

## A Genre Analysis of Kurdish Death Announcement Notices

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### **Abstract:**

The present paper examines the genre of death announcement notices (DANs) in Kurdish. Those notices have been regularly used but never been subject to an academic investigation in the context of Kurdish language. This study aims at outlining the linguistic structure of DANs as well as the socio-cultural influences that contribute to their final composition. To illustrate the basic components of the notices, some 60 samples of women and men DANs or funeral posters, which were hanged in different locations such as mosques and major intersections of the research area were collected and analyzed using Swale's (1990) genre move analysis. The analysis revealed three moves, namely, *Signaling the Event*, *Identifying the Deceased* and *Funeral Arrangements* as the obligatory components of the DANs in Kurdish. The notices were to some extent grounded in Islamic and Arabic traditions. Traces of gender bias were found in the corpus.

**Keywords:** Kurdish Death Notices, Swale's Move Analysis, Genre Study.

## Theoretical Background:

Death is an inevitable end to every individual's life. Every day people of all ages die and their death is announced publically in different ways so that relatives and friends gather around the survivors and support them in a difficult phase of their lives. In most cultures around the world, announcing the death is the first step of mourning rituals. The linguistic choices for announcing the death is meant to both create grief in the bereaved and encourage appreciation of the deceased in the public (Afful, 2012: 119). However, like any other written document, this written text is culture-sensitive as it mirrors the beliefs of the people who write it and affect the thinking of those who read it (Moses & Marelli, 2004:123). Thus, the structure and components of death announcement notices may vary from culture to culture.

Death announcement notices (DAN) are generally treated as a separate genre in sociolinguistic and anthropological studies. There is a rich literature over the term genre, which has been widely used in the past decades in various disciplines of social sciences and humanities. Many definitions for the term have been offered, which despite differences, put the accent on some common features of genres.

The word 'genre' was initially used for an independent style of art or literature but today, as stated by Swales (1990:33), a genre is "a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations". To Miller and Kelly (2018:269) "the idea of genre marks repeated patterns in human symbolic production and interaction, patterns that are taken to be meaningful."

A communicative purpose is usually regarded as the decisive criterion for identification of a genre. In Paltridge's (2012: 62-63) terms, genres can refer to activities or ways which individuals in a community employ through the use of language to accomplish a purpose or task. Johnstone (2008:182-184) maintains a genre goes hand in hand with an expected purpose or activity, stressing that the ability to distinguish, replicate and use a genre is to be learnt. Likewise, Bhatia (1993a, cited in Upton and Cohen, 2009:593) argues genres are centered over their communicative purposes and are restricted by constraints that the community members are sensitive about.

Investigating "regularities of structure" that help to set apart different kinds of texts is called genre analysis (Lieungnapar & Todd, 2011:1). Nowadays not only linguistic but also rhetorical features are included in genre studies because to assign a text to a certain genre requires analyzing different linguistic and contextual features such as its title, author, audience, purpose, physical form and style. Consequently, identifying a genre is a complicated task that calls for a dynamic view (Paltridge 2012: 66, 75; Devitt, 2015: 44-45).

One dominant method of genre analysis is the genre move analysis, in which the language of a discourse is broken down into smaller constituents called moves. At first it was primarily employed to investigate the schematic and rhetorical structure of academic discourses in fields such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). However, later it became a practical tool for analyzing different written and spoken discourses of daily social life, such as congratulations notes, wedding invitations and death announcements (Elekaei, Faramarzi and Heidari Tabrizi, 2014:39).

Pertinent to the context of death are the terms obituary and death notice. Both contain texts for announcing the death of someone as well as some major information about the deceased. As Cebrat (2016 :93) explains general dictionaries cannot be reliable for a complete distinction of the two terms. He believes that death notices or death announcements contain “basic information” about the deceased which survivors or colleagues write and publish just like advertisements. While obituaries are treated as news items in a newspaper which, in addition to providing the basic information, tell a bit about the life story of the deceased. Rather than differentiating obituary and death notice, Fernandez (2006:104-105) distinguishes between the informative and the opinative obituaries. To him those texts which supply “facts” like the name of the deceased or the funeral arrangements are informative obituaries. On the contrary, in opinative obituaries despite the basic information, the “emotions” are more prominent. For the purpose of this study, obituaries and death announcement notices are termed as two different genres. In the analysis part of the current study, the term obituary is avoided and DANs are taken as synonym for the funeral posters which are ordered by the family of the deceased.

