THE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE IN THE KURDISH NARRATIVES PRODUCED BY 60 KURDISH-PERSIAN BILINGUALS

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ABSTRACT

Bilinguals are special speakers of language, capable of speaking two different languages. It is obvious that bilinguals' languages are always in contact and they can affect one another (sometimes) undesirably. This is why they usually "mix" their languages helplessly. Transference is not limited to phonetic levels rather lexical and syntactic are undoubtedly included in this phenomenon. In this paper we analyze the Ilami Kurdish narratives produced by 60 Kurdish-Persian bilinguals to show this transference. We will also discuss how the vulnerable parts of their first language (Ilami) are affected by the more powerful language (Persian). These students were requested to retell a pictorial story known as "The Frog Story" to show the impact of Persian as an official language through three mentioned levels of language. By analyzing our data we concluded that attrition ally Persian is neutralizing such Ilami phones (or allophones) as "ö-u", "g-ɟ" and "r-ɾ". At the morph syntactic level, some lexical and not grammatical items (i.e. plural marker and definiteness marker) are likely to be mixed.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Ilami Kurdish, Persian, Code-mixing, Attrition, The Frog Story.

INTRODUCTION

According to Webster's dictionary (1961) bilingual is defined as "having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristic of a native speaker; a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker' and bilinguals as 'the constant oral use of two languages'. In the popular view, being bilingual equals being able to speak two languages perfectly (Hamers & Blanc 2004, p.6). It may be surprising that more people in the world are bilingual than monolingual- a clear reason why bilingualism is worth studying (Myers-Scotton 2006, p.2).

A related issue concerns the mental representation of a bilingual's two languages and the processing emanating from such representation. Evidence exists for both separate storage and shared storage of the two languages in the bilingual's brain, resulting in the suggestion that bilinguals have a language store for each of their two languages and a more general conceptual store. There are strong, direct interconnecting channels between each of these three separate stores (Wei 2005, p.13).

Bilinguals transfer some of linguistic elements from one language into another; a sentence begins in one language, and then makes use of words or grammatical features belonging to another. Such mixed forms of language are often labeled with a hybrid name and they attract attitudes ranging from enthusiastic community support (as an expression of local identity) to

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outright condemnation (from some speakers of the related standard languages) (Crystal 2003, p.79). Code-mixing is sometimes distinguished, though not always in the same way, from "code-switching". E.g. where a speaker switches at frequent intervals from one language etc. to another, for no discoverable external reason (Matthews 2007, p.61) In psychology and in psycholinguistics the label *code-mixing* is used in theories that draw on studies of language alternation or code-switching to describe the cognitive structures underlying bilingualism. During the 1950s and 1960s, psychologists and linguists treated bilingual speakers as, in Grosjean's term, "two monolinguals in one person." This "fractional view" supposed that a bilingual speaker carried two separate mental grammars that were more or less identical to the mental grammars of monolinguals and that were ideally kept separate and used separately. Studies since the 1970s, however, have shown that bilinguals regularly combine elements from "separate" languages. These findings have led to studies of code-mixing in psychology and psycholinguistics. (Wikipedia) In this article we will try to show how Kurdish-Persian bilinguals transfer Persian elements (at lexical or (morpho) syntactic levels) and how Persian affects some of their Ilami sounds in their narratives.

