in terms of its culture, tourism, and civilization. This policy internally might incur a serious impact on Iran because of its growing interest in 'Persianizing' public life in the Non-Persian territories and cornering the other domestic languages and dialects. This might threaten the peaceful coexistence between all languages, nationalities, and ethnic groups in Iran. This policy drove the Non-Persian ethnicities in Iran to ask for their legitimate linguistic and cultural rights, but things might go further than that if Iran does not resolve this issue. Minorities might increase their demands from identity and cultural rights into demands of separation and independence. Indeed, the most important issue for man is his identity- cultural, religious, and geographic identity. Denying nationalities their identities incurs cultural and linguistic separation, leading to a collapse and break down of social bonds and the fall of society. The idea of exporting the revolution to the outside world might lead to serious problems and spread chaos, turmoil, and sedition between people of the same society, which might have a further negative impact on Iran and its image, given that it is already stigmatized with being a rogue and evil state.

Endnotes

- (1) Kold Julius, Kolb William: Dictionary of Social Sciences, Tehran, 2nd edition, p 629-630.
 - (2) Kick Victor: Proposal for Evaluating Arab and Iranian Civilizations, Urbanization, and Cultures, Beirut: Issues 2004 ,7-6, p27.
 - (3) Saroukhai Baqir: An Introduction to the Social Sciences Encyclopedia, Kehan, Tehran, 1997, chppter12, p175.
 - (4) Mansouri Javad: Culture of Independence, Tehran: Political and International Studies Bureau in the Foreign Ministry, 1991, chapter 3, p 9.
 - (5) Qaisari Noura: speeches in Identity and Traditions of the Iranian Thinkers, Tehran: the Iranian Urbanization Publications, 1997, p 53.
 - (6) Dawri Ardkani: the Persian Language and Forms of the Iranian National Identity in the National Studies, Tehran: Nakar, issue 2007 ,3, p 20.
 - (7) Khomeini Ruhollah Mousavi: Annour Newspaper, Tehran: Institute of Organizing and Promoting Ayatollah Khomeini Legacy, chapter 12, p 6.
 - (8) Khomeini Ruhollah Mousavi: Annour Newspaper, Tehran: Institute of Organizing and Promoting Ayatollah Khomeini Legacy, chapter 18, p 209.
 - (9) An Iranian contemporary poet. He was born in 1928 in the city of Kashan and graduated in 1953 from the College of Fine Arts in Tehran. He is a painter as well as poet. In addition to his poetry books, he held many exhibitions for his paints all over Tehran.
 - (10) An opening verse of a popular poem for Sihrab Sabhari. It says: I am from Kashan... my age is not bad... my career is painting... sometimes I make a cage of dyes... I sell it to you... to please your hearts... with the songs of anemone caged in them.
 - (11) Quotes from the speech of Ali Khamenei he delivered at his meeting with members of the Higher Council for Cultural Revolution in 2003.
 - (12) Rabbani Ja'far: National Identity, Tehran: Establishment of the Frames and Guardians Association in Tehran, 2002, p 88
 - (13) Sane' Ijlal Maryam: An Introduction to the Iranian Culture and Identity, Tehran: the Iranian Urbanization Publications, 2005, p 105
 - (14) Shah Naqi Najeeemah: Determining the Foundations of the National Identity and Studying them in the Persian Language Books, Tehran, 2009, p 36
 - (15) Voler Graham and Frankeh Raheem: the Arab Shiites... the Forgotten Muslims, translated by Khdeejah Tanrizi, Tehran and Qum, 2005, p 172-171
 - (16) For more information, one can review the article published by Dr. Mohammad Jmeih in the Arabian Jerusalem newspaper in November 2016 ,24, under the title, "Iran: Sectarianism of the Constitution and Practices"
 - (17) Salara Mohammad: Islamic Revolution and Exporting Cultural Values in the Thought of the Islamic Revolution, Tehran: Summer of 2003, issue 5
 - (18) David Marsh: Theory and Approach in Political Sciences, translated into Persian by Ameer Mohammad Haji Yousfi, Tehran: Center of Strategic Studies, 1999, p 200-195
 - (19) Milliken, Jennifer: The study of Discourse, in international Relations, 2)5 1999), p230-229.
 - (20) No doubt, the influence of cultures on each other- especially the prevalent culture over the helpless one- results, over history, in significant and comprehensive changes to the extent of replacing one another or combining both cultures to come up with a new one with different characteristics, which applies to what happened between both the Arabic and Persian cultures. Despite none of them eliminated the other, the impact of the Arab Islamic culture was clear on the Persian culture since the beginning of the Islamic conquest of Persia until today.
 - (21) Suleimani Qahraman: the opening of Namah Parsi, Tehran, Ministry of Culture, issue 2003 ,29, p 2.
 - (22) Risager, Karen: Language culture Pedagogy, Toronto: Multilingual matters LTD, 2007.
 - (23) Ma'soum Najad and Haqani Nadir: Language Teaching and the Statement of Culture, in the Development of Language Teaching, Tehran, issue 2007 ,88, p 4.
 - (24) Hamti Mandana: Language and Cultural Identity, in Culture and Society, Tehran, issue 1998 ,1, p 15.
- Mujtahidi Hussein: Strong and Substantial Mechanisms for the National Identity in Iran, History section in the University of Aroumiah.