## Literature Review:

The genres tackled, in relation to death, are mainly obituaries that are published in newspapers. Matiki (2001) examined newspaper obituaries published in 24 editions of three popular Malawi papers to reveal the pragma-lingual as well as socio-cultural features of the obituaries and found traces of the Christian/Islamic norms and features from both African and Western cultures in Malawian obituaries.

In a different study, Moses and Marelli (2003) scrutinized obituaries penned either by family members and friends of the deceased or by professional writers of the *The New York Times*. Some 25 issues of the daily were investigated to find out how the common beliefs about life and death, causes of death, and life expectancy are reflected in obituaries. They also examined the gender differences in terms of issuance of edited and paid obituaries and found women are under-represented in this respect.

Afful (2012) designated seven moves in Ghanaian death announcements, including two optional moves. The obligatory moves were identified as *caption, list of members of family, clan, organizations and other, profile of the deceased, funeral arrangement* and *list of family members*. The corpus of the study included death announcements from three popular newspapers.

After comparing a corpus of 200 death announcements of men and women in Iran, Elekaei, Faramarzi and Heidari Tabrizi (2014) reported seven moves (six obligatory and one optional) in the structure of death announcement notices in the country. The writers also carried out two other case studies, each on the basis of 100 samples. In their second study, they analyzed the samples of funeral posters for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> days and the anniversary of the death which resulted in another move. The last study examined the representative structure as well as lexico-grammatical aspects of newspaper obituaries and funeral posters which showed how the profiles of men and women are depicted in terms of socio-cultural, Islamic and Iranian norms.

The newspaper obituaries in Iraqi Arab culture, according to a study undertaken by Al-Zubaidi (2014), exhibit eleven moves. The obituaries are neatly interwoven with Arab traditions and Islamic beliefs. For instance, the first move of the obituary which is an optional component may contain a direct verse from the Holy Qur'an, which reveals the cause or manner of death. The death might be a normal death, as a result of sickness or a car accident or it could be a sacred death or martyrdom. No matter how important this cause or manner of death could be, the most important ritual in Arab and Islamic culture is to remind oneself of the Almighty God when the tragedy of death occurs. Hence, in Iraqi obituaries the cause or manner of death has become an optional move while the *God provoking move* is established as an obligatory move along with *announcing the death move, identifying the deceased move*, and *identifying arrangements for receiving condolences move*.

Recently, Salahshour (2017) investigated death announcement notices in the context of Tabriz, a major city of Iran and identified eight moves with a fixed order. In his “thick” analysis of macro and schematic structures of the samples, he also cast some light on the reciprocal and dynamic nature of the genre by discussing key socio-economic processes like growth of population, immigration, and increasing price of plots of land.

Again using move-analysis, Sawalmeh (2019) compared 150 obituary announcements of the Muslim community in Jordan as well as 100 obituary announcements of the Christian population of the country and demonstrated that the obituaries of both religious communities comprise eleven moves. Like the previous studies, Sawalmeh's analysis also highlights the impact of social and cultural factors on the composition and structure of obituaries.

## Research Objectives and Questions:

To the researcher's knowledge, so far no study has been undertaken to investigate the genre of death notices in Kurdish. So, the current study aims at outlining the generic component of the DAN genre in Kurdish, in terms of its linguistic, rhetorical and organizational structures. However, since genres are "representations of reasoning and purposes characteristic of [a] culture" (Miller 1984:164-165), the socio-cultural communicative functions of the genre will also be analyzed. Thus, the study aims at answering the following questions:

1. What is the underlying generic move structure of Kurdish DANs?
2. What are the lexico-grammatical features of Kurdish DANs?
3. What socio-cultural aspects of Kurdish culture are reflected in Kurdish DANs?