Sometimes code-switching and code-mixing are used interchangeably (as we do so). These bilingual phenomena have been discussed from different points of view. Brice and Anderson (1999) aim to answer the questions regarding normal code mixing behaviors in a young bilingual child. They want to know what syntactic elements are mixed most frequently in conversational discourse in the young bilingual child and what information can be applied to a diagnostic or therapeutic situation. Descriptive analysis of the data revealed percentages and rank ordering of syntactic elements switched in the longitudinal language samples obtained. Von (2004) introduces an empirical study on eighteen simultaneous and successive English-German bilingual children. The study describes and analyzes the empirical data in order to find out more about the development and use of code-switching among bilingual children. It is concluded that code-switching is a displayed feature of everyday bilingual behavior and it plays many different functions in bilinguals' languages. By analyzing a child's recorded speech, Hara (2006) shows that he mixed more at the lexical level and less at the phonological level. In fact what the child has learnt at school in English fulfilled a booster function when either Chichewa or Chitumbuka was used. The results also reveal that the child's language mixing was influenced by the topic of discussion, the context and the interlocutor's mixed input. Torres (1992) analyzes the narratives produced by three sets of speakers to determine if the narrative strategies employed by the participants are community-wide or can be specific to a particular group in the community. The author focuses on code-switching as it appears in narratives produced in Spanish by participants with different proficiencies in Spanish and English. As far as we know, there is no prominent work done in Ilami Kurdish to discuss this topic.

An Introduction to Kurdish

Kurdish has many dialects, and Ilami is one of these varieties. Britannica describes Kurdish so:

> *Kurdish is a new western Iranian language spoken in Kurdistan; it ranks as the third largest Iranian language group, after Persian and Pashto, and has numerous dialects. There are two main dialect groups. The northern group-spoken from Mosul, Iraq, into the Caucasus—is called Kurmānji; in Turkey, Hawar (Turkized Latin) characters are used in the written form. It is spoken within a broad region that stretches roughly from Orūmīyeh, Iran, to the lower reaches of traditional Kurdistan in Iraq. In Iraq, Kurdī is the official form of Kurdish.*

As noted, Ilami (sometimes is called Feyli) is another variety under the Kurdish umbrella. This dialect is widely spoken in Ilam, a small mountainous city located at the west of Iran. Ilami shares some features with Kermanshahi and Kalhori. Although most of Kurdish varieties have ergative system, Ilami does not have such a system (Kalbasi 2010).

METHODOLOGY

In this research, sixty Kurdish-Persian bilinguals (half eight-year-old, half ten-year-old) participated. It should be noted that although Kurdish is the first language of these bilinguals, they are greatly exposed to Persian in different environments (like school, media, etc.). Having reviewed the pictures for five minutes, participants started narrating the story in Kurdish. A small tape recorder was used to record their productions. The next step was to transcribe the texts by using IPA symbols. Finally, these transcriptions were analyzed based on the three above-mentioned components.

The instrument used in this study was Mercer Mayor's wordless story known as "The Frog Story" consisting of 24 wordless pictures, published in 1960. According to Berman and Slobin (1994), this pictorial storybook has rapidly become a 'worldwide research tool'.

Data Analysis

In this part we classify the alternated codes in three categories. The first category includes the phonetic changes; the second one includes lexical and syntactic code-mixing[38]s together. We discuss each component through the examples given in the tables. For more convenience, Kurdish basic forms and English glosses are given for the mixed forms.

Table 1. Phonetic Change

Basic Forms	Mixed Forms
t͡ʃəɟæ go-Present Perfect-3rd Person/Sing	t͡ʃegæ
sæɟ dog-Noun	Sæg
hɑtəɟæ come-Present Perfect-3rd Person/Sing	hɑtəgæ
nurəsəɟæ see-Present Perfect-3rd Person/Sing	nurəsəgæ
æɾe for	æɾe
qurwɑqæ frog-Def Noun/Sing	qurbɑqæ
kæftəɟæ fall-Present Perfect- 3rd Person/Sing	Kæftegæ
kwət͡ʃəɟæ stone-Def Noun/Sing	kot͡ʃəgæ
dömɑ back	dumɑ
kɔɾæ boy-Def Noun/Sing	koɾæ

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[38] . In this article the term "mix" is used interchangeably to cover both code-mixing and code-switching.