- (25) Zumurdian, R: *Dialects Guide and Description*, Mashhad, Furdousi University, 2001, p 37.
- (26) The current Iranian constitution ratified by general public referendum on the April 1st, 1979 states in some of its articles like 20 ,19 ,3 on ensuring legitimate freedoms, equality, justice, and eliminate inequality between members of the society.
- (27) Barweez Natil Khnlari, an Iranian contemporary scholar, politician, linguist, writer, and poet. He was arrested after eruption of the revolution and quit all his academic and official activities. Died in 1990 at age 77 years old. The most prominent works of him are the books: *Grammar of Persian Language*, *History of Persian Language*, and the *Historical Dictionary of the Persian Language*.
- (28) Khanilri Barweez: *Linguistics and Persian Language*, Tehran: Tous, 2007, p175.
- (29) Haq Shnas Ali Mohammad: *the Persian Language and its Literature between Traditions and Novelty*, Tehran: 2003, p 187.
- (30) Hamty Mandana: *Language and the Cultural Identity in Culture and Society*, Tehran: issue 1998 ,1, p 20.
- (31) Murtaza Motaheri: cleric, Professor of Islamic Philosophy, Speech Science, Explanation of Quran in the University of Tehran, and Member of the Islamic Union Commission. He is one of founders and theorist of the regime of the Iranian Republic. After the revolution, he was appointed chief of the Council of the Revolution and was assassinated in 1979. Wrote many books like *Islam and Requirements of the Age*, *Imamate and Leadership*, *Future of Islamic Revolution*, *Mutual Services between Islam and Iran*.
- (32) Motaheri Murtaza: *Mutual Services between Islam and Iran*, Tehran, Sadra Publications, 2000, p 114.
- (33) Motaheri Murtaza: previous reference, p 375.
- (34) Motaheri Murtaza: *Mutual Services between Islam and Iran*, Tehran, Sadra Publications, 2000, p 119.
- (35) Khani Hameed Mohammad: *Studying the Role of Farsi Teaching in Explaining the Iranian Islamic Culture*, *Development of the Persian Language Teaching*, Tehran: 1998, issue 47, p 46.
- (36) Dr. Masoud Fikri in cooperation with Saied Ali Abu Talibi: *A Trip with the Farsi*, Tehran: 2011.
- (37) Maqdam Ahmad Safar: *Persian Language*, Tehran: Department of Promoting Farsi. Research and Studies Center in the Humanitarian Sciences, 2013. Derghamian Mahdi: *Persian Teaching from Elementary to Advanced Phase*, Tehran: Department of Promoting Persian and its Literature, 2002.
- (38) Qiadi Hussein Ali: *Explanation of the Persian Poetry Transformation after the Islamic Revolution*, under investigation, Tehran, summer of 2 ,2001nd issue, p 40.
- (39) Quotes from Ali Khamenei speech he delivered at his meeting with members of the Higher Council of the Cultural Revolution in 2003.
- (40) Razmjo, Hassan: *the Revolution and School Books*, in the *Voice of Light*, Tehran: 1997, p 110-109.
- (41) A quote from the speech of the Supreme Leader's speech he delivered at the Radio and Television Establishment, copied from *Soroush* magazine, year 1995 ,17, issue 770, p 6.
- (42) Quoted from a debate with Iran's Minister of Education, Mohammad Ali Najafi under the title, "Persian Language and Literature, big heritage", *Soroush* magazine, year 1995 ,17, issue 770. P 12.