## Sampling and Methodology :

The study was based on a corpus of 60 DANs or funeral posters (30 of men and 30 of women) in central Erbil, collected from September 2019 to January 2020. This included only DANs of Muslim women and men. To pile up the corpus photos of samples which were hanged on poles in major intersections, walls of mosque and entrances of buildings or shops and other public places were taken. Condolence notices written by relatives, friends or entities which look like DANs were excluded from the corpus. The corpus covered only the funeral posters or DANs authorized by the first rank survivors of the deceased.

Regarding the method of analysis, Swales' genre move analysis method was adopted. Swales (1990:58) points out that a genre can be identified in terms of distinct and common communicative purposes which accompany communicative events and impose restrictions over anticipated audience, the structure, content and style of the genre. To achieve a communicative purpose, a text is structured according to some units, called moves. Moves are discriminative elements of a generic structure into which a text is organized (Grossi, 2015:28). The introduction of research articles, according to Swales' model (1990:137-166) comprises three rhetorical moves which correspond to three communicative purposes: *establishing a territory*, *establishing a niche* and *occupying the niche*. As for the size of each move, sometimes a single phrase, a clause or a sentence and other times several sentences or a whole paragraph may be used to express one purpose. Through move analysis the moves, strings of moves and major linguistic aspects of a text are identified and analyzed (Ibid).

There are two approaches to identifying the rhetorical moves in genre move analysis: "context-first" and "text-first" approaches. Most frequent terms to describe the approaches are top-down and bottom-

up methods, respectively. Under the former a genre is first examined for discovering its moves on the basis of the communicative purposes. By contrast, in text-first or bottom-up approach the starting point of analysis is the examination of typical linguistic patterns of the discourse. (Paltridge, 2012:77; Lieungnapar & Todd, 2011:1; Cebrat, 2016:37).

One more point should be mentioned about the method of dealing with the corpus. The researchers who used Swales' model to study DANs or obituaries depended heavily on their own linguistic and cultural background in their analysis. Likewise, for the current paper, the researcher as a native speaker of the Kurdish language, who shares the target community's social and cultural background has examined the genre in question.

For a detailed analysis of the genre, first the context in which Kurdish DANs are used as well as their communicative purpose will be illustrated. Then using a top-down approach to genre move analysis, the moves will be identified in sequence. The underlying function of each move will be discussed in a separate sub-section along its key lexico-grammatical and socio-cultural features.

### **Contextual Background :**

The current study is carried out in the context of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Its capital city, Erbil, with a population of over one million people, constitutes the precise context of the research. The majority of Erbil dwellers are Kurds, who profess Islam, more specifically Sunni Islam. Also rooted in Erbil community are some religious and ethnic minorities, like Christians, and Turkmens, who are privileged to exercise their religious, political and language rights. Regardless of their different backgrounds and aspirations, the prevailing majority in Erbil speaks Kurdish, mainly central Kurdish. No matter how different burial and funeral rituals in different religions of Erbil could be, the adherents of any religious or members of any ethnic background fall in the same path for announcing a death. Considering the prevalent use of the Internet in Kurdistan, for many the social media networks have become the first tribune to declare the death of a family member or a close relative. Writing SMS messages or making telephone calls are other options.

One tradition which has not been outdated by the technology is ordering DANs. These are produced by calligraphy shops or the printing houses. The text of the notice is often provided by the survivors. However, sometimes the producers take note of some information such as the necessary names and dates to incorporate it into a ready template of DANs. The notice is written on pieces of black clothing or printed like posters with black backgrounds. Later copies of the notice are put up in different locations in the city as in major intersections and on shops, the iron fences of parks or hospitals, walls of schools, the entrances of major allies and almost every other public place. The most common place

where DANs are put up are at the gate and front wall of the mosque where the condolence ceremony takes place. The difference between this location and the rest goes back to the fact that at the mosque every close relative or establishment associated with the dead person or their close relatives, political parties, and others might post their DANs.