Table 2. Lexical Change (Morphosyntactic change)

Basic Forms	*Mixed Forms*
dɑrelæ tree-Def Noun/pl	dəræxtelæ
zærdalˌəɟelæ bee-Def Noun/pl	Zæmburelæ
kɔræ boy-Def Noun/sing	pəsæræ
kærwasæ keɟæ wær clothe-Def Wear-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing	kærwasæ puʃe
dijaɟæ dær come out- Simple Pres-3rd Person/Sing	dær dəraj
dijanæ ʃunə koræ come- Simple Pres-3rd Person/Pl for boy_Def/Sing	dijanæ dombalə koræ
bæd deræ dijanæ then here come- Simple Pres-3rd Person namə həʃkijæ in land-Def	bæd deræ xoʃkijæ dijan
qurbaqæ bæn ære malˌəjan frog-Def/Sing take-Simple Past-3rd Person for home- Possessive Pronoun-3rd Person/Pl	qurbaqæ bænæ xanejan
sære t͡ʃəɟæsæ namə dulæ head-Possessive Pronoun-3rd Person/Sing go-Present Perfect-3rd Person/Sing in bucket-Def	sære t͡ʃəɟæsæ namə sætlæ
kæftəɟæsæ namə awæ fall-Present Perfect-3rd Person/Sing in water-Def	tu ɑb kæftəgæ
bæd deræ ælˌəsanæ then here wake-up-Present perfect-3rd person/Pl	bæd deræ bidar binæ
nurənæ qurwaqæ look at-Simple Present-3rd Person/Pl	qurbaqæ tæmaʃa kæn
ulaj t͡ʃuwæ beside wood-Def	uwærə t͡ʃuwæ
jæ je koregæ qæza deɟe this one boy-be-3rd Person/Sing food give-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing	jæ je koregæ qæza beheʃ de
bæd deræ hez gəre then here stand-up-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing	bæd deræ bolændaw du
gəriwəsəɟæ cry-Present perfect-3rd Person/Sing	gərjæ kərdəgæ
xwæʃi kərdəɟæ happy (is)-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing	xoʃhalæ
dəræ æləse bæd deræ dine qurbaqæ dæ næme here wake-up-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing then here see- Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing frog-Def from in ʃiʃæ nijæ bottle-Def not (is)	dəræ æləse bæd deræ dine qurbaqæ næme ʃiʃæ nijæ
bæd deræ dijanæ namə həʃkijæ then here come-Simple Present-3rd Person/Pl land	bæd deræ xoʃkijæ dijan
bejarəgæ xwar take down-Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing	xwar bejare
t͡ʃu ke benure ha ku go- Simple Present-3rd Person/Sing that see is where	t͡ʃu tɑ benure hɑ ku

DISCUSSION

Phonetic Change (Attrition)

As it can be seen, there are significant numbers of sounds changed in the Kurdish examples. [ɟ]→[g] is one of the most prevalent changes observed in the Kurdish productions. [ɟ] is [+Non-stop] and is the allophonic pair of [g] in Kurdish. It is important that Persian does not have this allophone and Kurdish children replace [ɟ] by [g] in the Kurdish phonetic contexts (where [ɟ] occurs: between vowels or at the end of syllable for example):

[ɟ](+Non-stop)→[g]

hatəɟæ → hatəgæ

sæɟ → sæg

t͡ʃəɟæ → t͡ʃəgæ

kwət͡ʃəɟæ → kot͡ʃəgæ

The next change is related to replacing [r] → [ɾ]. As an effect of Persian, the children remarkably replace this allophone by the tap one. When they do so, their accent is more like the Kurds speaking Kermanshahi than Ilami. Have a look at the following examples:

[r](+trill) → [ɾ] (+tap)

æ**r**e → æ**ɾ**e

kɔ**r**æ→ kɔ**ɾ**æ

nu**r**əsəɟæ → nu**ɾ**əsəgæ

One of the most regularly occurred change is related to [ö] → [u]. It was observed that systematically, [ö] changes to [u] in the narratives produced by bilingual children. Like the sounds mentioned above, Persian lacks this sound and it seems that children do not tend to acquire or at least use this sound in Kurdish:

[ö] (+High, Front, Unround)→ [u] (+High, Back, Tense, Unround)

z**ö** → z**u**(d)

r**ö** → r**u**

d**ö**mɑ → d**u**mɑ

Lexical Change

As it can be seen there are lots of words mixed by children into Kurdish. "pəsæræ" which is a Persian word has been several times mixed into Kurdish.