There is no standard for the size of the funeral poster, though it is usually a 100 by 50 cm rectangular shape. Similarly, no limit is set for the number of copies of each DNA; survivors may suffice by only one notice or sometimes five or even more. Perhaps to make it easier for the mourners to locate the funeral place, multiple copies are hanged in entrances of different routes that lead to the funeral home or the mosque. It is observed that sometimes the use of multiple copies and the big size of the posters are to emphasize the high social statues of the deceased.

The text of the poster is usually in white which in combination with the black color of the background creates a contrast that can easily catch the eyes. Other colors could also be used sporadically to highlight names or some other important information. An interesting point here is that sometimes the use of these colors is politicized. Colors other than black and white might indicate the political affiliation of the deceased or sometimes of his/her family. Colors like yellow, green, blue and red are associated with different political parties in Kurdistan. Though conveying this political connotation in death notices is not as strong as it was once, in condolence posters (which resemble funeral notices) the practice is still alive. Here the political affiliation of the deceased (or of his/her family) and that of the entities that order the poster is indicated through the use of a specific color for highlighting the name of the deceased and/or the entity.

Announcing the death is of profound importance to the survivors as they remind people of their religious duties and social obligations towards the deceased and his/her family. Islam views death as just the beginning of another life, the afterlife. Thus, attending the funeral is for supporting the bereaved family to cope with their grief and also for praying to God to bestow mercy on the deceased. So, when the news of a death goes public, the family of the deceased expects the relatives, acquaintances and colleagues to be present at the funeral. The event is so important culturally and religiously that even the adversaries of the deceased or of their families may temporarily set their disputes aside and attend the ceremony to pray for the deceased because the common belief is that the deceased no longer has the chance to compensate or correct his/her wrongs.

Officially the funeral at mosques lasts for two days. Often the first day after the death has occurred a mosque and a funeral home are designated to host mourners. Because in Islam the corpse should be

buried at the earliest opportunity, on the same day that the death has occurred the survivors can only manage the burial ceremony and logistic preparation for the funeral.

During the funeral days, occasionally women and men can attend different halls of the same mosque but most often females should go to a funeral home which is typically the house of the deceased or his/her next of kin. At times, an entire alley is blocked since the funeral is held in a tent, set up in the middle of the route. Due to time scarcity some people may miss attending the funeral. Therefore, after the official funeral is over, men and women, without segregation, can meet the mournful family in their home. Thus, the unofficial funeral carries on for even weeks after the death to allow for people to offer their sympathy and prayers.

Frequently three days or a week after the death another ceremony is observed where the close relatives and friends of the deceased pay visit to his/her grave. Rarely the 40<sup>th</sup> day after the death and the anniversary are observed. These are often to honor martyrs or people who enjoyed high social or political status. No poster is made for announcing these occasions as they are usually declared officially through social media networks or mainstream media outlets.

## Results and Discussion

After analyzing the corpus, seven component moves were found in Kurdish DANs. Of these three moves, namely, *Signaling the Event*, *Identifying the Deceased* and *Funeral Arrangements*, were obligatory as they were found in all the samples. The rest were optional moves with different frequencies (less than 100%). The order of the moves varies to some extent but the one outlined in table below is the most popular.

**Table (1): Kurdish DAN Move Structure and Frequency**

Move No	Move Function	Women Data freq (pct)	Men Data Freq (pct)
1	Signaling the Event	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
2	Identifying the Deceased	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
3	Reference to Next of Kin	30 (100%)	29 (97%)
4	Date of Death	9 (30%)	9 (30%)
5	Cause of Death	2 (7%)	9 (30%)
6	Funeral Arrangements	30 (100%)	30 (100%)
7	Death as Truth	8 (27%)	8 (27%)

Note: (Freq) stands for frequency and (pct) for percentage. Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.



## Move 1 : Signaling the Event

This move declares the occasion for which the poster is issued. The Izafa construction *the funeral of* announces the death of someone whose identity will immediately be disclosed afterwards. The one-word phrase can stand on its own as the only constituent of the move or it may additionally contain the tensed clause *we announce*. In which case the structure of the move is changed from an Izafa phrase to a tensed clause. However, due to the embedded preposition in the Izafa construction, it is the identity of the deceased that immediately follows the construction, thus detaching the two parts of Move 1.

Rarely the Izafa construction *the funeral of* can be followed by another Izafa phrase which in English can be translated as “the passing away of”. This complementary part is redundant as the first phrase in itself denotes that a death has already occurred.

**Table (2): Syntactic Structure of Move 1**

Sample Data	Izafa Construction freq (pct)	Izafa Construction + Izafa Construction freq (pct)	Izafa Construction + Tensed Clause freq (pct)
Men	23 (77%)	3 (10%)	4 (13%)
Women	22 (73%)	2 (7%)	6 (20%)

Note: Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

## Move 2: Identifying the Deceased

This move details the profile of the deceased, as he/she is best recognized or known by people, as an individual. A combination of religious, social and professional titles and adjectives can precede and follow the personal name to allow for depicting an image of the deceased as complete as possible. Providing the correct and complete social image of the deceased is regarded as a token of the loyalty of the survivors towards the deceased.

### Religious Expressions

Most frequently, the expression *Xwa l y xo  b t* meaning “May God bless him/her” takes the initial position of the string. At first glance, it may look as a prayer, however, it is just a recent replacement for adjective *Xwal xo b * which was heavily used in DANs. The adjective, literally meaning “one who has already been forgiven by God” is an exact translation of the Arabic word *el merh m*. The word implies the deceased has already been forgiven by God; a view that runs contrary to the religious

credence of Muslims who maintain no one knows who God forgives until the doomsday. Nevertheless, despite the raised awareness concerning the implication of the term, its deep-rootedness in language makes it difficult to avoid it altogether, especially in oral contexts. Only one sample of the study contained the word. Another expression which may precede the name of the deceased in Move 2 could be *koçkirdû* meaning “the passed away person”. It denotes verbosity as the *Izafa* phrase in Move 1 in itself signals a death, rendering the use of such an expression superfluous.

**Table (3): Frequency of Religious Expressions**

Sample Data	Xwalêxoşbû “Already forgiven by God” freq (pct)	Xwa lêy xoş bêt “May God bless him/her” freq (pct)	Koçkirdû “the passed away person” freq (pct)
Man DANs	1(3%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)
Women DANs	0 (0%)	20 (67%)	4 (13%)

Note: Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

### Religious/ Professional/Honorific Titles

Next comes the religious or professional titles (or a combination of the two) as well as honorific forms of address. Regarding the religious markers, as observed in the samples, these could be titles like *Mullah* for men and *Haji* ( meaning one who has completed Hajj pilgrim) for both women and men (and sometimes *Hajiah* for women copying the feminine suffix of the original word in Arabic). The professional labels such as *teacher*, *lawyer* and *writer* can also emerge in this move but they precede the religious titles when they co-occur. The use of honorific titles seems to be very rare in the DANs, with only one example in the corpus containing the word *madam*, to refer to the deceased.

### Personal Names

The key component of Move 2 is the personal name of the deceased, generally put in brackets and written with a distinct color of the whole text. Here three generations are represented by citing the name of the deceased, that of his/her father and that of his/her grandfather. The cluster is written either in pure Arabic or Kurdish alphabet or a mixture of the two systems.

## Occupational Titles

Occupational titles as *butcher* or *tailor* are very common in Erbil. These have turned to a semi-surname chiefly for the Turkmens of the city who used to be famous for practicing different artisan professions. These were established when Erbil was under the rule of the Othman Empire. Nevertheless, today people other than Turkmens may be recognized by their occupational titles.