"**pəsær-æ** nuɾəsəgæsæ sægæ"

instead of "**kɔr-æ** nuɾəsəgæsæ sægæ"

If we break the morphological components of the word, we can figure out that the Kurdish grammatical bound morpheme is unchanged in both sentences. "**æ**" is an affix attached to the noun to show definiteness, this Kurdish definite marker remains intact.

A morphological code-mixing occurring in the Kurdish narratives was when a transferred Persian noun is pluralized via Kurdish plural marker. Indeed, some of the Kurdish-Persian bilinguals transfer only the bare lexical term (and not Persian plural marker "ha") into Kurdish and then they attach the Kurdish suffix "elæ" to pluralize the word, dəræxt-elæ and zæmbur-elæ to be mentioned here:

~~Kurdish lexical term~~ →Kurdish plural marker

↗

Mixed forms: Persian lexical term → ~~Persian plural marker~~

In the example "qurb**ɑ**qæ **xɑnejɑn** bæn" produced by one of the children, "**xɑne-jɑn"** is a mixed form in which "**xɑne"** (a Persian word for home) is mixed but the possessive pronoun "j**ɑ**n" remains Kurdish. We can call the examples of this kind "*code-blendings*" in a sense that bilinguals blend two distinct parts from their language systems.

It is not unexpected when a compound Kurdish verb is replaced by a simple Persian verb as in "kærw**ɑ**sæ puʃe". In this example, "kærw**ɑ**sæ" as the object of the sentence remains intact while the compound verb (=kegæ wær) is replaced by "puʃe" which is a simple Persian verb. The reverse also comes true in "gəriwəsəɠæ" and "gərjæ kərdəgæ". This example is a simple Kurdish verb affected by Persian language and changes to a compound verb.

Syntactic Change

It should be pointed that in the produced Kurdish narratives, some word order rules are also transferred. Compare the word order rules of these sentences:

Default forms: bæd deræ ræsənæ **həʃki**.

Mixed form: bæd deræ wæ **xoʃki** ræsən.

In this example, Persian word order is transferred into Kurdish. In other words, "xoʃki" is moved from its position (after the verb), to another place (before the verb).

CONCLUSION

Nowadays the impact of Persian on Kurdish is crystal-clear. In this article we aimed to discuss the influence of bilinguals' Persian on their Kurdish language by focusing on certain language changes. Excessive exposure to Persian increases the number of mixings in bilinguals' Kurdish language. This exposure can even decrease (attrite) the allophonic representations in some of the Kurdish examples (like three cases mentioned above).We could detect prevalent traces of code-mixings in the different levels of their Kurdish language. We assessed some of these code changes seen in the narratives produced by 60 Kurdish-Persian bilinguals. As far as phonetic components are concerned, there are some Kurdish (allo) phones being neutralized by Persian, resulting in producing the allophones articulated like Persian. For example, Kurdish has [g] and [ɠ] as two allophones while Persian lacks [ɠ]. In Kurdish one of the positions in which [ɠ] occurs is at the end of syllable (coda). Nevertheless Kurdish-Persian children do tend to pronounce it like [g] instead of [ɠ]. It is believed that Persian is influential and has attritional effect in this respect. Additionally, we saw some lexical examples that are mixed into Kurdish narratives. It was figured out that only bare lexical terms are probable to be transferred rather than inflectional morphemes like plural marker or definiteness marker. Compound words are also involved in this bilingual process, where a part (sometimes whole) of a compound word is mixed resulting in a half Persian/half Kurdish compound term.

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