## City/Town/Village Attributes

Occasionally, the name of the hometown or birth town of the deceased such as *Koyî* meaning “from the town of Koye” and even neighborhoods such as *Sêtaqanî* meaning “from Sêtaqan ( a neighborhood of Erbil)” surface in Move 2.

## Clan Identity

Titles denoting geographical roots of the deceased seem to be mutually exclusive of a recurrent constituent, i.e. the clan tagging which is still an inseparable part of the identity of a great part of Kurdish community. Clan is still a big social asset and a unique source of pride for many Kurdish individuals. Through alluding to clan’s name in the DNAs, survivors target two objectives; enriching the description of the deceased as well as expressing adherence to the clan and solidarity with its members. Sometimes it is not the three-generation name of the deceased but the name of the clan that is recognized by the viewers, pushing them to deliberate over their relation with the deceased and to decide whether it is imperative to attend the funeral. It’s probable that the reading public may have not known the deceased or even heard of him/her before but only in order to accomplish a religious obligation and to display their solidarity with their clan, they may attend the funeral. Equally seven samples of men and women DANs used clan names for defining the deceased.

## Epithet

Epithets characteristic of the deceased may come last in the string of his/her description. These could be either nicknames or just a fuller description of the personal name where religious/social/professional titles are added to the three-generation names of the deceased. This element was found in four samples of men DNAs but none of the women.

## Move 3: Reference to Next of Kin

The people in the nuclear and the extended families of the deceased hope and expect others to share their grief. That’s why their names are cited in the funeral poster. The more names on the list, the bigger is the chance for a more crowded mourning and grief-sharing. Given this, in case the dead

person is not known by the passersby, the cited names of the next of kin will help them to contemplate over their relations with the next of kin and choose whether to attend the ceremony. This speculation and decision-making is pivotal for upholding social ties.

An obvious gender bias is observed in this move since dead people from both genders are introduced in terms of their male next of kin. The next of kin for women in their nuclear and extended families are their husbands, brothers, sons, uncles or male cousins. Similarly, there is no reference to close female relatives in the DANs for men whose next of kin are their brothers, sons, uncles or male cousins.

The family members can simply be referred to by their first name or depending on their social status, a range of titles and attributes that could accompany the name of deceased may also be attached to their two or three-generation personal names. This in turn will possibly amplify the size of the move, making it look longer than all other moves. Perhaps for that reason different versions of the DANs for the same person are issued. Typically, the content of the notices is the same, except for Move 3 where only a group of relatives are prioritized to be mentioned.

Despite its importance, this move might be missing in some funeral posters, as it was the case in two samples of men DANs.

Regarding the syntactic structure of the move, it might be a tensed independent clause, a tensed dependent clause marked by a relative conjunction or simply an Izafa construction containing a possessive suffix. However, the greatest tendency is towards the use of tensed dependent clauses, as shown in table (4).

**Table (4): Syntactic Structure of Move 3**

Sample Data	Tensed Independent Clause/ freq (pct)	Tensed Dependent Clause/ freq (pct)	Izafa Construction/ freq (pct)
Women DNAs	7 (23%)	15 (50%)	8 (27%)
Men DANs	8 (29%)	13 (46%)	7 (25%)

Note: Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

#### Move 4: Date of Death

Usually funeral posters have to be collected after the official ceremony is over. However, now and again several days after the official funeral, the posters can still be seen in public places. Therefore, the time when the death has occurred will tell if the funeral is fresh, especially in those notices in which the first day of the funeral is indicated by words as *tomorrow* or *today*. Apparently, this move is not very common, as only nine samples of each gender category contained the move.

The structure is a full independent clause, marked by expressions as *the date of*, *the day of*, and *the night of* which can precede the exact date of the death. The date can also occur on its own as the object of the preposition *on*, followed by the verb phrase *passed away*. Generally in Kurdish dates are only written in numbers, referring to the day, month and year, respectively. When a person has died overnight, the common practice is to write two different numbers in the slot intended for the day where a slash or hyphen separates the two.

Not quite often, the reason for the death which is a separate move can be incorporated in Move 4, as it was the case with two samples of men DANs.

#### Move 5: Cause of Death

Though not a very common component, this move will demonstrate the cause of death but not the exact one. This results in a kind of indirectness and ambiguity which certainly does not rise from the syntactic structure of the move. Rather, it's associated with concealing the necessary information. According to the posters, men and women regularly die as a result of ailment, fatal diseases, or heartbreaking accidents. In the context of the study citing a deadly disease like cancer or a condition like stroke in spoken and written discourses is still taboo. The same is true of suicide attempts which end in death. Also car accidents are categorized as heartbreaking accidents. Due to the nature of these taboos, those who view the poster are left with only speculations about the exact reason of the death unless they visit the relatives of the deceased and inquire about the reason of the death.

Table (5): Causes of Death in Kurdish DANs

Sample Data	A Deadly Disease freq (pct)	Ailment freq (pct)	Heartbreaking Incident freq (pct)	No Cause Given freq (pct)
Women DNAs	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1(3%)	28 (94%)
Men DNAs	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	21 (70%)

Note: Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

### Move 6: Funeral Arrangements

It's essential to guide the mourners as to where and when the funeral is held since parallel with traditions of most Islamic communities, the funeral in Kurdish culture is characterized by gender segregation. Men should not mingle with women during the official funeral days. The custom of keeping the women apart may source from two different reactions to the loss of a beloved person. Usually women react by crying loudly and displaying forms of self-torture as scratching their face or beating their breast, whereas men generally exercise restraint, a reaction recommended by Qur'an, too. Men abhor women's reactions, trying either to suppress them or keep them apart or even prevent them from attending the funeral in case they fear the women might create chaotic situations (Jonker, 1997, 154-155). The analysis of the corpus indicated that this view has been reflected in the Kurdish DANs. When the designated mosque for the funeral has an extra hall for women, the poster reads both genders can attend the mosque. However, in these mosques usually the hall for women is smaller than the prayer hall where men gather. It's also located at the back of mosque, with a different gate or entrance. If only the name of a mosque is given with no explanation about the location of the funeral for women, it's generally interpreted that women can attend a funeral home, which is either the house of the deceased or of one of his/her relatives. To easily locate the funeral place, at times a short address is supplemented which is frequently the name of a neighborhood and/or a famous supermarket, or even houses of famous people.

The other element of Move 6 is the funeral date. Usually the onset of the funeral is stated in the DAN in the all-numeral (day/month/year) format. Along with the date the names of days of the week or expressions like *the first day of the funeral is* may occur. Words like *today* and *tomorrow* are observed either when the only provided date is the date when the death has occurred or as a device to emphasize the starting day of the funeral. For those versions of funeral posters hanged on the walls or fences of

mosques, the date of the funeral may not be provided as the posters will be collected after two days when the ceremony is over. There are posters which are not hanged on mosques but still lack the funeral date; however, these contain the date of the death.

Regarding the syntactic construction of the move, a tensed independent clause is the prevailing structure while a noun phrase is a rare format.

### **Move 7: Death as Truth**

The function of this move is to remind the readers of the inevitability of death as a universal truth. According to Muslim's beliefs, whether plunged into the greatest tragedies or promoted to the climax of prosperity or success, believers must remind themselves of God's will in creating these circumstances which are only tests for weighing patience of believers and their appreciation of God's authority and wisdom. For Muslims the life and demise of every living being is in the hands of the Almighty God. Therefore, when a death occurs, believers have to surrender to God's wish without any objection, recalling that God takes back His creations. The belief is reflected in Surat 2 Aya 156 of Holy Quran, *Înna lillâh we înnâ îleyhî raciûn*, meaning "indeed to God we belong and to Him we shall return." Death conquering all is also cited in Quran in Surat 3 Aya 185, reading *Kullû nefsên zaêqetul mewt*, meaning "every soul shall taste death". These verses can constitute one independent but not a common move in the DANs. The verses were observed in the corpus but the first one was by far the most common one. The latter was found in only one sample, along with the first verse. These verses are written in Arabic alphabet but without the original diacritics of each word. The move shows versatility in terms of its location in the death notice, as it's usually the last move in the script or the one before the last or even the first.

Table (6)

## Frequency of Qur'anic Verse(s) in Kurdish DANs

Qur'anic Verses	Men DANs	Women DANs
Înna lîllah we îinna îleyhî raciûn freq (pct)	8 (27%)	8 (27%)
Kullû nefsên zaêqetul mewt freq (pct)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

Note: Decimals are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

### Summary Conclusion

The current paper set out to illustrate the schematic structure of the DANs in Kurdish. It explored the linguistic and functional/ communicative features of death notices, using Swale's (1990) genre move analysis as the method of analysis. The analysis established seven component moves in Kurdish DANs, which can appear in different orders. However, the usual order can be Move 1: *Signaling the Event*, Move 2: *Identifying the Deceased*, Move 3: *Reference to Next of Kin*, Move 4: *Date of Death*, Move 5: *Cause of Death*, Move 6: *Funeral Arrangements* and Move 7: *Death as Truth*. Only three of these, Move 1, Move 2, and Move 6 were obligatory and the rest were optional, occurring sporadically. These moves were represented by different syntactic units, including one-word or multi-word phrases as well as dependent or independent clauses or a combination of these.

The cultural, religious and social impacts, which were firmly incorporated in the structure of death notices, were also investigated. It turned out that for both the reading public and the survivors, the notices communicated significant messages and information that eventually help to safeguard the social position of the deceased (even after his/her death) and to strengthen the social ranking of the survivors as well. The script also serves as a tool to maintain and develop social ties. The use of clan names in the script of funeral posters echoed the traditional clan-based composition of the Kurdish community and reiterated aspirations to promote clan-based distinctions. It was also found that the Arabic and Islamic practices were deeply interwoven with the structure of the notices, for instance, in methods of referring to both the deceased and his/her next of kin or in the adoption of the alphabetic system for writing the script. The notices were characterized by gender segregation and bias against



women as they openly called for separate funeral venues for men and women. The gender bias was quite obvious as reference to the female next of kin of the deceased was prohibited altogether.

This study was to provide a description of the Kurdish death notices as thick and full as possible. Yet, as it could be the case with any other academic study, some aspects of this paper may call for an independent research. These could be investigation of taboos pertinent to causes of death, the factors yielding different order of moves, the adoption of the different alphabetic systems along with the stylistic, grammatical, punctuation and spelling mistakes of the scripts in Kurdish DANs. Similar studies can be carried out in the context of other dialects and sub-dialects of Kurdish, as the current study was exclusive to central Kurdish.

## التحليل النوعي للافيئات النعي في اللغة الكردية

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### الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن اللافيئات النعي او (DANs) Death Announcement Notices في اللغة الكردية. حيث يتم استخدام هذه الاعلانات بانتظام في سياق اللغة الكردية ولكن لم تخضع أبدًا للبحث الأكاديمي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد البنية اللغوية والبراغماتية للافيئات النعي وكذلك التأثيرات الاجتماعية والثقافية التي تسهم في تكوين النهائي لهذه اللافيئات. و لتوضيح المكونات الأساسية لهذا النوع، تم جمع حوالي 60 عينة من لافيئات النعي لرجال ولرجال وتحليلها باستخدام التحليل الحركي النوعي لسويل (1990). و قد كشفت الدراسة عن ثلاث حركات الالزامية وهي: الإشارة إلى الحدث ، وتحديد المتوفي و ترتيبات الجنازة بسبب تواجد هذه الحركات في جميع اللافيئات. و لقد كانت اللافيئات تستند إلى حد ما إلى التقاليد الإسلامية والعربية. و قد تم العثور على آثار التحيز بين الجنسين في جميع العينات.

**كلمات الافتتاحية:** لافيئات نعي في اللغة الكردية، التحليل الحركي لسويل، دراسة النوع.

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